CAMBRIDGE
International Education

# Cambridge O Level

**HISTORY** **2147/22**

Paper 2 Document Questions **May/June 2026**

**1 hour 45 minutes**

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- Answer **one** question on **one** option only.
  - Option A: Nineteenth century topic
  - Option B: Twentieth century topic
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

**INFORMATION**

- The total mark for this paper is 40.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

This document has **12** pages.

DC (SL) 369339
© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

**[Turn over**

## Option A: Nineteenth century topic

**1 How far were criticisms of the Freedmen's Bureau valid?**

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully, and then answer **all** parts of Question 1.

**Background Information**

The Freedmen's Bureau was established by Congress in 1865. It was meant to help freed people achieve economic security and political rights. It issued rations and clothing and operated hospitals and schools. It also supervised labour contracts between planters and freed people. However, it had many critics. They claimed that its work was hampered by incompetent and corrupt agents. White Southerners, who were determined to keep freed people poor and powerless, claimed it created useless jobs for Republicans and it made black Americans lazy. In January 1866, Congress passed a bill renewing the Bureau's charter, but in the following month President Johnson vetoed the bill. In April, Johnson sent Generals Steedman and Fullerton to the South to find evidence to discredit the Bureau. Congress finally passed the bill in July.

Was the criticism of the Freedmen's Bureau fair?

**Source A**

The Freedmen's Bureau is the nation's right arm, gently but firmly outstretched to keep the peace between the warring classes. Its main aims are to save the blacks from famine, abuse and massacre, to set them to work and to see that they are well treated and fairly paid for their labour. It has achieved a marvellous success. Hundreds of thousands of blacks who are now hard working and comfortable labourers, with a roof over their heads and food in their cabins, would have been thieving and starving without the Bureau.

*From the* New York Tribune *newspaper, February 1866. The* Tribune *was owned by Horace Greeley, who was a Radical Republican at that time.*

**Source B**

The bill to renew the charter of the Bureau ought to be called an act to support the blacks in idleness by the honest labours of white people, or an act to establish a gigantic and corrupt political machine for the benefit of the Radicals. The supposed aim of the bill, to protect and benefit the freedmen, cannot be achieved by legislation. On the contrary, it will destroy their independence of character and action by making them dependent on government. Never prepared to work more than they had to, and having always been taught to rely on others, they are naturally idle, dependent and useless to themselves. How can the planters and other employers use these people as labourers, when the corruption of the thousands of Bureau agents stands in the way? Why should we be burdened with a charitable institution to support the African Americans at the cost of many millions a year?

*From the* New York Herald *newspaper, February 1866. The* Herald *supported the Democratic Party.*

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 

PapaCambridge · papacambridge.com 

**Source C**

The labourer on the plantation is in the clutches of his employer. If he is mistreated, where can he go for help? He has nowhere. If he goes to the Freedmen's Bureau agent, he finds there an officer who rides, dines and drinks champagne with his employer. Most of the agents think their job is to provide the planters with cheap workers, and to keep the labourers on the plantations. They are, in fact, the planters' guards. It is, therefore, useless for the poor labourer to look to the Bureau for help. He knows that the Bureau will send him back to his unjust employer. He will not be assisted to get his pay, but will be told to go back to his master and do his work.

*From the* New Orleans Tribune*, the first daily newspaper for black Americans, October 1867.*

**Source D**

There are different opinions over whether the Bureau encourages habits of hard work or idleness among the freedmen. In those districts where the Bureau is run by men of sound judgement, there has been no conflict between the Bureau and the local citizens. Officers of the Bureau have helped the rights of freedmen, such as the right to hold property. But in many places a very unsatisfactory situation exists. Bureau agents employ freedmen on their own plantations and pay them a low rate of wages, thus giving government support to levels of wages far below what the labour is really worth.

The idle and worthless look to the Bureau for support. The mass of freedmen have the idea that the Bureau is there to serve them and that if they do not have the standard of living they require, they can fall back on the Bureau for support. They also regard the existence of the Bureau as evidence that the government looks upon white people of the South as their enemies, which causes bad feeling.

*From the Report of Generals Steedman and Fullerton, who visited Southern states. The report was published in May 1866.*

**Source E**

The final report of Generals Steedman and Fullerton has been made public. Their predictable conclusion is that the Bureau is a nuisance, and is served by unworthy agents and that its continuance will produce disagreement and oppression. These Presidential fault-finders accuse the Bureau of re-enslaving the freedmen by contracts which impose wages far below what they should be. The very success of the Bureau in restoring labour and increasing the value of the labourer, is turned against it as a crime when it is doing its best to encourage industry, security, good morals and justice among all classes of the population. On evidence that is one-sided and inconclusive, and with hostile motives, the report supports the President's message.

