



General Certificate in Education

A2 History 6041

Alternative F Unit 6W

Mark Scheme

2008 examination – June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' 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.

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CRITERIA FOR MARKING GCE HISTORY:

A2 EXAMINATION PAPERS

General Guidance for Examiners

A: INTRODUCTION

The AQA's A2 History specification has been designed to be 'objectives-led' in that questions are set which address the assessment objectives published in the Board's specification. These cover the normal range of skills, knowledge and understanding which have been addressed by A2 level candidates for a number of years.

Most questions will address more than one objective reflecting the fact that, at A2 level, high-level historical skills, including knowledge and understanding, are usually deployed together.

The specification has addressed subject content through the identification of 'key questions' which focus on important historical issues. These 'key questions' give emphasis to the view that GCE History is concerned with the analysis of historical problems and issues, the study of which encourages candidates to make judgements grounded in evidence and information.

The schemes of marking for the specification reflect these underlying principles. The mark scheme which follows is of the 'levels of response' type showing that candidates are expected to demonstrate their mastery of historical skills in the context of their knowledge and understanding of History.

Consistency of marking is of the essence in all public examinations. This factor is particularly important in a subject like History which offers a wide choice of subject content options or alternatives within the specification for A2.

It is therefore of vital importance that assistant examiners apply the marking scheme as directed by the Principal Examiner in order to facilitate comparability with the marking of other alternatives.

Before scrutinising and applying the detail of the specific mark scheme which follows, assistant examiners are required to familiarise themselves with the instructions and guidance on the general principles to apply in determining into which level of response an answer should fall (Section B) and in deciding on a mark within a particular level of response (Section C).

B: EXEMPLIFICATION OF A LEVEL (A2) DESCRIPTORS

The relationship between the Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1.1, 1.2 and 2 and the Levels of Response.

A study of the generic levels of response mark scheme will show that candidates who operate solely or predominantly in AO 1.1, by writing a narrative or descriptive response, will restrict themselves to a maximum of 6 out of 20 marks by performing at Level 1. Those candidates going on to provide more explanation (AO 1.2), supported by the relevant selection of material (AO1.1), will have access to approximately 6 more marks, performing at Level 2 and low Level 3, depending on how implicit or partial their judgements prove to be. Candidates providing explanation with evaluation and judgement, supported by the selection of appropriate information and exemplification, will clearly be operating in all 3 AOs (AO 2, AO1.2 and AO1.1) and will therefore have access to the highest levels and the full range of 20 marks by performing in Levels 3, 4 and 5.

Level 1:***Either***

Is able to demonstrate, by relevant selection of material, implicit understanding of the question. Answers will be predominantly, or wholly narrative.

Or

Answer implies analysis but is excessively generalised, being largely or wholly devoid of specific information. Such answers will amount to little more than assertion, involving generalisations which could apply to almost any time and/or place.

Exemplification/guidance

Narrative responses will have the following characteristic: they

- will lack direction and any clear links to the analytical demands of the question
- will, therefore, offer a relevant but outline-only description in response to the question
- will be limited in terms of communication skills, organisation and grammatical accuracy.

Assertive responses: at this level, such responses will:

- lack any significant corroboration
- be generalised and poorly focused
- demonstrate limited appreciation of specific content
- be limited in terms of communication skills, organisation and grammatical accuracy.

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN THIS TYPE OF RESPONSE AND THOSE WHICH ARE SUCCINCT AND UNDEVELOPED BUT FOCUSED AND VALID (appropriate for Level 2 or above).

Level 2:

Either

Demonstrates, by relevant selection of material, some understanding of a range of relevant issues. Most such answers will show understanding of the analytical demands but lack weight and balance.

Or

Demonstrates, by relevant selection of material, implicit understanding of a wide range of relevant issues. Most such answers will be dependent on descriptions, but will have valid links.

Exemplification/guidance

Narrative responses will have the following characteristics:

- understanding of some but not all of the issues
- some direction and focus demonstrated largely through introductions or conclusions
- some irrelevance and inaccuracy
- coverage of all parts of the question but be lacking in balance
- some effective use of the language, be coherent in structure, but limited grammatically.

