



General Certificate of Education

AS History 1041

Unit 2: HIS2Q

The USA and Vietnam, 1961–1975

Mark Scheme

2009 examination - June series

This mark scheme uses the [new numbering system](#) which is being introduced for examinations from June 2010

The specimen assessment materials are provided to give centres a reasonable idea of the general shape and character of the planned question papers and mark schemes in advance of the operational exams.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

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Generic Introduction for AS

The AS History specification is based on the assessment objectives laid down in QCA's GCE History subject criteria and published in the AQA specification booklet. These cover the skills, knowledge and understanding which are expected of A Level candidates. Most questions address more than one objective since historical skills, which include knowledge and understanding, are usually deployed together. Consequently, the marking scheme which follows is a 'levels of response' scheme and assesses candidates' historical skills in the context of their knowledge and understanding of History.

The levels of response are a graduated recognition of how candidates have demonstrated their abilities in the Assessment Objectives. Candidates who predominantly address AO1(a) by writing narrative or description will perform at Level 1 or Level 2 depending on its relevance. Candidates who provide more explanation – (AO1(b), supported by the relevant selection of material, AO1(a)) – will perform at high Level 2 or low-mid Level 3 depending on how explicit they are in their response to the question. Candidates who provide explanation with evaluation, judgement and an awareness of historical interpretations will be addressing all 3 AOs (AO1(a); AO1(b); AO2(a) and (b) and will have access to the higher mark ranges. AO2(a) which requires the evaluation of source material is assessed in Unit 2.

Differentiation between Levels 3, 4 and 5 is judged according to the extent to which candidates meet this range of assessment objectives. At Level 3 the answers will show more characteristics of the AO1 objectives, although there should be elements of AO2. At Level 4, AO2 criteria, particularly an understanding of how the past has been interpreted, will be more in evidence and this will be even more dominant at Level 5. The demands on written communication, particularly the organisation of ideas and the use of specialist vocabulary also increase through the various levels so that a candidate performing at the highest AS level is already well prepared for the demands of A2.

CRITERIA FOR MARKING GCE HISTORY:

AS EXAMINATION PAPERS

General Guidance for Examiners (to accompany Level Descriptors)

Deciding on a level and the award of marks within a level

It is of vital importance that examiners familiarise themselves with the generic mark scheme and apply it consistently, as directed by the Principal Examiner, in order to facilitate comparability across options.

The indicative mark scheme for each paper is designed to illustrate some of the material that candidates might refer to (knowledge) and some of the approaches and ideas they might develop (skills). It is not, however, prescriptive and should only be used to exemplify the generic mark scheme.

When applying the generic mark scheme, examiners will constantly need to exercise judgement to decide which level fits an answer best. Few essays will display all the characteristics of a level, so deciding the most appropriate will always be the first task.

Each level has a range of marks and for an essay which has a strong correlation with the level descriptors the middle mark should be given. However, when an answer has some of the characteristics of the level above or below, or seems stronger or weaker on comparison with many other candidates' responses to the same question, the mark will need to be adjusted up or down.

When deciding on the mark within a level, the following criteria should be considered *in relation to the level descriptors*. Candidates should never be doubly penalised. If a candidate with poor communication skills has been placed in Level 2, he or she should not be moved to the bottom of the level on the basis of the poor quality of written communication. On the other hand, a candidate with similarly poor skills, whose work otherwise matched the criteria for Level 4 should be adjusted downwards within the level.

Criteria for deciding marks within a level:

- The accuracy of factual information
- The level of detail
- The depth and precision displayed
- The quality of links and arguments
- The quality of written communication (grammar, spelling, punctuation and legibility; an appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of ideas, including the use of specialist vocabulary)
- Appropriate references to historical interpretation and debate
- The conclusion

Specimen Mark Scheme for examinations in June 2010 onwards

GCE AS History Unit 2: Historical Issues: Periods of Change

HIS2Q: The USA and Vietnam, 1961–1975

Question 1

01 Use **Sources A** and **B** and your own knowledge.

Explain how far the views in **Source B** differ from those in **Source A** in relation to the Tet Offensive, 1968. (12 marks)

Target: AO2(a)

Levels Mark Scheme

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| Nothing written worthy of credit. | 0 |
| L1: Answers will either briefly paraphrase/describe the content of the two sources or identify simple comparison(s) between the sources. Skills of written communication will be weak. | 1-2 |
| L2: Responses will compare the views expressed in the two sources and identify some differences and/or similarities. There may be some limited own knowledge. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed. | 3-6 |
| L3: Responses will compare the views expressed in the two sources, identifying differences and similarities and using own knowledge to explain and evaluate these. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed. | 7-9 |
| L4 Responses will make a developed comparison between the views expressed in the two sources and will apply own knowledge to evaluate and to demonstrate a good contextual understanding. Answers will, for the most part, show good skills of written communication. | 10-12 |

