



A-level HISTORY

Paper 2T The Crisis of Communism: The USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953–2000

Mark scheme

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 Unit 2 Specimen Mark Scheme

2T The Crisis of Communism: The USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953–2000

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 Gorbachev's reforms within the USSR. | [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.

Students are asked to analyse and evaluate these sources and assess their usefulness as evidence about Gorbachev's reforms. Answers may choose to deal with each source in turn; or to make a comparative evaluation, linking the sources together. Either approach is valid.

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

Provenance

- this is an article from a Soviet newspaper, which is seeking to influence the Russian people and put out a public statement
- it comes directly from Gorbachev who wishes to dispel the impression that he is seeking to destroy socialism
- the date 1987 is significant, being just 2 years after Gorbachev became the Soviet leader and therefore representing an early stage in his reform thinking.

Content and Argument

- the source suggests Gorbachev is facing criticism about his proposed reform in the USSR and offers arguments to deny this
- the source refers to the desire to promote internationalism and 'human values'
- Gorbachev argues that he is not abandoning socialism
- Gorbachev denies any attempt to set up a Western-style democracy.

Tone and Emphasis

- the tone is direct and clear – trying to convey a viewpoint
- Gorbachev may be defensive but he speaks with authority
- the emphasis is on Gorbachev's leadership and his command over what is happening in the USSR.

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

Provenance

- this is from a speech given by Gorbachev at the opening of a Soviet Party Conference; it would therefore be published in Pravda and its contents become publicly known
- it comes from the soviet leader himself and is designed to give a clear indication of future policy – direction for the delegates – and the wider world
- it was given in 1988 after the perestroika initiative but before extensive democratic reform
- the report was publicly available and its writers might have expected to see its findings in the national press – so are clearly concerned to make their view of working-class women clear.

Content and argument

- the source speaks of the need to embed perestroika into future development
- it admits to deficiencies in working class representation in the past and suggests that the only way to preserve perestroika is to develop democratic procedures, e.g. with a new Congress of People's Deputies and promotion of political rights
- it warns against allowing perestroika to flounder.

Tone and emphasis

- the tone is forceful – seeking to both persuade and warn of the consequences of not taking further steps
- it suggests frustration and the importance of speed, speaking of the need for 'vigorous action' and lamenting, 'for how long...'
- it uses a rhetorical question to get the deputies involved and prick their consciences.

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

Provenance

- this source comes from a policy analysis published in an American journal by the Chairman of an academic university department
- it represents a Western and American perspective and is intended to provoke questioning in Western circles
- it was written in March 1989 – before the collapse of Communism and 4 years into Gorbachev's leadership and reforming programme, so providing an overview of developments to that date.

Content and argument

- the source acknowledges Gorbachev's sincerity in carrying out economic reform and points out that this is essential to prevent Soviet decline
- it suggests greater democracy will be needed to continue this process but that not a lot has been seen by this point
- it suggests that without democratisation, reforms will collapse and suggests that the 1989 elections will show Gorbachev's true intentions.

Tone and emphasis

- the tone is reasonably objective although it reveals the writer's opinion in 'hints at'; the results will reveal whether Gorbachev is 'at all serious'
- its emphasis is on the importance of what was happening at the time – 1989 – suggesting that the future of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's reforms were dependent on the attitude shown in the forthcoming elections.

In summary

- all three sources provide views on Gorbachev's reforms within the USSR but their differing dates help account for some differences of emphasis and message between them
- while Source A denies any intention to pursue Western-style democracy, whereas Sources B and C both view democratisation as essential in order to carry through other reforms
- all three sources show Gorbachev's commitment to Perestroika but they are divided on his attitude to Glasnost and democracy.

Section B

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|---|-------------------|
| 0 | 2 | To what extent did Khrushchev bring about a 'great thaw' within the Soviet Union during his years in power? | [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 will need to consider what is meant by 'the great thaw' (which will involve some reference to what had gone before) and examine a variety of aspects of life in which this might be said to have occurred – or failed to occur during Khrushchev's years (c1953–1964). Areas for consideration might include political, religious, economic, nationalist and cultural and students should address more than one of these for a mark of Level 3 or higher. Students will need to provide a balanced argument, distinguishing between evidence of greater liberalisation (thaw) and evidence of continued repression and control.

Students may suggest that there was a 'great thaw' politically with reference to:

- relaxation in some political controls at beginning of period of rule, e.g. end of Beria and others of the 'old guard'; amnesties for political prisoners
- de-Stalinisation and the 'secret speech' of 1956
- opening of labour camps
- moves to decentralisation of economy – regional economic councils and dismantling of some agricultural controls
- end to 'socialist realism'; new histories of the party, less censorship; greater freedom for writers and artists
- improvement in standards of living with more consumer goods, a rise in household income and increase in pensions and benefits.

Students may suggest that there was no 'great thaw' politically with reference to:

- continued pressure of religious groups with demolition of Orthodox Churches and pressure on Muslims and Jews
- Pasternak not allowed to publish *Dr Zhivago* in the USSR and not allowed to collect his Nobel prize for Literature in 1958; Solzhenitsyn also suffered from continuing control of the Union of Soviet Writers (although was allowed to publish *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*)
- no self-government for nationalities
- the government still refused to abandon central planning in industry or give full economic independence to farmers, permitting market trading, thus the effect of the few decentralising measures was limited
- although the standard of living improved, housing remained poor in cities and goods, such as cars – common in the West, were rare luxuries.

