

A-LEVEL

History

Paper 2N Revolution and Dictatorship: Russia and the Soviet Union,
1917–1953

Additional Specimen Mark scheme

Version/Stage: Stage 0.1

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 Assessment Writer.

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.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

A-level History Paper 2 Specimen Mark Scheme

2N Revolution and Dictatorship: Russia and the Soviet Union, 1917–1953

Section A

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|--|-------------------|
| 0 | 1 | With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the First Five-Year Plan. | [30 marks] |
|----------|----------|--|-------------------|

Target: AO2

Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.

Generic Mark Scheme

- | | | |
|------------|---|--------------|
| L5: | Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. | 25-30 |
| L4: | Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. | 19-24 |
| L3: | Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. | 13-18 |
| L2: | The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. | 7-12 |
| L1: | The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. | 1-6 |
| | Nothing worthy of credit. | 0 |

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.

In responding to this question, students may choose to respond to each source in turn, or to adopt a more comparative approach. Either approach could be equally valid, and what follows is indicative of the evaluation which may be relevant.

Source A: In assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance

- Source A is from a speech made by Stalin approximately halfway through the First Five-Year Plan, at a time when the USSR was undergoing massive industrialisation.
- The speech is being made to 'business executives'. Since industry was nationalised, in State hands, these industrial managers would already have been on board and probably committed to Stalin's programme, or at least had to appear so. The speech is obviously designed to stimulate them to even greater efforts.
- However, the speech is probably also aimed at a wider audience in the USSR and even possibly abroad, emphasising the Soviet determination to meet its ambitious targets. The speech was widely publicised at the time. It is particularly valuable because it summarises Stalin's views about 'Socialism in One Country': the notion that the USSR should concentrate on building up its strength by its own methods, because in relation to the Western Powers, the USSR was behind industrially.

Content and argument

- The source conveys the essence of the First Five-Year Plan: the core of Stalin's programme to turn a primarily agricultural, backward economy into a major industrial power. NEP industry had many flaws: the large nationalised industries in the late 1920s were heavily subsidised, not productive and efficient enough and would not make the USSR a State capable of standing up to the West without a radical overhaul of the industrial economy.
- The source reveals one of the major emphases of the plan: the USSR must industrialise in order to be in a position to stand up to hostile capitalist powers.
- Speed is the essence, because a weak USSR is in danger from its enemies.
- Throughout the 1920s, despite the fact that most States by now officially recognised the Communist State, relations between the USSR and several other major Powers had been tense.

Tone and Emphasis

- Stalin's tone is bombastic, but also with a touch of both desperation and confidence.
- Stalin emphasises the context: too often in the past Russia has been beaten by its neighbours and this must not happen again. A 'genuine Bolshevik tempo' is what is required. This source is valuable because it gives a clear indication of what became increasingly obvious, that Stalin put strengthening the State as more important, at least for the time being, than ideological considerations.
- There is also an attempt at self-justification and propaganda. Stalin is not carrying out his programme on a whim.

Source B: In assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance

- The article is by a Trotskyist, that is, a supporter of Trotsky. By this time Trotsky was already in exile, having been defeated by Stalin in the struggle for the leadership of the USSR and driven out from the USSR. Trotsky had found this difficult to accept.
- Trotsky, although isolated abroad, was still very active in writing and making speeches. He undoubtedly had followers both around the world and within the USSR, but we do not know the numbers, because by now in the USSR it would have been increasingly dangerous to have been suspected of being a Trotskyist.
- Although like all Communists, Trotsky was a supporter of industrialisation as a precursor to socialism, he was highly critical of Stalin's approach to government and his policies generally. The source therefore is valuable in highlighting Trotsky's and his followers' bitterness and frustration that the 'inferior' Stalin had defeated Trotsky's prospects to be either leader or at least one of the leading policy makers.

Content and argument

- The author is focusing on the flaws in the plan. The source is implying that in the haste to meet the ambitious targets of the plan, the regime just has not put enough thoughtful and realistic planning into the exercise. Therefore although the plan might look good in theory, the reality is proving very difficult. The source is valuable in reminding us, at least by implication, that Trotskyites wanted to focus on world revolution rather than making Socialism almost a religion of national development.
- The lack of effective coordination or direction is having a serious effect on progress. Neither industry nor communications can cope with the bottlenecks and other problems. It is a vicious circle. The source is valuable because although highly subjective, it does reinforce other evidence that there were many difficulties in implementing the Plan, whatever the official propaganda claimed.

Tone and Emphasis

- As a Communist, Rakovsky cannot attack the basic rationale of trying to industrialise the USSR. All Communists believed in industrialisation, because only that could produce the large, dominant proletariat on which a future classless Communist State could successfully be based. Communists disagreed about the methods of achieving industrialisation, not its ultimate objective.

