



# Examiners' Report

## Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In History (1HIA)

Paper 3: Modern depth study

Option 32: Mao's China, c1945–76

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It was pleasing to see that students seemed confident in tackling this paper after a three-year gap in formal examinations. They coped well with the range of question styles, which covered all four Assessment Objectives, and they responded particularly well to the enquiry 'package' in question 3.

Questions on this paper cover all the Assessment Objectives but over half of the available marks are for question 3, which focuses on sources and interpretations. These questions form a coherent package leading to a final question in which students, having explored the utility of the provided sources, analyse the different views presented in the interpretations and the reasons for those differences; they are then invited to judge the extent to which they agree with one of the interpretations. It is therefore important that students appreciate the difference between sources and interpretations, and the focus of different parts of question 3.

The answer space provided is intended to be sufficient for the question to be answered in full and, although some students did write on extra sheets, they were not always as successful as those who produced more concise answers. Where additional space is needed, it is important that students clearly state in the answer space for the question that it has been continued on an additional sheet of paper and the continued answer should be clearly labelled. Answers should not be continued in the answer space for another question. However, in many cases where additional paper had been taken, the marks had already been attained within the space provided rather than on the extra paper and students should be discouraged from assuming that lengthy answers will automatically score highly. Indeed, students taking extra paper sometimes ran out of time on the final, high mark question and therefore disadvantaged themselves.

### **Question 1**

This question requires students to make two inferences from a source and it is sometimes regarded as an 'easy' question. However, students need to be sure that the inferences they make from the source are not dependent on their own knowledge. For example, the source mentioned people 'waving their Little Red Books in the air' and some students linked this to a claim that the audience at the rallies consisted of members of the Red Guard, but this is not a valid inference from the source since it requires the use of additional knowledge.

The focus of the question also needs to be addressed; inferences had to be about mass rallies, not the cult of Mao. Similarly, inferences about Jung Chang's attitude to Mao were not valid answers to this question.

It should be recognised that details from the source can only be rewarded if they are provided as support for an inference. No marks were available for students who provided simple paraphrases of the source, for example the inference that people wanted to see Mao being supported by the detail from the source that 'Everyone wanted to see Mao in person'.

1 Give **two** things you can infer from Source A about the mass rallies held during the Cultural Revolution.

Q01

Complete the table below to explain your answer.

(i) What I can infer:

who attended the mass rallies  
Many people, had a ~~the~~ great respect and love for him ~~who attended the mass rallies~~  
rallies

Details in the source that tell me this:

"excited shouts of 'Long live Chairman Mao!'"

(ii) What I can infer:

People may have attended the mass rallies in order to see Mao in person

Details in the source that tell me this:

"only a glimpse of his back? The sun seemed suddenly to have turned grey"

#### Comment:

The two inferences are both focused on the rallies and are supported from the source. It therefore scores 4 marks.

#### Examiner Tip

Make sure the supporting detail is linked to the inference being made.

1 Give **two** things you can infer from Source A about the mass rallies held during the Cultural Revolution.

Q01 0

Complete the table below to explain your answer.

(i) What I can infer:

Mao was very important to many of the public especially during the Cultural Revolution when he rose in power once again.

Details in the source that tell me this:

"Everyone wanted to see Mao in person"

(ii) What I can infer:

The person seems to part of the cult of Mao which began in 1965. The cult of Mao was a group of people who idolised Mao and made him the <sup>centre of</sup> their lives.

Details in the source that tell me this:

"Was that all I would see of Chairman Mao?"  
"Life seemed pointless"

### Comment:

Although a detail from the source is included, the first inference is about Mao's importance and the Cultural Revolution; it is not about mass rallies. The second inference is about the author and the cult of Mao. Again, it misses the focus of the question. This answer scores 0 even though details from the source are being used.

### Examiner Tip

Make sure the inferences being made are relevant to the focus stated in the question.

## Question 2

In question 2, the focus will always be on causation, but the question does not require a judgement to be made or for the answer to prioritise or show interaction of factors, and no marks were available to reward such evaluation, however strongly argued. Instead, the most successful students showed a consistent analytical focus throughout their answers, and many were able to access Level 4 by doing so.

