



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Level in History (WHI04)

Paper 4: International Study with
Interpretations

Option 1B: The World in Crisis, 1879–
1945

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Generic Level Descriptors for Paper 4

Section A

Targets: AO1 (5 marks): 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.

AO3 (20 marks): Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material
1	1–4	• Demonstrates only limited comprehension of the extracts, selecting some material relevant to the debate. • Some accurate and relevant knowledge is included and presented as information, rather than being linked with the extracts. • Judgement on the view is assertive, with little supporting evidence.
2	5–8	• Demonstrates some understanding and attempts analysis of the extracts by describing some points within them that are relevant to the debate. • Mostly accurate knowledge is included, but lacks range or depth. It is added to information from the extracts, but mainly to expand on matters of detail or to note some aspects which are not included. • A judgement on the view is given with limited support, but the criteria for judgement are left implicit.
3	9–14	• Demonstrates understanding and some analysis of the extracts by selecting and explaining some key points of interpretation they contain and indicating differences. • Knowledge of some issues related to the debate is included to link to, or expand, some views given in the extracts. • Attempts are made to establish criteria for judgement and discussion of the extracts is attempted. A judgement is given, although with limited substantiation, and is related to some key points of view in the extracts.
4	15–20	• Demonstrates understanding of the extracts, analysing the issues of interpretation raised within them and by a comparison of them. • Sufficient knowledge is deployed to explore most of the relevant aspects of the debate, although treatment of some aspects may lack depth. Integrates issues raised by extracts with those from own knowledge. • Valid criteria by which the view can be judged are established and applied and the evidence provided in the extracts discussed in the process of coming to a substantiated overall judgement, although treatment of the extracts may be uneven. Demonstrates understanding that the issues are matters of interpretation.

5	21–25	• Interprets the extracts with confidence and discrimination, analysing the issues raised and demonstrating understanding of the basis of arguments offered by both authors. • Sufficient knowledge is precisely selected and deployed to explore fully the matter under debate. Integrates issues raised by extracts with those from own knowledge when discussing the presented evidence and differing arguments. • A sustained evaluative argument is presented, applying valid criteria and reaching fully substantiated judgements on the views given in both extracts and demonstrating understanding of the nature of historical debate.
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Section B

Target: AO1 (25 marks): 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.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material
1	1-4	• Simple or generalised statements are made about the topic. • Some accurate and relevant knowledge is included, but it lacks range and depth and does not directly address the question. • The overall judgement is missing or asserted. • There is little, if any, evidence of attempts to structure the answer, and the answer overall lacks coherence and precision.
2	5-8	• There is some analysis of some key features of the period relevant to the question, but descriptive passages are included that are not clearly shown to relate to the focus of the question. • Mostly accurate and relevant knowledge is included, but lacks range or depth and has only implicit links to the demands and conceptual focus of the question. • An overall judgement is given but with limited support and the criteria for judgement are left implicit. • The answer shows some attempts at organisation, but most of the answer is lacking in coherence, clarity and precision.
3	9-14	• There is some analysis of, and attempt to explain links between, the relevant key features of the period and the question, although some mainly descriptive passages may be included. • Mostly accurate and relevant knowledge is included to demonstrate some understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question, but material lacks range or depth. • Attempts are made to establish criteria for judgement and to relate the overall judgement to them, although with weak substantiation. • The answer shows some organisation. The general trend of the argument is clear, but parts of it lack logic, coherence or precision.
4	15-20	• Key issues relevant to the question are explored by an analysis of the relationships between key features of the period. • Sufficient knowledge is deployed to demonstrate understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question and to meet most of its demands. • Valid criteria by which the question can be judged are established and applied in the process of coming to a judgement. Although some of the evaluations may be only partly substantiated, the overall judgement is supported. • The answer is generally well organised. The argument is logical and is communicated with clarity, although in a few places it may lack coherence or precision.