- However, as a Trotskyist, Rakovsky would have been very biased against Stalin, who had effectively driven Trotsky into the wilderness. The source is very valuable in highlighting how bitter relations were between Stalinists and Trotskyites.
- Trotskyists bitterly resented their defeat and objected to Stalin's methods. Therefore someone like Rakovsky was always likely to seize on any difficulties encountered by the USSR in carrying out Stalin's programme. The difficulties were real, not just the product of anti-Stalinist propaganda.

Source C: In assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance

- Magnitogorsk was one of the huge new industrial towns built in the USSR during the First Five-Year Plan. It has huge steel plants. The city was home to many new workers, including young Communist volunteers who came to build socialism.
- This letter was typical of many from ordinary people at the time, either to each other or to official bodies, which either praised the regime's policies or criticised them.
- We do not know whether this letter remained private or was more widely publicised at the time. Nor can we be certain of the status of the writer, e.g. whether she was a Party member or not. The source is valuable in reminding us that even in Stalin's USSR ordinary people were not automatons but prepared to comment to each other about their concerns.

Content and argument

- The source shows the view of an 'ordinary' Russian – the wife of a locomotive driver who might have been sent to Magnitogorsk or volunteered to go there as one of the enthusiastic young Communist volunteers who wanted to build this new showpiece of socialist industry. The source is valuable in reminding us of what a great 'adventure' the industrialisation programme was.
- The source confirms that there are difficulties in implementing the Plan. This is valuable evidence particularly since it is from a Stalinist supporter, not an opponent.
- The source does not suggest that there is anything fundamentally wrong with the premise of the plan or the strategy, just that some of the workers, for whatever reason, are not as committed to the ideals and the hard work as others and therefore are putting some of the desired achievements at risk.

Tone and Emphasis

- The source is written by a supporter of the Communists, (who is not necessarily a Party member). She is clearly enthusiastic and committed to Stalin, because she parrots Stalinist propaganda about the honour and sacrifice involved in carrying out the regime's policies. It is valuable evidence because it reminds us that the Stalin revolution was not just based on coercion and terror, but on real enthusiasm also.
- The tone and emphasis are exactly what Stalin would have wanted. The writer is unabashed in criticising her friend's husband and implicitly her friend herself, because together they are not doing their duty. They are certainly not heroic and indeed it is suggested that they are putting the gains of the Revolution at risk.

- As well as the implied threats there is a lot of strident propaganda, with the claim that nothing can be better than working hard and even exceeding the norms, a true Stakhanovite approach. It is valuable in showing us both the positive and negative impact of the regime's propaganda on ordinary people.

Section B

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|--|-------------------|
| 0 | 2 | Why was there no outright successor to Lenin as leader of the USSR on Lenin's death in 1924? | [25 marks] |
|----------|----------|--|-------------------|

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- | | | |
|------------|---|--------------|
| L5: | Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. | 21-25 |
| L4: | Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. | 16-20 |
| L3: | Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. | 11-15 |
| L2: | The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. | 6-10 |
| L1: | The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. | 1-5 |
| | Nothing worthy of credit. | 0 |

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students should be able to identify several reasons why the succession to the leadership was not straightforward in 1924, and why no one leader quickly emerged to take Lenin's place.

Arguments that suggest that some of the reasons were due to Lenin's own personality and the way that the Party and government operated might include:

- because of Lenin's great reputation as leader of the Bolsheviks in the 1917 Revolution and steering Russia through the difficult years after 1917, his position had been unchallengeable. He had no rivals for power and his would be a difficult act to follow
- despite Lenin's long illness and incapacity, his reputation was such that the succession was rarely if ever discussed, it was almost as if nobody could conceive of government and indeed Russia without Lenin
- partly for the reasons above, there was no mechanism in place for electing a party leader
- the ban on factions and emphasis on Party unity in 1921 meant that other politicians had to be cautious. Any attempt to manoeuvre for power or influence on the part of any individual might be interpreted as breaking Lenin's ban
- Lenin's Testament was crucial. It gave no decisive answer to the question of the succession. Lenin found something to criticise in all his colleagues. There was no indication that he favoured a particular individual above others. It is generally assumed that Lenin favoured some sort of collective leadership, but this was not spelled out.

