

2006 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION  
Modern History

Section I (continued)

Question 2 (10 marks)

Explain why US entry into World War I proved to be the most significant of the war's turning points.

Use Sources A and B and your own knowledge to answer this question.

There were numerous turning points in WWI, including the failure of the Schlieffen plan, the U-boat campaigns at sea, the withdrawal of Russia and of course the entry of the US into WWI. The entry of the US into the war was significant as prior to their entry the Allies as ~~as~~ were forced to endure hardships on the home front, such as rationing of goods eg. bacon, flour, sugar and imports, export and trade was impacted as ~~as~~ as the "German U-boats attempted to starve Britain by sinking its supply ships" apparent in Source A. Although, civilians continued to suffer hardships after the entry of the US, if the US had not entered Britain's social and economic structures would have collapsed relatively earlier. As apparent in Source A ~~the~~ Germany in 1918 launched their final Spring offensive, led by Ludendorff. Britain due to the U-boat campaign ~~the~~ initially faced a campaign in which they suffered low troop morale due to lack of supplies and war weariness, as defeat was imminent. However the US entry into war turned the British situation around as evident in Source B "French and British morale is boosted"

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## Question 2 (continued)

with the knowledge that the USA will request no effort which can hasten its traps". Due to the "continuous violations of American neutral shipping" apparent through source A, and notably the sinking of the Lusitania where 128 innocent American civilians died, the US was effectively forced to declare war on Germany. Thus this acted as a significant turning point as the ~~British force~~ US entry, provided an ~~undisputable~~ undisputable boost to allied morale. ~~Of~~ Although Americans did not contribute much strategically, they offered the allies fresh men and relief to the allied soldiers who were demoralised by the senseless slaughter they had experienced since 1914. The US brought manpower, and it was a fundamental factor that led to the final defeat of the Germans in the Spring offensive. As the British and US ~~to~~ forced the Germans to retreat, the Germans ~~lost~~ stripped their supply lines and their <sup>troop</sup> morale fell as they were made aware of the better and improved situation of their enemies, who enjoyed more comforts than the Germans due to the US entry. As source B states ~~that~~ "In war, Time is vital", highlighted as without the entry of the US at this crucial battle ~~that~~ there is a great possibility that the ~~the~~ outcome of the war would have been different.

End of Question 2

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## Section I (continued)

O  
M  
A  
  
C  
  
U  
R

## Question 3 (10 marks)

Assess how useful Sources C and D would be for an historian studying the impact of total war on the home fronts during World War I.

In your answer, consider the perspectives provided by the TWO sources and the reliability of each one.

Source C is an extract from former American Ambassador James Gerard's *My Four Years in Germany, London 1917*; is a primary source which means it is reliable to an extent as it ~~conveys~~ <sup>is useful</sup> in conveying a personal perspective and personal observations of the impact of total war on the home fronts. The motivation of the extract may have been to recount his personal thoughts or possibly to keep a record of life on the home front for future historical reference.

As the source is a primary source, it is fair to assume it has not been influenced by hindsight or historical debate, ~~and~~ <sup>his perspective as he is of</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> nationality, and he is living in Germany, the enemy country, yet his language appears to be factual opposed to emotive, and whilst describing the German conditions it doesn't show prejudice or enemy hate, ~~conveying~~ <sup>conveying</sup> a lack of bias despite his nationality. The source is useful in conveying the hardships or fatiguing, the coal shortages and the impact on civilian social life ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> entertainment was decreased as the home front economic and social structures were fully devoted to the war effort, this is reliable as

these hardships and conditions corroborate with many other sources. -5- For a historian to gain a greater understanding of the impact of total war, such as the impacts of propaganda, censorship and increased

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## Question 3 (continued)

Government control they would need to collaborate with other sources, to find a wider range of perspectives. Source D, is a British poster produced by the Ministry of Food, 1917. The poster is a primary source and a useful example of the form and aim propaganda set out to achieve. The source obviously, is useful in conveying the government wishes and influence over the British people. The poster is useful in conveying how British propaganda specifically, this poster targeted women, and the emotive language such as "Defeat" and attempt to play on the emotions and encourage civilians to conscientiously contribute to the war effort in every possible way. ~~The source~~ <sup>whilst</sup> the source is useful in highlighting the perspectives of the British government and their attempts to encourage rationing ~~and it is also has elements~~. In order to gain a wider understanding of the impact of total war on the homefront historians would need to collaborate with other sources, as this source only shows a limited range of impacts. The source also contains elements of bias, as the size and placement of the U-boats in the image portrays the destruction that the German fleet is causing to Britain, in an attempt to play to emotions and even encourage hatred of the enemy for these actions. Effective in showing methods employed by the govt to manipulate social conscience and gain the support of the homefront, for total war production.

~~But does not note~~

End of Question 3