GCE

History A

Y253/01: Non-British period study: The Cold War in Europe 1941-1995

AS Level

Mark Scheme for June 2025

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

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MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARATION FOR MARKING
RM ASSESSOR

1. Make sure that you have accessed and completed the relevant training packages for on-screen marking: *RM Assessor Online Training: OCR Essential Guide to Marking*.

2. Make sure that you have read and understood the mark scheme and the question paper for this unit. These are available in RM Assessor

3. Log-in to RM Assessor and mark the **required number** of practice responses ("scripts") and the **required number** of standardisation responses.

MARKING

1. Mark strictly to the mark scheme.

2. Marks awarded must relate directly to the marking criteria.

3. The schedule of dates is very important. It is essential that you meet the RM Assessor 50% and 100% (traditional 40% Batch 1 and 100% Batch 2) deadlines. If you experience problems, you must contact your Team Leader (Supervisor) without delay.

4. If you are in any doubt about applying the mark scheme, consult your Team Leader by telephone or the RM Assessor messaging system, or by email.

5. **Crossed Out Responses**
   Where a candidate has crossed out a response and provided a clear alternative then the crossed out response is not marked. Where no alternative response has been provided, examiners may give candidates the benefit of the doubt and mark the crossed out response where legible.

   Rubric Error Responses – Optional Questions
   Where candidates have a choice of question across a whole paper or a whole section and have provided more answers than required, then all responses are marked and the highest mark allowable within the rubric is given. Enter a mark for each question answered into RM assessor, which will select the highest mark from those awarded. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate has penalised themselves by attempting more questions than necessary in the time allowed.)*

Multiple Choice Question Responses

When a multiple choice question has only a single, correct response and a candidate provides two responses (even if one of these responses is correct), then no mark should be awarded (as it is not possible to determine which was the first response selected by the candidate).

When a question requires candidates to select more than one option/multiple options, then local marking arrangements need to ensure consistency of approach.

Contradictory Responses

When a candidate provides contradictory responses, then no mark should be awarded, even if one of the answers is correct.

Short Answer Questions (requiring only a list by way of a response, usually worth only **one mark per response**)

Where candidates are required to provide a set number of short answer responses then only the set number of responses should be marked. The response space should be marked from left to right on each line and then line by line until the required number of responses have been considered. The remaining responses should not then be marked. Examiners will have to apply judgement as to whether a 'second response' on a line is a development of the 'first response', rather than a separate, discrete response. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate is attempting to hedge their bets and therefore getting undue benefit rather than engaging with the question and giving the most relevant/correct responses.)*

Short Answer Questions (requiring a more developed response, worth **two or more marks**)

If the candidates are required to provide a description of, say, three items or factors and four items or factors are provided, then mark on a similar basis – that is downwards (as it is unlikely in this situation that a candidate will provide more than one response in each section of the response space.)

Longer Answer Questions (requiring a developed response)

Where candidates have provided two (or more) responses to a medium or high tariff question which only required a single (developed) response and not crossed out the first response, then only the first response should be marked. Examiners will need to apply professional judgement as to whether the second (or a subsequent) response is a 'new start' or simply a poorly expressed continuation of the first response.

6. Always check the pages (and additional objects if present) at the end of the response in case any answers have been continued there. If the candidate has continued an answer there, then add a tick to confirm that the work has been seen.

7. There is a NR (**No Response**) option. Award NR (No Response):

   - if there is nothing written at all in the answer space
   - OR if there is a comment which does not in any way relate to the question (e.g., 'can't do', 'don't know')
   - OR if there is a mark (e.g., a dash, a question mark) which is not an attempt at the question.

   Note: Award 0 marks – for an attempt that earns no credit (including copying out the question).

8. The RM Assessor **comments box** is used by your team leader to explain the marking of the practice responses. Please refer to these comments when checking your practice responses. **Do not use the comments box for any other reason.**
   If you have any questions or comments for your team leader, use the phone, the RM Assessor messaging system, or e-mail.

