



GCSE HISTORY 8145/1B/C

Paper 1 Section B/C: Conflict and tension between East and West,
1945–1972

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

Copyright information

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Copyright © 2025 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

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.

Step 3 Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in question 04.

	Performance descriptor	Marks awarded
High performance	• Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall • Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate	4 marks
Intermediate performance	• Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall • Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate	2–3 marks
Threshold performance	• Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall • Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate	1 mark
No marks awarded	• The learner writes nothing • The learner's response does not relate to the question • The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning	0 marks

Question 04 is an extended response question. They give students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

0	1
---	---

Source A supports the friendship between China and the USSR. How do you know?

Explain your answer using **Source A** 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 sources contemporary to the period (AO3a)**

Level 2: **Developed analysis of source based on content and/or provenance** **3–4**

Students may progress from a simple analysis of the source with extended reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding related to the features of the source.

For example, the use of the word ‘friendship’ in the title shows that China feels close to the USSR. China became communist in 1949 and the poster was published in the year that the two countries made an alliance. The alliance was called the Treaty of Friendship, and it was a promise to support each other in the event of either country being attacked.

Level 1: **Simple analysis of source based on content and/or provenance** **1–2**

Students identify relevant features in the source and support them with simple factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, the leaders of the two countries are standing side by side as if they were friends. They are smiling and the crowds behind them are smiling.

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

0 2

How useful are **Sources B** and **C** to an historian studying the Space Race?

Explain your answer using **Sources B** and **C** and your contextual knowledge.

[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

Analyse sources contemporary to the period (AO3a)

Evaluate sources and make substantiated judgements (AO3b)

In analysing and evaluating sources, students will draw on their contextual knowledge to question critically the content and provenance of sources (for example, the context of the time in which source was created, place, author's situation, knowledge, beliefs, circumstances, access to information, purpose and audience).

Level 4:

Complex evaluation of both sources with sustained judgement based on content and provenance

10–12

Students may progress from a developed evaluation of the sources by complex reasoning related to utility on the basis of content and provenance. They may evaluate the relationship between the sources based on analysis of provenance and contextual knowledge.

For example, Source B shows that the technological competition of the space race was extremely important. The President of America obviously believed he had to respond in person to the development which shows how much worry there was amongst the public. This was also addressed by President Kennedy in the next decade as he promised America would be the first country to put a man on the moon.

Level 3:

Developed evaluation of sources based on the content and/or provenance

7–9

Students may progress from a simple evaluation of the sources with extended reasoning related to utility on the basis of content and/or provenance.

For example, Source B is useful because it shows the space race was a focus for Cold War rivalry between the superpowers. The USSR won the first round to the Space race with the launch of a satellite. They also achieved a first by sending a dog into space. The purpose of the speech is to try and defend the USA's image against the success of communism. There was a fear amongst Americans that the Soviet rockets used to launch the satellites could also be used to launch nuclear weapons. Source C is useful because it shows that the USSR used the space programme as propaganda to tell people that the Soviet Union and communism was a success. It shows ordinary people in the poster as well as the astronauts.

For example, the date of Source C is useful to show how the space programme continued throughout the 1960s and remained politically important in the Cold War. Propaganda such as this poster was used by the USSR as a way of showcasing what was being achieved by a communist country and proving that their ideology was superior to the West. As well as beating the USA in the race to launch a satellite, the USSR was also the first country to send a man into space. Source B shows that the USA felt a rivalry with the USSR in the space race and they want to catch up. The two countries were rivals during the Cold War and in competition to show which government system was better.

Level 2: Simple evaluation of source(s) based on content and/or provenance 4–6

Students may progress from a basic analysis of the source(s) to simple evaluation of the content and/or provenance.

For example, Source B shows that the USA felt a rivalry with the USSR in the Space Race and they want to catch up. The USSR had launched a satellite called Sputnik. The two countries were rivals during the Cold War and in competition to show which government system was better.

For example, Source C shows that the USSR used the space programme as propaganda to tell people that the Soviet Union and communism was a success. It shows ordinary people in the poster as well as the astronauts.

Level 1: Basic analysis of sources(s) 1–3

Answers may show understanding/support for one or both sources, but the case is made by assertion/basic inference.

Students identify basic features which are valid about the sources and related to the enquiry point, for example, Source B says that the USA plans to launch a satellite.

Source C shows that the USSR is proud of its space programme.

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

0 3

Write an account of how the division of Germany affected Superpower relations in the years 1945 to 1949.

[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 analysis of causation/consequence** **7–8**
Answer is presented in a coherent narrative/account that 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 narrative of causation/consequence with complex sequencing and reasoning supported by a range of accurate and detailed factual knowledge and understanding which might be related, for example, to an analysis of how/why tension increased at different stages and /or showing understanding about how much each part of the sequence increased tension.

