Once you have planned your responses using the past questions on the previous document, check your ideas against the marks schemes below. This will give you an indication that you are heading in the right direction, but they are *only suggestions.*

May 15

**11. To what extent did the European balance of power change between 1871 and 1900?**

It is important to understand that the balance of power as established in 1815 had been shattered by the unifications of Italy and Germany between 1859 and 1871. The disturbance of the balance of power was caused by the fact that the new Germany was more powerful than Prussia had been. This caused anxieties for other states, especially France and Russia.

However, Bismarck attempted to create a new balance of power. In the Bismarckian system, Germany acted as “honest broker” between Austria-Hungary and Russia in their disputes over the Balkans as the power of the Ottoman Empire waned. In this way, Bismarck kept France isolated from both Russia and Austria Hungary. Meanwhile, Britain worked with Bismarck to limit Russian gains in the Balkans but otherwise pursued her imperial objectives in Africa and Asia. It is arguable how successful this balance of power was, especially given Russo–German tensions in the 1880s, note, for example, the Lombard Verbot of 1887 by which German loans to Russia were severely restricted.

Change occurred in the 1890s. With Bismarck replaced by Wilhelm II, the Reinsurance Treaty between Germany and Russia was not renewed and Russia was allowed to conclude an alliance with France, ending the latter’s isolation. The search for a German “place in the sun” in the 1890s also led to tensions between Britain and Germany (1896 Kruger Telegram and 1898 Tirpitz Naval Law).

Note: The end date for this question is 1900; however, candidates may reasonably argue that changes in the balance of power in the 1890s prefigured the formation of the Anglo–French Entente in 1904 and the Anglo–Russian Entente of 1907. Nevertheless, this is not an origins of the First World War question.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about in their responses. However, it is not exhaustive and no set answer is required.

Examiners and moderators are reminded of the need to apply the markbands that provide the

“best fit”

**12. Evaluate the causes of the First World War**

Candidates should attempt to evaluate the relative importance of the various causes of the First World War, the main causes of which should be well known. The most immediate short-term cause was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo leading to the July Crisis. Diplomatic attempts to defuse the situation failed (note, for example, the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia or the Blank Cheque) and mobilisation of various forces took place in August 1914.

Longer term factors may include: the Alliance system; the arms race, especially, but not exclusively between Britain and Germany; the decline of the Ottoman Empire; militarism and arguably imperialism. Supporters of the Fischer thesis argue for the primacy of a German “will to war” as the cause of the First World War. Some candidates may argue for the primacy of domestic politics, and that German foreign policy decision-making in the run up to 1914 was shaped by the challenges that the German ruling class was facing at home, especially from the Social Democrats. More recent historiography has argued that the German elite was not the only one in pre-War Europe to feel under threat in 1914 and to have prepared aggressive plans to defend its position.

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Nov 14

**11. Examine the importance of global colonial rivalry as a cause of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.**

It could be argued that Anglo-German colonial tensions (eg Kruger Telegram and more especially the naval competition, which was linked to British and German colonial ambitions) led to the initial move of Britain towards France, leading to the Entente Cordiale of April 1904. Furthermore, Franco-German colonial rivalry in Morocco led to the consolidation of the Entente between Britain and France during the crises of 1905 and 1911. While Russia had been allied with France since 1894 there was no agreement between Britain and Russia until the Triple Entente of August 1907 (after the resolution of colonial difficulties between the two). Global colonial rivalry played a role in establishing and strengthening the two blocs of powers that confronted each other in 1914.

On the other hand, one can argue that colonial disputes were not at all important in the actual outbreak of war in 1914. This was due in large part to events in the Balkans, Austro-Russian rivalries in the region and the European policies of the Great Powers. Some candidates may wish to stress the primacy of German policy as the main cause of the outbreak of war.

One could also argue that Britain and France and Britain and Russia had traditionally been colonial rivals, but were on the same side in 1914, suggesting that colonial rivalry was not an especially important cause of the outbreak of the First World War.

