

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y223/01 Summer 2023 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper Y223/01 series overview

Y223/01 is one of twenty four units in Paper 2 for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 years through a short-answer essay and a traditional essay. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short-answer essay and a traditional essay and candidates had to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short-answer essay question, candidates needed to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates needed to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels, candidates needed to assess the issues they discussed and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short-answer essay</li> <li>• reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important</li> <li>• linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question</li> <li>• discussed at least two relevant issues in depth</li> <li>• gave supporting detail, that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic</li> <li>• reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question</li> <li>• made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way</li> <li>• produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response</li> <li>• were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question</li> <li>• showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay</li> <li>• were unable to support their response with relevant or accurate material</li> <li>• did not focus on the precise wording of the question</li> <li>• made unsupported comments about issues, which were no more than assertions.</li> </ul>

## Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Which of the following had the greatest impact upon international relations in Europe in the period from 1956 to 1984?

- (i) Events in Poland
- (ii) Events in Germany

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

**[10]**

This was the more popular of the two questions and elicited a good range of responses. Candidates were able to write in detail about both countries and across the whole period and they were suitably rewarded. Where candidates didn't cover the whole period, they were restricted to the lower levels of the mark scheme. The best responses examined the impact of events on European affairs, with candidates seeing events in Poland in 1956 as precipitating unrest in Hungary, or the rise of Solidarity as being integral to the collapse of the Soviet Union later. Similarly, in Germany, candidates generally examined the impact of the Berlin Wall as cementing the Cold War. The best responses also examined the role of Brandt's Ostpolitik as being a prelude to better relations as seen in the Basic Treaty.

## Exemplar 1

1	a	<p><del>Poland had the greatest impact upon interna</del></p> <p>Poland had a significant impact upon international relations in Europe due to its 1956 uprising which inspired Hungary's uprising in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. Poland's uprising has a significant impact upon international relations because it was the first time a satellite state had risen up and publicly voiced their grievances since Stalin's death in 1953. This tested Khrushchev's policy of de-Stalinisation, and his secret speech as to how Khrushchev would react. His reaction would have a significant impact on international relations because the West could learn from his decisions if de-Stalinisation was actually occurring, or if it was just a ploy of fear for his vast repression. However, the events in Poland was not the greatest impact on international relations because the West had already accepted the USSR dominance in Eastern Europe, so no matter what occurred with Poland, it would unlikely change the West's stance on relations. Furthermore, the events in Poland had little impact on relations because there was no invasion of Poland, just the Solidarity movement was repressed, having a long term effect outside of 1984 (via winning the 1989 general election). However, Poland still had some impact on relations because it inspired future uprisings, which however did lead to the Brezhnev Doctrine. Overall, Poland <del>wasn't</del> didn't have the greatest impact on relations due to limited change internationally. Poland just changed leaders to the United Reform Committee, and then kept quiet until 1980s where the Solidarity movement rose up. Long term it did have an impact as it tested de-Stalinisation and Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, but short term it was limited, and <del>more</del> really highlighted any significant changes after 1956.</p> <p>The events in Germany had the greatest impact upon international</p>
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relations in Europe due to it always being the geopolitical centre of the Cold War. One example of this was the construction of the Berlin wall due to the vast number of refugees fleeing from East Germany to West Germany. By 1955, East Germany had lost 20% of its population and in 1961, July, they had lost 39k in just a month. This was causing a brain drain in East Germany, hence the construction of the Berlin wall. The Berlin wall impacted international relations as it became the stand-off for any potential confrontation and a large political divide which remained until 1989. The Berlin wall became a flashpoint of tension (e.g. Checkpoint Charlie) and could've sparked World War Three at any point, therefore impacting international relations. Germany also led the way in détente in the 70s via the Basic Treaty in 1972, which led to the formal recognition of each state. This was significant because it led the way on détente, a cooling of tensions, via encouraging mutual co-operation, and a de-escalation of tensions via SALT I/II Treaties, Helsinki Accords 1975 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968). The events in Germany had a significant impact upon international relations in Europe because it was the geopolitical centre, as everything that Germany led the way in bringing to tensions, to the de-escalation of tensions. Germany and Berlin became the significant landmark of the Cold War, which when the Berlin wall fell in 1989, so did the Cold War.

Overall, the events in Germany had the greatest impact upon international relations due to it being the geo-political centre of the Cold War, and leading the way in the period of détente in the 70s. However, the events in Poland did trigger a

		<p>uprising across Eastern Europe, testing the USSR policy of co-existence, however, due to the Suez canal, and the West's acceptance of the East Germany being behind the USSR's Iron Curtain and there being the satellite states, all it did was continue tensions on. Both provided long term sources of conflict in relation between the East and West, however, overall, the events in Germany were the most significant.</p>
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Exemplar 1 shows an excellent response to this question. It was given Level 6: 10 marks.