Indicative content

Differences:

- Source B almost presents Tet as a defeat for the USA. Nixon emphasises that Tet has now put the USA into a position where it must withdraw from Vietnam. Source A openly comments that Tet was a military defeat for the Vietcong. There is no suggestion in Source A that the USA should consider withdrawing from Vietnam.
- Source A suggests an analysis of the military impact of the Tet Offensive on the Vietcong. It presents Tet as marking an end to Vietcong guerrilla warfare. There is no such perception of the state of the Vietcong mentioned in Source B. There is no indication in this source that guerrilla warfare is at an end in Vietnam.
- Source A suggests detail about the Vietcong fighting conventional battles during the Tet Offensive, i.e. it had not been able to function as a guerrilla force. Essentially it was this that had led to the defeat of the Vietcong. Source B makes no reference to the Vietcong

fighting conventional warfare. This source notes that the Vietcong were able to penetrate deep into the South.

Similarities:

- Source B implies that Tet should not be viewed as a final crushing defeat. It refers to the idea that the USA still had some chance of winning the war. Source A places a similar but more positive interpretation on US military capability to win the war. This is illustrated through the references to the USA's superior firepower and the defeat of the Vietcong.
- Source A implicitly suggests that the USA's role would be reduced. There is a clear reference to the enhanced role of the North Vietnamese regular forces and the implicit link is that this force could be faced by South Vietnamese regular troops. Source B more explicitly notes that the USA's military role would be lessened.

Candidates may comment on the scale of the Tet Offensive and the fact that hardly a major town in South Vietnam remained immune from its effects. The Americans were stunned by the scale of the offensive and it did contribute significantly to demoralisation within the US army. The idea that Tet was any kind of victory for the Vietcong, other than a propaganda victory, may be seen as inaccurate. However, the Vietcong were able to regroup and revive. There was no final end to guerrilla warfare.

Question 1

02 Use **Source A, B and C** and your own knowledge.

How important was the Tet Offensive as a reason for the USA adopting a diplomatic solution to its involvement in Vietnam?

(24 marks)

Target: AO1(b), AO2(a), AO2(b)

Levels Mark Scheme

Nothing written worthy of credit.

0

L1: Answers may be based on sources or on own knowledge alone, or they may comprise an undeveloped mixture of the two. They may contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question or they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, there may be some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**

L2: Answers may be based on sources or on own knowledge alone, or they may contain a mixture of the two. They may be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the focus of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment with relevant but limited support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-11**

L3: Answers will show a developed understanding of the demands of the question using evidence from **both** the sources **and** own knowledge. They will provide some

assessment backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, but they will lack depth and/or balance. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **12-16**

L4: Answers will show explicit understanding of the demands of the question. They will develop a balanced argument backed by a good range of appropriately selected evidence from the sources and own knowledge, and a good understanding of historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, show organisation and good skills of written communication. **17-21**

L5: Answers will be well-focused and closely argued. The arguments will be supported by precisely selected evidence from the sources and own knowledge, incorporating well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate. Answers will, for the most part, be carefully organised and fluently written, using appropriate vocabulary. **22-24**

Indicative content

- Source A, to some extent, confirms the idea that a diplomatic solution was not the absolute alternative to a militaristic approach. It emphasises the scale of the military defeat of the North. Candidates might use this to suggest that Vietnamisation was not a purely diplomatic tactic. The USA retained military forces in the form of the air force and it extended the war to increased bombing of the North and to the neighbouring states of Cambodia and Laos. The final sentence in this source also reminds us that the North Vietnamese Army was still largely intact but that it was not a guerrilla army, and it was guerrilla tactics that had proven so hard to defeat.
- Source B is much more focused on military withdrawal. Candidates should have little difficulty in using Nixon's comments to illustrate this view. This source does not develop an explicit reference to the use of diplomacy as an alternative strategy to militarism but it does make a direct link between the Tet Offensive as a phenomenon and the need for US withdrawal. Candidates may suggest an implicit reference to diplomacy through the final phase. Nixon considered 'how' the withdrawal might take place.
- Source C has a direct reference to diplomacy. Initially the source refers to the post-Tet period between 1969 and 1971. This implies that Tet had not immediately shifted the USA's level of commitment to South Vietnam nor had it fundamentally moved the USA away from militarism and into a purely diplomatic approach. Candidates may make links here with comments made relating to Source A. The source clearly refers to the military limitations of US military strategy and the weaknesses of the ARVN. Candidates may identify the post-1971 triangular relationship and develop its diplomatic significance. Overall the source may be used to suggest that, in itself, the Tet Offensive did not significantly move the USA towards a diplomatic solution because other factors assumed greater significance during the period 1969–1971.
- Candidates may examine the post-Tet strategies of the USA and suggest that all Tet did was to redirect US policy in such a way that diplomacy was merely one element of a wider strategy. Candidates may examine the nature of Vietnamisation. They may also consider the wider motives of Nixon, particularly his own personal political priorities. They could suggest that Tet was the catalyst that ultimately led Nixon towards diplomacy. Candidates may refer back to pre-Tet diplomacy and suggest that Tet itself was not the key that unlocked diplomacy as a route to success. The US priority of peace with honour remained, as did the determination to preserve the integrity of South Vietnam. Diplomacy was rather a contributor to the achievement of this basic objective.