Arguments that suggest that the uncertainty surrounding Lenin's death and the succession was also about their personalities, their ambitions and their policies might include:

- many Party members felt that one person should not be 'leader', but that a collective leadership or rule by committee would be a more socialist way of doing things, although that also opened the way for more indecision or debate, particularly since many in the party were already siding with the Right or the Left
- because of Trotsky's crucial role in the 1917 Revolution and the Civil War and in other key events such as the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, many people seem to have assumed that Trotsky would succeed to the leadership. But it was not that straightforward. Trotsky had enemies in the Party. Because of his role in the Red Army, there was fear of him mounting some sort of Napoleonic-style coup. He was no longer very popular in the army itself!
- Stalin already had considerable influence in the Party, being its General Secretary and he had also controlled access to Lenin in the last months of his life. However, Lenin had expressed grave doubts about his suitability and, in his Testament, actually urged colleagues to remove Stalin from any position of influence
- other potential successors had weaknesses as well as strengths. Kamenev and Zinoviev had power bases and had been close collaborators of Lenin. However, they had to live down their opposition to the timing of the Revolution in 1917. They underestimated Stalin

-
- Bukharin was personally popular and had the reputation of being the party's theorist, but was not widely seen as a leader
 - the failure to publicise Lenin's Testament contributed to the uncertainty as well as being caused by it. Because of its criticisms, individuals were reluctant to see it publicised. Already by 1924 the Party had become more authoritarian, with decisions made by relatively few people. There was certainly not going to be an election of a leader by all Party members
 - there had already been manoeuvring, which contributed to the uncertainty. Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev in the Triumvirate tried to combat Trotsky's influence. But it was not a solid alliance. Political infighting was already going on.

Students may conclude that the uncertainty about the succession was due to a range of these short and longer term factors and the uncertainty was not to be resolved for some time. They may conclude that the uncertainty was not just about personalities, since there were genuine debates and arguments for the best way forward for Russia, especially economically. But mutual suspicions and rivalries were also at work as seen in the changing alliances. The leadership was not really resolved until Stalin had defeated both Left and Right during the later 1920s. However, this is not a question of how and why Stalin defeated his rivals and a good answer should focus on the situation at the time of Lenin's death and in the succeeding months in 1924.

0 3 'There was a revolution in culture in the USSR between 1929 and 1941.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16-20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6-10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments about the position of culture in the USSR in 1929, might include:

- the regime took culture very seriously, since for Marxists cultural and intellectual life was an important part of social relations, and these had to be changed as well as economic and political structures if Socialist man and woman were to emerge as true citizens of the socialist utopia. Culture was not apolitical: it reflected, or should both reflect and support, the political system, the economic system and the society for which the regime was striving
- communists had also been anxious to reverse what they saw as Russia's previous cultural 'backwardness'
- already by 1929, the regime had repressed those intellectuals hostile to the regime's policies. Communists saw no contradiction between suppressing ideas with which they disagreed and promoting a new concept of 'culture'. Therefore experiments in fields such as art, architecture, poetry and film had already been both welcomed and promoted and sometimes criticised. There had been organised attacks against religion and other forms of cultural expression seen as inimical to the regime and too 'progressive' (i.e. 'anti-bourgeois')
- as part of the ending of NEP, the regime launched a strong attack on what were considered any remaining remnants of the old tainted cultural order. There was a renewed attack on 'unsuitable' intelligentsia, in the name of the proletariat. There was a deliberate anti-intellectualism, even though Stalin himself had already attacked the notion of egalitarianism
- in practice it meant that any artists, including writers and film directors, were attacked if they produced works not considered accessible to 'ordinary people'
- experimentation in art was attacked
- Socialist Realism became the basis of all Soviet art and other cultural forms. Socialist Realism was first defined at the First All Union Congress of Writers in 1934. It was a form of 'truthfulness' with the task of 'ideological transformation and education of workers in the spirit of socialism.' In the words of Peter Kenez, 'Socialist realism could best be understood in terms of what it excluded. It excluded above all ambiguity. It created a totally imaginary universe.'
- many famous writers were imprisoned or shot, e.g. Osip Manelshtam and Isaac Babel. Others who survived, like Boris Pasternak and Mikhail Bulgakov, could not publish some of their work. The classic novel of Socialist Realism was *How The Steel Was Tempered* (1932-4) with its working class hero. The most popular themes in the 1930s were aviation and exploration. A romanticised version of peasant or folk culture was promoted
- in the cinema, the Party dictated topics to filmmakers and made sure that required topics were covered. Stalin censored every Soviet film personally.

Arguments about the ‘revolution’ in culture after 1929, might include :

- after Stalin began the ‘Second Revolution’ in economic life in 1928/9, there were further radical changes in culture
- after 1933 more traditional values were reintroduced such as school uniforms and a renewed emphasis on teaching basic core subjects, with a particular stress on maths and sciences, because it was recognised that these skills were needed for a rapidly industrialising country
- another trend as the 1930s progressed was a resurgent Russian nationalism which affected culture – also seen in the promotion of Russian in the Republics at the expense of local languages and culture
- the personality cult of Stalin increased and pervaded culture
- experimentation in fine arts and music was banned. Science became suspect and there were few meaningful contacts with the outside world. Some sciences, like sociology, genetics and psychiatry, were completely abolished. History was rewritten
- there was a partial return to older values and more spontaneity. Then in 1936 there was another change, with ‘excesses’ in fields like jazz and films being checked again. The changes reflected political changes, but were always about the leadership’s desire to capture mass audiences.