Analytical responses will have the following characteristics:

- arguments which have some focus and relevance
- an awareness of the specific context
- some accurate but limited factual support
- coverage of all parts of the question but be lacking in balance
- some effective use of language, be coherent in structure, but limited grammatically.

Level 3:

Demonstrates by selection of appropriate material, explicit understanding of a range of issues relevant to the question. Judgement, as demanded by the question, may be implicit or partial.

Exemplification/guidance

Level 3 responses will be characterised by the following:

- the approach will be generally analytical but may include some narrative passages which will be limited and controlled
- analysis will be focused and substantiated, although a complete balance of treatment of issues is not to be expected at this level nor is full supporting material
- there will be a consistent argument which may, however, be incompletely developed, not fully convincing or which may occasionally digress into narrative
- there will be relevant supporting material, although not necessarily comprehensive, which might include reference to interpretations
- effective use of language, appropriate historical terminology and coherence of style.

Level 4:

Demonstrates by selection of a wide range of precisely selected material, explicit understanding of the demands of the question and provides a consistently analytical response to it. Judgement, as demanded by the question, will be explicit but may be limited in scope.

Exemplification/guidance

Answers at this level have the following characteristics:

- sustained analysis, explicitly supported by relevant and accurate evidence
- little or no narrative, usually in the form of exemplification
- coverage of all the major issues, although there may not be balance of treatment
- an attempt to offer judgement, but this may be partial and in the form of a conclusion or summary
- effective skills of communication through the use of accurate, fluent and well directed prose.

Level 5:

As Level 4 but also shows appropriate conceptual awareness which, together with the selection of a wide range of precisely selected evidence, offers independent and effectively sustained judgement appropriate to the full demands of the question.

Exemplification/guidance

Level 5 will be differentiated from Level 4 in that there will be:

- a consistently analytical approach
- consistent corroboration by reference to selected evidence
- a clear and consistent attempt to reach judgements
- some evidence of independence of thought, but not necessarily of originality
- a good conceptual understanding
- strong and effective communication skills, grammatically accurate and demonstrating coherence and clarity of thought.

C: DECIDING ON MARKS WITHIN A LEVEL

These principles are applicable to both the Advanced Subsidiary examination and to the A level (A2) examination.

Good examining is, ultimately, about the **consistent application of judgement**. Mark schemes provide the necessary framework for exercising that judgement but it cannot cover all eventualities. This is especially so in subjects like History, which in part rely upon different interpretations and different emphases given to the same content. One of the main difficulties confronting examiners is: "What precise mark should I give to a response *within* a level?". Levels may cover four, five or even six marks. From a maximum of 20, this is a large proportion. In making a decision about a specific mark to award, it is vitally important to think *first* of the mid-range within the level, where the level covers more than two marks. Comparison with other candidates' responses **to the same question** might then suggest that such an award would be unduly generous or severe.

In making a decision away from the middle of the level, examiners should ask themselves several questions relating to candidate attainment, **including the quality of written communication skills**. The more positive the answer, the higher should be the mark awarded. We want to avoid "bunching" of marks. Levels mark schemes can produce regression to the mean, which should be avoided.

So, is the response:

- precise in its use of factual information?
- appropriately detailed?
- factually accurate?
- appropriately balanced, or markedly better in some areas than in others?
- and, **with regard to the quality of written communication skills:**
generally coherent in expression and cogent in development (as appropriate to the level awarded by organising relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary and terminology)?
- well-presented as to general quality of language, i.e. use of syntax (including accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar)? (In operating this criterion, however, it is important to avoid "double jeopardy". Going to the bottom of the mark range for a level in each part of a structured question might well result in too harsh a judgement. The overall aim is to mark positively, giving credit for what candidates know, understand and can do, rather than looking for reasons to reduce marks.)

It is very important that Assistant Examiners **do not** always start at the lowest mark within the level and look for reasons to increase the level of reward from the lowest point. This will depress marks for the alternative in question and will cause problems of comparability with other question papers within the same specification.

June 2008

Alternative F: Russia and the USSR, 1855–1991

A2 Unit 6: The End of the Soviet Union, c1968–1991

(a) Use **Source A** and your own knowledge.