*From* The Nation *newspaper, August 1866.* The Nation *was published in New York.*

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 

PapaCambridge · papacambridge.com 2147/22 Question Paper June 2026

**Source F**

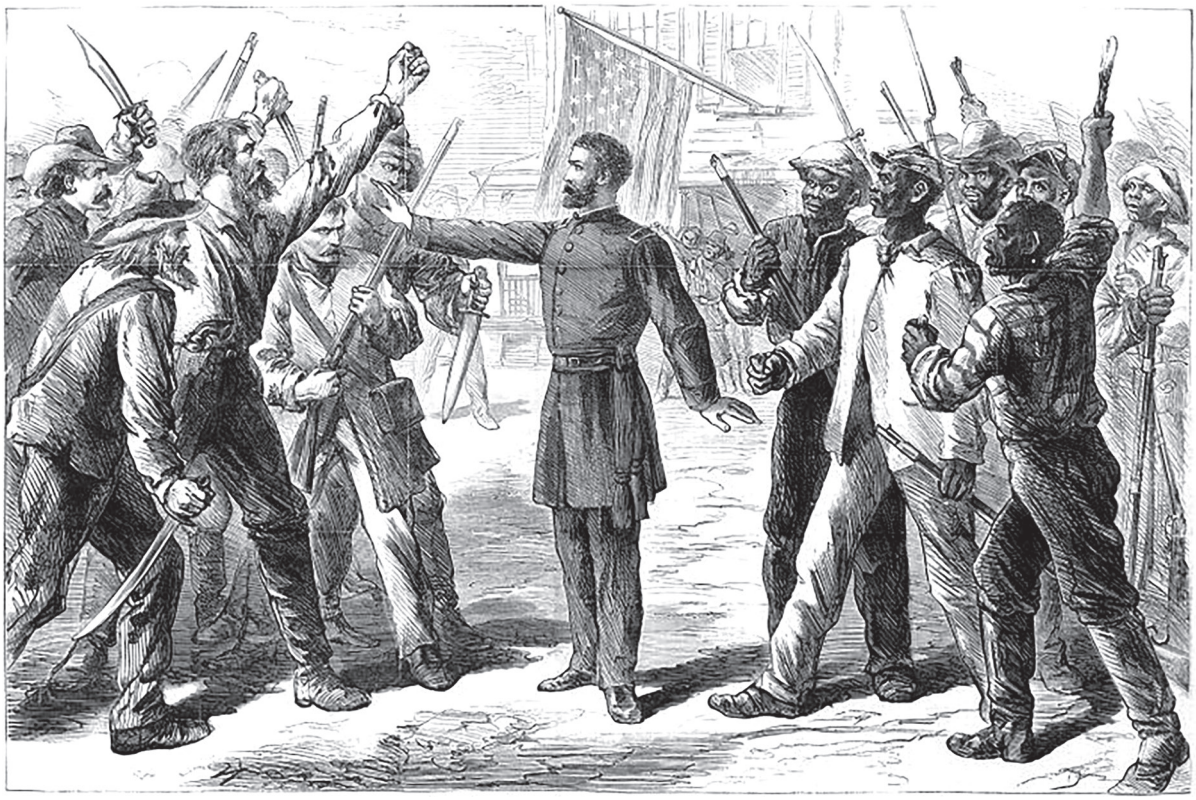
"THE POPULAR IDEA OF THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU—PLENTY TO EAT AND NOTHING TO DO."

*A cartoon published in an American magazine, October 1866.*

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 

PapaCambridge · papacambridge.com 

**Source G**



*Published in an American magazine, 1868. The man in the middle represents the Freedmen's Bureau.*

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 

PapaCambridge · papacambridge.com 2147/22 Question Paper June 2026

Now answer **all** parts of Question 1. You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources which you are told to use. In answering **1(a)–(e)** you should use your knowledge of the topic to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

**(a)** Study Source A.

Why was Source A published in February 1866? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [7]

**(b)** Study Sources B and C.

How similar are these two sources? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

**(c)** Study Sources D and E.

Does Source D make Source E surprising? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

**(d)** Study Sources F and G.

How far do these two sources agree? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

**(e)** Study **all** the sources.

How far do these sources provide convincing evidence that criticisms of the Freedmen's Bureau were valid? Use the sources to explain your answer. [9]

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 

PapaCambridge · papacambridge.com 

Turn over



PapaCambridge · papacambridge.com 2147/22 Question Paper June 2026

## Option B: Twentieth century topic

**2 How far did the Germans have good reason for being angry about the Treaty of Versailles?**

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully, and then answer **all** parts of Question 2.

