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# AS-LEVEL HISTORY

Unit HIS2Q: The USA and Vietnam, 1961–1975  
Mark scheme

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1041  
June 2015

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Version 1: Final Mark Scheme

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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)

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## Generic Introduction for AS

The AS History specification is based on the assessment objectives laid down in QCA's GCE History subject criteria and published in the AQA specification booklet. These cover the skills, knowledge and understanding which are expected of A Level students. Most questions address more than one objective since historical skills, which include knowledge and understanding, are usually deployed together. Consequently, the marking scheme which follows is a 'levels of response' scheme and assesses students' historical skills in the context of their knowledge and understanding of History.

The levels of response are a graduated recognition of how students have demonstrated their abilities in the Assessment Objectives. Students who predominantly address AO1(a) by writing narrative or description will perform at Level 1 or Level 2 depending on its relevance. Students who provide more explanation – (AO1(b), supported by the relevant selection of material, AO1(a)) – will perform at high Level 2 or low-mid Level 3 depending on how explicit they are in their response to the question. Students who provide explanation with evaluation, judgement and an awareness of historical interpretations will be addressing all 3 AOs (AO1(a); AO1(b); AO2(a) and (b) and will have access to the higher mark ranges. AO2(a) which requires the evaluation of source material is assessed in Unit 2.

Differentiation between Levels 3, 4 and 5 is judged according to the extent to which students meet this range of assessment objectives. At Level 3 the answers will show more characteristics of the AO1 objectives, although there should be elements of AO2. At Level 4, AO2 criteria, particularly an understanding of how the past has been interpreted, will be more in evidence and this will be even more dominant at Level 5. The demands on written communication, particularly the organisation of ideas and the use of specialist vocabulary also increase through the various levels so that a student performing at the highest AS level is already well prepared for the demands of A2.

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**CRITERIA FOR MARKING GCE HISTORY:****AS EXAMINATION PAPERS****General Guidance for Examiners (to accompany Level Descriptors)**

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**Deciding on a level and the award of marks within a level**

It is of vital importance that examiners familiarise themselves with the generic mark scheme and apply it consistently, as directed by the Principal Examiner, in order to facilitate comparability across options.

The indicative mark scheme for each paper is designed to illustrate some of the material that students might refer to (knowledge) and some of the approaches and ideas they might develop (skills). It is not, however, prescriptive and should only be used to exemplify the generic mark scheme.

When applying the generic mark scheme, examiners will constantly need to exercise judgement to decide which level fits an answer best. Few essays will display all the characteristics of a level, so deciding the most appropriate will always be the first task.

Each level has a range of marks and for an essay which has a strong correlation with the level descriptors the middle mark should be given. However, when an answer has some of the characteristics of the level above or below, or seems stronger or weaker on comparison with many other students' responses to the same question, the mark will need to be adjusted up or down.

When deciding on the mark within a level, the following criteria should be considered *in relation to the level descriptors*. Students should never be doubly penalised. If a student with poor communication skills has been placed in Level 2, he or she should not be moved to the bottom of the level on the basis of the poor quality of written communication. On the other hand, a student with similarly poor skills, whose work otherwise matched the criteria for Level 4 should be adjusted downwards within the level.

Criteria for deciding marks within a level:

- The accuracy of factual information
- The level of detail
- The depth and precision displayed
- The quality of links and arguments
- The quality of written communication (grammar, spelling, punctuation and legibility; an appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of ideas, including the use of specialist vocabulary)
- Appropriate references to historical interpretation and debate
- The conclusion

June 2015

**GCE AS History Unit 2: Historical Issues: Periods of Change**

**HIS2Q: The USA and Vietnam, 1961–1975**

**Question 1**

**01** Use **Sources A** and **B** and your own knowledge.

Explain how far the views in **Source B** differ from those in **Source A** in relation to Operation Rolling Thunder. **[12 marks]**

