



A-LEVEL HISTORY

Unit HIS3K: Triumph and Collapse: Russia and the USSR, 1941–1991

Mark scheme

June 2015

Version 1.0: Final Mark Scheme

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

Generic Introduction for A2

The A2 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 a good historian must be able to combine a range of skills and knowledge. 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 low Level 2 if some comment is included. Students who provide more explanation – (AO1(b), supported by the relevant selection of material, AO1(a)) – will perform at Level 2 or low Level 3 depending on their synoptic understanding and linkage of ideas. Students who provide explanation with evaluation, judgement and an awareness of historical interpretations will be addressing all 3 AOs (AO1(a); AO1(b); AO2(b)) and will have access to the higher mark ranges.

To obtain an award of Level 3 or higher, students will need to address the synoptic requirements of A Level. The open-ended essay questions set are, by nature, synoptic and encourage a range of argument. Differentiation between performance at Levels 3, 4, and 5 therefore depends on how a candidate's knowledge and understanding are combined and used to support an argument and the how that argument is communicated.

The mark scheme emphasises features which measure the extent to which a candidate has begun to *'think like a historian'* and show higher order skills. As indicated in the level criteria, students will show their historical understanding by:

- The way the requirements of the question are interpreted
- The quality of the arguments and the range/depth/type of material used in support
- The presentation of the answer (including the level of communication skills)
- The awareness and use of differing historical interpretations
- The degree of independent judgement and conceptual understanding shown

It is expected that A2 students will perform to the highest level possible for them and the requirements for Level 5, which demands the highest level of expertise have therefore been made deliberately challenging in order to identify the most able students.

CRITERIA FOR MARKING GCE HISTORY:**A2 EXAMINATION PAPERS****General Guidance for Examiners (to accompany Level Descriptors)**

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 candidate 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 candidate 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:

- Depth and precision in the use of factual information
- Depth and originality in the development of an argument
- The extent of the synoptic links
- 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)
- The way the answer is brought together in the conclusion

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A2 Unit 3: The State and the People: Change and Continuity

HIS3K: Triumph and Collapse: Russia and the USSR, 1941–1991

Question 1

- 01** 'Khrushchev's attempt to carry out de-Stalinisation in the USSR was the main reason for his overthrow in 1964.'
Assess the validity of this judgement. **[45 marks]**

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

Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** 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, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. 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 primarily descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain explicit comment but show limited relevant factual support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Historical debate may be described rather than used to illustrate an argument and any synoptic links will be undeveloped. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-15**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, which may, however, lack depth. There will be some synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included although these may not be highly developed. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will be clearly expressed and show reasonable organisation in the presentation of material. **16-25**
- L4:** Answers will show a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be mostly analytical in approach and will show some ability to link ideas/arguments and information and offer some judgement. Answers will show an understanding of different ways of interpreting material and may refer to historical debate. Answers will be well-organised and display good skills of written communication. **26-37**
- L5:** Answers will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide-ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing answer with a high level of synopticity. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and a mature historical understanding, informed

by a well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate, will be displayed. Answers will be well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**

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 will need to assess the extent to which Khrushchev's attempt to reform Stalinism was the main reason for his overthrow in 1964.

Students may refer to some of the following material in support of the view that Khrushchev's 'destalinisation' measures did lead to his overthrow:

- Party and administrative reforms – e.g. abolishing central ministries and devolving economic decision-making to regional bodies – although gaining support from some local Party apparatchiks who gained more power, upset many Party officials who subverted the reforms, so that power gradually reverted back to the centre. The lingering Party uneasiness felt about Khrushchev's reforms continued and resurfaced later
- Party bureaucrats disliked the reforms and wanted to protect their own positions
- Khrushchev's 1956 'Secret Speech' created an internal Party opposition both from those who felt that he had not gone far enough in his denunciation of Stalin, to those in contrast who would not accept his criticisms. Upsetting the latter group in particular left Khrushchev vulnerable should his own regime run into difficulties, which it did in the 1960s
- the Hungarian Revolution, though crushed, led to considerable unease about Khrushchev's reforms and their possible consequences at home and abroad
- there was unease in some quarters about the relaxation of Stalin's strict rule, as the arbitrary powers of the security apparatus were reined in, and there were measures, albeit limited, to ease restrictions on cultural life
- reforms led to the end of the monolithic one-man dictatorship of Stalin, and this opened the way for colleagues to act against Khrushchev when concerns about him grew.

Nevertheless, there are a number of other factors responsible for Khrushchev's overthrow:

- Khrushchev's power was weakened considerably by his perceived failures in foreign policy, notably China and Cuba. The events of the Cuban crisis led to feelings amongst the elite that Khrushchev was unreliable and also weak when it mattered
- Khrushchev's failed agricultural reforms undermined his reputation, especially since he was supposed to be an agricultural expert
- disquiet over Khrushchev's style, which combined a certain crudeness, bluster and extrovert streak, eventually contributed to leading colleagues deciding to sack him
- some of Khrushchev's other reforms in industry and the administration were not specifically anti-Stalinist measures, but nevertheless upset some of his colleagues.

Students may well conclude that the reforms, however limited they were, contributed to Khrushchev's downfall; but will also conclude that it was his failures in particular areas such as agriculture which also played a significant part. Students might also conclude that had Khrushchev had more policy successes in any areas, then this might have negated opposition to Khrushchev and kept him in power.