### Background Information

The peace terms agreed by the Allies were presented to the German delegation on 7 May 1919. The Germans had two weeks to respond. Both the German delegation and people in Germany were shocked by the terms, which included loss of territory, the war guilt clause, reparations and disarmament. By the end of May, Germany had responded with its objections. Minor changes were made to the terms but the substance of the Treaty was unchanged. The Germans were told to sign the Treaty and, on 28 June, they did so very reluctantly.

Were the Germans justified in their claims that the Treaty was unfair?

### Source A

Once the Germans agreed to the Armistice, they thought that they would be consulted on the Treaty, but this was not the case and caused them to regard the Treaty as a 'Diktat'. The Treaty of Versailles included little of Wilson's ideas. One of the most controversial terms of the Treaty was the War Guilt Clause, which blamed Germany for the war. This was unfair and led to Germany being forced to disarm and pay reparations, which it could not afford, to the Allied powers. In a clumsy rearrangement of the map of Europe, the Treaty broke up and redistributed the German empire and unsurprisingly contributed to German resentment in the period after the war. Most objectionable and hated were the arrangements for Germany's eastern frontiers and the revival of Poland. Although Wilson was opposed to such harsh terms, he was outmanoeuvred by Clemenceau, who aimed at weakening Germany as much as possible.

*From a recent study of the Treaty of Versailles.*

### Source B

Unsurprisingly, the Germans were not included in the negotiations for the Treaty. It is not true to say that the Treaty was lacking in idealism. Much was achieved at Versailles and the Treaty bears Wilson's mark. The new map of Europe was drawn according to the principle of self-determination. The new frontiers were Wilsonian and ensured that only three per cent of the total population of Europe lived under foreign rule. No previous frontiers had been so satisfactory. On the economic side the Treaty was too harsh. The reparations were too high and harmed the stability of the new regime in Germany but the Germans most hated being unjustly blamed for the war. However, many in France thought that Clemenceau had failed and had left Germany too strong for the future peace of the world.