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**12. “German military and diplomatic errors were responsible for the defeat of the Central Powers in 1918.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

German strategic errors could include the actual execution and arguably the design of the Schlieffen Plan, (how far had it taken account of Russia’s improved ability to mobilize?). The provocation of the US, which brought her into the war, was a diplomatic error (eg the decision to attack US shipping and the Zimmermann telegram). The failure of the Schlieffen Plan and the US entry into the war could be argued to have been key reasons for the defeat of the Central Powers.

On the other side of the argument, there were factors that led to defeat in 1918 that were not German strategic/diplomatic errors, these could include: the blockade of Germany and its effects on the civilian population; the arguably greater mobilisation of the home front in Britain compared to Germany; the collapse of the Austrian and Ottoman Empires; and perhaps the generally greater resources of the Allied powers.

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May 14

**11. Analyse the main objectives of German foreign policy between 1890 and 1914.**

This is not a question on the causes of the First World War, rather, it gives an opportunity for candidates to show their knowledge of German foreign policy between 1890 and 1914 and asks for an analysis of the main objectives. Some may focus on German naval and colonial policy (the claim for “A Place in the Sun” was stated by Bülow in 1897), while others may focus more on German support of Austria–Hungary in the Balkans and the desire for a Mitteleuropa. Others may highlight the unpredictability of German policy and comment on the character of Kaiser Wilhelm II (Daily Telegraph affair). Other approaches could emphasize how objectives shifted over time within this period, or how foreign policy was driven by domestic concerns – specifically by what was seen as the threat of the rise of the SPD. Fear of a two front war and the resultant military planning (Schlieffen Plan) could also be discussed as well as the view that Russia would only become industrially and militarily stronger over time (War Council meeting of December 1912 and Moltke’s view that war was inevitable and “the sooner the better”).

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Examiners and moderators are reminded of the need to apply the markbands that provide the “best fit” to the responses given by candidates and to award credit wherever it is possible to do so.

**12. Compare and contrast the contribution of the British and German home fronts in determining the outcome of the First World War.**

The First World War was the first “total” war in history. For comparison between Britain and Germany, candidates could focus on conscription, propaganda and the degree of suspension of domestic political conflict, among others. Britain and Germany could both be examined for reorganization of the economy, rationing and the extent to which women were incorporated into the workforce.

For contrasts: candidates might choose to focus on specific episodes during the war. For example, in Britain, the Shell crisis of 1915 and the emergence of the Ministry of Munitions, which supported the British military effort. For Germany, candidates could assess the Burgfrieden, conditions from 1916 onwards, including the “Turnip Winter”, the growth of the black market and the way in which labour unrest (strikes and the Kiel Mutiny) contributed to political instability and an eventual willingness to seek an armistice, implicitly conceding defeat.

Comments on comparisons and contrasts should be linked to the outcome of the war

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about in their responses. However, it is not exhaustive and no set answer is required.

Nov 13

**11. To what extent were the policies of Germany responsible for the outbreak of war in 1914?**

German policies: In the longer term, Wilhelm II’s policies of Weltpolitik, his colonial ambition, caused tensions with both Britain and France (Boer War, Morocco, etc). Naval expansion led to more tensions with Britain, contributing to the signing of the Entente Cordiale. Wilhelm’s failure to renew the Reinsurance Treaty led to the Franco-Russian Alliance which was later extended to the Triple Entente.

In the shorter term, Germany’s military strategy (Schlieffen Plan) was likely to lead to British involvement in any Franco-German conflict. Wilhelm’s so called “blank cheque” also encouraged Austria to take a hard line with Serbia in the crisis of 1914.

Candidates should also consider the role of Austria. Austrian ambitions in the Balkans had led to tensions with Russia since the 1870s. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 increased tensions between Austria and Serbia and with Russia. The Austrian response to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, and the harshness of the ultimatum issued to Serbia, increased the likelihood of conflict in the Balkans and the bringing into play of the alliance systems.

Answers may also want to consider the actions of the other powers, both in the longer term and as a response to the July Crisis, before reaching a judgment. However the policies of Germany should be the main focus.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about in their responses. However, it is not exhaustive and no set answer is required.

**12. Assess the successes and failures of the Paris Peace Settlement at the end of the First World War.**

The key terms of the settlements (not just Versailles) should be well known. Credit accurate detailed knowledge which supports analysis. However the focus should be on the successes and failures in relation to the aims of the peacemakers and the achievements of the Settlement as a whole.

