

2001 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
Modern History

Section I (continued)

Question 3 (10 marks)

Assess how useful Sources C and D would be for an historian studying the Allies' approaches to Germany at the Paris Peace Conference.

In your answer, consider the perspectives provided by the two sources, and their reliability.

Source C is an address made to Congress by Woodrow Wilson in 1918, only a few months after the Armistice was signed, in November. As it is an address to parliament, by the President of the United States, it is useful for showing America's attitude towards Germany. ~~Considering~~ However, given that it is an address made by the President, it must be considered that perhaps it ~~is not~~ ^{is not} extremely indicative of America's approach, but rather of Wilson's approach. This is supported by the rather idealistic tone of the source, and Wilson's pleas for "equality" in this "new world". Such a view is one which Britain, and to a greater extent France would not be supportive of. France in particular wished rather to exact revenge on Germany, and to hinder her enough so as to

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Question 3 (continued)

avoid the possibility of any future conflict. Therefore, whilst it is certainly a reliable source, as it is an address to Congress, and thus should be free from bias, it is not particularly useful for showing the Allies' approaches to Germany at the Paris Peace Conference. Rather, it only shows Wilson's idealistic view.

Source D is a note from the German Government to the Allies, ^{dated} June 1919. As this source originated in Germany, rather than an Allied country, it is not particularly useful for showing the Allies' approach to Germany. It does however make references to various conditions of the Peace Treaty, for example Article 231, now known as the 'War Guilt Clause'. Perhaps this is useful for showing how the Allies, particularly France and Britain, wished to place all blame and costs for the war on Germany, whom they see as the "sole instigator of war" (SD). ~~That~~ Perhaps also, by studying this source in conjunction with Source D, it is useful in showing the contrasting approaches of the USA, Britain and France, and how, eventually, Britain and France's desire for a harsh peace was successful. As it is a note to a government, ~~there~~ it can perhaps be assumed that its details are an accurate description of the attitudes of Germany, however this does not make it any more useful for a historian studying the Allies' approaches to Germany at the Paris Peace Conference.

End of Question 3

Therefore, whilst both sources are reasonably reliable, they are not useful for showing the approaches of the Allies' to