9. *Assistant Examiners will send a brief report on the performance of candidates to their Team Leader (Supervisor) via email by the end of the marking period. The report should contain notes on particular strengths displayed as well as common errors or weaknesses. Constructive criticism of the question paper/mark scheme is also appreciated.*

10. For answers marked by levels of response: Not applicable in F501
    a. **To determine the level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
    b. **To determine the mark within the level**, consider the following

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this level and the one below	At bottom of level
Just enough achievement on balance for this level	Above bottom and either below middle or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and either below top of level or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Consistently meets the criteria for this level	At top of level

11. **Annotations**

Annotation	Meaning
BP	Blank Page
	Highlight
Off-page comment	
A	Assertion
AN	Analysis
EVAL	Evaluation
EXP	Explanation
F	Factor
ILL	Illustrates/Describes
IRRL	Irrelevant, a significant amount of material that does not answer the question
J	Judgement
KU	Knowledge and understanding
P	Provenance
SC	Simple comment
	Unclear
V	View

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
1*			**How important were atomic weapons in the development of the Cold War during the period from 1946 to 1955?** **In arguing that they were important,** answers might consider: • How the bombing of Japan and the development of the hydrogen bomb fostered political anxiety • How the refusal to share weapons technology broadened the divide between the West and the USSR • How secret weapons' developments engendered suspicion and espionage • How each new development hastened the arms race and increased the danger of pre-emptive strikes • How the threat of mutual destruction kept the Cold War 'cold' during the period **In arguing that other factors were important,** answers might consider: • Unresolvable ideological differences which meant that diplomatic solutions were impossible • Soviet security needs which encouraged the creation of satellite states • Fear of Soviet expansion / spread of communism heightened by Churchill's Iron Curtain speech which led the West to react aggressively to the creation of Soviet satellite states	30	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. **Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.** The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected. • At Level 5 there will be a judgement as to importance • At Level 5 answers might establish criteria against which to judge importance • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. If not, they are assertions. • Knowledge must not be credited in isolation, it should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• The heightening of tension by the content of the Long and Novikov telegrams which encouraged each side to use aggression instead of diplomacy • The impact of events in Germany which created direct tension between the two sides • Russian interventions in the affairs of other countries behind the 'iron curtain' which worried the West and encouraged a strong response • Polarisation through membership of NATO, Warsaw Pact, Cominform, Comecon which ensured that each side had confidence to act aggressively • The impact of personalities on international relations (e.g. Stalin's and Truman's inflexibility) which created situations like the Berlin Blockade • The heightening of tension due to the Korean War which meant that the two superpowers were engaged in a proxy war.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
2*			**'Economic problems in the USSR and Eastern Europe were the main reason for the end of the Cold War.'** **How far do you agree?** **In arguing economic problems were the main reason,** answers may consider: • The contrast between economies of western bloc states and those in the USSR weakened Soviet determination to compete • The crippling cost of military investment meant that the USSR could not maintain the military stalemate • The USSR's inability to match Reagan's investments in the arms race showed that they had fallen substantially behind • The effects of problems in agricultural and industrial output which left the USSR unable to compete with the USA • Effects of oil shortage which made Russia reliant on international trade which was stifled by the continued Cold War **In arguing economic problems were not the main reason,** answers may consider: • Impact of domestic social problems (e.g. alcoholism; living standards; strikes) on the government's ability to compete internationally • The international humiliation of the Chernobyl disaster and the social consequences which	30	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. Both features that support the hypothesis and features that challenge the hypothesis are detailed. **Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.