



General Certificate in Education

A2 History 6041

Alternative F Unit 6W

Mark Scheme

2007 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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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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 2007

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 reasons for the failure of the August 1991 coup. (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

The view in Source A is broadly accurate. The plotters were not a dynamic group. They disliked the reforms that had been taking place, particularly the resulting corrosion of the Party's power. They had no real programme beyond stopping reform in a desperate attempt, as they saw it, to save the Union. Certainly there was nothing in their own personalities or background to inspire support, except perhaps from a minority of old die-hard Communists who were equally devastated at what was happening to Russia.

The source is also accurate in indicating that the coup did not fail because of strong opposition. The prevailing public mood in many cases was one of apathy or passive acceptance rather than enthusiasm either for Gorbachev or the "old way". Earlier enthusiasm for change, such as the glasnost of the mid 1980s, had evaporated as people found that economic conditions had not improved, and in some cases worsened. The gradual introduction of political pluralism did not appear to be solving problems. Reforms had been half-hearted or ineffective. Gorbachev's own popularity had sharply declined. But neither did the plotters inspire enthusiasm: they appeared to offer nothing but an unrealistic hankering for the old days. The phrase "descending into anarchy" is debatable, but certainly there was no decisive leadership either at an individual or party level. In that sense the source is correct in stating that there was an "absence of all authority". The source is also correct in highlighting the growing threat from nationalism, e.g. in the Baltic States. The key point is that although the Government increasingly lacked authority and credibility and was unable to solve major problems, the opposition, which was scarcely united, was equally barren of ideas and authority and therefore in little position to take advantage of Government weaknesses. The power base of the plotters had already been steadily undermined, and they had no clear strategy – simply a strong dislike of the way events appeared to be moving and an almost nostalgic desperation to preserve the old, Party-controlled Union in which the established bureaucracy, with all its inefficiencies, could manage a basically compliant population, provide jobs for life, and complacently ignore unpleasant facts

such as a declining economy which was seriously undermining the USSR's super power status and its ability to hold its vast empire together.

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

How useful is **Source B** as evidence of the motives of the leaders of the coup?

(10 marks)

Target: AO1.1, 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

Source B is a contemporary source, written in the heat of the coup by one of the main protagonists, Yeltsin. It tells us something of the context e.g. the role of the Union Treaty, a major step for the USSR. The source gives a flavour of the excitement of the time. It is Yeltsin straight talking. Its inherent weaknesses include the Source's lack of objectivity, its one-sided attitude. Whilst the accusations of base motives to the plotters were not confined to Yeltsin, there is no real evidence to support the accusation that the plotters' motives were purely mercenary and self-interested. The conservatives did genuinely and rightly fear the break up the Union and the vulnerability of Russia's position. They also feared anarchy. The plotters were not personally hostile to Gorbachev. There were genuine fears of the impact of nationalism throughout the Soviet Empire. Recent changes such as partial democratisation had been controversial in their origin and impact.

Therefore the source is only a partially satisfactory explanation of the coup leaders' motives.

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

'The failed coup only accelerated the inevitable process of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.'

How valid is this interpretation of Soviet instability since the death of Brezhnev in 1982?
(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

Source B highlights the internal divisions and problems in the USSR. Source A clearly indicates the growing problems – political, economic and nationalist. Source C is a damning indictment of Gorbachev and longer term problems are highlighted, such as the decline of the Party.

The problems leading to the break-up of the Union were serious. The inflexible Stalinist system was notoriously resistant to change, as Khrushchev had found before. Economic decline – the product of an unbalanced, inefficient economy – threatened disaster, but there was a reluctance to radically change things. Stagnation set in, and bureaucracy prevented reform. Andropov's attempts at reform after Brezhnev were only partial and half-hearted. Chernenko was a conservative stop gap who basically continued the conservative path of the Brezhnev years. The major developing challenge of Republican and nationalist unrest was only partially understood, and the break up of the Union was unthinkable to Communists. A peaceful secession was unlikely. Gorbachev recognised the need for changes, but his vision was limited, and the ultimate failure of glasnost and perestroika was probably not surprising. The rise of more radical reformers such as Yeltsin and the Russian Government was a new factor,

but they were more concerned with their own Republican concerns than the fate of the Union. Gorbachev's indecision was certainly a factor in the break-up, but certainly not the only one. The only central authority, the Party and its allied bureaucracy, was already becoming fatally weaker before 1991, so that even without the coup, some form of radical change, peaceful or violent, was probably inevitable. Once the reforms and changes after Brezhnev had begun, a can of worms had been opened, and events were difficult to control – certainly neither Gorbachev nor his opponents could do so. The coup simply clarified the bankrupt nature of the old guard. But even without the coup, instability was such that some sort of change to the Union was surely inevitable, whether outright disintegration or something more gradual. The remarkable thing is that it was relatively peaceful despite the disturbances in some of the Republics. All we can say with certainty is that the coup did accelerate the process of dissolution, and killed off political reform. It highlighted republican unrest and killed off the Party as a unifying force.

Level 1 answers will be generalised. Level 2 answers will probably be very descriptive, outlining events in the USSR but not directly addressing the key questions. Level 3 answers will be reasonably wide ranging, certainly addressing the problems of the USSR during this period and examining the causes of dissolution, but not all aspects will be covered. Level 4 answers will be wide ranging, and will certainly address both the causes of decline since 1982 and explicitly link them to the coup and the break-up of the Union. Level 5 answers will additionally provide a well substantiated judgement and may also show a good perspective.