5	21-25	• Key issues relevant to the question are explored by a sustained analysis and discussion of the relationships between key features of the period. • Sufficient knowledge is precisely selected and deployed to demonstrate understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question, and to respond fully to its demands. • Valid criteria by which the question can be judged are established and applied and their relative significance evaluated in the process of reaching and substantiating the overall judgement. • The answer is well organised. The argument is logical and coherent throughout and is communicated with clarity and precision.
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Section A: Indicative content

Option 1B: The World in Crisis, 1879–1945

Question	Indicative content
1	Answers will be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Candidates are expected to use the extracts and their own knowledge to consider the views presented in the extracts. Reference to the works of named historians is not expected, but candidates may consider historians' viewpoints in framing their argument. Candidates should use their understanding of issues of interpretation to reach a reasoned conclusion concerning the view that it was only after Russia's general mobilisation of its forces on 30 July 1914 that the outbreak of war in Europe became unstoppable. In considering the extracts, the points made by the authors should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: Extract 1 • Having committed itself to the Serbian cause, and with France promising its support, Russia's general mobilisation became the turning point in the events leading to war in 1914 • Once the Russian general mobilisation had taken place, neither Russia nor Austria-Hungary were willing to abandon their courses of action in order to prevent war breaking out • The loyalty of both Germany and France to their diplomatic alliances meant that neither country could persuade Austria-Hungary nor Russia to back down in the face of the loss of national prestige • Russia's general mobilisation activated an alliance system that turned a quarrel between Austria-Hungary and Russia into a general European war. Extract 2 • It is unlikely that the Russian decision to mobilise fully on 30 July 1914 was the event responsible for the outbreak of general war • Serbia, although willing to compromise with some of the terms demanded by the Austrian-Hungarian ultimatum, was not going to accept them wholly and so was willing to go to war with or without Russian support • The Austrians had already begun the war against Serbia before the Russian mobilisation and were determined to use war to get what they wanted whether the Russians became involved or not • Austria-Hungary and Germany had no intentions of agreeing to a negotiated solution, as could be seen by the failure of British attempts to contain hostilities regionally. Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to support the view that it was only after Russia's general mobilisation of its forces on 30 July 1914 that the outbreak of war in Europe became unstoppable. Relevant points may include: • In 1914, Russia was not willing to back down in the face of Austrian-Hungarian threats to its influence in the Balkans, as it had done in 1908–09 when it had accepted the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina • France was openly supportive of Russia with a state visit in mid-late July and militarily in a stronger position to offer Russia support than it had been in previous crises, e.g. increases in conscription, Plan XVII

Question	Indicative content
	• Once Russia made the decision to support Serbia with a show of force, the European alliance system was effectively brought into play, with the potential involvement of Triple Alliance and Triple Entente powers • Once Russian mobilisation took place, any chance of the conflict remaining localised to the Balkans was effectively undermined as the German Schlieffen Plan required France to fall before Russia fully mobilised. Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to counter or modify the view that it was only after Russia's general mobilisation of its forces on 30 July 1914 that the outbreak of war in Europe became unstoppable. Relevant points may include: • In early July 1914, Germany gave promises of unconditional support to Austria (the 'blank cheque') that encouraged Austrian belligerence towards Serbia despite Serbia's relationship with Russia • Austria's unwillingness to mediate with Serbia, despite Serbia's relatively conciliatory response to the assassination ultimatum of 23 July 1914, made it clear that Austria was determined to take direct action • On 28 July 1914, Austria declared war on Serbia and began the bombardment of Belgrade, so initiating physical hostilities on the European continent and forcing Russia to make the decision to mobilise • The assassination in Sarajevo provoked an existential crisis in Austria-Hungary and created an opportunity for Germany to undertake a preventative war, meaning both powers were unwilling to back down.