Good answers cannot be expected to deal with all possible aspects of culture. But students should be aware of the main trends. The state had already interfered in culture before 1928, but state interference became much more pervasive after Stalin came to power and the nature of the politicisation and state control of culture did change during the 1930s as the nature of the regime and its priorities changed. So it is possible to talk of a ‘revolution’ in culture, but it did not all happen in one phase.

0 4	What was the importance of terror in keeping Stalin in power between 1945 and his death in 1953?	[25 marks]
------------	--	-------------------

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

L5:	Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement.	21-25
L4:	Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated.	16-20
L3:	Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist.	11-15
L2:	The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist.	6-10
L1:	The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment.	1-5
	Nothing worthy of credit.	0

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students should be able to identify the features of Stalinist Terror after 1945, but above all, consider its importance in sustaining Stalin's regime.

Arguments supporting the view that terror was important in keeping power, might include:

- terror had always been an integral part of Stalinism before 1945. It was present from the start and then it blossomed in the mid 1930s in the period of the 'Great Terror'. It was relaxed to some extent before 1941, but was retained during the war as part of the regime's determination to keep the population entirely and ruthlessly focused on the goal of survival and then victory. Soviet Russia had always been a police state, seeking out enemies of socialism, real or imagined, and enforcing compliance with the regime alongside other forms of influence or control such as propaganda and censorship
- a climate of fear and accompanying terror existed after the war. Stalin became increasingly destructive and paranoid, suspicious of everyone. It was also a period of 'hysterical isolationism' when the regime tried to isolate its citizens from the outside world. People were encouraged to be on guard against anti-Soviet influences, so anyone tempted to question the regime, let alone challenge it, had to be eliminated. Returning soldiers were sent to labour camps; returning prisoners of war were treated even worse. Beria's secret police and informers were everywhere
- Zhdanov's cultural purge, against cosmopolitanism and any threat to Socialist Realism, was accompanied by terror. Well-known cultural figures like Shostakovich and Akhmatova suffered ostracism or worse
- as the membership of the Party rose to over 5 million by 1950, Stalin took the opportunity to rid himself of possible rivals or others who were now considered superfluous or dangerous. The Leningrad affair, fabricated by Malenkov and Beria, began with the arrest of many party members, including Zhdanov's associates. Thousands of other party members were accused of conspiracy or treason and imprisoned or shot. It is possible that one of the reasons for the purges was Stalin's associates jockeying for position for when Stalin died
- Anti-Semitism was a feature of the terror. In the late 1940s many Jews were arrested for 'Zionist conspiracies'. Jewish shops, synagogues and schools were closed. The climax was the 'Doctors' Plot' of 1953 when several Jewish doctors who treated leading Communists were accused of poisoning Zhdanov and other prominent figures. Stalin was probably preparing for a new purge of the party at the time of his death.

Arguments challenging the view that terror was important in keeping power, might include:

- there were other reasons apart from Terror responsible for keeping Stalin in power. There was genuine admiration for Stalin for his successful leadership in the war, which left a strong legacy of patriotism, pride and optimism for the future
- the regime had always relied a lot on mass propaganda and this continued after 1945. It was particularly evident in the magnification of Stalin's already inflated personality cult. Propaganda was an important factor in maintaining enthusiasm, particularly of younger people

-
- the party was also held in high regard after the war, because of its role in the war and membership grew steadily to 1950
 - all means of communication were controlled by the state, through censorship, the state's monopoly of all means of communication, control of education and so on. Totalitarianism meant that all human life was controlled. No autonomous organisations were allowed
 - it is difficult to know exactly what many ordinary people thought. Living conditions were very poor, but people had very little access to the outside world and may have believed most of the regime's propaganda. It is unlikely that the regime's power rested on terror alone, since there were other powerful forces encouraging conformity. All citizens were educated and exhorted into fulfilling their role in building socialism, and this was reinforced by nationalism, emphasising pride in the USSR.

A good answer will consider the role of terror alongside other factors as the basis of the regime's support. Students may well conclude that Stalin's regime, like other forms of totalitarianism to a greater or lesser extent, was a combination of several influences or forces: control of people's minds, censorship, political control of education and a ban on all forms of individualism, unorthodoxy or dissent. In the background was terror and the debate is, was terror just one of several means of sustaining the regime's hold over the population, or was it the cement which bound everything else together and was therefore ultimately essential to the regime's survival?