



A-level HISTORY 7042/2K

Component 2K International Relations and Global Conflict, c1890–1941

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.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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Supporting Marking Guidance

A separate Supporting Marking Guidance document has been created for use in this series and any future series.

It has been written by the senior examining team. It applies to all A-level History options. The purpose of the guidance is to clarify key aspects of the mark scheme and further ensure consistency of approach across all options. The guidance does not reflect a change in the standard applied, but clarification and amplification of the standard. We hope that the guidance document will aid you in your understanding of how the standard should be applied and deepen your understanding of how the key aspects of the mark scheme work. The Supporting Marking Guidance should always be used in conjunction with the mark scheme, and any relevant examiner standardising and teacher training material.

Examiners can find the Supporting Marking Guidance on the associate extranet.

Teachers can find the Supporting Marking Guidance alongside the current mark scheme on Centre Services on results day. It will also be published with any future assessment materials on the public website.

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, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the July Crisis in 1914.

[30 marks]*Target: AO2*

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

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25–30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19–24**
- L3:** Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13–18**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7–12**
- L1:** The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1–6**
- 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.

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

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- this report of the views of the Kaiser comes from the Austrian ambassador to Germany, who was right in the thick of discussions trying to seek German support following the assassination of the Archduke. However, this might also limit the source as it is a partisan account
- the fact that it is a diary entry suggests that he is expressing his interpretations of the Kaiser's views about how angry the Austrians were but also including his fears about the alliance systems being invoked and war spreading to the Balkans
- coming a few days after the assassination and before the declaration of war on Serbia, the source offers a fresh and immediate reaction to the event, and the feelings of both Austria and Germany. There is a slight naivety about the Russians thinking twice as they would have been expected to come to the aid of their Slavic neighbours
- the tone is serious but hopeful and satisfactory that the Kaiser had pledged support for the Austrians to attack Serbia.

Content and argument

- the source is valuable for studying the July Crisis as it clearly pinpoints the motivations behind the Austrian attack on Serbia and the fact they had the support of Germany to do so
- the source highlights how Austria may rely on full German support which is valuable as it was on 5 July when the Germans symbolically offered the blank cheque to Austria
- the reference made to the possible serious European complications demonstrates that there was an understanding that any response from Austria-Hungary could lead to a full-blown European war. This is also supported by the fact that Austria issued a list of demands first to Serbia rather than declaring war
- the suggestion that the Kaiser supported a rapid and serious response from Austria-Hungary towards Serbia is of value as within 4 weeks, Germany had declared war
- the fact the Kaiser suggested to the ambassador that he had been preparing for years is valuable as it demonstrates Germany's willingness to support the Austrians with all that they needed.

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

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- the source is valuable as it comes from Kaiser Wilhelm who was central to communications with the Russians on issues of Austria and Serbia as his cousin Nicholas II was the Tsar of Russia. This was one of a series of urgent telegrams sent between the two leaders
- the fact that it is a telegram to his cousin, suggests that he is expressing his personal and urgent views in light of the rapidly changing situation. There are suggestions that Wilhelm (privately) thought that war was highly likely so perhaps he is absolving himself of blame here
- coming a day after the negotiations between Austria and Russia had broken down, and on the same day that Austria declared war on Serbia; clearly Wilhelm is trying to stop Nicholas II taking Russia into war with the Austrians
- the tone is optimistic as Wilhelm attempts to persuade Nicholas not to go to war even though Wilhelm had ultimately given Austria the blank cheque (and therefore could be blamed for Austria's harsh demands on Serbia).

Content and argument

- the source is valuable as it highlights the reasons for the crisis itself: it outlines the 'dastardly murder' referring to the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand
- the source is valuable for studying the July Crisis as it clearly demonstrates the consequences of Austrian aggression on Serbia. The Russians were shocked at the harsh terms of the ultimatum and the public were outraged at the treatment of fellow Slavic peoples
- the source is slightly limited as the Kaiser suggests that politics should play no part as he argued it was a moral issue despite the fact he had already guaranteed Austria by way of the blank cheque. Similarly, Russian influence in the Balkans was at stake, whereas Wilhelm had much less to lose unless Russia mobilised, which limits the value of the source
- the reference in the final lines to helping smooth over difficulties can also be challenged as German ambassadors in Russia were threatening their Russian counterparts that any mobilisation would be seen as an act of aggression and a war would be inevitable.