For example, in the long term, the division of Germany had a negative effect on Superpower relations. It led to the first major crisis of the Cold War when the Superpowers came into direct conflict during the Berlin Blockade and airlift. Following the airlift, the Western powers formed NATO which was a military alliance based on collective security against the USSR.

Level 3: **Developed analysis of causation/consequence** **5–6**
Answer is presented in a structured and well-ordered narrative/account that demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 2.

Students may progress from a simple narrative of causation/consequence with developed sequencing and reasoning supported by a range of accurate factual knowledge and understanding which might be related, for example to an analysis of how/why tension increased at one stage in the process.

For example, the division of Germany in 1945 affected Superpower relations because it became a source of tension when the Western powers joined their zones together, Stalin felt threatened by this and it led to the Berlin Blockade. Stalin wanted to take full control of Berlin and force Western officials to leave the Soviet zones in Berlin and Germany. The West responded by launching an airlift of supplies. There was a fear that war would break out between the Superpowers.

Level 2:	Simple analysis of causation/consequence Answer is presented in a structured account that demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question	3–4
	Students may progress from a basic narrative of causation/consequence by showing a simple understanding of sequencing, supporting it with factual knowledge and understanding. For example, the Allies agreed at Yalta to divide Germany into four zones. This decision was confirmed at Potsdam. The USA, USSR, Britain and France all had a zone. Berlin was in the Soviet zone, and it was also divided into four zones.	
Level 1:	Basic analysis of causation/consequence Answer is presented as general statements which demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question	1–2
	Students identify cause(s)/consequence(s) about the events such as in 1945 Germany was divided between the four Allies. Berlin was also divided.	
	Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0

Question 04 requires students to produce an extended response. Students should demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

0	4
---	---

'The Cuban Missile Crisis was the main reason for increased tension between the Superpowers during the 1960s.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

Explain your answer.

[16 marks]
[SPaG 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 **Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:8)**
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:8)

Level 4: **Complex explanation of stated factor and other factor(s) leading to a sustained judgement** **13–16**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question
 Answer demonstrates a complex, sustained line of reasoning which has a sharply-focused coherence and logical structure that is fully substantiated, with well-judged relevance.

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed explanation of causation by complex explanation of the relationship between causes supported by detailed factual knowledge and understanding to form a sustained judgement.

For example, the Cuban Missile Crisis could be seen as the main reason for increased tension because it brought both superpowers closer than ever before to a nuclear conflict. Although there were repeated examples of intense political rivalry during events that took place in Europe throughout the 1960s, nothing else carried the same level of threat to worldwide security.

Level 3: Developed explanation of the stated factor and other factor(s) 9–12
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding
that is relevant to the question

Answer demonstrates a developed, sustained line of reasoning which has coherence and logical structure; it is well substantiated, and with sustained, explicit relevance.

Extends Level 2.

Answer may suggest that one reason has greater merit.

Students may progress from a simple explanation of causation with developed reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, the Cuban Missile Crisis increased tension because the USSR's alliance with Cuba created a very threatening situation for America. Kennedy faced an enormous political challenge as Soviet nuclear missiles were installed in Cuba. When the US enforced a naval blockade around Cuba the whole world felt there was a danger of war breaking out and there was intense fear that nuclear weapons may be used.

For example, Soviet actions in Czechoslovakia in response to the Prague Spring of 1968 increased tension; the issuing of the Brezhnev Doctrine declared that all Warsaw Pact countries were to remain under the tight control of the USSR. Dubcek had relaxed state control of the economy and press in Czechoslovakia. Soviet forces invaded and installed their own loyal government. International tension increased when Western countries criticised the violent response from Moscow and called for the UN to condemn the USSR.

Level 2: Simple explanation of stated factor or other factor(s) 5–8
Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is
relevant to the question

Answer demonstrates a simple, sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, structured, substantiated and explicitly relevant.

Answers arguing a preference for one judgement but with only basic explanation of another view will be marked at this level.

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

For example, the main reason was that in 1961 the USSR built the Berlin Wall which was a symbol of the division between East and West; at one point American and Soviet tanks faced each other on either side of Check Point Charlie.

Level 1:	Basic explanation of one or more factors	1–4
	Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question	

Answer demonstrates a basic line of reasoning, which is coherent, structured with some substantiation; the relevance might be implicit.

Students recognise and provide a basic explanation of one or more factors.

Students may offer a basic explanation of the stated factor, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis increased tension because the USSR had nuclear missiles in Cuba that could have destroyed most of America.

Students may offer basic explanations of other factor(s), for example, the U2 spy plane incident increased tension because America was caught spying on the USSR.

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

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

	Performance descriptor	Marks awarded
High performance	• Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall • Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate	4 marks
Intermediate performance	• Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall • Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate	2–3 marks
Threshold performance	• Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall • Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate	1 mark
No marks awarded	• The learner writes nothing • The learner's response does not relate to the question • The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning	0 marks