Aims varied, but a broad aim was to stabilize Europe, to prevent the spread of Communism and to try to restore economic activity. More specific differences could include Clemenceau’s aim to weaken and punish Germany, Lloyd George’s aim to restore trade, etc and Wilson’s aim to make a peace that was fair and lasting based on the Fourteen Points. In the Middle East the aims of Britain and France were somewhat different from the other peacemakers and could be criticized as being neo-colonial. Italy sought to gain territories (from the collapse of Austria–Hungary) as promised in the Treaty of London.

Successes could include: Actually reaching terms relatively quickly (the Treaty of Versailles was signed six months after the conference began. The other treaties (Saint Germain, Neuilly, Trianon and Sèvres) were all signed by 1920. The Treaties established a forum for the resolution of disputes (the League of Nations). The Treaties met the demands for national self determination of many groups (Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc). The left wing threat at the end of the war rapidly diminished as Europe stabilized.

Failures: The Treaties left several key nations dissatisfied – Germany, Hungary, Italy and Turkey were all revisionist powers. The reparations issue remained a hindrance to re-establishing international trade. The Treaty of Sèvres had to be revised fairly soon (1923). A number of vulnerable Central European states were established.

Key nations: Germany, Russia and the USA were not committed to maintaining the Settlement as they were not initially members of the League.

There is much material which could be considered and a great deal of historiography. Answers which take the line the settlements were unsuccessful because they did not prevent another war are unlikely to gain many marks.

May 13

**11. Discuss the significance of the Alliance System on European affairs in the years 1871–1914.**

This is a complex question and answers would benefit by (a) defining the term “Alliance System” and (b) by being broken up into two distinct periods, 1871–1890 and 1890–1914. Some detailed knowledge of the various alliances is required.

Nations sign alliances to ensure their own security, in order to make themselves strong enough to deter potential threats.

In the earlier period Bismarck’s system of alliances was essentially designed to ensure that France was too isolated to seek a war of revenge and to maintain peace in Europe in order to allow the new German Empire to flourish. Alliances such as the Dreikaiserbund meant that two potential enemies were allied to Germany. His complex system and use of diplomacy (for example Congress of Berlin) helped resolve various crises.

In the second period in the 1890s the Dual Alliance (Russia and France) and the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria–Hungary and Italy) also seemed to help maintain the balance of power. In the early years of the twentieth century the signing of the Entente Cordiale and Triple Entente seemed to disturb that balance by involving Great Britain and by dividing Europe into two camps. Candidates could argue that the various crises of the first decade of the twentieth century seemed to strengthen the bonds of each alliance and made them rigid and inflexible by 1914. On the other hand they could argue the fact that they were fairly evenly balanced meant that crises were resolved avoiding war (Bosnia and the Balkan wars).

Reward answers which focus on “significance” and which have well-developed analysis.

**12. Examine the reasons for, and the consequences of, the United States’ entry into the First World War in 1917.**

Causes could include: the fact that United States’ financial interests were already committed to the Allies. More immediately, the German decision to reintroduce the policy of unrestricted submarine warfare (February 1917) and the Zimmerman Telegram (March 1917) generated public support for the war. The final obstacle to American entry was overcome with the fall of Tsarism in Russia. The war could now be presented as a “war for democracy”.

Consequences could include: a huge increase in potential resources for the Allies in a war of attrition, at a time when Germany’s resources were almost exhausted. US entry into the war seemed to break the stalemate on the western front.

In January 1918 Wilson made a statement of war aims, the Fourteen Points, which encouraged Germany to seek an armistice after the failure of the Ludendorff Offensive in the spring of 1918.

Nov 12

**11. Assess the impact of the First World War on the civilian population of any one country you have studied.**

Britain, Germany, France and Russia are likely to be popular choices, however credit any other country from the region.

Areas to be explored could include: the impact of conscription, the movement of women into the workforce in new areas of employment, economic disruption, rationing and the impact on the health of the population, civilian casualties where appropriate. The growth of labour unrest because of harsh wartime working conditions. The growth of political radicalism.