The stimulus points in the question will often be useful reminders to students of specific areas of content about which they can write. Students do not need to use these stimulus points but there is an expectation that there will be some depth of knowledge, shown by three discrete aspects of content being covered, although this does not mean students need to identify three different causes or events.

A number of answers remained at Level 3, despite excellent knowledge, because they missed the focus of the question. The mark scheme's bullet point for Assessment Objective 2 (analysis) at Level 4 expects an analytical explanation, directed consistently at the conceptual focus of the question. Students who responded to the topic rather than the key idea were unlikely to achieve high marks. Those who did reach Level 4 realised that the topic provides the context but that there is a specific focus, which the analysis should address.

Students should also realise that any information in the sources and the interpretations for question 3 is unlikely to be relevant here and furthermore, any attempt to use such details in this question is likely to mean that those sections of the answer cannot be rewarded, and that the answer as a whole then lacks coherence. In this case, question 2 was about the reasons why Mao was in a dominant position at the start of Communist rule in China, whereas the support for Mao described in Source A was in 1966 and the focus of Question 3 was on the years 1958-62.

Many students had excellent knowledge about Mao's role during the civil war in China, his relations with key individuals such as Lin Biao, his adaptation of Marxism and the reasons why the reforms Mao introduced appealed to the peasants.

However, some knowledgeable students failed to score highly because they did not properly address the focus of the question. These answers were often descriptive of events during the civil war, dating back to the Long March during the 1930s, but did not show why these events aided Mao's rise within the CCP or why they increased his status among Chinese peasants.

2 Explain why Mao was in a dominant position at the start of communist rule in China.

(12) 002 12

You **may** use the following in your answer:

- guerrilla warfare in the Civil War
- Chinese nationalism

You **must** also use information of your own.

win civil war → intellectual → Maoism  
8000 miles long march  
→ lead party tough times  
and hard talent.  
→ strategy (PLA surround)

The main reason for Mao's dominant position was his reputation as an intellectual who had been able to fit Marxism to the situation in China. He created 'Marxism with Chinese characteristics' which allowed the traditional ideas of Marx to be implemented in China. Many Marxists believed that communism couldn't be applied to a country which didn't have a very ~~big~~ large industry, like China, however Mao proved this to be wrong. Communism and Marxism appealed to the peasants as it emphasised equality between them and landlords and supported land reform. Therefore, his reputation as an intellectual made Mao dominant at the start of communist rule as it proved him to be clever and his ideas, such as Maoism, gained the support of the peasants, meaning his authority was increased.

Another reason for Mao's dominant position was his effective strategies and tactics displayed in the Civil War. For example, he played to the strengths of the smaller ~~army~~ army of the PLA.

Compared to the much larger GMD army of 2.5 million, by using guerrilla warfare. He also masterminded an effective ~~strategy~~ strategy to surround the cities of the GMD so they couldn't retreat meaning they lost 1/3 of their troops, control of Manchuria and a large amount of artillery. This meant ~~the~~ Mao's army then gained the advantage - 22,800 pieces of artillery compared to the GMD's 21,000. These strategies meant Mao was in a dominant position as they were highly effective and proved to be much more successful than those of the GMD. This links to the factor of Mao's reputation as an intellectual as his ~~strategies~~ tactics gained support for him as they were clever and well thought through which elevated his status as an intellectual.

Another reason for Mao's dominant position was ~~his~~ his <sup>known</sup> past experience of leading the Party through tough times. For example, ~~he~~ he <sup>had</sup> led the CCP on the 'Long March' of 8000 miles in order to escape extermination by the GMD. This meant that Mao protected the CCP from being knocked out of the Civil War, and he used his oratory talent to ~~to~~ attract new members to the PLA to rebuild his forces. Also, during the Civil War, he led the PLA effectively,



communicating well and efficiently with his generals such as Liu Bocheng and Lin Biao. During the Huai-Hai campaign, <sup>whose</sup> ~~he~~ ~~gained~~ ~~the~~ ~~present~~ ~~support~~ ~~of~~ ~~1.6~~ million peasants supported him, ~~and~~ ~~he~~ ~~led~~ the CCP ~~to~~ victory, which was shown to be a very big achievement as the GMD had had the advantage at the start of the war. Therefore, Mao's history of good leadership through the hard times of the Civil War and the Long March, proved by the CCP's victory in the Civil War, gave Mao a dominant position. ~~with~~ ~~his~~ ~~reputation~~ This links to the factor of Mao's reputation as an intellectual as his oratory talents displayed as he recruited people ~~to~~ and peasants to join the CCP's side after the Long March ~~cemented~~ <sup>cemented</sup> this portrayal and view as Mao ~~as~~ as a clever and effective intellectual leader.