*Target: AO2(a)*

**Levels Mark Scheme**

Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**

**L1:** Answers will **either** briefly paraphrase/describe the content of the two sources **or** identify simple comparison(s) between the sources. Skills of written communication will be weak. **1-2**

**L2:** Responses will compare the views expressed in the two sources and identify some differences and/or similarities. There may be some limited own knowledge. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed. **3-6**

**L3:** Responses will compare the views expressed in the two sources, identifying differences **and** similarities and using own knowledge to explain and evaluate these. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed. **7-9**

**L4:** Responses will make a developed comparison between the views expressed in the two sources and will apply own knowledge to evaluate and to demonstrate a good contextual understanding. Answers will, for the most part, show good skills of written communication. **10-12**

**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 levels scheme.**

Students will need to identify differences between the views of the two sources. For example:

- Source B takes the view that many people were killed and thousands wounded. Source A suggests that the loss of life was greatly reduced by carefully targeted bombing
- Source B takes the view that Hanoi and Haiphong were regularly attacked while Source A suggests that these cities were 'hardly bruised'

- Source B takes the view that the bombing strengthened morale while Source A suggests that its purpose was to undermine morale in North Vietnam.

Students will need to apply their own knowledge of context to explain these differences. They might, for example, refer to:

- the notion that the USA was certain of victory through mass bombing. It did come to acknowledge that such a victory had not been achieved
- the North Vietnamese quickly organised a national response to the bombing. Repair work was carried out quickly
- the North Vietnamese military machine continued to function effectively.

To address 'how far', students should also indicate some similarity between the sources. For example:

- Source B is clearly of the view that the bombing did cause widespread damage. This is reinforced in Source A by reference to the fact that the bombing devastated parts of North Vietnam
- both sources accept that Operation Rolling Thunder failed to destroy the morale of the north Vietnamese people and their leaders.

In making a judgement about the degree of difference, students may conclude that the sources have a significantly different perspective on US intent. Source A seems to suggest that the bombing was careful and targeted while Source B adopts a less friendly and less pro-American analysis.

**Question 1**

**02** Use **Sources A, B and C** and your own knowledge.

How far were the USA's military tactics responsible for its failure to achieve a final victory in the years 1965 to 1967? **[24 marks]**

*Target: AO1(b), AO2(a), AO2(b)*

**Levels Mark Scheme**

Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**

**L1:** Answers may be based on sources or on own knowledge alone, or they may comprise an undeveloped mixture of the two. They may contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question or they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, there may be some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**

**L2:** Answers may be based on sources or on own knowledge alone, or they may contain a mixture of the two. They may be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the focus of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment with relevant but limited support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-11**

**L3:** Answers will show a developed understanding of the demands of the question using evidence from **both** the sources **and** own knowledge. They will provide some assessment backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, but they will lack depth and/or balance. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **12-16**

**L4:** Answers will show explicit understanding of the demands of the question. They will develop a balanced argument backed by a good range of appropriately selected evidence from the sources and own knowledge, and a good understanding of historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, show organisation and good skills of written communication. **17-21**

**L5:** Answers will be well-focused and closely argued. The arguments will be supported by precisely selected evidence from the sources and own knowledge, incorporating well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate. Answers will, for the most part, be carefully organised and fluently written, using appropriate vocabulary. **22-24**

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## 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 should be able to make a judgement by addressing the focus of the question and offering some balance of other factors or views. In ‘how important’ and ‘how successful’ questions, the answer could be (but does not need to be) exclusively based on the focus of the question.

Students should use the sources as evidence in their answer.

Relevant material from the sources would include:

- **Source A:** suggests that the bombing campaign failed. The morale of the North Vietnamese remained intact. Westmoreland’s comment is particularly significant.
- **Source B:** the bombing did cause significant damage but never enough to deter the North Vietnamese from continuing a military struggle.
- **Source C:** this itemises the destructive scale of US firepower. The basic approach was to blanket bomb and conduct large scale damage alongside focused search and destroy missions.

