



GCSE HISTORY 8145/1A/D

Paper 1 Section A/D: America, 1920–1973: Opportunity and inequality

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 the American economy in the 1920s?

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, Interpretation A says the American economy did really well in the 1920s as a result of the craze for buying shares. Whereas Interpretation B says that the growth was short term because beneath the surface, there were hidden problems with the economy in the 1920s.	
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, Interpretation A says that everyone was spending money and making money in the 1920s whereas Interpretation B says that people stopped buying things and that farmers did not make money.	
	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 the American economy in the 1920s?

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, the author of Interpretation A is writing his autobiography, and, in this extract, he is giving an account of the years in the 1920s when the stock market grew rapidly. His time in America was spent surrounded by wealthy people so he is reflecting the experience of the groups that prospered in the 1920s. Whereas the purpose on Interpretation B is to give a warning to the American government that the speculation of the 1920s was a bad thing in the long term.

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, Interpretation A is written by someone who experienced the boom and made money for himself whereas Interpretation B is written by someone who is looking back at the whole decade and is considering how the boom ended.

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

0 3

Which interpretation gives the more convincing opinion about the American economy in the 1920s?

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, the interpretations reflect both sides of the economy in the 1920s. Interpretation A focuses on the positive side of the economy and the reasons for the boom, but Interpretation B points out the negative side of the 1920s. This is the more convincing opinion about the economy in the 1920s because there were several social groups that had not benefitted from the boom including farmers, immigrants and African-Americans.

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 A is convincing because the economy in the 1920s had a boom period partly because people made money by speculation with buying and selling shares. The price of shares increased so quickly that people made a lot of profit. Some people bought shares 'on the margin' which meant borrowing money to pay off their loan once they made a profit. Interpretation B is convincing because it talks about one of the causes of the Wall Street crash which was overproduction. Companies stopped making such large profits because sales dropped and so did the value of their shares.

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 because the boom did not last. When the Wall Street Crash happened in 1929, the economy went bust. Huge numbers of shares were sold in one day and all the values dropped. People lost all their money, and it led to an economic depression.

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, Interpretation A is convincing because people had money to spend, and they bought lots of new gadgets. Cars were mass produced using an assembly line. They became cheaper to buy.

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

0	4
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Describe two problems that the New Deal tried to solve.

[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 unemployment and the New Deal tried to solve this by creating Agencies that were designed to provide work. Several agencies began programmes to build schools, airports and dams. These programmes created construction jobs in the short term and longer-term jobs for permanent staff once the building was complete

Another problem was poverty and homelessness. Alphabet Agencies provided welfare handouts such as soup and blankets. They also provided financial help for people to buy their mortgages.

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

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

For example, all the banks were inspected and only allowed honest, well-run banks were allowed to reopen.

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

0 5

In what ways were the lives of Americans affected by Prohibition?

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, Prohibition did not work and did not have any of the benefits that it intended to create; it increased the number of bars that existed. It resulted in many people losing respect for the law and choosing to break it because they did not agree with it. Eventually the ban on alcohol was lifted in order to end the influence of gangsters on society and to create a source of tax income for the government.

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, people's lives were affected by gangsters and the organised crime which developed as a consequence of Prohibition. Criminal gangs made money from selling alcohol in Speakeasies and they bribed the police to turn a blind eye to their law breaking. Gangs would also make money through racketeering which was when they threatened to smash up businesses unless shopkeepers paid 'protection' money.

For example, people's lives were affected by the creation of 'Prohibition Agents' who were given the job of enforcing the law. They had to find the places that were still selling alcohol and confiscate it. There were far too few agents to have any effect on the smuggling business as alcohol came from Canada in the North and Mexico in the South.

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, people had to buy alcohol from secret bars called Speakeasies that were hidden in cellars. A special password was needed to be allowed in. People also drank homemade alcohol called 'moonshine'. This was sometimes poisonous.

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, it became illegal to buy alcohol.

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

0	6
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Which of the following had more impact on America after the Second World War:

- campaigns for the rights of African-Americans
- campaigns for the rights of women?

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 causation by complex explanation of the relationship between causes supported by factual knowledge and understanding and arriving at a sustained judgement.

For example, the impact of the changes to African-American Civil Rights had a wider ranging impact on a greater area of society. The campaigns to achieve these changes took place over several decades and attracted the attention of the whole world. Whereas women's rights were restricted by the negative impact of the government and some women in the Stop ERA campaign.

Level 3: **Developed explanation of both bullets** **7–9**
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 causation with extended reasoning supported by developed factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, the campaigns for African-American civil rights had a big impact on America because it affected so many different areas of society. The desegregation of schools had an impact on all Americans. Oliver Brown in Topeka and the Little Rock Nine in Arkansas won the right for equality in education. The Civil Rights Acts removed the obstacles to voting that African-Americans had faced in some tests for example, literacy tests.

For example, campaigns for women's rights had an impact on America because abortions were made legal in 1973. The Supreme Court ruled in the Roe v Wade case that women had the right to decide if they wanted to have a child or not. This overruled the anti-abortion laws that existed in some states of America.

Level 2: Simple explanation of bullet(s) Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question 4–6

Students may progress from a basic explanation of causation by using simple reasoning and supporting it with factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, when Rosa Parks was arrested for sitting in a 'whites only' section of a bus, there was a boycott in protest about segregation. Hundreds of people walked to work rather than using buses. Eventually, the Supreme Court ruled that laws of segregation were illegal on public transport.

Level 1: Basic explanation of bullet(s) Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question 1–3

Students recognise and provide a basic explanation of one/both bullet points.

For example, African-Americans gained more civil rights; it was illegal to have racial discrimination in employment. Women gained more equality; the Equal Pay Act guaranteed the same pay as men for the same job.

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