Question 2

- 02** 'Gorbachev's efforts to reform the USSR between 1985 and 1991 were too little and too late.'
Assess the validity of this view. **[45 marks]**

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

Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** 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, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. 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 primarily descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain explicit comment but show limited relevant factual support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Historical debate may be described rather than used to illustrate an argument and any synoptic links will be undeveloped. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-15**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, which may, however, lack depth. There will be some synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included although these may not be highly developed. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will be clearly expressed and show reasonable organisation in the presentation of material. **16-25**
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- L5:** Answers will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide-ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing answer with a high level of synopticity. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and a mature historical understanding, informed by a well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate, will be displayed. Answers will be well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**

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 may refer to some of the following material in support of the argument that Gorbachev's reforms failed to save the USSR because the reforms were not of sufficient substance and were not introduced quickly enough:

- apparently major initiatives like glasnost and perestroika had too limited an impact on transforming the USSR and aroused as much opposition as support for Gorbachev
- the essentials of Stalinism stayed in place – especially the centralised economy with all its faults – and therefore the serious economic decline continued
- Gorbachev's political reforms did not solve any problems. They created confusion and dissatisfaction. They were certainly too late to save the Union
- Gorbachev himself lacked conviction and clarity in his reforms and was too hesitant to take decisive actions in order to move the USSR forwards
- in particular, Gorbachev failed to move decisively to address growing separatism in the Republics, and when he did move, as in the Baltic Republics, it was too late to save the Union.

Nevertheless, there are a number of other factors to consider about the reasons for the break-up of the USSR:

- it might be argued that the problems of the USSR, especially in the economy, were already so great by 1985 that even a stronger Gorbachev could not have arrested them, even if the reforms had been more substantial and had been introduced immediately he came to power
- the Party's power was already declining before Gorbachev's political reforms
- the activities of radical reformers such as Yeltsin were important and probably decisive in the break-up of the Union
- the activities of hard-line Conservatives, especially in the coup, contributed to the terminal decline of the Union.

In conclusion, students might well argue that Gorbachev's reforms were too little and too late. However, they might also argue that if the prevailing issues were compounded by doubts about Gorbachev's own intentions in making changes, and the fact that Gorbachev went through various phases of reform and attempted reaction, then the break-up of the Union was already inevitable, especially as the centre in Moscow weakened whilst the ambitions of the Republics grew.

Question 3

- 03** 'Attempts to modernise the Soviet economy between 1945 and the death of Brezhnev in 1982 were unsuccessful.'
Assess the validity of this view. **[45 marks]**

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

Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** 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, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. 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 primarily descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain explicit comment but show limited relevant factual support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Historical debate may be described rather than used to illustrate an argument and any synoptic links will be undeveloped. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-15**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, which may, however, lack depth. There will be some synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included although these may not be highly developed. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will be clearly expressed and show reasonable organisation in the presentation of material. **16-25**
- L4:** Answers will show a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be mostly analytical in approach and will show some ability to link ideas/arguments and information and offer some judgement. Answers will show an understanding of different ways of interpreting material and may refer to historical debate. Answers will be well-organised and display good skills of written communication. **26-37**
- L5:** Answers will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide-ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing answer with a high level of synopticity. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and a mature historical understanding, informed by a well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate, will be displayed. Answers will be well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**

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 will need to explain the extent to which the USSR did or did not successfully improve the economy between 1941 and 1982.

Students may point out that the economy was totally focused on the massive war effort between 1941 and 1945, and although this produced many impressive successes, it was at the expense of some sectors, including agriculture, which were certainly not modernised.

Following the 1945 victory, students may refer to some of the following material in support of the view that the economy was modernised:

- there was some recovery in agriculture after the devastation of the Second World War, albeit limited
- there was a remarkable recovery in heavy industry post-war, under the Fourth Five-Year Plan, focusing on heavy industry/capital goods
- under Khrushchev, there was an increase in consumer goods, leading to some improvement in living standards; also improvements in favoured economic sectors such as defence and space.
- Khrushchev's regime attempted reforms in agriculture: notably the Virgin Lands policies, and increased investment in rural areas. There were also administrative changes aimed at benefiting agriculture.
- Brezhnev's regime continued a strong focus on heavy industry; it also pumped more resources into agriculture, and there was some evidence of increases in food production and corresponding living standards.

Nevertheless, there are a number of factors to support the view that the Soviet economy did not significantly modernise:

- agricultural production had never really recovered from the war: it was still plagued by low productivity and inefficiency, and received less preferential treatment than industry under Stalin. There were famines in some areas, and in some areas grain production was still below 1913 figures. There was no significant modernisation, mainly because the promised mechanisation of agriculture was never substantial
- agriculture was slow to recover even to pre-war levels
- agriculture was starved of efficient labour and remained for most of this period without adequate resources or incentives right up to 1982. It remained backward partly because it was still labour-intensive
- agriculture in many respects remained backward both economically and socially. Peasants were for a long time treated as second-class citizens and the rural economy lagged behind the industrial sector, despite the problems of the latter
- the traditional economic weaknesses such as the inflexibility of planning, obsolescence, poor productivity and so on, affected both agriculture and industry. This was not 'modernisation'
- the increase in industrial production after the war masked the deficiencies mentioned above, and the industrial sector was unbalanced, with some sectors receiving more attention and resources than others. The same priorities were in place, so there was no real attempt to modernise in the sense of adjusting to new conditions

- the fall in economic growth was evident even during the 1960s. It became even more significant under Brezhnev, when there was economic stagnation. Targets were not achieved, and growth probably went into overall decline
- attempts at economic reform, such as the Kosygin reforms, with more modern practices such as initiative and incentives, were never whole-hearted and were usually killed off at an early stage
- there were other negative aspects to the overall picture – notably a complete disregard for environmental issues whilst promoting industry, an imbalance between the economies of the various Republics, and a vast ‘black economy’, along with associated issues such as poor efficiency and a demotivated work force.

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