From students’ own knowledge:

Factors suggesting the USA’s military tactics did lead to its failure to achieve a final victory by 1967 might include:

- the tactics were based on military power linked to conventional forms of warfare. Such tactics were much less successful against guerrilla forces. Mass bombing failed to guarantee that the target was there and that it was hit
- the tactics generated popular opposition in the USA. Pressure from the media had a significant impact in undermining the military effort
- increasingly, the failure to establish clear indicators that victory was possible served to demoralise US troops and this further undermined the possibility of military success. Many US troops were not committed to the tactics they were deploying.

Factors suggesting that the failure to achieve a final victory by 1967 was primarily due to factors other than US military tactics might include:

- the Vietcong had the support of the rural population. They were ruthless enough to ensure that support if it ever began to waver. This meant that guerrilla warfare could function effectively
- the South Vietnamese army was a weak asset for the US. Its members lacked motivation and commitment and this was largely out of the hands of the USA
- the VC and North Vietnamese army had a very efficient supply system with the Ho Chi Minh trail. This made it possible for them to function as an efficient fighting force.

Good answers may conclude that the failure to achieve victory through military means was the most significant factor. The Americans maintained an arrogant belief that their military superiority would succeed. The tactics never succeeded in addressing the fundamental issue of the war being a guerrilla war.



**Question 2**

**03** Explain why President Diem had become unpopular in South Vietnam by 1963. **[12 marks]**

*Target: AO1(a), AO1(b)*

**Levels Mark Scheme**

Nothing written worthy of credit.

**0**

**L1:** Answers will contain either some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question or some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-2**

**L2:** Answers will demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they will provide some explanations backed by evidence that is limited in range and/or depth. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **3-6**

**L3:** Answers will demonstrate good understanding of the demands of the question providing relevant explanations backed by appropriately selected information, although this may not be full or comprehensive. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **7-9**

**L4:** Answers will be well-focused, identifying a range of specific explanations, backed by precise evidence and demonstrating good understanding of the connections and links between events/issues. Answers will, for the most part, be well-written and organised.

**10-12**

**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.**

Answers should include a range of reasons as to why President Diem had become unpopular in South Vietnam by 1963.

Students might include some of the following factors:

- Diem did very little to carry out much needed economic improvements in the rural areas of South Vietnam. US economic aid was being fed into the towns and cities and in expanding the South Vietnamese army while the vast majority of the population were in the rural areas in what was a predominantly agricultural country. The rural areas remained poor despite the scale of US economic aid
- it was Diem's regime that launched the strategic hamlets programme in 1962. This was highly disruptive to thousands of rural peasants and it was massively unpopular. It served to bring many such people to support Diem's primary opponents, the Vietcong.

OR Students may refer to some of the following long-term factors:

- Diem belonged to the minority Catholic population. He had consistently shown favouritism towards that minority at the expense of the Buddhist majority. He had also applied nepotism in appointments and this led to his family dominating senior government jobs. The opposition from Buddhists culminated in the Buddhist Crisis of May 1963
- Diem was inevitably associated with the USA and this meant he was associated with western imperialism in the minds of many South Vietnamese. He was an easy target for nationalist and communist propaganda

and some of the following short-term/immediate factors:

- the Vietcong focused on winning support from the rural population. The use of propaganda, nationalism and communism served to alienate many rural peasants from the Diem regime, which in turn was associated with imperialism, corruption and a failure to reform. The Vietcong harnessed this existing opposition and honed it into direct anti-Diem action
- military leaders were disaffected. They held Diem responsible for the military weaknesses of the South Vietnamese army. This was particularly evident at the battle of Ap Bac.

To reach higher levels, students will need to show the inter-relationship of the reasons given. For example, they might suggest that Diem's regime was characterised by multiple failings that impacted on all the significant elements he needed to retain power. He alienated his political allies, his military allies and large sections of society. The common factors were his corruption and failure to respond positively to the needs and demands of those groups whose support he needed.