Assess the validity of the view in **Source A** about the weaknesses of the USSR in the years 1968 to 1982. (10 marks)

Target: AO1.1, AO2

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------------|
| L1: | Summarises the content of the extract and the interpretation it contains. | 1-2 |
| L2: | Demonstrates understanding of the interpretation and relates to own knowledge. | 3-5 |
| L3: | As L2, and evaluation of the interpretation is partial. | 6-8 |
| L4: | Understands and evaluates the interpretation and relates to own knowledge to reach a sustained and well-supported judgement on its validity. | 9-10 |

Indicative content

Source A paints a bleak period of the Brezhnev years: a reluctance to consider economic or political reform, despite several problems identified; declining industrial growth; a neglect of new technology; widening divisions across the republics and different regions; and widespread corruption. There are also hints of further problems, such as undercurrents of nationalist discontent.

This is a fairly accurate picture, although not all problems have been identified or developed. The Brezhnev years were characterised by conservatism, a deliberate reaction to the ‘hare brained schemes’ of the Khrushchev years which had unsettled the Party. This conservatism operated at all levels. Politically it meant the ‘stability of cadres’ with an aging leadership, a reluctance to rock the boat and Party and bureaucratic resistance to change, whether for ideological reasons or because those in post wanted security of tenure and the privileges which went with it. Because there had been a relatively good rate of economic growth under Khrushchev and achievements such as those in the space race, there was little talk of economic reform, even though there was increasing evidence of economic stagnation in most areas of the economy during the Brezhnev years. The Stalinist system was still the existing orthodoxy, and the basic structure was left untouched. The Kosygin package of 1965 giving more autonomy to managers and more emphasis to costs and profits, had petered out by 1970 because the reforms were faulty and obstructed by opponents. There were later developments – principally more concentration of enterprises and specialisation, but the fundamental problems of the planned economy with its wastefulness, obsession with quantitative targets, lack of innovation, labour intensity etc., all continued except in a few favoured areas such as defence. The number of plan indicators and administrative burdens on managers actually increased after 1979. There was labour security, but at a cost of low productivity, despite the obsession with growth. There was a growing gap between the increasingly modest 5 year plan targets and actual performance. Even on optimistic, probably exaggerated estimates, growth rates declined from 7% in the 1950s to 4% and then less in the 1970s and 1980s. The technological gap with more advanced economies certainly widened, and the buying in of foreign technology was only

partially effective. The obsolescence of capital shock and the infrastructure was an increasing problem. The system's only strength was its ability to mobilise resources on a large scale to meet basic, limited goals, but it could not efficiently meet multiple goals and the needs of a complex modern economy. There was a rise in the standard of living – real wages, diet – but this was being reversed for many people by the 1980s. There were growing regional disparities, e.g. living standards were much higher in the Baltic republics than in Central Asia, although educational inequalities were addressed. Cultural destalinisation ended with Khrushchev. Although repression never approached pre-1953 levels, the boundaries of artistic expression were narrowed, and dissidence was not tolerated, although it was not always treated quite as brutally as in earlier years. Corruption was certainly rife at all levels, as had been the case before, although the relative leniency of the regime compared to previous eras perhaps encouraged it more.

Therefore the source is accurate, although it does not mention other problem areas – demographic problems such as a declining birth rate in Russia and fears that non Russian republics would eventually swamp the Russian population; a growing death rate, ecological problems, largely government caused; failures in agriculture, which was still the poor relation of industry; and the increasing restlessness within some national groups, mentioned in the source but not developed – central control of the republics was steadily eroded, as political patronage and corruption grew. Despite the titular control within republics by Russians appointed by Moscow, the regime was storing up trouble from the nationalities for the future.

(b) Use **Source B** and your own knowledge.