** The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected. • At Level 5 there will be a judgement as to the extent of importance of reasons • At Level 5 answers might establish criteria against which to judge importance of reasons • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. If not, they are assertions. • Knowledge must not be credited in isolation, it should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			showed the world that the USSR had fallen behind in both technology and society • Reactions abroad to the invasion of Afghanistan which increased international opposition • The inability of the USSR to keep up with the West in the arms race which meant that USSR was incapable of initiating direct conflict with the USA and hoping to win • The significance of Gorbachev's 'new thinking' (*glasnost* and *perestroika*) which encouraged anti-communist ideology and popular opposition to the government • The rise of separatist movements throughout the USSR which weakened the Warsaw Pact and hence the USSR's military stability • The impact of Solidarity on nationalist movements which meant that the Soviet government needed to focus on domestic issues • The domino effect: events in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria which weakened the USSR's grip on Eastern Europe • The significance of the reunification of Germany in publicly showing that the USSR could not maintain control or continue the Cold War • The failure of the 1991 coup and the role of Yeltsin which led to Gorbachev's decision to disband the USSR, effectively ending the USSR as a superpower		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
3			**'The reasons for the deterioration in relations between the West and Russia lie in misunderstandings and suspicions on both sides.'** **R. Brown and C. Daniels, Twentieth Century Europe, published in 1981.** **Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation of the origins of the Cold War during the period from 1941 to 1945, making reference to other interpretations you have studied.** **The historical debate** centres on the extent to which suspicions and misunderstandings were the main reason for the deterioration in relations. The implication of this interpretation is that greater transparency and co-operation would have prevented the deterioration of relations in the period 1941-1945. **In analysing and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the interpretation**, answers might consider the evidence for misunderstandings, the evidence for suspicions, and the extent to which there were genuine reasons for the deterioration in relations. **In analysing and evaluating the strengths of the given interpretation**, answers might use knowledge and understanding of: • The incompatibility of communism and capitalism based, in part, upon suspicion, misunderstanding and fear • The legacy of distrust due to the Nazi-Soviet Pact	20	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. **Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.** The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set. • No set answer is expected. • Candidates must use their knowledge and understanding of the historical context and the wider historical debate surrounding the issue to analyse and evaluate the given interpretation. • Candidates must refer to at least one other interpretation. • The quality of analysis and evaluation of the interpretations should be considered when assigning answers to a level, not the quantity of other interpretations used in the answer. • Other interpretations considered as part of evaluation and analysis do not need to be attributed to specific named historians, but they must be recognisable historical interpretations, rather than the candidate's own viewpoint. • Answers may include more on strengths or more on limitations and there is no requirement for a 50/50 split in the evaluation, however for level 5 there should be well supported evaluation of both and for level 4 supported evaluation of both, in line with levels descriptors. • Candidates are not required to construct their own interpretation.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Soviet suspicion that the Western powers aimed to destroy communism as well as fascism • The suspicions / misunderstanding of Western Allies regarding supposed plans for the west-wards expansion of Soviet communism • Russians' suspicion / misunderstanding they had been forced to take on more than their fair share in the fight against Nazism • Truman and Churchill's personal suspicions regarding Stalin and communism **In analysing and evaluating the weaknesses of the given interpretation**, answers might use knowledge and understanding of: • Evidence that relations between the West and Russia were sufficiently good to be able to cooperate during the wartime conferences; the 'Big Three' cooperated in plans for the future division of Germany • Constructive plans, based upon trust in the commitment of all parties, were developed in consort by their representatives in the European Advisory Commission from 1943 • Roosevelt's good working relationship, based upon trust, with Stalin (e.g. agreements regarding USSR's promise to enter war with Japan) • Churchill's willingness on a personal level to have a mutually friendly and respectful relationship with Stalin • The fact that there was sufficient trust for the western powers to agree, in principle, to the inclusion of the USSR in the UN		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• The willingness of the US to provide lend-lease support to the USSR. **Other interpretations that might be used in evaluation of the given interpretation are:** • There were genuine reasons (as opposed to misunderstandings and suspicions) for the deterioration of relations such as Soviet resentment due to the delay in establishing a Second Front and the concerns aroused by Soviet actions in Poland • The impact of Stalin's determination to secure Soviet satellites to secure communism in the east • The geographic implications of advancing toward Berlin in the later part of the Second World War, which created a sense of tension and competition between the two sides • Tensions caused by inequality in the Grand Alliance, demonstrated by the controversial ending of aid to the USSR via the Land-Lease scheme and the development of nuclear weapons • It can be argued that the West and Russia *both* fully understood each other's intentions, therefore the tensions were not based upon suspicion or misunderstanding of intentions.		

