

AS

# History

The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953–2000

7041/2T Crisis in the Soviet Union, 1953–2000

Mark scheme

---

7041  
June 2016

---

Version: 1.0 Final

---

---

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

June 2016

**The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953–2000**

**AS History Component 2T Crisis in the Soviet Union, 1953–2000**

**Section A**

- 01** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two sources is more valuable in explaining the Soviet attitude towards human rights under Brezhnev? **[25 marks]**

*Target: AO2*

*Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.*

**Generic Mark Scheme**

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the value of the sources in relation to the issue identified in the question. They will evaluate the sources thoroughly in order to provide a well-substantiated conclusion. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will provide a range of relevant well-supported comments on the value of the sources for the issue identified in the question. There will be sufficient comment to provide a supported conclusion but not all comments will be well-substantiated, and judgements will be limited. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **16-20**
- L3:** The answer will provide some relevant comments on the value of the sources and there will be some explicit reference to the issue identified in the question. Judgements will however, be partial and/or thinly supported. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. There may be either some relevant comments on the value of one source in relation to the issue identified in the question or some comment on both, but lacking depth and have little, if any, explicit link to the issue identified in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **6-10**
- L1:** The answer will either describe source content or offer stock phrases about the value of the source. There may be some comment on the issue identified in the question but it is likely to be limited, unsubstantiated and unconvincing. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

---

## Indicative content

**Note:** This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

**Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.**

In responding to this question, students may choose to address each source in turn or to adopt a more comparative approach in order to arrive at a judgement. Either approach is equally valid and what follows is indicative of the evaluation which may be relevant.

**Source A: in assessing the value of this source as an explanation, students may refer to the following:**

### Provenance and tone

- this is an official, legally binding document so could be expected to represent the views of both countries. The document was signed at the height of détente and covered many areas of ‘agreement’, not just human rights
- because it is an official document, the tone is formal and the language legalistic
- the aims of this section of the agreement are very clear. There is a very strong emphasis on ‘freedoms’ and ‘rights’, and that the states will ‘recognise’ and ‘respect’ them (all of these words repeated several times)

### Content and argument

- the USA and USSR agreed to respect human rights and freedoms, and recognised their universal significance
- both states agreed to allow their citizens to exercise civil rights and freedoms, but Brezhnev was more concerned to secure the benefits of the first two baskets of the Helsinki agreement, which would give the USSR access to US technology and other economic benefits
- both states agreed to allow for freedom of religion, but Brezhnev stated privately at the time that he did not intend to keep to this part of the agreement, believing that the US could not control what happened in the USSR.

**Source B: in assessing the value of this source as an explanation, students may refer to the following:**

### Provenance and tone

- this source is a letter to Brezhnev which is aiming to get an ‘open’ trial so they can defend ‘fabricated charges’
- as the letter is an appeal it is possible that the musicians are exaggerating their persecution within the USSR to support their claims

- despite the fact that it is to Brezhnev, the tone of the letter is quite bold and forceful, for instance the musicians ‘demand’ a trial and they implicate Brezhnev personally in the actions taken against them
- the bold tone is also surprising in that the letter was written in 1978, just one year into the KGB crackdown on dissidents

### **Content and argument**

- the musicians were persecuted for giving refuge to Solzhenitsyn, a famous Soviet dissident, who was expelled from the Soviet Union. Dissidents like Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov were harassed, imprisoned or put in mental institutions
- persecution took the form of stopping them from carrying out their musical activities
- the Helsinki Agreement emboldened human rights activists. For example, the Helsinki Watch Groups reported Soviet infringements of Human Rights to the international community, causing some embarrassment to Brezhnev
- the musicians wanted to have a trial, which they stressed should be ‘open’. Yet, despite the Helsinki Agreement, limitations on cultural freedom and human rights remained
- whilst there was opposition, the number of dissidents actively opposing the regime’s position on Human Rights was small, and most individuals/groups were dealt with by 1982

In arriving at a judgement as to the relative value of each source, students may conclude that Source B is more valuable for showing the Soviet attitude to human rights as it gives a clear picture of how certain citizens were treated and indicates, for example, the lack of ‘open’ trials. Conversely Source A was signed only for convenience. Any supported argument as to relative value should be fully rewarded.

**Section B**

- 02** ‘De-Stalinisation brought very little change to the lives of Soviet citizens in the USSR in the years 1956 to 1964.’

