



AS HISTORY 7041/2Q

The American Dream: reality and illusion, 1945–1980

Component 2Q Prosperity, inequality and Superpower status, 1945–1963

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



2 5 6 A 7 0 4 1 / 2 Q / M S

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.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk)

Copyright information

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Copyright © 2025 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

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 Eisenhower's attitude to military conflict?

[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 extract is from a private letter to a friend, meaning Eisenhower is likely to be honest about his concerns
- the date of the source is April 1956 during a period of reduced tensions with the USSR prior to the suppression of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and following Khrushchev's Secret Speech denouncing Stalin in February 1956
- Eisenhower's tone is resigned and cautionary. He is still positive about the ability of the US to thrive but is concerned about the likelihood that any future war will be world ending.

Content and argument

- Eisenhower argues that 'We are rapidly getting to the point that no war can be won' and that 'both sides know that destruction will be both reciprocal and complete'. This reflects the speed of the nuclear arms race which had resulted in both the US and the USSR successfully testing hydrogen bombs by 1955
- Eisenhower is hopeful that the opposing superpowers will be able 'to meet at the conference table' and that disputes would be solved diplomatically; this is reflected in his actions in bringing the Korean War to an end and his willingness to meet with Khrushchev later in the Presidency
- Eisenhower argues that he does not 'deny the need for strength' but that strength must be broader than just armed forces 'That strength must be spiritual, economic and military'. This is supported by his efforts to strengthen NATO, the creation of SEATO and his use of the CIA to undermine communist governments as well as the overwhelming power of the US economy
- in his 1961 Farewell Address to the American people Eisenhower warned of the dangers of the 'Military Industrial Complex' suggesting that he was being honest in his concerns about reliance on conventional armed forces.

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

Provenance and tone

- the source is from a public speech to Congress, meaning that the desired audience is not just simply the US legislature but also the American people and the Soviet leadership alongside communist parties worldwide
- the speech was given in 1957, a year after the Suez Crisis as well as the Hungarian uprising which had increased tensions between the superpowers. The speech later became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine
- the tone is committed and strong, perhaps even threatening in the direct commitment to employ US troops in the support of governments in the Middle East and Eisenhower is specific in directing the threat against 'armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism' going further than Truman did in the Truman Doctrine.

Content and argument

- the Eisenhower Doctrine was proclaimed in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis where Eisenhower had failed to support French and British imperialism. As a result, Egypt enjoyed greater independence and there was a risk of her turning to the Soviet Union. Eisenhower needed to show strength to counter this possibility and replace the British and French imperial presence with a US sphere of influence in the Middle East
- Eisenhower makes a point of stressing US support for 'national independence' and 'political independence' but this is a smokescreen to cover over the increasing dependence of the US on oil imports from the Middle East as US sources ran down. Oil was vital to the US economy so it is possible that Eisenhower is being genuine in his pronounced willingness to use force to keep Soviet influence out of the Middle East
- the formation of CENTO in 1955 had attempted to provide a NATO equivalent in the Middle East which would keep the Soviets at bay. The USA did not join for fear of upsetting the Israeli-lobby in the US so the Eisenhower doctrine was a way of providing a NATO style assurance without the US joining CENTO, as a result it suggests Eisenhower was serious about being willing to engage in conflict with the USSR
- despite the Truman Doctrine, Eisenhower had not intervened in Hungary in 1956 which suggests that he was not willing to become involved in a conflict with the USSR.

In arriving at a judgement as to which source might be of greater value, students might conclude that Source A is more valuable explain Eisenhower's attitude as it highlights his hopes for summitry to avoid conflict. However, students may argue that Source B is more valuable as it is a public commitment by Eisenhower that the US was willing to intervene militarily against the Soviet Union and use force against Communist expansion, if needed.

Section B

- 0 2** 'The USA was a deeply divided country in the five years following the end of the Second World War.'

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 USA was a deeply divided country in the five years following the end of the Second World War might include:

- Truman's victory over Dewey in the 1948 Presidential election was so close that the 'Chicago Daily Tribune' called the election for Dewey, this suggests that political division was significant
- violence against returning African-American servicemen prompted Truman to commission 'The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights' suggesting racial differences were still significant
- tensions over the growth of communist influence were building following Stalin's actions in Eastern Europe, eventually these exploded into division following McCarthy's speech in Wheeling, Virginia in February 1950
- five million women entered the US workforce between 1940 and 1945 but at the end of the war most were forced out from their jobs to accommodate the returning male soldiers. This led to resentment that later emerged in the women's rights movement.

Arguments challenging the view that the USA was a deeply divided country in the five years following the end of the Second World War might include:

- the 1944 GI Bill allowed millions to join the middle class through loans for housing and college tuition. By 1947, half of all college admissions were Second World War veterans
- Stalin's actions in Eastern Europe and the communist revolution in China united the USA in opposition to Communism which later manifested itself as McCarthyism. The outbreak of the Korean War was similarly unifying
- unemployment had dropped dramatically during the war, reaching a low of 1.2% in 1944, and stayed low following the war suggesting that jobs were widely available
- US society became increasingly homogenized in the years following the war; people bought the same consumer goods across the country and lived in similar suburban homes such as the Levittown suburbs which began construction in 1947.

Students might conclude that after the Second World War there was unity when it came to dealing with Communism, both in and out of America, and in creating a thriving economy based on capitalist ideals. However, students may also argue that there were continuing racial and gender differences in the US, as well as political differences over Truman.

- 0 3** 'It was pressure from Martin Luther King that forced President Kennedy to take action concerning Civil Rights.'

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 it was pressure from Martin Luther King that forced President Kennedy to take action concerning Civil Rights might include:

- the Birmingham campaign pushed Kennedy to act, following the coverage of the events in Birmingham demonstrations broke out across the country leading to 758 demonstrations in April and May 1963. Kennedy could not ignore these
- the sheer numbers involved in the August 1963 March on Washington coupled with the television coverage and the resonance of King's 'I have a dream speech'
- King formed a close relationship with Kennedy in the period from 1960 to 1963. Kennedy's influence in getting King released after he had been arrested during a protest in Atlanta during the 1960 election campaign brought the two together and they met several times whilst King never missed the opportunity to appeal to the President in speeches
- King's global profile put pressure on Kennedy because of the need for the US to be seen as a bastion of freedom in the Cold War propaganda conflict.

Arguments challenging the view that it was pressure from Martin Luther King that forced President Kennedy to take action concerning Civil Rights might include:

- Kennedy had campaigned in 1960 on a civil rights platform, promising for example to wipe out segregation in housing with the stroke of a pen. At this point the SCLC was at a low point in their level of influence yet 70% of African-Americans still voted for Kennedy
- it was the sit-ins of 1960 that galvanised the movement prior to Kennedy's election and his efforts to act on civil rights were driven by the desire to avoid the adverse publicity generated by high profile student led campaigns
- the Freedom Rides of 1961, organised by CORE rather than King, forced Kennedy to arrange for Federal intervention and ban segregation on interstate buses
- television footage of the events in Birmingham, Greensboro and the Freedom Rides was widely shown in communist countries and used to accuse the US of hypocrisy in their criticism of the Soviet Union. It was the embarrassment at this challenge to US claims of global moral authority that forced Kennedy's hand.

Students might conclude that King and the SCLC were instrumental in forcing Kennedy to take action concerning Civil Rights but that other factors and groups also provided leverage, including the SNCC, CORE, James Meredith, Bobby Kennedy and the propaganda efforts of the USSR.