How useful is **Source B** as evidence of the impact of Brezhnev's 'Developed Socialism' by 1982? (10 marks)

Target: A01.1, AO2

- L1: Summarises the content of the extract in relation to the issue presented in the question. **1-2**
- L2: Demonstrates some appreciation either of the strengths and/or of the limitations of the content of the source in relation to its utility/reliability within the context of the issue. **3-5**
- L3: Demonstrates reasoned understanding of the strengths and limitations of the source in the context of the issue and draws conclusions about its utility/reliability. **6-8**
- L4: Evaluates the utility/reliability of the source in relation to the issue in the question to reach a sustained and well-supported judgement. **9-10**

Indicative content

The source certainly has its uses. It is a good example of the official propaganda which characterised the Soviet system under 'Developed Socialism' and was as strong under Brezhnev as any Soviet era. There is the usual reference to Lenin, to add weight to the pronouncement of the leader – if Lenin said it, it must be true and could not be challenged. There are the usual references to the cornerstones of Marxist-Leninist ideology, such as the dictatorship of the proletariat, collectivism and socialism. However, the meaning of these phrases is never defined, because they are used as the regime wants them to be used, to justify its policies or lack of them, and persuade its people or the outside world that it is all going well –

almost a form of socialist realism. In terms of the reality represented here, as opposed to the propagandist aspect, the source has little usefulness or reliability, since much of the content is distorted or blatantly inaccurate. Industry was certainly powerful in terms of size and overall output, but was not 'advanced' in terms of productivity indicators, technological content and all the indicators which would be used to measure progress in a market driven economy. Agriculture was certainly not highly mechanised and agricultural yields were not impressive. Despite rises in output, following more investment, output could not meet demand and there was increased reliance on food imports and shortages which sometimes led to riots and disorders. The gap between town and country was certainly not obliterated – the countryside remained the poor relation, and despite problems of urban life, most Russians were desperate to live in towns, where conditions were better. References to people drawing closer together are more difficult to judge, and the evidence may appear contradictory: although there was undoubtedly much cynicism and corruption, and social problems such as a rising death rate and alcoholism, there is also evidence that the mass of the population was broadly content and knew that some living standards had improved, and there was certainly no widespread support for dissidents. Therefore the regime may well have believed that life was improving, albeit not on the scale implied by the overall tone of the speech. The penultimate line of the source is virtually meaningless: the USSR had never been 'a dictatorship of the proletariat' except in propaganda, and it is arguable whether the USSR was ever 'socialist'; whilst it has never been clear what 'collectivist principles' meant except in the narrow sense of collectivised agriculture. Again, the regime never really defined what 'communism' meant; although several times the regime pronounced that the USSR was on the verge of a transition to it.

Therefore the source is not very reliable or useful as evidence for the actual condition of the USSR in the 1970s, but it is very useful as evidence of Soviet propaganda generally, and in particular the self-satisfied complacency and distortion of language employed in the Brezhnev era, and it was characteristic of 'Developed Socialism'. In so far as 'Developed Socialism' was ever defined, this passage is close to a definition, even if it presents an idealised objective rather than the reality of Brezhnev's USSR. If candidates develop the point that the question refers to 'by 1982' but the source refers to the situation in 1977, this can be credited if used to evaluate validity. However, it is not essential for this answer.

(c) Use **Sources A, B and C** and your own knowledge.

'In the years 1985 to 1991, Gorbachev lacked the skill to reverse the stagnation and complacency which had held back the USSR since 1968.'

Assess the validity of this view.

(20 marks)

Target: AO1.1, AO1.2, AO2

L1: Is able to demonstrate, by relevant selection of material, *either* from appropriate sources *or* from own knowledge, implicit understanding of the question. Answers will be predominantly, or wholly, narrative. **1-6**

L2: ***Either***

Demonstrates, by relevant selection of material, *either* from the sources *or* from own knowledge, some understanding of a range of relevant issues. Most such answers will show understanding of the analytical demands, but will lack weight and balance.

