

Paper 3, Section B: Question 3a

How useful are Sources C and D for an enquiry into the way Hitler came to power?

Explain your answer, using Sources C and D and your own knowledge of the historical context. (8 marks)

Strong answer

Source C is useful because it mentions how Brüning kept issuing commands but he was not obeyed. It is accurate because we know that Brüning issued 66 decrees in 1932 and this source shows why this helped Hitler come to power. It says 'each week there were new decrees'. I can infer from this that people were getting fed up with decrees which achieved nothing and wanted an alternative.

Source C is also useful because it shows that Germany was in chaos, which helps to explain how Hitler came to power. I know, from my own knowledge, that the impression Source C gives is an accurate one. Unemployment was at five million in Germany by 1932 and this caused street violence like the source says. Many people in Germany thought that Germany needed a strong hand like Hitler. Source C is therefore useful; it gives us extra detail about the violence and explains what German people wanted – as Source C puts it, 'a man with hair on his chest'.

Source C was written by a British journalist. In one way this weakens how useful it is. The journalist tells us what Germans thought – 'hate in their heads', for example. But he was not German, he couldn't really know what they thought. On the other hand, he writes from first-hand experience. He tells us exactly what he saw – the knives on the streets, the bloodshed – that we know took place. Therefore the impression he gives of the attitude of many Germans is also very believable – 'Brüning is weak', 'the Nazis will be in power by Christmas'. This is reliable information about what people were doing and saying and makes the source useful. Even if it is a story, it seems to be trying to create an accurate impression.

Source D is useful. It shows that political commentators at the time thought that Hitler needed the help of Hindenburg and von Papen to lift him to power, and that they were reluctant to do it. This idea is supported by von Papen's comment to Hindenburg at the time, when he said "we will push Hitler so far into a corner, he will squeak like a mouse". The source is from a British magazine, which concentrated on political events, so it gives us an informed view about Hitler coming to power and suggests that the role of Hindenburg and von Papen was widely known as it was portrayed in this way in a magazine designed for the British public. This makes it more useful.

This is a well-developed point. The content of the source, inference from the source other knowledge are all combined to show how the source is useful in explaining the circumstances behind Hitler's rise to power.

Content of the source and specific knowledge used to show how the source throws light on Hitler's rise to power.

This is a balanced view of the provenance of the source, which makes a reasonable case for its usefulness.

Answer uses provenance to decide that the source is useful and then compares its content with own knowledge to show how the source helps us to understand Hitler's rise.

Verdict

This is a strong answer because:

- it has analysed both sources, making inferences from them
- it has used contextual knowledge in the evaluation of both sources
- evaluation takes provenance into account and explains why they are useful.