**Question 1 (b)\***

**(b)\*** 'The Berlin Blockade was the most important event in the development of the Cold War in Europe in the period from 1946 to 1955.' How far do you agree? **[20]**

This question was generally well answered by candidates, who found a good range of events to discuss across the period. The best responses ensured that they chose events from within the given date range and analysed and evaluated the importance of the factors chosen. Most were able to examine the Blockade in great detail, although a small number confused this with the building of the Berlin Wall, outside the period in question. The best responses were able to show how the Blockade cemented the Cold War and led to the creation of East and West Germany. This event was compared to Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe, Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech, Marshall Aid as well as the development of armed alliances.



## Exemplar 2

1	b	<p>The period from 1946 to 1955 saw some of the most significant developments in the Cold War, as the Western allies and the USSR went from allies fighting Nazism to competing superpowers fighting an ideological battle. An important event in this period was the Berlin Blockade, which saw the two powers actively oppose each other in their foreign policy, however American policies in Europe, and particularly Stalin's actions in Europe drove the development of the Cold War on a larger scale.</p> <p>It had been finalised at the Potsdam Conference in 1945 that Berlin, despite being the Soviet zone of Germany, would also be split into zones controlled by the USSR, USA, Britain, and France, since it was the most important and largest city in Germany. However, Stalin <del>was</del> wanted to get rid of this</p>
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island of capitalism in the middle of eastern Germany, and when the western zones introduced a joint currency, the Deutschmark in June 1948, Stalin saw the event as a threat, and decided to cut off all transport ~~from~~ between West Berlin and the rest of eastern Germany and ~~the~~ the West, from the 23rd to 24th June 1948. He hoped that, by starving the 2 million who lived in West Berlin, the West would allow him full control of Berlin, but the West responded with the Berlin Airlift on 26th June. Soon, planes were landing with supplies once every 90 seconds to keep the citizens of West Berlin alive. The USSR was seen as the clear aggressor in the situation, while the West were seen as passive, particularly with help from ~~propaganda~~ figures like the 'Candy Bomber', who gave

sweets the the children of the city. It was also the first significant moment of direct ~~opposit~~ military opposition between the Western powers and the USSR, which solidified their opposing aims. In the end, Stalin stopped the blockade in May 1949, and the West were seen as the victors. This moment epitomised the tensions between the powers from 1946 to 1955, but did less to develop the Cold War.

Rather, ~~the~~ Soviet actions in Eastern Europe developed the ~~own~~ rivalry between the USSR and the West. Despite having agreed to free elections in Eastern European states at the wartime conferences of Yalta and Potsdam (1945), Stalin started installing pro-Soviet communist governments in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany, deposing their

pre-war governments, many of whom were exiled in London. He used intimidation and rigged elections to ensure that loyal communists led the satellite states, for example Dimitrov in Bulgaria and Gomulka in Poland. This angered the West, not only because it went against the agreements of the wartime conferences, but also because it exemplified the communist idea of worldwide revolution and expansionism, which the West feared. Significantly, it also split Europe in half, as Churchill explained in his 'Iron Curtain' speech in 1946. Stalin solidified the Eastern Bloc with Cominform in 1947 and Comecon in 1949, and later the Warsaw Pact in 1955, which was a military alliance between the USSR and the satellite states, putting them in direct opposition to Western Europe.

united through NATO. It is also clear that these communist governments were not always desired by the people, for example the GDR Uprising in ~~the~~ 1953 demonstrated discontent with Ulbricht's strict communist regime. Therefore, the USSR's almost imperial installation of pro-soviet communist governments in Eastern Europe, which he had totally achieved by 1949, served to split Europe into two separate blocs, and ~~do~~ thus develop the rivalry in Europe and the rivalry with the USA further.

However, the actions of the USA must not be ignored, as they also developed the Cold War. For example, the Marshall Plan in 1947 was seen by some as 'dollar imperialism' as they vied for influence in Europe, attempting to keep countries capitalist and pro-USA in

opposition to the actions of the USSR. Their policy of containment in the Truman Doctrine of 1947 also showed the US' stark opposition to communism, which further fuelled the tension between them and the USSR. They also played a large role in the creation of NATO in 1949, an military alliance between the Western Bloc country, which seemed ~~don~~ to aim to defend them from Soviet aggression. Therefore, American policies in Europe also developed the tensions of the Cold War.

In conclusion, the actions of the USSR and USA developed the tense relations ~~between~~ between East and West, that was seen in the significant moment of the Berlin Blockade. However, Stalin's imperial, ~~and~~ undemocratic, and aggressive actions in Eastern Europe in order to create a buffer zone ~~caused~~ <sup>led to</sup> the split between East and West that would characterise the Cold War for years to come.