Specific detailed evidence should be presented to support analysis of impact. Generalized unsupported answers should not score well.

May 12

**11. Assess the importance of Balkan nationalism as a reason for the outbreak of the First World War**

The longer term underlying tensions in Europe which contributed to the outbreak of war in 1914 will no doubt be well known and could be made relevant, particularly the development of the Alliance system – where Russia made unlikely alliances with France and later Great Britain as a consequence of German support of Austrian ambitions and fears in the Balkans. Austrian anxiety over Serb nationalism led to full annexation of Bosnia in 1908 which led to the growth of nationalists groups such as the “Black Hand”. The Balkan wars led to the virtual expulsion of Turkey from Europe, a greatly enlarged Serbia and a very anxious Austria. The removal of Turkey meant that tensions in the Balkans brought Austria and Russia into direct confrontation, and after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand the failure to resolve the crisis brought the Alliance system into play. Thus it could be argued that instability in the Balkans was a key factor in the development of a crisis which led to war. If candidates challenge the question and provide well evidenced, well structured arguments then these should be rewarded appropriately.

**12. Why were the Central Powers defeated by 1918?**

Candidates should attempt to give an overview of the whole war and focus on key issues which contributed to failure. The main focus will no doubt be on Germany and those candidates who address the problems of her allies as well as Germany should be well rewarded (e.g. internal tensions in Austria such as Czech nationalism, the success of the British campaigns in the Middle East).

Key factors include: the failure of the Schlieffen Plan which led to a war of attrition; the imbalance between the sides; the Allies included Britain and the Commonwealth and her European Allies plus the US from April 1917 – which brought huge reserves of manpower and resources; the impact of the Naval Blockade and control of the seas; poor decisions on the part of the Germans e.g. unrestricted submarine warfare, internal problems within Germany; labour unrest and the threat of revolution – the failure of the Ludendorff Offensive 1918 increased internal problems in Germany and led to the request for an armistice which was an admission that Germany could no longer continue fighting.

Nov 11

**11. Discuss the importance of two of the following in European diplomacy between 1870 and 1914: the Alliance System; global colonial rivalry; changing balance of power; nationalism**.

Candidates need to select two of the factors, define them, and show their importance in diplomacy that involved the key European states, between the unification of Germany and the outbreak of the First World War.

The Alliance System would include Bismarck’s Alliance System (candidates could challenge that it was a system) and the formation of the Triple Alliance and the Entente, why they were important and their role in the outbreak of the First World War.

Global colonial rivalry was the attempt of various European powers to obtain colonies outside Europe. This led to rivalries, especially between Britain and France, and later Britain, France and Germany, and will no doubt be regarded as a cause of war in that it increased tensions. Answers should be supported by reference to specific crises: Fashoda, Morocco, etc.

The changing balance of power refers to the rise and decline of various European powers, especially Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the Austro–Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. Much of the diplomacy in this era revolved around this change, and candidates could bring the Balkans, and the outbreak of war, into this section.

Nationalism and the desire of states, especially those whose ethnic majorities had been ruled by foreign powers, for freedom and autonomy, could be analysed. This is a complicated area and included various wars, revolts, annexation and probable genocide (Bulgaria and Armenia) as well as the outbreak of the First World War, as a consequence of Balkan nationalism.

This should not however be turned into a “causes of the First World War” answer. The period it covers is 44 years, so for “good” marks, demand reasonable coverage of the time period.

**12. Assess the factors that led to the defeat of the Central Powers in the First World War.**

This is a very mainstream question that will probably be popular, but often in the past answers have been short of specific details as well as analysis. Some points that could be included are:

 failure of the Schlieffen Plan to knock out France before Russia could mobilize;

 two-front war faced by Germany;

 weakness of German allies, Austria Hungary, Turkey, Bulgaria (1915);

 Germany and the Central Powers outnumbered by the Allies, especially with the entrance of Italy (1915), US (1917) and British Imperial and Commonwealth forces;

 Germany’s use of unrestricted submarine warfare adopted in 1917, was at first successful, but brought in the US and made Britain adopt the convoy system;

 Allies fought successful campaigns in the Middle East, and Germany lost colonies in Africa and the Far East;

 Germany’s final drive, the Ludendorff Offensive: failed to obtain victory before American troops arrived in strength;

 the German fleet mutinied (October 1918) and food shortages caused unrest in Germany, also her allies were failing (Turkey in the Middle East, Austria Hungary collapsing). Points raised should be assessed to show their significance in the loss of the war.