Students are likely to conclude that, whilst there was some degree of 'thaw', this did not go far enough to be termed 'great'. Khrushchev maintained a firm belief in Communism and some of his reforms (e.g. decentralisation measures) actually only entrenched the system further, adding another layer of bureaucracy. The thaw was probably strongest in the artistic/cultural area, but even here, artists and writers were not allowed complete freedom.

0 3 'A successful socialist society.'

Assess the validity of this view of the GDR under Honecker's leadership.

[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.

In order to address the extent to which a 'successful socialist society' was created in the GDR during the years of Honecker's leadership (1971–1989), students will need to consider how the success of a society can be measured. They will also need to address the specific term 'socialist society' (which they could even criticise) and what Honecker was hoping to achieve within the GDR. Having defined their terms, students should balance the social successes and failures in this period in order to offer an overall judgement.

Students may suggest that a successful socialist society was created with reference to:

- this was a period of stability giving sense of security; most people accepted and worked within the system, taking pride in the GDR's achievements, especially in sport
- a new generation of East Germans had been brought up knowing nothing else but socialist society which they accepted as the norm
- control of education and monopoly of propaganda ensured loyalty and there was criticism of Americanisation – particularly among those in government service
- socialist organisations – sports clubs, art and leisure centres, women's and youth groups, socialist trade unions – had high membership rates and appeared very enthusiastically supported
- socialist holidays and parades on National days were welcomed with high levels of participation
- members of the GDR enjoyed regular employment, an apartment and welfare provision; living standards improved under Honecker, with greater ownership of fridges, TVs and cars, so people felt 'well-off' – particularly in comparison with the rest of the Eastern bloc. They enjoyed a 'niche society'.

Students may suggest that a successful socialist society was not created with reference to:

- membership of socialist organisations did not necessarily imply ideological commitment. People had no choice but to join socialist organisations if they wanted to pursue an interest, e.g. sport
- outward conformity to socialism was necessary in order to get a university place or advance a career
- many showed private indifference or, at best, outward acceptance, rather than fervent socialist commitment. Plenty of examples of individuals 'playing the system' (e.g. to get hold of scarce commodities)
- elites enjoyed a privileged existence which could challenge the concept of a 'socialist society'; Wanderlitz, north of Berlin, provided exclusive facilities for the party bosses which contrasted with the everyday shortages encountered by most
- Western television was popular and became increasingly so over this period
- the continued existence of the Stasi, use of informers, the retention of the Berlin Wall and strongly enforced border controls, all suggest a people held against its will and forced to conform. The Stasi were active in compiling reports and recording individual protest (evidence of which has been made available since the collapse of the Communist state). Furthermore, a minority of activists sought reform in 1970s–1980s forming groups under Church auspices to protest against lack of

personal freedom and constant surveillance.

In summary, students are likely to argue that despite its outward appearance, the GDR was not a 'successful socialist state' under Honecker. Many will point out that Honecker really believed he had created a state of 'actually existing socialism' and that his supreme self-confidence blinded him to the realities of life and his failure to embed lasting socialism in the GDR.

0 4 To what extent was the collapse of the Soviet Empire in central and Eastern Europe in 1989 due to 'people power'?

[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 will need to consider the reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Empire in central and Eastern Europe and assess the importance of 'people power' as one of these. The best answers will show the links between the various reasons and make supported judgements as well as writing with authority and precision on the focus of the question.

Students may suggest the collapse of the Soviet Empire in central and Eastern Europe in 1989 was due to 'people power' with reference to:

- the influence of Solidarity in Poland (with particular emphasis on the workers and their economic power – holding the government to ransom through strike activity)
- Nationalism was strong in satellites and its resurgence accompanied the continued deterioration of living standards and fears for cultural identity led intellectuals/literary and musical figures (as particularly seen in Czechoslovakia) to inspire a popular following and lead pressure for change
- the influence of reform-minded activists and groups such as Charter 77 and Civic Forum (Czechoslovakia), New Forum and Democracy Now (GDR)
- the power of the crowds in the GDR forcing political change: flight through Hungary (May); the freedom trains; support to Gorbachev at mass meetings, October; the Leipzig marches; pressure of numbers leading to the fall of the Berlin Wall, November
- the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia; the riots against Ceausescu in Romania; demonstrations against Communism in Bulgaria
- 'people power' also seen as free elections were held, e.g. first non-Communist government in Poland (June); changes in Czechoslovakia (November).

Students may suggest the collapse of the Soviet Empire in central and Eastern Europe in 1989 was not due to 'people power' and that other factors were more important with reference to:

- favourable climate for change brought about by renunciation of Brezhnev doctrine and example set by Gorbachev in the USSR
- outside inspiration – Pope (particularly influential in Poland); Reagan; Thatcher; collapse of Cold War tensions
- entrenched hard-line Communist rulers, whose failure to reform/adopt flexible policies meant that political systems proved unable to respond to change and were therefore overthrown
- economic forces which surfaced once Soviet support disappeared
- powerful individual leaders such as Lech Walesa or Victor Havel who kept the fight alive.

Students may conclude that people power was an important element of the collapse, but they are likely to point out that it was only in the context of the changes that had taken place by 1989, that 'people power' could have any effect. (Comparison with the failure of 'people

power' in Czechoslovakia in 1968, for example, might be made.) Among these, changes within the USSR and its outlook were crucial but, even then, Communism might not have collapsed had individual rulers been more amenable to reform.