- Candidates may call upon the wider context – as does the final sentence of Source C. By 1969 détente had emerged as a cornerstone of international relations. Détente suggested that containment was no longer necessary. Détente offered the USA an honourable way out of Vietnam. Détente was founded on diplomacy. Candidates may suggest that it was not the Tet Offensive that was the primary factor in the USA's shift in methodology but rather that it was the emergence of détente which forced the USA to link Vietnam to the wider diplomatic scene. Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy could be usefully explored here to suggest that Tet was a minor factor in this shift in approach.

Question 2

03 Explain why President Diem was assassinated in 1963. (12 marks)

Target: AO1(a), AO1(b)

Levels Mark Scheme

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will contain either some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question or some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-2**
- L2:** Answers will demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they will provide some explanations backed by evidence that is limited in range and/or depth. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **3-6**
- L3:** Answers will demonstrate good understanding of the demands of the question providing relevant explanations backed by appropriately selected information, although this may not be full or comprehensive. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **7-9**
- L4:** Answers will be well-focused, identifying a range of specific explanations, backed by precise evidence and demonstrating good understanding of the connections and links between events/issues. Answers will, for the most part, be well-written and organised. **10-12**

Indicative content

- There is ample evidence to suggest that Diem's corruption and his failure to deliver social and economic reform had finally convinced the USA that he was more of a liability than an asset. Candidates may refer to the failure of Diem's Strategic Hamlets programme and the implications of this on US/peasant relations. The programme alienated peasants rather than engaged them as allies.
- The Cuban Missile Crisis heightened US determination to stop the spread of communism. The USA had to succeed in South Vietnam and it was clear that Diem and his administration were not contributing to this.
- The USA did little to deter Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) generals from plotting against Diem. The US was keen to win the hearts and minds of the South

Vietnamese people and that could be partly achieved by Diem reducing his oppression of political dissidents. This lack of solidarity between the US and Diem encouraged Diem's opponents in the military to plot against him and plan his overthrow through assassination. Removing Diem was a possible way in which the USA could have a more direct and proactive involvement in the affairs of South Vietnam. 1963 marked a shift in US commitment to South Vietnam and it could be argued that this could only be achieved by having a leadership which was much more malleable.

Question 2

- 04** 'The Vietcong gained support in South Vietnam because of the attraction of communism.'
Explain why you agree or disagree with this view. (24 marks)

Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)

Levels Mark Scheme

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a limited part of the period of the question. Alternatively, there may be some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**
- L2:** Answers will show some understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain some explicit comment with relevant but limited support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-11**
- L3:** Answers will show a developed understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, but they will lack depth and/or balance. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **12-16**
- L4:** Answers will show explicit understanding of the demands of the question. They will develop a balanced argument backed by a good range of appropriately selected evidence and a good understanding of historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, show organisation and good skills of written communication. **17-21**
- L5:** Answers will be well-focused and closely argued. The arguments will be supported by precisely selected evidence leading to a relevant conclusion/judgement, incorporating well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate. Answers will, for the most part, be carefully organised and fluently written, using appropriate vocabulary. **22-24**

Indicative content

Candidates may challenge the premise that the Vietcong was a purely communist organisation. They may suggest that it was as much nationalist as communist. They may consider the early origins of the Vietcong in its Vietminh stage. This might lead to the argument that the primary reason why the Vietcong had popular support amongst the South Vietnamese people was because of their commitment to nationalism rather than communism. The Vietcong were perceived as freedom fighters and they were able to infiltrate the peasant villages in the South. This gave them a primary opportunity to propagandise the people into accepting communist ideology. This was particularly easy as US military tactics became increasingly aggressive to the ordinary people in rural South Vietnam. The Americans were perceived as imperialist aggressors while the Vietcong were nationalist freedom fighters who supported communism. Candidates may suggest that the primary reason why the Vietcong was popular was because they were fighting the USA. The USA may be seen as the Vietcong's single greatest asset, particularly in the early stages when it supported the corrupt Diem regime.