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

**[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.*

**Generic Mark Scheme**

- L5:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment leading to substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be analytical comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance. However, there may be some generalisation and judgements will be limited and only partially substantiated. **16-20**
- L3:** The answer will show some understanding of the full demands of the question and the answer will be adequately organised. There will be appropriate information showing an understanding of some key features and/or issues but the answer may be limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some comment in relation to the question. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer will be descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6-10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

---

## Indicative content

**Note:** This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

**Arguments suggesting that de-Stalinisation brought very little change to the lives of Soviet citizens in the USSR in the years 1956 to 1964 might include:**

- Khrushchev had no intention of turning the USSR into a liberal democracy and there were clear limitations on de-Stalinisation. Key features of Stalinism remained in place, e.g. the one-party state and command economy
- writers who were too outspoken were harassed and imprisoned. Pasternak's novel 'Dr Zhivago' was banned, and experimentation in art was often banned
- certain groups continued to be persecuted, e.g. Jews. Khrushchev brought back the anti-religious campaign of the 1920s and 1930s
- whilst there was some legal reform, political interference in legal and judicial processes remained
- the KGB still monitored citizens
- economic hardship continued

**Arguments challenging the view that de-Stalinisation brought very little change to the lives of Soviet citizens in the USSR in the years 1956 to 1964 might include:**

- Khrushchev's ambition for peaceful coexistence with the West caused hostilities to 'thaw', resulting in citizens having access to a wider range of literature and film, including some from the West.
- censorship lessened. There were more freedoms for writers than before 1956
- there were increased cultural and sporting contacts with non-Communist countries, e.g. the Moscow World Festival of Youth in 1957
- Khrushchev granted a political amnesty, resulting in a mass release of political prisoners and ordinary citizens from the Gulag
- a new criminal code gave citizens more security
- the atmosphere of fear and terror lessened considerably. There was less fear of arrest amongst ordinary citizens
- there were improved working and living conditions, e.g. the introduction of the minimum wage, shorter hours of work, Khrushchev's house building project, etc

Good answers are likely to show an awareness that 'de-Stalinisation' would have made some difference to the lives of Soviet citizens, particularly in terms of lifting the atmosphere of fear and allowing for more cultural freedoms. However, not all citizens benefitted and many of the more 'liberal' reforms were being modified by the time of Khrushchev's fall from power.

**03** 'Gorbachev resigned because his economic policies had failed.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

**[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.*

### **Generic Mark Scheme**

- L5:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment leading to substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be analytical comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance. However, there may be some generalisation and judgements will be limited and only partially substantiated. **16-20**
- L3:** The answer will show some understanding of the full demands of the question and the answer will be adequately organised. There will be appropriate information showing an understanding of some key features and/or issues but the answer may be limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some comment in relation to the question. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer will be descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6-10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

---

**Indicative content**

**Note:** This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

**Arguments suggesting that Gorbachev resigned because his economic policies had failed might include:**

- the economy was in a desperate state by 1991. There were falls in productivity and price rises, hoarding became an issue, strikes occurred, rationing had to be introduced and levels of poverty had risen
- the USSR's budget deficit and international debt increased considerably
- Gorbachev's reforms lacked careful planning. Gorbachev did not understand the measures needed for a full market economy and relied on a mix of different initiatives
- his reforms were contradicted by his reluctance to abandon the command economy and the leading role of the CPSU, frustrating both conservatives and reformists
- his reforms had never received full support from colleagues and the public, and the ongoing political unrest made it more difficult to carry the reforms through.
- by 1990, there were several bodies responsible for economic policy all competing with each other, causing confusion
- corruption was rife, e.g. protection money
- foreign investors were put off from investing in the the Soviet economy due to the alien workings of the planned economy

**Arguments challenging the view that Gorbachev resigned because his economic policies had failed might include:**

- the changes in the constitution weakened the party and Gorbachev's position as President, e.g. political reform challenged the nomenklatura system, and Yeltsin's powerful position as Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet greatly weakened Gorbachev
- Demokratizatsiya undermined the authority of the party
- Glasnost encouraged criticism of Gorbachev, and was deemed non-genuine due to Gorbachev's delayed and guarded response to the Chernobyl disaster
- the events of the 1991 coup strengthened Yeltsin, as did Yeltsin's actions after the coup. Gorbachev's failure to recognise the changed political situation on his return from the coup damaged him
- the new union of the republics (CIS) established in December 1991 meant that Gorbachev's position as President of the USSR had ceased to exist
- what brought Gorbachev down was a collapse of the entire Communist system and the triumph of Western values at the end of the Cold War.
- there was increased nationalist unrest, to which Gorbachev responded inconsistently

Good students may argue that although Gorbachev's economic policies had indeed failed by 1991, the actual reasons for his resignation lay in the challenge from Yeltsin and the constitutional changes which had left him with no effective power.