APPENDIX 1 – this contains a generic mark scheme grid

	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 for Section A, Questions 1 and 2: Essay [30]
Level 5 25–30 marks	There is a mostly consistent focus on the question. Generally accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding is demonstrated through most of the answer and is evaluated and analysed in order to reach substantiated judgements, but these are not consistently well-developed. There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured. The information presented is relevant and in
Level 4 19–24 marks	The question is generally addressed. Generally accurate and sometimes detailed knowledge and understanding is demonstrated through most of the answer with evaluation and some analysis, and this is used appropriately to support the judgements that are made. There is a line of reasoning presented with some structure. The information presented is in the most-part relevant and supported by some evidence.
Level 3 13–18 marks	The question is partially addressed. There is demonstration of some relevant knowledge and understanding, which is evaluated and analysed in parts of the answer, but in places knowledge is imparted rather than being used. The analysis is appropriately linked to the judgements made, though the way in which it supports the judgements may not always be made explicit.
Level 2 7–12 marks	The focus is more on the topic than the specific demands of the question. Knowledge and understanding is limited and not well used, with only limited evaluation and analysis, which is only sometimes linked appropriately to the judgements made. The information has some relevance, but is communicated in an unstructured way. The information is supported by limited evidence and the relationship to the evidence may not be clear.
Level 1 1–6 marks	The answer relates to the topic but not the specific question. The answer contains only very limited relevant knowledge which is evaluated and analysed in a very limited way. Judgements are unsupported and are not linked to analysis. Relevant knowledge is limited, generalised and poorly used; attempts at argument are no more than assertion. Information presented is basic and may be ambiguous or unstructured. The information is supported by limited evidence.
0 marks	No evidence of understanding and no demonstration of any relevant knowledge.

	AO3: Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.
	Generic mark scheme for Section B, Question 3: Interpretation [20]
Level 5 17–20 marks	The answer has a very good analysis of the interpretation. It uses detailed and relevant knowledge of the historical context and shows thorough understanding of the wider historical debate, in the form of detailed examination of other interpretations, in order to produce a well-supported evaluation of both the strengths and weaknesses of the given interpretation.
Level 4 13–16 marks	The answer has a good analysis of the interpretation. It uses relevant knowledge of the historical context and good understanding of the wider historical debate, in the form of examination of other interpretations, in order to produce a supported evaluation of both the strengths and weaknesses of the given interpretation.
Level 3 9–12 marks	The answer has a partial analysis of the interpretation. It uses some relevant knowledge of the historical context and shows partial understanding of the wider historical debate, in the form of reference to other interpretations, in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the given interpretation. The evaluation may be un-even with only limited treatment of either limitations or strengths,
Level 2 5–8 marks	The answer has a limited analysis of the interpretation. It uses generalised knowledge of the historical context and shows limited understanding of the wider historical debate, in the form of generalised reference to other interpretations, in order to produce a limited evaluation of the given interpretation. The evaluation may deal with either strengths or limitations in a very superficial way, or
Level 1 1–4 marks	The answer has a very limited analysis of the interpretation which may be descriptive and relate more to the topic area than the detail of the interpretation. It uses very limited and generalised knowledge of the historical context and shows very limited or no understanding of the wider historical debate, with reference to other interpretations being implicit or lacking, in order to produce a very simplistic, asserted evaluation of the given interpretation.
0 marks	No evidence of understanding or reference to the interpretation.

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