May 11

**11. Analyse the impact of the new German Empire on European affairs in the years 1871–1910.**

Impact could include: the disturbance of the balance of power; tensions between France and Germany because of French desire for revenge for 1870/71; anxiety over a powerful Germany leading to the eventual establishment of the alliance system. In terms of detail, answers may focus on how Bismarck sought to address these fears by his complex policy of “checks and balances”, which maintained relative stability until 1890. This system was destabilized by Wilhelm II’s less consistent policy, his pursuit of “a place in the sun”, Weltpolitik, the Naval Race – all of which led to the division of Europe into the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente.

This is not a question on the long-term causes of the First World War. Answers should address both Bismarck’s and Wilhelm II’s foreign policies.

**12. Discuss the impact of the First World War on domestic affairs in any one country of the region.**

Areas to consider could be: economic – greater government involvement in economic/industrial activity; society – the changing role of women (work) as a consequence of mass mobilization of men for the armed forces; impact on daily life – food shortages, rationing, military threat to civilians in some cases. Political – could include instability in Germany and Italy or the impact of the war on the political affairs of any valid example.

Answers may also consider the post-war impact such as the extension of the franchise to women in Great Britain and universal suffrage in Germany. Candidates may legitimately examine conditions in Russia but this is not a question on causes of the 1917 revolution.

Nov 10

**11. In what ways, and with what results, did German foreign and colonial policies change after 1890?**

Candidates should have knowledge of both Bismarck’s and Kaiser Wilhelm II’s foreign and imperial policies, and the best answers will explain how the Kaiser differed from Bismarck.

Bismarck set up a series of alliances – Dreikaiserbund, Dual Alliance, Reinsurance Treaty – in order to avoid Germany’s isolation, and he did not encourage colonialism because this would bring Germany into conflict with France and/or Britain. The Berlin Conference could be used as an illustration of his diplomatic abilities. The Kaiser sacked Bismarck and weakened the alliance with Russia and encouraged German intervention in Africa (e.g. the Kruger Telegram and the two Moroccan crises).

Some results that could be considered include: France’s drawing closer to Britain, leading to an Entente mostly because of colonial matters; Russia’s joining the Entente; the arms build-up and Russia’s increasing concern about events in the Balkans as Germany encouraged its ally, Austria. Wilhelm’s policies contributed to German isolation (except for Austria) whereas Bismarck’s policies kept Germany on reasonable terms with the other powers except France.

This is a two part question; if only “ways” or “results” are addressed, mark out of a maximum of [12 marks].

May 10

**11. Evaluate continuity and change in German foreign policy between 1871 and 1914.**

In 1871 Bismarck as Chancellor was in charge of foreign policy. Bismarck wished for a period of peace in order to consolidate the Empire, and avoid war with Austria-Hungary or France. The latter especially had to be isolated to prevent a war of revenge. Bismarck succeeded by making a complicated alliance system: the Dreikaiserbund (1871), the Dual Alliance with Austria (1879), the Triple Alliance with Austria-Hungary and Italy (1882) and the Reinsurance Treaty (1887) with Russia. Bismarck presided at the Berlin Conference (1878), claiming to wish to avoid colonial involvement, but protectorates were established later in South West Africa and the Cameroons.

German foreign policy changed with the accession of William II: The Reinsurance Treaty with Russia was not renewed, leading to a Franco–Russian Alliance in 1894. More colonies were sought, Germany supported the Boers in South Africa against the British and the German navy was enlarged, leading Britain to ally with France and Russia. Crises occurred in the Balkans and Morocco. Austria continued its alliance with Germany, thus after the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne at Sarajevo in June 1914, Germany supported Austria’s demands. Germany’s foreign policy had changed from 1890. William pursued Weltpolitik but was frequently inconsistent in his approach.