



GCSE HISTORY 8145/1A/A

Paper 1 Section A/A America, 1840–1895: Expansion and consolidation

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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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.

0	1
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How does **Interpretation B** differ from **Interpretation A** about conflict on the Plains?

Explain your answer based on what it says in **Interpretations A** and **B**.

[4 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target	Analyse individual interpretations (AO4a) Analyse how interpretations of a key feature of a period differ (AO4b)	
Level 2:	Developed analysis of interpretations to explain differences based on their content	3–4
	Students may progress from a simple analysis of interpretations with extended reasoning to explain the differences. For example, the interpretations differ about the reasons why there was conflict on the plains. In Interpretation B the 'Native Americans' could not trust the government to keep their promises and had to fight back. However, in contrast in Interpretation A, the reason given is because the army started fighting to protect the migrants on the trails.	
Level 1:	Simple analysis of interpretation(s) to identify differences based on their content	1–2
	Students are likely to identify relevant features in each interpretation(s). For example, according to Interpretation A the migrants crossing the 'Native Americans' land caused conflict on the plains whereas Interpretation B says it was because the government broke its promises.	
	Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0

0	2
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Why might the authors of **Interpretations A** and **B** have a different interpretation about conflict on the Plains?

Explain your answer using **Interpretations A** and **B** and your contextual knowledge.

[4 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Analyse individual interpretations (AO4a)**
Analyse why interpretations differ (AO4c)

Level 2: **Developed answer analyses provenance of interpretation to explain reasons for differences** **3–4**

Students may progress from identification to explanation of the reasons for the differences in the interpretations supported by factual knowledge and understanding related to, for example, differences in provenance, context of their time of writing, place, previous experience, knowledge, beliefs, circumstances, and access to information, purpose and audience.

For example, students may argue that the author in Interpretation A can see both sides of the conflict because he has worked for the United States government as an interpreter but also lived on a 'Native American' reservation in Oklahoma and understood 'Native American' thinking. But in Interpretation B the author's opinion is based on Christian values. He has been a bishop for over 20 years, so he believes in telling the truth which he thinks the American government have not been honest with the Indians. He wants to treat 'Native Americans' and the poor of the American cities the same – as human beings.

Level 1: **Simple answer analyses provenance to identify reasons for difference(s)** **1–2**

Students are likely to identify relevant reasons for the differences in each interpretation(s). Related to, for example, differences in provenance, context of their time of writing, place, previous experience, knowledge, beliefs, circumstances, access to information, purpose, and audience.

For example, in Interpretation A Bent was a Cheyenne 'Native American' who lived on a reservation. However, in Interpretation B, the writer is a Christian bishop who lives in a city.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question **0**

0 3

Which interpretation gives the more convincing opinion about conflict on the Plains?

Explain your answer based on your contextual knowledge and what it says in **Interpretations A and B**.

[8 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target

Analyse individual interpretations (AO4a)
Evaluate interpretations and make substantiated judgements in the context of historical events studied (AO4d)

Level 4:

Complex evaluation of interpretations with sustained judgement based on contextual knowledge/understanding

7–8

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed evaluation of interpretations by analysis of the relationship between the interpretations supported by factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, Interpretation A is convincing because many Euro–Americans thought negotiating with Indigenous nations was wrong and they should be removed. They were happy to provoke conflicts and ignore the treaties they made such as Fort Laramie, 1851, when the Colorado goldrush occurred in 1858. But Interpretation B is convincing because of the skilful leadership of Red Cloud showed that Indigenous people could resist US expansion. Red Cloud's victories meant a new peace treaty – the second Fort Laramie Treaty, 1868. The American government would break this treaty when George Custer led an expedition into the Black Hills in 1874.

Level 3:

Developed evaluation of both interpretations based on contextual knowledge/understanding

5–6

Extends Level 2.

Answers may assert one interpretation is more/less convincing.

Students may progress from a simple evaluation of the interpretations by extended reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, Interpretation B is convincing about the reasons for the conflict. The Indigenous nations kept to the agreements they made in the Fort Laramie Treaty. They allowed migrants to travel through their lands and kept to their own territories. But there was little respect for Indigenous rights amongst the migrants. During the Civil War when the US Army left the West, militia replaced them and often had 'Exterminator' views and attacked Indigenous communities, such as at Sand Creek. In 1854 two new territories Kansas and Nebraska which had been 'Indian Territory' were now opened to Euro-American and Indigenous settlement. This land had been agreed under the Fort Laramie Treaty to be for Indigenous people.

Level 2:	Simple evaluation of one interpretation based on contextual knowledge/understanding	3–4
	There may be undeveloped comment about the other interpretation.	
	Students may progress from a basic analysis of interpretations to simple evaluation, supported with factual knowledge and understanding.	
	For example, Interpretation B is convincing as the government needed to protect migrants and wanted to move Indigenous people away from the Overland Trails so they abandoned the Permanent Indian Frontier and started concentrating Indigenous nations within their own separate territories. But the migrant settlers did not respect the treaties signed by the government.	
Level 1:	Basic analysis of interpretation(s) based on contextual knowledge/understanding	1–2
	Answers show understanding/support for one/both interpretation(s), but the case is made by assertion/recognition of agreement.	
	For example, answers stating that Interpretation A is convincing because in 1834 the government said that everything west of the Mississippi River was 'Indian country'. They built a line of army forts along what was called the Permanent Indian Frontier. When they discovered gold in California the government encouraged migration to the far west.	
	Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0

0	4
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Describe two problems faced by Native Americans in the years after the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

[4 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Demonstrate knowledge of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied (AO1a)**
Demonstrate understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied (AO1b)

Level 2: **Answers demonstrate knowledge and understanding** **3–4**

Students may progress from a simple demonstration of knowledge about the issues identified with extended reasoning supported by understanding of, for example, the ways in which events were problematic.