Source C: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- the source is valuable as it comes from a respected British newspaper which had correspondents keeping anxious British people up to date with the changing situation around Europe to inform them of the developments
- the source is valuable as it was written shortly after Austria declared war on Serbia, so the article provides the immediate reaction of a number of nations to the rising aggression in July 1914
- a limitation might be that the views are influenced by the liberal values of the 'Manchester Guardian'
- the tone is informative to the British public but also opinionated towards the end and makes clear its opposition to war.

Content and argument

- the source might be considered valuable as it highlights how the July Crisis developed with the declaration of war on Serbia and the actions of Austria-Hungary and that there was no need for Britain to be involved
- the 'Manchester Guardian's' suggestion that the Royal Navy had returned to home waters is valuable for showing the British Government's reaction to the July Crisis and that it was preparing for the July Crisis to spill over into a European war
- the source's suggestion that Russia would be to blame is valuable for demonstrating the British reaction to the July Crisis. Behind the scenes, Germany had sent Austria instructions to mobilise against Russia as well as Serbia. Yet, according to this newspaper, Russia would be at fault for the increase in tensions because of the July Crisis
- the reference to Russia's mobilisation can be supported by the fact Nicholas II had begun to mobilise an army, but the source could be slightly challenged as Nicholas' intention was for this action to serve as a deterrent to other nations.

Section B

0 2 'The Bosnian Crisis of 1908/09 was caused by the actions of Austria-Hungary.'

Assess the validity of 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 very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It 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 relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** 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, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is 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 Bosnian Crisis of 1908/09 was caused by the actions of Austria-Hungary might include:

- Austria-Hungary's actions caused the crisis because Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 was seen as a direct challenge to Russian influence in the Balkans
- Austria-Hungary rejected any external interference when dealing with Bosnia, demonstrating that it was their bold actions that caused the crisis
- Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was driven by its own domestic interests and the desire to consolidate its authority over the territory
- Austria-Hungary's sudden announcement of the annexation of Bosnia was perceived as a 'manipulation' of the secret meeting at Buchlau with Izvolsky by the Russians and French.

Arguments challenging the view that the Bosnian Crisis of 1908/09 was caused by the actions of Austria Hungary might include:

- the crisis was enabled by the emergence of the Young Turk movement in the Ottoman Empire. The Young Turks, aiming to modernise and centralise the empire, sought to challenge Austrian and Russian influence in the Balkans, leading to increased tensions in the region
- the spread of Pan Slavism caused the crisis as Russia sought to maintain its influence as the protector of Slavic nations, shown by continuously supporting Serbia's demands for the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina
- the declining influence of the Ottoman Empire was the cause of the Bosnian Crisis due to the shifting balance of power among European powers. Austria was worried about the spread of Russian influence in the area
- the Serbian Coup in 1903 had placed a pro-Russian government in Serbia, which worried the Austrians that Bosnia would go a similar way.

Overall, students may suggest that as the major power in the region, Austria-Hungary caused the crisis as their determination to take on Russia continued to raise tensions. Alternatively, some students may argue that other factors, such as Russia's determination to protect the Slavic peoples, caused the crisis and the shifting balance of power was more at fault than the actions of Austria. Students may also refer to the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of Pan Slavism and the Young Turk movement.

- 0 3** 'In the years 1925 to 1933, international co-operation to maintain the 'Spirit of Locarno' achieved significant successes.'

Assess the validity of 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 very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It 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 relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** 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, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is 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 in the years 1925 to 1933, international co-operation to maintain the ‘Spirit of Locarno’ achieved significant successes might include:

- the Locarno conferences were successful in establishing the ‘Spirit of Locarno’ as there was much co-operation between European nations including Britain, France and Germany
- the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, signed by 62 nations including major powers like the United States, France, and Britain, exemplified international co-operation to maintain the ‘Spirit of Locarno’ during this period. The pact renounced war as an instrument of national policy, showcasing a collective commitment to peaceful resolution of conflicts
- the Young Plan of 1929 demonstrated that despite an isolationist policy, the USA was willing to co-operate alongside Britain and France to maintain the ‘Spirit of Locarno’ by reducing Germany’s payment schedule
- the London Naval Conference of 1930 is a successful example of international co-operation between the Great Powers to maintain the ‘Spirit of Locarno’. This conference resulted in an agreement on naval disarmament, indicating successful collaboration on a specific issue.