*From a recent account of the Treaty of Versailles.*

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 

PapaCambridge · papacambridge.com 

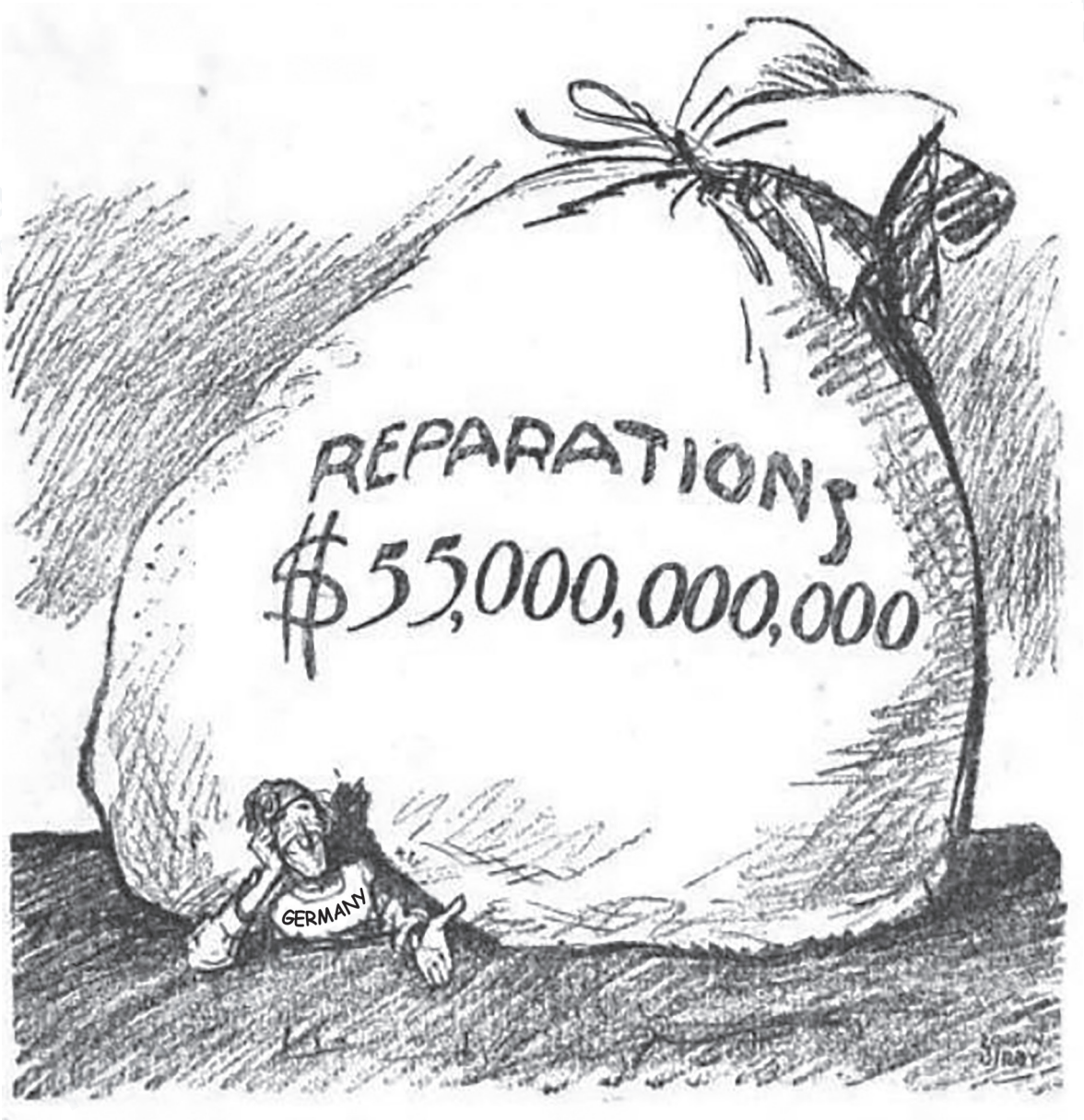
**Source C**

*A cartoon published in a British newspaper, October 1921. The caption read: 'The "Forgive-Germany" fanatic to Britain: "How can you expect this poor fellow, in such a dreadful condition, to pay Reparations?"'*

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 

PapaCambridge · papacambridge.com 2147/22 Question Paper June 2026

**Source D**




*A cartoon published in an American newspaper, 1921. Germany is saying, 'Let's see you collect it.'*

**Source E**

After the loss of its colonies and merchant fleet, Germany will no longer be in a position to import raw materials in sufficient quantities. An enormous part of German industry will be condemned to extinction and it will no longer be able to provide bread and work for millions of people. The enforcement of the Peace Treaty will lead to the deaths of several million people. This will occur soon because the health of the population has been broken by the starvation blockade. The Peace will impose on Germany many times the number of deaths caused by the war. Those who sign this Treaty will be responsible for the deaths of many millions of German men, women and children.

*The German reply to the proposed Treaty, 15 May 1919.*

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 

**Source F**

The reparations to be levied on Germany may be difficult to defend, but they were based by the Allies on Germany's own prosperity. Don't let us allow ourselves to be deceived by the protest and outcry that comes from Germany. While France's industrial machinery was ruthlessly destroyed by Germany, Germany's factories are still intact. Germany's aggression in starting the war resulted in enormous damage. The total cost of the war to the world has been set at not less than $348 billion. Therefore, when the Allies now propose that Germany should pay a sum which amounts to only about $13 billion, it does not seem unreasonable. Germany, with a population twice as large as France – skilful, able, industrious, with its industrial machinery unharmed – should be able to pay this amount. Do not let us forget that during the war Germany was happily announcing that it would be able to make the Allies pay $500 billion.

*From an article by Thomas William Lamont, one of Wilson's chief advisors at the peace conference, 1921.*

**Source G**

The historian, with every justification, will come to the conclusion that we were very stupid men. We arrived in Paris as fervent followers of President Wilson and determined that a peace of justice and wisdom should be negotiated. We left, conscious that the Treaties imposed on our enemies were neither just nor wise. Those who wish to see the gap between intention and practice should read the notes to the Conference by the German delegation. It is impossible to read the German criticism without forming the impression that the Peace Conference was guilty of disguising an imperialistic peace under the cloak of Wilsonism. Seldom has such a desire for revenge been hidden by such deceit.

*From a book by Harold Nicolson, a member of the British delegation at Versailles, published in 1933.*

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026


PapaCambridge · papacambridge.com 2147/22 Question Paper June 2026

Now answer **all** parts of Question 2. You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources which you are told to use. In answering **2(a)–(e)** you should use your knowledge of the topic to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

**(a)** Study Sources A and B.

How far do these two sources agree? Explain your answer using details of the sources. [7]

**(b)** Study Sources C and D.

How similar are these two cartoons? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

**(c)** Study Sources E and F.

How far does Source E prove that Lamont in Source F was wrong? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

**(d)** Study Source G.

Is Source G surprising? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [8]

**(e)** Study **all** the sources.

How far do these sources provide convincing evidence that the Germans were justified in their view that the Treaty of Versailles was unfair? Use the sources to explain your answer. [9]

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (Cambridge University Press & Assessment) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in our Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cambridgeinternational.org after the live examination series.

Cambridge International Education is the name of our awarding body and a part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, which is a department of the University of Cambridge.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 2147/22/M/J/26