For example, one problem was that Native Americans faced the Dawes Act, 1887 which aimed to break up their societies and assimilate them into Euro American society. One of the main ways they were assimilated was through schooling. They were sent to boarding schools run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and they have strict military style discipline.

Another problem the Native Americans had to give up the sacred lands of the Black Hills for free. In August 1876 the government cut off food rations to their reservations unless they did this. They overturned the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. Roads were built through the reservations and the Black Hills were opened for non-indigenous settlement.

Level 1: **Answers demonstrate knowledge** **1–2**

Students demonstrate relevant knowledge about the issue(s) identified which might be related.

For example, one problem was that the Native Americans faced the might of the US government using its army to ‘pacify’ the Northern plains. They attacked the Lakota and Cheyenne nations, destroying their camps, supplies and capturing their horses.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question **0**

0	5
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In what ways were the lives of Homesteaders changed by new farming methods and technology?

Explain your answer.

[8 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:4)**
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:4)

Level 4: **Complex explanation of changes** **7–8**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed explanation of changes by explanation of the complexities of change arising from differences such as time, group, social and/or economic impact, supported by knowledge and understanding.

For example, students may recognise that even though the new farming methods and technology helped Homesteaders survive and prosper, in the 19th century, they could not by themselves prevent their lives being badly affected by natural hazards such as prairie fires, plagues of grasshoppers, or extreme weather conditions such as tornadoes or severe droughts.

Level 3: **Developed explanation of changes** **5–6**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 2.

Students may progress from a simple explanation by developed reasoning considering **two or more** of the identified consequences, supporting them by factual knowledge and understanding.

In addition to a Level 2 response, students make additional developed point(s).

For example, the Homesteaders benefited from the invention of barbed wire in 1874 by Joseph Glidden. It was cheap and allowed Homesteaders to mark their land and keep stray cattle and buffalo off. This helped because there was no wood on the plains for fencing so no protection for crops from straying cattle or buffalo.

For example, there were long dry periods on the plains so crops would shrivel and die but Homesteaders began to use a new method called dry farming

where they ploughed the land when there had been heavy rain or snow. This trapped and kept the moisture in the soil and meant that better crops could be grown.

Level 2: Simple explanation of change **3–4**
Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Students may progress from a basic explanation of change by using simple reasoning and supporting it with factual knowledge and understanding which might be related, for example, to **one** of the identified changes.

For example, Homesteaders benefited from a new steel plough built by John Deere in 1830, it was called the Sod Buster which made it possible to cut through the soil, matted with roots, and plant crops more successfully.

Level 1: Basic explanation of change(s) **1–2**
Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Students identify change(s), which are relevant to the question. Explanation at this level is likely to be implicit or by assertion.

For example, the lives of Homesteaders were affected by wind pumps which meant they could bring water up to the surface.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question **0**

0	6
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Which of the following were the more important consequences of the American Civil War:

- social and economic consequences
- political consequences?

Explain your answer with reference to **both** bullet points.

[12 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:6)**
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:6)

Examiners are reminded that AO1 and AO2 are regarded as interdependent and when deciding on a level should be considered together. When establishing a mark within a level, examiners should reward three marks for strong performance in both assessment objectives; two marks may be achieved by strong performance in either AO1 or AO2 and one mark should be rewarded for weak performance within the level in both assessment objectives.

Level 4: **Complex explanation of both bullets leading to a sustained judgement** **10–12**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 3

Students may progress from a developed explanation of Consequences by complex explanation of the relationship between consequences supported by factual knowledge and understanding and arriving at a sustained judgement.

For example, students will explain the part played by both consequences linked in a chain of events which fed off each other. Reconstruction brought big changes in politics to the South with African-American people being elected to government offices and in South Carolina more black representatives were elected to the state assembly than white. But there was opposition; the Ku Klux Klan was one of many white supremacist organisations that used threats and violence to stop African-American people using their political rights. In the south, states passed 'Black Codes' which aimed to keep the system as much like slavery as possible. So economically some African-American people did not have a better quality of life and decided to move to places like Kansas and become Exoduster Homesteaders. Economically slaves in the South were better off after the Civil War but as they had not earned anything beforehand this had to be an improvement.

Level 3:	Developed explanation of both bullets Answer demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question Extends Level 2. Students may progress from a simple explanation of consequences with extended reasoning supported by developed factual knowledge and understanding. For example, students may explain the economic consequences of the end of slavery in the South and the boost to the economy in the North which got most of the benefits. The northern cities connected with the West by the Transcontinental Railroad which brought in raw materials and food. Immigrants were attracted from Europe, but this led to social consequences as there was anti-immigrant tensions such as opposition to Catholic immigrants from Protestant Americans.	7–9
Level 2:	Simple explanation of bullet(s) Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question Students may progress from a basic explanation of consequences by using simple reasoning and supporting it with factual knowledge and understanding. For example, the main consequence of the American Civil War was economic because cotton was the South's main export and after the war cotton prices fell. This is because other countries sold cotton. The eleven ex-Confederate states remained the poorest part of the United States for the next 100 years.	4–6
Level 1:	Basic explanation of bullet(s) Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question Students recognise and provide a basic explanation of one/both bullet points. For example, more than 75,000 Confederate soldiers were killed during the war and nearly 200,000 were wounded. There were fewer people to farm the land and as much as a third of the land stopped being farmed in some areas of the south after the war.	1–3
	Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0