

A-LEVEL HISTORY

Unit HIS2L: The Impact of Stalin's Leadership in the USSR, 1924–1941
Mark scheme

1041
June 2014

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

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.

CRITERIA FOR MARKING GCE HISTORY:**AS 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 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 2014

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

HIS2L: The Impact of Stalin’s Leadership in the USSR, 1924–1941

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 the kulaks. **[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 A** asserts that the regime, whilst not particularly sympathetic to the kulaks, should not wreck their farms or have a ‘dekulakisation’ campaign, whereas **Source B** is quite explicit that the kulaks should be ‘smashed’ for good
- **Source A** advocates a policy of supporting all farmers, including individual (i.e. independent) farmers in the interests of increasing output – which would therefore include

kulaks - whereas **Source B** makes it clear that the State's policy is to rely on collective and state farms

- **Source A's** whole tone is one of conciliation and compromise in the interests of the economy, whereas the tone of **Source B** is essentially one of confrontation. Both sources show concern about increasing output, but **Source B** seems to be as much concerned about the ideological aspects as the economic ones, since it is not prepared to tolerate the kulaks, whatever their previous success as farmers.

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

- the sources come from a period in 1928–1929 when NEP was in a state of flux, caused principally by the decline in grain supplies from the countryside. What had been a theoretical debate about the future of the economy had become a matter of urgent attention, as the regime realised that drastic emergency measures were necessary to extract more grain from the peasants, if its recently agreed ambitious investment plans for industrial development were to have any chance of succeeding
- Stalin's coercive measures (the Urals-Siberian method), supported by Molotov, went much further than many Communists, including the author of Source A, had envisaged. There was a deliberate attack on kulaks, with peasants persuaded by the authorities to identify and denounce kulaks (e.g. by the promise of a share in grain requisitioned from richer peasants)
- as rumours spread of a return to War Communism, there was peasant resistance and the Stalin-Bukharin split: Bukharin, Tomsy and Rykov continued to push for a more moderate approach, based on incentives rather than force – the approach also adopted by the author of Source A. The dissent between the Stalinist and the Right's approach became public, and by the end of 1928 the Politburo and Central Committee came out in support of Stalin
- during 1929 the lead was taken by rural activists in 'exposing' kulaks and promoting collectivisation. This approach was given official approval at the same time as Bukharin was expelled from the Politburo. The rural revolution was well under way.

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

- **both sources** identify the kulaks as an 'issue' which must be addressed, even though Source A is much less aggressive in proposing solutions
- **both** clearly recognise that increasing output is a major priority
- **both** recognise that the kulaks have been successful economically
- **both** claim that the kulaks have exerted unhealthy influence over other peasants.

In making a judgement about the degree of difference, students will probably highlight the provenance of the sources, for example the fact that Source A appears to come from a 'moderate' Communist, albeit one with an official position, whereas Source B represents Stalin's hard-line attitude. **However, it is not necessary for students to deal with provenance to acquire full marks.**

Question 1

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

How successful was Stalin's policy of collectivisation in improving agriculture in the USSR in the years 1928 to 1941? **[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**

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** clearly indicates that there are already serious problems in the countryside in 1928, with references to social and political divisions as well as the fact that many farmers need assistance. This is fundamental to Stalin's approach to agriculture from 1928 onwards
- **Source B** also highlights similar issues, with the strong hint of violence to come or which is already happening in rural areas, with references to exploitation and clear reference to the fact that increasing the supply of produce from the countryside is a major concern for the regime. This approach is the cornerstone of Stalin's policy
- **Source C** implies that Stalin's victory in the 1928–1929 debates was a hollow one, since it talks of Stalin's approach being a 'gamble' which did not produce the anticipated surplus of produce: since the rural labour force was not motivated, livestock was slaughtered and living standards fell. The source refers to not enough food being produced for the population throughout the 1930s – hardly a 'success', whatever Stalin's personal motives.

From students' own knowledge:

Factors suggesting that Stalin did improve agriculture might include:

- Stalin's policies ensured that the Party did establish a firm control over the countryside once the brutal Collectivisation process was over in the early 1930s, and the regime was able to direct supplies of grain to the towns and for export
- there were some advances in farming, e.g. the provision of tractors, and rural areas made some advances, e.g. in the provision of educational and medical services
- there was something of a recovery by the mid-1930s, after the Great Famine, although outcomes were still low, e.g. the 1935 harvest was below the 1930 figure and output from tsarist times, and did not recover to the 1928 level until after the 1950s; similarly with livestock figures.