#### Comment:

Each paragraph starts with an analytical point, provides precise supporting detail and ends with a clear explanation of the significance of this analysis in relation to the question. The argument is coherent and well-structured. This meets the demands of Level 4 for both Assessment Objective 2 (analysis) and Assessment Objective 1 (knowledge and understanding). It scored the full 12 marks.

#### Tip:

Make sure you analyse the question in order to understand the skill being assessed (analysis of causation), the topic and focus (Mao's dominant position) and the time frame (at the start of communist rule).

2 Explain why Mao was in a dominant position at the start of communist rule in China.

(12)

002

7

You **may** use the following in your answer:

- guerrilla warfare in the Civil War
- Chinese nationalism

You **must** also use information of your own.

One reason Mao was in a dominant position at the start of the communist rule in China was because of his use of guerrilla warfare in the Civil War. Although at the start of the civil war, the GMD was in a much stronger position with more weapons and an army twice the size of the PLA, the CCP still managed to win the civil war. This was because of the guerrilla warfare used which worked well for ambushing the GMD's many soldiers. Furthermore, during the civil war Mao had good leadership skills when he told the PLA to retreat so that the CCP still remained in the Civil War. This allowed him to have a dominant position because the people within the CCP respected Mao's leadership and were awestruck by his ability to win the civil war with many less soldiers.

Another reason, Mao was in a dominant position at the start of the communist rule in China was because of the support of the people. Due to Mao's belief in land reform he had the support of many peasants who wanted their land back. He also had a strong belief in women's rights which gained him the support of women in China. He also had his own belief in Maoism which suggested the peasants should be in charge of the revolution rather than the proletariat. This gained him a dominant position because he was very popular.

### Comment

This starts by identifying a factor in Mao's dominance (his use of guerrilla warfare) but does not develop it. Instead, the answer describes the relative strength of the GMD and the CCP and states that guerrilla warfare was important. However, it then makes a valid point of analysis

about Mao's leadership skills, which made people respect him and allowed him to have a dominant position.

The second paragraph says that Mao became dominant and gained the support of the people because of his ideas about land reform, women's rights and his views on revolution, but no details are offered.

This answer reaches Level 3 for AO2 (analysis) but Level 2 for AO1 (knowledge and understanding). A 'best-fit' approach to marking produced a mark of 7, Level 3.

### Tip

Make sure you offer some detail to support each point of analysis.

### Question 3a

Question 3 (a) targets the ability to analyse and evaluate source utility and, in doing so, introduces the enquiry which will be dealt with in further detail in questions 3(b), 3(c) and 3(d).

In question 3 (a) students are expected to evaluate the usefulness of the content, taking account of the provenance of the sources and applying contextual knowledge in making judgements about the utility of the sources as evidence for the specific enquiry, in this case the causes of the Great Famine. These strands are linked and should be dealt with together, rather than in isolation. There is no need to compare the two sources and, indeed, only a handful of students did attempt to do this.

Students found the sources accessible and were confident in showing that the content of the sources was relevant for the enquiry and therefore useful. They could also make a number of points about the significance of the provenance for the usefulness of the content, although sometimes this consisted of simple statements rather than a developed explanation. When considering provenance, generic comments about a source being biased (with no explanation of how that bias could be detected or why it occurred) or about the source being reliable because it came from the time under investigation, could be made without any reference to the individual source and therefore remained at Level 1. This type of generic assumption was seen when some answers assumed that the authors of the sources would be biased or made the assumption that the diary of a Soviet official would be unreliable.

At Level 2, developed comments were made about the content of the sources, for example the fact that in Source B, different types of natural disasters were listed or the comment in Source C that the reports of grain harvests had been exaggerated.

There were also good comments made about the provenance of the sources. The fact that B was from the diary of a Soviet official after a private conversation with a Chinese official was seen as a reason why the account was reliable, but also seen as potentially unreliable because the Chinese official might have been afraid to speak the truth, or his comments indicated the view that the Chinese government wanted to present.