**Question 2**

**04** 'Many people in South Vietnam supported the Vietcong because it was a communist movement.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

**[24 marks]**

*Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)*

**Levels Mark Scheme**

Nothing written worthy of credit.

**0**

**L1:** Answers may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a limited part of the period of the question. Alternatively, there may be some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**

**L2:** Answers will show some understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain some explicit comment with relevant but limited support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-11**

**L3:** Answers will show a developed understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, but they will lack depth and/or balance. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **12-16**

**L4:** Answers will show explicit understanding of the demands of the question. They will develop a balanced argument backed by a good range of appropriately selected evidence and a good understanding of historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, show organisation and good skills of written communication. **17-21**

**L5:** Answers will be well-focused and closely argued. The arguments will be supported by precisely selected evidence leading to a relevant conclusion/judgement, incorporating well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate. Answers will, for the most part, be carefully organised and fluently written, using appropriate vocabulary. **22-24**

**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 should be able to make a judgement by balancing evidence which supports the view given against that which does not.

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Evidence which agree(s) might include:

- Communism was an attractive political ideology for South Vietnamese peasants. It appeared to promise a better and more prosperous existence for them than capitalism did
- Communism was perceived as being not only anti-capitalist but also anti-American and anti-imperialist. Both these characteristics of communism appealed to the South Vietnamese peasantry
- Ho Chi Minh, the communist leader of North Vietnam, was highly respected by South Vietnamese peasants. He represented the physical embodiment of communism and this strengthened support for the Vietcong had amongst the South Vietnamese. As a communist organisation it was closely tied to Ho Chi Minh.

Evidence which disagree(s) might include:

- the Vietcong was always willing to use terror methods to intimidate South Vietnamese peasants in order to guarantee support. Any kind of opposition or resistance towards the Vietcong was usually met with extreme reprisals in order to keep the peasant population as supporters
- the Vietcong was also a nationalist movement as well as a communist one. Many South Vietnamese peasants supported the Vietcong because of its nationalist aims. Most significantly many wanted Vietnam to be restored as one united country rather than the divided state that had never existed after the French withdrawal
- many peasants regarded the USA as an imperialistic state that had occupied their land. The Vietcong was perceived as the defender of the peasantry against the threat from the USA. The tactic of search and destroy had significantly strengthened South Vietnamese support for the anti-US Vietcong
- the Vietcong showed itself to be a very effective military organisation. The Vietcong's guerrilla tactics were very successful and this success strengthened support amongst the South Vietnamese.

Good answers may conclude that although Communism was popular amongst many South Vietnamese, there were strong nationalist sentiments that drew people to support the Vietcong.

**Question 3**

**05** Explain why the Tet Offensive was regarded in the USA as a defeat. **[12 marks]**

*Target: AO1(a), AO1(b)*

**Levels Mark Scheme**

Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**

**L1:** Answers will contain either some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question or some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-2**

**L2:** Answers will demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they will provide some explanations backed by evidence that is limited in range and/or depth. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **3-6**

**L3:** Answers will demonstrate good understanding of the demands of the question providing relevant explanations backed by appropriately selected information, although this may not be full or comprehensive. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **7-9**

**L4:** Answers will be well-focused, identifying a range of specific explanations, backed by precise evidence and demonstrating good understanding of the connections and links between events/issues. Answers will, for the most part, be well-written and organised. **10-12**

**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.**

Answers should include a range of reasons as to why many in the USA regarded the Tet Offensive as a defeat.

Students might include some of the following factors:

- there was a huge anti-war media response to the US military's failure to prevent the offensive or to bring it under control quickly. A very influential political commentator, Walter Cronkite, commented that the war in Vietnam was unwinnable
- some political leaders e.g. Nixon, regarded Tet as a psychological, if not a military, defeat for the USA.