A good response is noted in Exemplar 2. This was given Level 6: 18 marks.

**Misconception**

Many candidates confused the Berlin Blockade with the building of the Berlin Wall.

**Question 2 (a)**

**2 (a)** Which of the following was most affected by Soviet control of Eastern Europe in the period from 1946 to 1955?

**(i)** Economic conditions

**(ii)** Social conditions

Explain your answer with reference to both **(i)** and **(ii)**.

**[10]**

This question elicited a wide range of responses with a variety of approaches taken. The best responses tended to look more generally at features of Soviet control. There were some good responses that focused on specific countries in Eastern Europe, in particular the DDR. No set approach was required. Those that did well examined issues such as collectivisation, nationalisation of industry and living standards when considering the economy. In examining social conditions many examined the role of women, education, mass organisations and the impact of the police state in these countries.

## Exemplar 3

2	a	<p>Soviet control over Eastern Europe was achieved through the outcomes of WWII. Stalin imposed a strict and totalitarian regime over these satellite states which affected social conditions. But the changes to economic conditions affected the countries in Eastern Europe more.</p>
		<p>Social conditions were affected by Soviet control in Eastern Europe but to a lesser extent than the economic conditions. This is seen particularly through Cominform which was established in 1946. Stalin created this as a conference to which all of Eastern Europe as well as France and Italy were invited. It was a group of countries that would discuss how to use communist or socialist ideals in these nations. In actuality, it was a control tactic which only ended up affecting the Eastern Bloc. However, the ideals that were imposed here would go on to affect the citizens of the countries attending. However, some countries were able to resist the social reforms pushed onto them as evidenced through Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was already a communist country when Stalin arrived which limited the damage he could make - particularly due to the fact that the people were fiercely loyal to Tito. Stalin was more lenient towards Yugoslavia as it was furthest away from the Soviet border which meant he viewed it as least important to Stalin's buffer zone. Despite these reasons, Stalin's leniency towards Yugoslavia shows how the</p>



social ~~reform~~ conditions were least affected. An opposite to this was Poland who was seen as crucial to the buffer zone. Terror was a tactic that was favoured by Stalin and he imposed this on the Polish people. Stalin even killed many of the Polish government when they arrived back from London, immediately sending them to Moscow. This use of fear shaped the social conditions of the Polish people for decades. Therefore, ~~though~~ although Stalin was incredibly strict on the Polish social conditions, his leniency towards other countries like ~~the~~ Yugoslavia shows how there was limited change in social conditions because of Soviet control over Eastern Europe compared to his impact on economic conditions.

Economic conditions were more affected by Soviet control over Eastern Europe compared to social conditions. Similarly to Communism, in 1948 Stalin established Cominform which told countries in the Eastern Bloc how to manage their economy. This mostly involved telling more developed countries to do heavy industry and others to make use of firms. These impositions on economic conditions severely affected the people of the Eastern Bloc and damaged their economies for several decades. Furthermore those in Cominform were forbidden to trade with the West which further damaged business in the Eastern bloc. Those who didn't comply would be

		<p>         ousid from the group like in cases like Yugoslavia.          This was because of more economic imposition -          Marshall Aid. Marshall Aid was set up by President          Truman who gave 5 billion US dollars to countries          in Europe to help recover from WWII. Stalin          forbid any countries under his control from accepting          Marshall Aid - all except Yugoslavia which they got          ejected from Comcon. This was because damaged countries like          Finland which desperately needed the money that          the USSR was not giving them. This case shows          how badly the USSR's control over Eastern Europe          affected the economic conditions. Overall, Soviet control          damaged the economic condition of the Eastern Bloc more          than it did social conditions.       </p>
		<p>         In conclusion, the USSR's use of terror and          exclusion does not outweigh the economic          impositions they placed on countries in the Eastern Bloc.          Therefore, the economic conditions of the Eastern Bloc          were more affected by Soviet control than social          conditions.       </p>

Exemplar 3 highlights an uneven approach to the question, which is better on the economy than social conditions. It was given Level 4: 6 marks.

### Question 2 (b)\*

(b)\* To what extent were American presidents responsible for the origins of the Cold War in Europe in the period from 1941 to 1945?

[20]

This was generally well answered. The best responses considered both the actions of Truman and Roosevelt when investigating the actions of American presidents, although the vast majority focused largely on Truman. Those that did well considered Roosevelt's acceptance of Russian hegemony in the east and the division of Germany and compared Truman's more hard-line stance after the use of the atomic bombs in Japan. This was then contrasted with other factors including the ideological clashes between capitalism and communism, actions in Poland, the issue of the second front and the actions of the Red Army.

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