



GCE

History A

Y318/01: Russia and its rulers 1855-1964

A 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:

- 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
	Blank Page
	Highlight
Off-page comment	
	Assertion
	Analysis
	Evaluation
	Explanation
	Factor
	Illustrates/Describes
	Irrelevant, a significant amount of material that does not answer the question
	Judgement
	Knowledge and understanding
	Simple comment
	Unclear
	View
	Synthesis
	Continuity/Change

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
1			Evaluate the interpretations in both of the two passages. Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the weaknesses of the Provisional Government. In locating the interpretations with this wider historical debate, answers might argue that Interpretation A suggests that the Provisional Government's weaknesses were rooted in its unelected status and the loss of credibility due to failed reforms. • In evaluating Interpretation A, answers might argue that it is valid in showing how the unelected nature of the government made it a target for criticism by the soviets. • Answers could consider the claim that the need to support Western governments in the war caused greater unrest within Russia. • Answers could challenge the view that the main weakness was being unelected by considering weaknesses, like the decision to continue the war. • Answers could challenge the view that reforms were introduced as a failed attempt to follow popular radicalism by arguing that Kerensky introduced reforms because of his political ideology. • Answers could argue that the desertions and worker militancy crippled government efforts to maintain control of the country.	30	The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> 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 and above answers will evaluate both interpretations, locating them within the wider historical debate about the issue and using their own knowledge, and will reach a balanced judgement as to which they consider the most convincing about the issue in the question. • To be valid judgements they must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • Knowledge must not be credited in isolation. It should only be credited where it is used to analyse and evaluate the sources, in line with the descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers could consider the lack of challenge to the Bolshevik takeover in 1917 as validating the claim of the 'decomposition' of the government. In locating the interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might argue that Interpretation B suggests the weaknesses of the Provisional Government were caused by the unpopularity of the ministers, the impact of military failures and the strength of radical political views. • In evaluating Interpretation B, answers might argue that it is valid because it addresses the unpopularity of the ministers, many of whom were landed elites and members of the last Duma. • Answers could consider the failure of the government's reforms to satisfy the Russian people. • Answers might argue that the conflict between the soviets and the right wing was a challenge is supported by the July Days and Kornilov Affair. • Answers might challenge the validity of the claim that there was an increase in patriotism, since desertions and protests were on the rise. • Answers might support the view that military failures weakened the government by considering the property destruction in rural areas as deserters and wounded soldiers returned from front lines.		

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Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			Answers might argue that the importance of the Kornilov Affair is valid since it led to the arming of Bolsheviks and paved the way for their coup.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
2*			‘Communist leaders in the period from 1917 to 1964 were more willing to accept political change than were the Tsars in the period from 1855 to 1917.’ How far do you agree? In arguing that the Communist leaders of 1917 to 1964 were more willing to accept political change, answers might argue that there were many political changes under successive Communist leaders. • Answers might argue that Alexander II’s early reformist views were replaced by a return to a reactionary attitude toward the end of his reign. • Answers might consider the extremely repressive and reactionary nature of Alexander III’s reign, for example strengthening the secret police to limit political opposition. • Answers might consider the introduction of new central government structures under Lenin, for example the Politburo and Sovnarkom. • Answers might consider the increase in Party membership and political involvement of women under Lenin and then Stalin. • Answers might consider the increased political opposition allowed under Khrushchev’s government. In arguing that the Communist leaders of 1917 to 1964 were not more willing to accept political change, answers might argue that Communist leaders	25	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. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> 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 higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • 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 levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			relied on similar methods of political repression to the tsars. • Answers might argue that Alexander II's reforms in the earlier part of his reign, including relaxing censorship and the introduction of the <i>zemstvo</i> system, was a significant political change. • Answers might argue that Nicholas II's introduction of the Dumas showed his acceptance of a fundamental political change. • Answers might argue that Lenin's decision to close the Constituent Assembly and willingness to fight the against his opponents showed a resistance to real political change. • Answers might argue that Stalin consistently resisted political change and became increasingly dictatorial, despite the appearance of the New Constitution 1936. • Answers might argue that Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev's retention of a single party model and resistance to political demands by national groups was similar to the attitude of Alexander III and Nicholas II.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
3*			‘The Russian people experienced little improvement in their personal, political and religious freedoms throughout the period from 1855 to 1964.’ How far do you agree? In arguing that the Russian people experienced little improvement in their personal, political and religious freedoms, answers might focus on the consistently repressive policies under both tsarist and communist governments. • Answers might consider that the emancipation of the serfs under Alexander II provided limited improvement, and worsened the freedoms of many serfs. • Answers might argue that the introduction of Land Captains, Russification and increased censorship under Alexander III reduced the freedoms of many Russians. • Answers might consider the political and religious repression under the Communist government in the years 1917-c1924, with the Red Terror and anti-clerical repression. • Answers might consider the use of show trials and propaganda under Stalin to repress political opposition. • Answers might consider the impact of the Great Terror, gulags and the NKVD in the 1930s in reducing personal and religious freedoms. • Answers might consider the use of the KGB as a continuation of restrictions imposed by the NKVD.	25	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. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> 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 higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • 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 levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			In arguing that the Russian people did experience improvement in their personal, political and religious freedoms, answers might focus on the key developments that offered change for some or all of the population. • Answers might consider the increased freedom provided by Alexander II, who relaxed state censorship, allowed liberal academics in universities and introduced juries in trials. • Answers might argue that some of Alexander III's reforms increased freedoms – Land Captains reduced corruption and the Peasant's Land Bank increased land ownership. • Answers might consider the greater freedom experienced by many peasants under Stolypin's reforms to agriculture. • Answers might consider the increased artistic and cultural freedom in Russia from 1917 to c1929, and the later relaxation of censorship on literature and art from 1956 to 1964. • Answers might consider the greater religious freedom following the re-establishment of the Orthodox Church during the Second World War. • Answers might consider the increased access to education and technical skills for Russian women under the Communist governments, especially under the Five-Year Plans.		