Factors suggesting that Stalin did not ensure improved agriculture might include:

- mechanisation was very partial and farming was still backwards. The concessions of private plots were reduced in the late 1930s. The price for exported Russian grain fell. Agriculture remained the Achilles heel of the economy. The concessions to peasants of private plots were reduced in the late 1930s. The price for exported Russian grain fell
- problems in the countryside were exacerbated by the exodus of farm workers to the industrial towns. Peasants no longer openly rebelled, but may not have been reconciled to the regime, and certainly put more effort into their private plots than into the collective farms.

Good answers are likely to conclude that the 1930s were a difficult time for Soviet agriculture. The regime did secure control over the countryside, did manage to feed the towns and the Red Army, and did secure labour for the industrial revolution – but in strictly economic terms (and the human cost), agriculture was backward and inefficient.

Question 2

- 03** Explain why there was uncertainty in 1924 about the succession to Lenin as leader. **[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 there was uncertainty about the succession in 1924.

Students might include some of the following factors:

- there was general uncertainty about the leadership, mainly because Lenin had not made a clear decision about a successor and there was no official 'post' or mechanism in place for electing a leader
- it was difficult for any one person to put themselves forward, since they might be accused of 'factionalism' or over-ambition
- Lenin's death was a shock, difficult for many Russians to take in
- potential contenders for the leadership all had flaws, and none had been unanimously endorsed by Lenin: Trotsky had personal flaws and was distrusted by several colleagues; Stalin, although powerful already, was not seen as an obvious choice; Bukharin, Zinoviev

and Zinoviev did not have universal support from colleagues and had their own flaws or limitations as potential leaders.

To reach higher levels, students will need to show the inter-relationship of the reasons given. For example, to what extent were political and personal factors linked?

Question 2

- 04** 'Lack of unity amongst his rivals ensured Stalin's success in gaining the leadership of the USSR by 1929.'
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 either agree with the view that lack of unity amongst Stalin's rivals ensured his success in gaining the leadership, or disagree by emphasising other factors responsible for Stalin's rise to power.

Points which agree(s) that lack of unity amongst Stalin's rivals ensured his success in gaining the leadership might include:

- the Left was too bound up with its own internal rivalries – especially the changing alliances of Kamenev and Zinoviev, first with Stalin and then with Trotsky – to pay enough attention to Stalin's influence
- there was a struggle for influence, based partly on personality and partly on differences in policy, between Left and Right, which to some extent played into Stalin's hands, because he did not appear to be allied to one particular faction, and frequently appeared as a man from the moderate 'centre'
- frequently, especially early on, the process of finding a leader seemed to be as much about stopping other people reaching the top than projecting one's own credentials. There were disagreements about the objective, e.g. several Party members were fearful of a dictator emerging and wanted to keep collective leadership – which was one of the reasons why Trotsky was distrusted
- lack of unity was exacerbated by strong differences in opinion about NEP and the way ahead to socialism

Points which disagree that lack of unity amongst Stalin's rivals was the main reason for Stalin acquiring the leadership might include:

- there was a general underestimation of Stalin, e.g. Trotsky largely dismissed Stalin as a mediocrity, and certainly underestimated the potential threat he opposed in the power struggle after Lenin's death, at least until it was too late. Trotsky had many weaknesses/flaws as a potential leader
- Zinoviev and Kamenev also underestimated Stalin, and like a number of the Bolshevik Old Guard, regarded themselves as intellectuals, looking down on the supposedly inferior Stalin; and whilst Zinoviev may have had ambitions for the leadership, Kamenev probably did not
- the Left's underestimation of Stalin was also evident in the way they agreed not to publish Lenin's Testament, even though that would probably have finished Stalin politically had it been carried out. The Left, like others, appeared not to notice the emerging strength of Stalin, being a member as he was of all the key Party bodies and controlling the Party machine through the post of General Secretary – the Left did not cultivate a Party base anything like as effective as Stalin's
- several prominent Bolsheviks such as Molotov, Mikoyan, Voroshilov, Malenkov, Ordzhonikidze and Dzierzynski, who all attached themselves to Stalin in the 1920s, were not notable members of either Left or Right groups, since they attached themselves to Stalin not out of ideology but because they recognised him as a rising star and therefore the man to support, in order to further their own careers. This clearly helped Stalin
- Stalin's outmanoeuvring of the Left can also be explained by several factors, such as Stalin's personal strengths, his powerful position in the Party machine, his manipulation of the Right, and sheer luck
- Stalin's policy of Socialism in One Country was attractive to many
- generally, colleagues simply did not appear to understand Stalin's cunning, tactical skill and ruthlessness until it was too late.