Section B: Indicative content

Option 1B: The World in Crisis, 1879–1945

Question	Indicative content
2	Answers will be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant. Candidates are expected to reach a judgement on whether the League of Nations was more of a success than it was a failure in the years 1920-33. Arguments and evidence that the League of Nations was a success in the years 1920-33 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • In the 1920s, the League of Nations successfully resolved international disputes, such as the Aaland Islands and Memel, and mediated in disputes carried over from the First World War, e.g. Mosel • The League of Nations' associated organisations and committees were renowned for dealing with global social and economic issues, e.g. Refugee Commission, ILO, Court of International Justice, Health Organisation • For most of the period, the majority of its membership believed in its aims and objectives and were willing to work within the League of Nations to prevent the international conditions that had led to the First World War • In the years 1926-29, the Council was used to some effect by the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany to discuss international issues • The League of Nations led the way in the promotion of disarmament and was instrumental in bringing together the 61 nations that attended the Geneva Disarmament Conference (1932) • It was only late in the period that the League of Nations began to face real challenges to its international authority, e.g. Japanese actions in Manchuria and German disregard for the Geneva Disarmament talks. Arguments and evidence that the League of Nations was a failure in the years 1920-33 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Across the period, the League's effectiveness to resolve disputes was undermined by the absence of major powers, particularly the USA but also Russia and Germany (before 1926 and at the end of 1933) • Both the indecision and decisions made by the League of Nations in resolving disputes involving major powers undermined the confidence in it of smaller nations, e.g. over Corfu, the Ruhr and Manchuria • The nature of the League's constitution and machinery meant that it was often slow to react, required unanimous agreement to act and did not have the physical means to enforce its actions • Some of the major issues of international tension and dispute in the 1920s were discussed and, in some cases resolved, outside of the League machinery, e.g. German reparations, the Locarno Treaties, naval limits • The position of Britain and France – colonial powers with League mandated territory – as permanent Council Members was seen by some nations as undermining the League's commitment to self-determination • The League's failure to deal effectively with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria (1931) was an existential challenge and its outcome essentially overshadowed the successes of the previous decade. Other relevant material must be credited.

Question	Indicative content
3	Answers will be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant. Candidates are expected to reach a judgement on whether German success in the war in Europe in the period September 1939-September 1941 was mainly due to the weaknesses and mistakes of Britain and France. Arguments and evidence that German success in the war in Europe in the period September 1939 to September 1941 was mainly due to the weaknesses and mistakes of Britain and France should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • The appeasement policies of Britain and France in the 1930s that allowed Nazi Germany to expand eastwards meant that when Hitler invaded Poland they were not able to provide direct military aid so far away • Although Britain and France did have rearmament policies, they were not sufficiently prepared for war in September 1939; it was really only after the Czech takeover in March 1939 that military readiness sped up • The Allies failed to take direct advantage of the first eight months of the war; this period of 'phoney war' allowed Germany to secure Poland while preparing for the invasion of western Europe • France was reliant on the Maginot Line fortifications and was not prepared for the <i>Blitzkrieg</i> style offensive through the Ardennes that contributed to France falling to Germany in June 1940 • French mistakes were crucial, e.g. holding back aircraft and sending reserves to the Dutch border, in allowing the Germans to advance • The fall of France and the absence of the British from the continent after the evacuation of the BEF from Dunkirk meant that Germany was able to begin Operation Barbarossa in summer 1941 with relative impunity. Arguments and evidence that German success in the war in Europe in the period September 1939 to September 1941 was mainly due to other factors should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Hitler's foreign policy of the 1930s had laid the groundwork that would give the initial advantages to Germany, e.g. remilitarisation of the Rhineland, the annexation of central Europe, alliances with Italy and Japan • The Nazi regime prepared the German people for war through rearmament and nationalist militaristic propaganda so that when war did come there was support for the war effort, particularly to the East • Hitler's strategic objectives and the German military's planning and tactics, particularly the shock, and application, of <i>Blitzkrieg</i> gave the Germans the offensive military advantages of a conquering power • The Nazi-Soviet Pact (August 1939) blind-sided the other European powers enabling Germany to invade Poland and giving Hitler time to prepare for the initially successful invasion of the USSR itself in June 1941 • Stalin was not prepared to admit that Germany would invade the USSR and so the Soviets were underprepared for Operation Barbarossa in June 1941; initial Soviet troop orders were not to exacerbate the situation • The reluctance of the USA to do little more than criticise the actions of Germany gave Hitler the confidence to carry out his conquest of Europe and to maintain sufficient resources for the initial successes in Russia. Other relevant material must be credited.