Or

Demonstrates, by relevant selection of material, *both* from the sources *and* from own knowledge, implicit understanding of a wide range of relevant issues. These answers while relevant, will lack both range and depth and will contain some assertion. **7-11**

L3: Is able to demonstrate, by relevant selection of material, *both* from the sources *and* from own knowledge, explicit understanding of the issues relevant to the question. Judgement, as demanded by the question, may be implicit or partial. **12-15**

L4: Demonstrates, by selection of a wide range of precisely selected material, *both* from the sources *and* from own knowledge, explicit understanding of the demands of the question and provides a consistently analytical response to it. Judgement, as demanded by the question, will be explicit but may be limited in scope. **16-18**

L5: As L4, but also shows appropriate conceptual awareness which, together with the wide range of precisely selected evidence, offers independent and effectively sustained judgement appropriate to the full demands of the question. **19-20**

Indicative content

Sources A and B are not about the Gorbachev period, but they give several clues about the problems of the previous twenty years, thereby helping to explain the problematic situation which Gorbachev inherited in 1985. Such problems would have presented an enormous challenge to any leader, however gifted they were. As it is, the scope of the problems certainly helps to explain why Gorbachev failed. Source A focuses on the reluctance to reform, weaknesses and failures in the economy, possible social problems, corruption, and hints of problems with the nationalities. Source B is only helpful in this context by giving some indication of the nature of the regime with its propaganda and its refusal to face up to reality, massive entrenched problems which Gorbachev had to face in 1985. Source C, however, suggests specific reasons why, if anything, Gorbachev made the situation worse. There is the claim that Gorbachev did not really understand the system, by implication therefore sharing some of the misconceptions evident in Source B. There is the claim that his 'centrist' line whilst possibly being forced on him, ultimately led to opposition from the extremes. There is the suggestion that when he did reform, e.g. by offering more liberty (a reference to *glasnost?*), he opened a can of worms; there is also the assertion that he faced not just opposition, but also the force of inertia, which made real change difficult.

Own knowledge will probably lead candidates to conclude that some of these claims were true, and that Gorbachev did face an almost impossible situation; so that even though he recognised the need for reform, it was unlikely that he could have succeeded in turning the problems around without a major crisis, which essentially happened with the break up of the Union. Nevertheless, Gorbachev also contributed to his own problems, demonstrating gaps in skills and understanding. It did not take much skill to recognise some of the problems which needed tackling, especially the economic and social ones – however, Gorbachev, a product of the system, was possibly naive in thinking that the Party could stay in charge of a major reform programme, when the Party itself was part of the problem. Gorbachev realised that he must do more than tinker with the system, and hence his programme of *glasnost*, or openness, which encouraged the Soviet people for the first time to openly discuss, criticise and show initiative. There were significant changes, including key appointments in the Party, but he was unable to overcome the culture of conservatism, resistance to change and apathy in the ranks. The initial attempts at *perestroika* were unpromising, since they did not address the fundamental weaknesses in the economy. Once this was seen to be the case, there was cynicism at large, and because of this Gorbachev could not deliver the goods, and people did not want to give up the basic protection of the state for the insecurity and uncharted territory of free enterprise and initiative. Gorbachev did upset both conservatives and radicals by his half hearted measures; possibly too little too late. Political reforms, e.g. in parliament, actually reduced his own power and helped to hand the initiative to more radical opponents such as Yeltsin. Gorbachev's faith in the party was amazing, since it extended even beyond the coup which threatened to overthrow him. Given the magnitude of these challenges, it is not surprising that Gorbachev failed to meet new challenges, notably from the republics, both the more advanced Baltic States and the more backward Asian Republics.

Therefore although Gorbachev was not complacent, and he understood that some sort of change was necessary, he lacked the capacity to solve the problems which had plagued the USSR for years, and would probably have defeated other more skilled or more popular politicians.

Answers at Level 1 are likely to be very generalised, possibly just repeating or paraphrasing the sources, and/or showing no real understanding of what Gorbachev did. Level 2 answers will show some awareness of the problems, but it will probably be narrative or descriptive in approach, and not really address the issue of Gorbachev's competence. At Level 3 there will be an attempt both to evaluate the problems and to argue a case about Gorbachev's attempt to address them, but there will be limited range and balance, and not all aspects will be covered. Level 4 answers will be reasonably wide ranging both on the problems and Gorbachev's ability to deal with them. There will certainly be an argument, although any judgement may be confined to the conclusion. Level 5 answers will address the question of Gorbachev's role directly, integrating evidence from the sources and own knowledge well, with a good range of knowledge and analysis, and with sustained and well supported judgement about Gorbachev's perceived failure.