



AS HISTORY 7041/2N

Revolution and dictatorship: Russia, 1917–1953

Component 2N The Russian Revolution and the Rise of Stalin, 1917–1929

Mark scheme

June 2025

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 Examiner.

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.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level, you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A

- 0 1** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two sources is more valuable in explaining why the White armies were defeated in the Russian Civil War?

[25 marks]*Target: AO2*

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

Generic Mark Scheme

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

Indicative content

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

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

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

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

Provenance and tone

- the source comes from a peasant who lived through the occupation of both the White and Red Army. It is valuable because he recounts his first-hand experiences at the time of the war
- the source is limited insofar as the peasant is speaking to Trotsky, whom he presumably wished to flatter or was intimidated by, and his words are reported by Trotsky who had a vested interest in damning the Whites and making the Red Army look good
- the tone is obsequious – ‘we breathed freely and blessed the Red Army’ and this would suggest the comments may not be entirely trustworthy.

Content and argument

- the peasant describes the Cossack Whites as greedy and unscrupulous. They appear to have been deliberately harsh on the peasants, not only taking their goods but also beating and even shooting at them. Peasant hostility can be corroborated by detail on the Whites’ association with traditional right-wing policies and the importance, to the peasants, of their newly-acquired land
- the peasant’s praise for the Red Army can be corroborated by details of the attempts to imbue discipline into the Red Army and the power of their ideological commitments
- the value of the source could be questioned as it provides an overly positive impression of the relationship between the Red Army and the peasants. Grain requisitioning was carried out by the Red Army as well as the Whites during the war leading to the formation of ‘Green’ peasant forces, which aimed to keep both sides out of rural areas.

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

Provenance and tone

- written by Wrangel to Denikin, the two principal White Army commanders in the south, this provides first-hand detail on the state of the White Army at the end of 1919 after a year of war
- the letter may be influenced by Wrangel's disappointment, that the White forces under Denikin had been driven back from Moscow in the summer of 1919. Significantly, he places the blame on the soldiers and their officers, not on the leadership or strategy of the White generals.
- the tone is reasonably measured although Wrangel rails against 'gambling, immorality and wild behaviour'. This suggests a limited perspective from an aristocratic army general assuming the moral high ground, which might make it less believable as a fully-rounded explanation of White deficiencies.

Content and argument

- the source suggests that continual advance reduced effectiveness and brought disorganisation. This can be corroborated by reference to Denikin's long and exhausting campaign (waged with limited support from other White contingents) and the Whites' weakness in civil administration; the Bolsheviks had the advantage of controlling a more compact central area
- the corruption of army units and their officers may be corroborated with reference to other behaviours and atrocities. Demoralisation would have weakened the forces' reserves and account for Denikin's retreat towards the Crimea where Wrangel was stationed.
- in explaining the White defeat, the source offers several reasons – strategic, organisational and military. Its main complaint, however, is of troop behaviour; it ignores any inadequacies of leadership which detracts from its value.

In arriving at a judgement as to which source might be of greater value, students might argue that Source A has greater worth because it provides a more balanced picture of the White's failure to win over the (large) peasant population, as against the Red's success, especially hinting at the greater discipline within the Red forces. However, Source A is clearly influenced by Trotsky's propagandist intentions, which is not an issue with Source B. The letter by Wrangel is very revealing of the breakdown of discipline in the White army which significantly undermined their war effort.

Section B

- 0 2** 'Nicholas II's abdication was due to his government's failure to deal with the strikes and demonstrations in Petrograd in February/March 1917.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

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

Generic Mark Scheme

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

Indicative content

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

Arguments supporting the view that Nicholas II's abdication was due to his government's failure to deal with the strikes and demonstrations in Petrograd in February/March 1917 might include:

- strikes and demonstrations, (Jan/Feb, especially on International Women's Day) made the Tsar's government unworkable; from protests over food shortages, popular sympathies were increasingly swayed by political agitators
- the government was slow to respond to the emerging crisis, assuming that this was just another example of popular discontent that would blow over once the people had vented their frustrations with the food supply and general economic situation
- the Duma and soviets of workers called for abdication in response to the government's ineptitude: the Duma refused to disband and offered an alternative body to run the country (12-man provisional committee); Soviets joined to form Petrograd Soviet – with Order No 1 (army officers to be elected by their men); both developments confirmed the Tsar's loss of authority
- the mutiny of the military (whom the Tsar ordered to crush the demonstrations) showed that the Tsar's position was untenable; rebellious soldiers and workers were able to divert his returning train; members of the rebellious Duma were easily able to demand his abdication having received assurances from the Army generals that the military would recognise a new civilian government.