OR Students may refer to some of the following long-term factors:

- the Ho Chi Minh trail had not been destroyed. Resources were still able to enter South Vietnam and enable the Tet offensive to happen. This was a fundamental failure on the part of the US military
- for many US troops the offensive was the last step in the growing increase in demoralisation. The offensive further undermined the disillusionment many troops felt. The fact that such an offensive could happen further reduced the confidence that many troops had in their military and political leaders
- Tet proved to the Americans that the strategy of military escalation had failed. The fact that such an offensive could be mounted despite the presence of over 500,000 US troops showed that the basic strategy had failed

and some of the following short-term/immediate factors:

- there were immediate political consequences. President Johnson announced that he would not stand for re-election in the coming Presidential elections. It was clear that he regarded his policies in Vietnam as having failed and he had no answers on how to address this
- the US forces were completely unprepared. The lack of military intelligence underlines the failure of the US military to respond quickly to the attacks.

To reach higher levels, students will need to show the inter-relationship of the reasons given. For example the psychological defeat was emphasised by the US media and this then created a political reaction.

- Nixon introduced a policy of Vietnamisation soon after Tet. This illustrates his certainty that Tet was a failure for the USA.

**Question 3**

- 06** 'In the years 1969 to 1973 President Nixon's primary concern in South Vietnam was the withdrawal of US troops.'  
Explain why you agree or disagree with this view. **[24 marks]**

*Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)*

**Levels Mark Scheme**

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a limited part of the period of the question. Alternatively, there may be some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**
- L2:** Answers will show some understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain some explicit comment with relevant but limited support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-11**
- L3:** Answers will show a developed understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, but they will lack depth and/or balance. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **12-16**
- L4:** Answers will show explicit understanding of the demands of the question. They will develop a balanced argument backed by a good range of appropriately selected evidence and a good understanding of historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, show organisation and good skills of written communication. **17-21**
- L5:** Answers will be well-focused and closely argued. The arguments will be supported by precisely selected evidence leading to a relevant conclusion/judgement, incorporating well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate. Answers will, for the most part, be carefully organised and fluently written, using appropriate vocabulary. **22-24**

**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 should be able to make a judgement by balancing points which agree with the view that Nixon was primarily interested in withdrawing US troops from South Vietnam against those that suggest he had other, more significant concerns in terms of South Vietnam.

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Points/factors/evidence which agree(s) might include:

- the Tet Offensive had convinced Nixon that the war was unwinnable by simply using conventional military methods. Nixon was very clear that there was an absolute need to withdraw US ground forces as soon as possible and this was very much a key focus in the final stages of the Presidential election campaign that Nixon followed.
- Nixon was very conscious of the growing rejection of war amongst large sections of the US public. Protest was increasing and the media was a major force in influencing opinion. Nixon linked his own political survival to the importance of withdrawing US troops from South Vietnam
- troop withdrawal was a feasible option because it could strengthen Nixon's negotiating position. It was a way of showing the North Vietnamese that the USA was serious about finding a resolution to the war. It also offered Nixon and his advisers the opportunity to urge the North Vietnamese to not intrude across the border.

Points/factors/evidence which disagrees:

- the USA remained committed to a military presence in Vietnam. Nixon went on to order significant bombing attacks on North Vietnam
- the war was extended to Cambodia and Laos
- Nixon and Kissinger were committed to achieving victory through diplomacy and troop withdrawal was, therefore, a means to support this end rather than an end in itself
- US militarism in Vietnam had not succeeded. Vietnamisation was an alternative strategy rather than a simple abandonment
- there was an extensive programme of support for the South Vietnamese army.

Good answers may conclude that rather than serving as primary objective, US troop withdrawal was simply a component in a wider and larger strategy. Nixon wanted to strengthen his negotiating position and reinforce his own political survival. Candidates may also strengthen this view by considering the wider context, e.g. détente and the Cold War. Alternatively, candidates may argue that the Tet Offensive was a fundamental turning point and this motivated Nixon to prioritise troop withdrawal.

### **Converting marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

**UMS conversion calculator:** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)