Arguments challenging the view that in the years 1925 to 1933, international co-operation to maintain the ‘Spirit of Locarno’ achieved significant successes might include:

- the Great Depression significantly hindered international co-operation to maintain the ‘Spirit of Locarno’. The economic crisis led to increased protectionist measures and trade barriers, exacerbating tensions and hindering collaborative efforts. For example, the implementation of tariffs, such as the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act in the United States, contributed to the breakdown of global trade and undermined cooperative efforts
- the Hoover Moratorium of 1931, in which the United States temporarily suspended German reparation payments, highlighted the lack of international co-operation to maintain the ‘Spirit of Locarno’. This unilateral action by the US caused resentment among other powers, weakened the global financial system, and hampered collaborative solutions to address the economic crisis
- the failure of the Lausanne Conference of 1932 which aimed to address war debts and reparations, demonstrates a failure to engage in co-operative discussions and keep up the ‘Spirit of Locarno’
- the London Conference of 1933 showcased the lack of international co-operation among the Great Powers and therefore, a failure in maintaining the ‘Spirit of Locarno’. The conference aimed to address global economic issues but failed to produce meaningful agreements due to conflicting national interests and the inability to overcome protectionist measures resulting from the depression
- there was growing evidence of a lack of international co-operation. This was seen in Japan’s defiance of the League of Nations over the invasion of Manchuria in 1931. The lack of progress at the World Disarmament Conference, held from 1932, demonstrated the lack of international co-operation.

Students may argue that throughout the period, there were clear attempts to maintain the ‘Spirit of Locarno’ but a number of them ended in failure. Students may point to the depression or the actions of various nations as a reason for the lack of co-operation in maintaining the ‘Spirit of Locarno’. Others may argue that whilst there were failures, there are enough successes to show that international co-operation attempted to maintain the ‘Spirit of Locarno’. Reward any well-balanced argument and judgement.

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- How significant was challenging the Treaty of Versailles to Hitler's foreign policy in the years 1934 to 1939?

[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 very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
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- L3:** 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, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is 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 challenging the Treaty of Versailles was significant to Hitler's foreign policy in the years 1934 to 1939 might include:

- the public acknowledgment of the Luftwaffe's existence showed Hitler's aims to push forward with military rearmament. Similarly, conscription was officially announced in March 1935. The Anglo-German Naval agreement allowed for the increasing of Germany's battle fleet also which challenged the Treaty of Versailles terms of rearming
- remilitarisation of the industrially rich Rhineland was a key objective for the Nazis – 32 000 German soldiers marched into the Rhineland in March 1936 in defiance of the terms of the Treaty which had stipulated that the area must remain a neutral, demilitarised zone
- the Anschluss was successfully achieved in March 1938 when a German invasion force was sent to 'restore order' in Austria which challenged the Treaty of Versailles' term that Austria and Germany should never be allowed to unite
- Hitler challenged the fact that Germany had lost territory as part of the post-war settlement. Hitler used the excuse of Germans being treated badly to stir riots in the Sudetenland, which was made part of Germany in September 1938
- the Nazi-Soviet Pact challenged the Treaty of Versailles as it was clear that the Nazis had the full intention of regaining the Polish corridor and Danzig.

Arguments challenging the view that challenging the Treaty of Versailles was significant to Hitler's foreign policy in the years 1934 to 1939 might include:

- initial intentions of Hitler had been peaceful and not just about overturning the Treaty of Versailles. The 1934 German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact had secured Eastern borders and proclaimed no conflict for ten years, suggesting Hitler was not solely concerned with challenging the Treaty. Hitler sought to improve relations with other nations, for instance, the Anglo-German Naval agreement of 1935 showed he was working for better international co-operation
- Hitler claimed that a number of his measures were acts of self-defence. German rearmament was as an act of 'defence' following the failure of the campaign for international disarmament and the collapse of the Geneva Conference 1934, with the remilitarisation of the Franco-German border necessary to ensure this defence
- Hitler's involvement in the Spanish Civil War from 1936 was driven by the ideology of resisting communism not challenging the treaty of Versailles
- Hitler's foreign policy was based on expansionist aims far beyond challenging the Treaty of Versailles.

Although the undoing of the Treaty of Versailles was without doubt a significant driving factor in Hitler's foreign policy, there were clearly other motivating factors, such as his expansionist aims to create Lebensraum. Reward any balanced and substantiated argument.