Arguments challenging the view that Nicholas II's abdication was due to his government's failure to deal with the strikes and demonstrations in Petrograd in February/March 1917 might include:

- Russia had suffered from the effects of pre-war political and economic problems and industrialisation had led to poor living and working conditions; radical opposition had called for revolution long before Feb/March 1917; to some extent the war merely postponed this event
- Nicholas II's position was severely weakened by the pressures of war; Russia's poor military performance brought huge loss of life; initial patriotism had given way to despair and war-weariness; Nicholas lost respect, especially after his decision to take personal command of the Army in 1915
- The economic impact of the war significantly increased popular discontent and pressure on the regime from 1914 onwards. Food shortages, inflation and unemployment had already caused opposition to grow prior to the strikes and demonstrations of 1917
- Nicholas himself was indecisive and unable to provide a firm lead; the Tsar had refused to listen to critics and had relied on right-wing conservative government; he had left Tsarina Alexandra in charge in Petrograd when he left for the war front, leading to growing unpopularity of the regime due to Rasputin's destabilising influence

Whilst the events of February/March 1917 in Petrograd were the immediate cause of the Tsar's abdication, it is possible to argue that they were a mere trigger and that other pre-existing conditions were the real reason why the Tsar was forced to abdicate. Alternatively, students may argue that had the government taken more decisive action in response to the demonstrations, they may not have increased in significance to the point where abdication became inevitable. Reward any supported view, provided the case is well-argued and balanced.

0 3 'The use of propaganda was crucial for Stalin's rise to power in the years 1924 to 1929.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

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

Generic Mark Scheme

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

Indicative content

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

Arguments supporting the view that the use of propaganda was crucial for Stalin's rise to power in the years 1924 to 1929 might include:

- Stalin used propaganda to position himself as Lenin's heir and chief interpreter of Lenin's wishes; he met challenges by reference to Lenin's words and used posters to reinforce the image of himself continuing Lenin's legacy; Lenin's mummified corpse was put on public display, emphasising god-like qualities that were also reflected in Stalin
- Stalin used slogans and propaganda around the idea of 'Socialism in One Country' to suggest his superior ideological position to his rivals. This slogan had the added advantage of ideological flexibility which enabled Stalin to shift from a pro- to anti-NEP position, whilst appearing to pursue a consistent line.
- Stalin used the war scare of 1927 to create propaganda to support his decision to switch from supporting the NEP to a policy of rapid industrialisation and collectivisation. This 'Great Turn' enabled him to defeat the Right Opposition in 1928/29.
- slogans and images were used throughout the 1920s to support his campaigns, eg collectivisation (with images of happy farmers), Five year plans (images of powerful and purposeful workers); he was also portrayed as the great helmsman taking the Russian people 'Forward to socialism'

Arguments challenging the view that the use of propaganda was crucial for Stalin's rise to power in the years 1924 to 1929 might include:

- Stalin's rise to power was dependent on his skill in out-manoeuvring his rivals in the leadership struggle; his rise was not the result of propaganda but his political scheming which left him in an unchallenged position, for example using Kamenev and Zinoviev to destroy Trotsky and then turning on them in an alliance with Bukharin
- Stalin's rise to power was dependent on his position as Party Secretary and his ability to put supporters in key positions and manipulate decision-making; he won crucial votes at Party Congresses, especially on issues around the NEP, due to his strong support base in the Party
- Stalin used debates over economic policy to his advantage. He initially supported the NEP in alliance with Bukharin and then changed his policy to undermine the Right. The success of this manoeuvring was based more on Stalin's reading of the political landscape rather than propaganda
- Stalin's rise was also aided by the divisions and weaknesses of his opponents. For example, Kamenev and Zinoviev helped Stalin to eliminate Trotsky before allying with the Trotsky in the United Opposition, which made them appear opportunist and inconsistent. In addition, Trotsky made several mistakes undermining his own chances of success.

Students may conclude that Stalin was an effective propagandist, immediately understanding the power of the emerging 'cult of Lenin', and how propaganda was crucial in justifying his shifts in economic policy. However, students may argue that Stalin's rise to power largely took place in the corridors of power rather than in the more public forum influenced by propaganda. In this context, it was Stalin's unrivalled skills of political manoeuvring that proved to be the crucial factor in his rise to power.