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
4*			'The October Revolution of 1917 changed Russian society more than any other war or revolution in the period from 1855 to 1964.' How far do you agree? In arguing that the October Revolution of 1917 changed Russian society more than any other war or revolution, answers might focus on the significance of the revolution as a turning point in bringing about a change of regime and ideology. • Answers might consider that the revolution entirely destroyed the existing social class structure, leaving many former landlords and aristocrats impoverished. • Answers might argue that the revolution was a direct cause of the Civil War and therefore responsible for the socio-economic problems that resulted, like famine. • Answers might consider the brutal methods of consolidation that followed the revolution, like the Red Terror. • Answers might argue that the revolution marked a significant replacement of the entire political system, ending even limited democracy. • Answers might argue that the revolution marked a social change to a society where the numerically inferior industrial workers took on greater importance than the more numerous agricultural workers	25	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. <u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u> 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 higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge • To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. • 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 levels mark scheme.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			• Answers might consider the impact of the new ideals for the role of women, children, marriage and the family in society. In arguing that other wars or revolutions changed Russian society more than the October Revolution of 1917, answers might focus on key turning points for the population during the period 1855 to 1964. • Answers might argue that rural communities experienced limited social change as a direct result of the October Revolution. • Answers might argue that the First World War caused greater social changes due to the high casualty rates and the difficulty in maintaining the economy. • Answers might argue that the Crimean War had a great social impact, since the Russian defeat directly contributed to key reforms, including the emancipation of 23 million serfs. • Answers might argue that the Russo-Japanese War led to the 1905 Revolution, the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and social reforms like increased peasant land ownership. • Answers might argue that the preparations for the Second World War turned the USSR into an industrial nation, and the Second World War caused population disruption through casualties and supply shortages. • Answers might consider the significance of the Cold War and isolation from the West in		

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Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
			creating a society with a stagnated economy and limited consumerism.		

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APPENDIX 1 – this contains a generic mark scheme grid

	<i>AO3: Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.</i>
	Generic mark scheme for Section A, Question 1: Interpretation [30]
Level 6 26–30 marks	The answer has a very good focus on the question throughout. It has thorough and sustained evaluation of the interpretations, using detailed and accurate knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a convincing and supported analysis of them in relation to the question.
Level 5 21–25 marks	The answer has a good focus on the question throughout. It has good evaluation of the interpretations, using relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a supported analysis of them in relation to the question.
Level 4 16–20 marks	The answer is mostly focused on the question. It has evaluation of the interpretations based on generally relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce an analysis of them in relation to the question.
Level 3 11–15 marks	The answer is partially focused on the question. It has partial evaluation of the interpretations based on some knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue. There may be some use of information from one of the two interpretations to support the evaluation of the other, but the evaluation will not rely on this. There is a limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.
Level 2 6–10 marks	The answer has a limited focus on the question. Parts of the answer are just description of the interpretations, with evaluation in relation to historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue being weak, and evaluation relying heavily on information drawn from the other interpretation. There is a very limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.
Level 1 1–5 marks	The answer has some relevance to the topic, but not the specific question. The answer consists mostly of description of the interpretations with very limited evaluation based on very generalised knowledge of historical context and minimal or no reference to the wider historical debate. Analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question is either in the form of assertion or lacking.
0 marks	No evidence of understanding and no demonstration of any relevant knowledge.

	<i>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.</i>
	Generic mark scheme for Section B, Questions 2, 3 and 4: Essay [25]
Level 6 21–25 marks	The answer has a very good focus on the question. Detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a fully developed synthesis supporting a convincing and substantiated judgement. There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is coherent and logically structured. The information presented is entirely relevant and substantiated.
Level 5 17–20 marks	The answer has a good focus on the question. Generally accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a developed synthesis supporting a substantiated judgement. There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured. The information presented is relevant and in the most part substantiated.
Level 4 13–16 marks	The answer is mostly focused on the question. Relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a synthesis supporting a reasonable judgement. 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 9–12 marks	The answer has a partial focus on the question. Some relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and explain key features of the period studied in order to attempt an undeveloped synthesis, which is linked to a judgement, though the supporting explanation may lack detail and clarity. The information has some relevance and is presented with limited structure. The information is supported by limited evidence.
Level 2 5–8 marks	The answer has only a limited focus on the question. Limited relevant knowledge and understanding is used to give a limited explanation and analysis of key features of the period studied. There is a judgement but this may not be clearly linked with the supporting explanation. 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 1–4 marks	The answer has a limited focus on the topic, but not the specific question. The answer is largely descriptive, with only very generalised knowledge of the period studied being used to attempt basic explanation and very limited analysis. Judgements are unsupported and are not linked to analysis. Information presented is basic and may be ambiguous or unstructured. The information is supported by limited evidence.
0 marks	The answer contains no relevant information.

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