Question 3

- 05** Explain why, in the years 1965 to 1967, there was growing opposition inside the USA towards the war in Vietnam. (12 marks)

Target: AO1(a), AO1(b)

Levels Mark Scheme

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will contain either some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question or some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-2**
- L2:** Answers will demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they will provide some explanations backed by evidence that is limited in range and/or depth. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **3-6**
- L3:** Answers will demonstrate good understanding of the demands of the question providing relevant explanations backed by appropriately selected information, although this may not be full or comprehensive. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **7-9**
- L4:** Answers will be well-focused, identifying a range of specific explanations, backed by precise evidence and demonstrating good understanding of the connections and links between events/issues. Answers will, for the most part, be well-written and organised. **10-12**

Indicative content

- The early opposition was part of a larger societal protest. There was growing unrest throughout the USA. This was expressed through race riots, the campaign for racial

equality and civil rights and opposition to the war in Vietnam. The mid-1960s witnessed a growing shift in social and moral values and the anti-war movement was swept along with this process. Martin Luther King joined the public debate as the most respected civil rights activist and his presence added weight to the movement against the war.

- Motives behind the anti-war movement varied. Political liberals rejected the USA's alignment to South Vietnamese authoritarianism. Pacifists had long rejected the USA's Cold War policies. Many others wanted a negotiated settlement rather than resorting to militarism. This was particularly powerful as escalation developed. Candidates may suggest that opposition was popular because it could encompass so many disparate groups and motives.
- The media in all its forms also stimulated opposition. For a time the National Co-ordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam (NCC) stage managed demonstrations and ensured they were well-covered by the media.
- From 1967 opposition escalated as new organisations were formed. More people who were unaffiliated with organised and political and social groups attended anti-war demonstrations. 1967 was a year of mass demonstrations and these added impetus to opposition numbers.

Question 3

- 06** 'President Johnson escalated the war from 1965 in order to strengthen his negotiating position with the government of North Vietnam.'
Explain why you agree or disagree with this view. (24 marks)

Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)

Levels Mark Scheme

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a limited part of the period of the question. Alternatively, there may be some explicit comment with little, if any, appropriate support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**
- L2:** Answers will show some understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be almost entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain some explicit comment with relevant but limited support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-11**
- L3:** Answers will show a developed understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, but they will lack depth and/or balance. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material. **12-16**
- L4:** Answers will show explicit understanding of the demands of the question. They will develop a balanced argument backed by a good range of appropriately selected

evidence and a good understanding of historical interpretations. Answers will, for the most part, show organisation and good skills of written communication. **17-21**

L5: Answers will be well-focused and closely argued. The arguments will be supported by precisely selected evidence leading to a relevant conclusion/judgement, incorporating well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate. Answers will, for the most part, be carefully organised and fluently written, using appropriate vocabulary. **22-24**

Indicative content

Candidates may suggest Johnson was unduly influenced by his military advisers. He was convinced that US military power could overcome what he perceived to be a third world, underdeveloped state. His advisers emphasised the importance of protecting America's national prestige, credibility and honour. This was particularly relevant given the fact that US Cold War policy was still founded upon containment. South Vietnam had to be protected from the spread of communism. Candidates may suggest that this shows that escalation was not driven primarily by a desire to establish a stronger negotiating base, it was driven by the logic of containment. There is also the reality that the Saigon government was weak and unreliable. The US had to escalate its military presence in order to ensure that the robust defence of South Vietnam actually occurred. Candidates may also consider the need, in 1965, to protect US airbases in Vietnam. These were under heavy attack from the Vietcong, e.g. the attack on Pleiku in February 1965. This protection was enhanced by sending ground forces. US public opinion polls during 1965 seemed to suggest that about 70% of the American people were supportive of Johnson's escalation. Candidates may suggest that this popular early support reinforced Johnson's commitment. His policies were politically positive.

Candidates may suggest that peace talks had been a recurring theme throughout Johnson's presidency. One of his aims had been to persuade North Vietnam that it could not win and should therefore negotiate. Candidates may suggest that Johnson was ever reluctant to halt the bombing and was not particularly serious about peace initiatives. Peace talks did start in May 1968 in Paris. Each side was intractably opposed to compromise. Candidates may suggest that this shows that Johnson was using militarism for diplomatic purposes but it did not work. The only way to get the North to compromise was to pound them into it.