



GCSE HISTORY 8145/1B/D

Paper 1 Section B/D: Conflict and tension in Asia, 1950–1975

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.

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
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Source A supports President Nixon's policies. 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 magazine is encouraging people to watch the TV coverage of Nixon's visit to China by putting this image on the front page. It shows the leader of China as smiling and welcoming which presents him in a positive way, despite him being communist.

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 source shows Nixon being friendly towards the leader of China. Nixon was trying to bring an end to the war in Vietnam.

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 spread of Communism in Asia?

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 America was considering using military action against the spread of communism from the beginning of its involvement in Vietnam. The fears voiced in this report about costs and loss of life were proved to be true. America spent the next 20 years trying to contain the spread of communism in Asia.

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, the date of Source B is useful because it shows that America was worried about the spread of communism in Asia but they took no action at this point. The report was sent during the critical battle of Dien Bien Phu. A French air force base was attacked by the Vietminh and after 57 days of warfare the French troops surrendered. No assistance was sent to the French troops during the battle but, after the Geneva Agreement in 1954, the USA began to supply military aid to support South Vietnam. Source C is useful because it shows how anti-communist opinions were shared in cartoons. The snake is presented as a threatening predator and the other countries are presented as innocent rabbits.

For example, Source C shows how some people felt about communism in Asia. The Geneva Agreement was made after the battle of Dien Bien Phu which gave control of North Vietnam to the communist Ho Chi Minh. The source shows that how western and democratic countries, such as Australia and the USA, believed there was a danger of communism spreading throughout the rest of Vietnam and onto neighbouring countries. This was called the 'Domino theory'. Source B says America needs to plan military action to stop communism spreading in Asia because they think that China is spreading communism. America had a policy of containment towards communism.

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 America was secretly planning military action because they were worried that China was spreading communism in Asia. America had a policy of containment towards communism.

For example, Source C shows an anti-communist opinion. The snake is presented as a threatening predator and the democratic countries are presented as innocent rabbits.

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 America does not want South-East Asia to come under communist control.

Source C shows that communism is taking over lots of other countries.

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

0 3

Write an account of how the Korean War ended in military stalemate.

[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, the Korean War ended in stalemate because it was a proxy war between the Cold War superpowers. It therefore had the potential to be a nuclear war, but Truman was not willing to let this happen which is why he sacked MacArthur. Similarly, Stalin hid his direct involvement by painting over Soviet markings on the planes he provided because he did not want an all-out war with the USA.

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 Korean War ended in military stalemate because both sides were evenly matched in terms of military equipment. The North Koreans were supported by Chinese troops and Soviet fighter planes. President Truman did not want to use a nuclear weapon to secure a decisive victory and so conventional fighting continued for three years. Peace talks began in 1951 but

no agreement was reached and so the frontline remained around the 38th parallel.

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, North Korea had the support of the USSR and sent troops into South Korea in order to unite the country under communist leadership. The USA got the support of the UN and 16 member states provided troops for an invasion force to help South Korea.	
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 North Korea invaded South Korea but was pushed back by UN forces.	
	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
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'The Tet Offensive was the main reason America failed to win the war in Vietnam.'

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 Tet Offensive was a turning point that indirectly led to failure for America because of the impact it had on popular support for the war. Even though it was not a strategic defeat in the long term as US forces regained control, it was a moral defeat. Many Americans were disillusioned about the prospect of ever winning the war and called for an end to the fighting. It was arguably the beginning of the end.

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 Tet Offensive was one of the reasons that America failed to win the war in Vietnam because the American public were shocked to discover that the Vietcong were strong enough to attack South Vietnam and seize control of the US embassy in Saigon. It was a simultaneous attack in hundreds of towns and US military bases in South Vietnam but the US army were able to gain back control. Public opposition began after the Tet Offensive. People questioned why America was involved in a war that they did not seem able to win.

Another reason why America failed to win in Vietnam was because their soldiers could not identify the enemy since the Vietcong did not wear a uniform. The guerrilla tactics used by Vietcong prevented the American forces from securing a quick victory. Rather than launching full scale attacks the Vietcong used tactics such as booby traps, ambushes and 'Hanging on the belts' to undermine the American forces' military strength and morale.

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, American tactics such as Operation Rolling Thunder and widening the war into Cambodia did not work. The Americans tried to use their superior bombing power to damage the Ho Chi Minh trail, but the Vietcong could find a different route through the jungle. The bombing campaigns and the use of chemical warfare did little to destroy the underground tunnel system.

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 Tet Offensive was a victory for the North Vietnamese and Vietcong. It was an attack on US bases in South Vietnam.

Students may offer basic explanations of other factor(s), for example, American forces could not compete with the guerrilla tactics of the Vietcong.

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