Good answers may conclude that the outcome of the power struggle was a combination of several factors, one of which almost certainly was disunity amongst Stalin's rivals. However, there were also other factors which determined the outcome of the leadership struggle, including Stalin's own skills and activities in exploiting opportunities, and it is open to informed debate as to what was the relative importance of all the relevant factors.

Question 3

05 Explain why Stalin purged many leading Communists in the years 1936 to 1938.

[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 Stalin purged leading Communists between 1936 and 1938.

Students might include some of the following factors:

- Stalin had shown increasing signs of paranoia about his personal position, the stability of the leadership and the Party's position since the early 1930s and the Kirov affair
- Stalin was vindictive towards influential Communists who had been both colleagues and rivals in the leadership struggles of the 1920s
- Stalin was concerned about foreign influences which might threaten Soviet security (e.g. possible links between the Red Army leadership and its German equivalents, and the fact that generals like Tukachevsky were intelligent and had their own hero status). Stalin was convinced that spies and traitors were at work, undermining the USSR and his own position as leader

- to some extent the purges gained their own momentum as the NKVD sought to meet its targets and an atmosphere of fear and suspicion spread
- events such as the Show Trials were part of a propaganda exercise to demonstrate why the regime had to be vigilant and to justify the enormous power vested in Stalin as the only leader who could be trusted to lead the USSR securely and complete the massive programme of industrialisation, building defence and moving inexorably onwards to socialism.

To reach higher levels, students will need to show the inter-relationship of the reasons given. For example, Stalin's own personal paranoia was mingled with genuine concerns about the USSR's strength and security – so personal and political motives were mixed – and added to this were economic concerns about the progress of the industrial and agricultural revolutions taking place. Alternatively, students might prioritise the reasons.

Question 3

- 06** 'Stalin's Great Terror ensured that the USSR was well prepared for war in 1941.'
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.

Evidence which agree(s) with the assertion that the Terror ensured that the USSR was well prepared for war in 1941 might include:

- in 1928 the regime could not be certain of stable food supplies reaching the towns from the countryside; by 1941 Collectivisation had ensured that the industrial towns and the army were fed reasonably regularly, and this meant a certain degree of security, but this had come about partly because of the Terror unleashed against the peasantry in the early 1930s and draconian discipline imposed throughout society
- independently-minded military leaders had been purged in 1937 and the armed services were very much under Stalin's control by 1941
- Years of Terror had stifled potential opposition, Stalin had eliminated other influential colleagues who might have been rivals and the regime entered the war with a united leadership
- the Terror had instilled a 'siege mentality' in the USSR which psychologically prepared the population for the harsh times ahead
- the unity imposed by the Terror meant that the regime, and Stalin in particular, could determine and implement policies without any dissenting voices or obstructionism.

Evidence which disagrees with the assertion that the Terror prepared the USSR well for war might include:

- many of the best and most successful farmers had been purged during Collectivisation, causing the death of millions, and the most productive workers had moved to cities, where their skills were of less value to the economy. In this sense the Terror had a negative economic effect; also many peasants appear to have been disillusioned, for example clearly putting more effort into working their small private plots than on the Collectives and state farms. Also it is not clear that the Terror had a positive impact on industrial productivity
- the purge of the armed forces eliminated many of the best military brains and leaders – and those that survived were too inhibited to exercise any independence or initiative, as seen in the early months of the war
- although many purged soldiers were rehabilitated and the army was considerably increased in size by 1941, there were doubts about its effectiveness, graphically illustrated during the Russo-Finnish war
- Stalin himself showed flawed leadership e.g. his absolute power was reinforced by the Terror, but he used it to misjudge Hitler, and the alliance with Germany 1939-41 was much more economically and militarily advantageous to Germany than to the USSR.
- there is a debate as to whether a population subject to over-optimistic, strident propaganda and all the paraphernalia of a totalitarian state was well prepared for the shock of invasion in 1941
- other actions to strengthen the USSR's preparation for war, for example the emphasis on building up defence in the Third Five-Year Plan from 1938, could have been achieved without the use of Terror.

Good answers are likely to conclude that the Terror had both positive and negative effects on the Soviet ability to deal with war in 1941, and the balance of the various factors is very open to debate.

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