However, some very good answers could not access the higher marks because they did not include contextual knowledge. Contextual knowledge is mentioned at every level of the mark scheme and failure to include it limited a number of otherwise good answers. Students should recognise that it is not enough to repeat a detail from the source and assert that this can be

confirmed from the candidate's own knowledge or to give generalised comments such as 'I know that there were floods and droughts' – some additional detail is needed as a demonstration of that own knowledge. Contextual knowledge should be relevant to the enquiry and used to assess the source, for example to add detail about something mentioned in the source, to add weight to an aspect of the provenance, to place the source in a broader context, or to assess whether the source gave an accurate view or showed a typical situation. Some knowledgeable students wrote extensively about possible causes of the famine that were not mentioned in Source B, for example Lysenkoism, the impact of the Great Leap Forward and the failure of the backyard furnaces to provide usable steel, without relating these details to an evaluation of the source.

At Level 3, comments need to consider the effect of an aspect of the provenance on the usefulness of the source content, and contextual knowledge should be integrated into the process of reaching a judgement, not simply provided as information.

It is important to note that the question asks about the usefulness of the sources in relation to a specific enquiry, in this case, an enquiry into why the Great Famine occurred. Sources should not be dismissed because they do not cover every detail that might be helpful in an investigation and students should recognise that unreliable sources can be very useful.

Similarly, the focus should be on assessing the usefulness of what is in the source rather than listing details which are not mentioned. It can be valid to note the limitations of a source, but these points need to be used in an overall evaluation of the usefulness of the source; an answer which focuses on 'missing' information without weighing the positive aspects of the source is unlikely to score highly. If the answer identifies omissions from the source as limitations on its usefulness, this could be linked to a consideration of the provenance, showing whether this is the result of lack of knowledge or deliberate omission.

The question asks 'how useful' the sources are, so a judgement should be made on the usefulness of the source's evidence for the specific enquiry. Good answers made clear the criteria being used to assess the usefulness for the enquiry of the sources, weighing the value of the content in the light of the provenance and the student's own knowledge. Various criteria could be used, for example accuracy of detail, reliability, the relevance of the source, the way it could be used by the historian, how representative the source is etc.

Although a judgement should be reached on the overall usefulness of each source, there is no requirement to compare the sources or to use them in combination and no marks are available for this. Students who focused on comparisons between the sources often failed to develop their judgement on each source properly; if this approach is used, it is important that the answer still comes to a judgement on each individual source.

Very few answers only considered one source, but it should be noted that every level of the mark scheme refers to 'sources' and therefore answers which do not consider both sources cannot access high marks.

## SECTION B

For this section, you will need to use the sources and interpretations in the Sources/Interpretations Booklet.

### 3 (a) Study Sources B and C.

How useful are Sources B and C for an enquiry into the causes of the Great Famine (1958-62)?

Explain your answer, using Sources B and C and your knowledge of the historical context.

(8)

Source B is ~~very~~ <sup>partially</sup> useful ~~when it~~ for an enquiry into causes of the Great Famine as it tells us that agricultural <sup>environmental factors were the cause of ~~it~~ for example</sup> agricultural areas have been affected by flooding' hence why there was ~~was~~ lower amount of crops. It also tells us that the crops produce would be '75%' of what they originally planned to produce. ~~This source is very typical as it is a diary.~~ I know this is true as places such as Sichuan had faced many environmental problems which dropped there agricultural by 12%. This source is very typical as it is a diary. This would mean the person had no reason to exaggerate or lie as <sup>they</sup> ~~he~~ would have been the only one to read it. Furthermore, the official who wrote the diary is from USSR so he has no reason to be influenced by China's control in media. However, it may not be typical as the officer was hearing it from a Chinese officer who might have lied in order to protect China's and Mao's image. The Chinese officer could have said that <sup>as I know</sup> ~~that~~ ~~the~~ reports from officers in the communes were ~~likely~~ reported to make out that they made more crops than they actually did due to fear for not meeting the high expectations from Mao.

Source C is very useful for an enquiry into the causes of the Great Famine as it tells us that human error and exaggeration was the cause

of the Great famine. This can be seen when it says that reports ~~have been~~ exaggerated show 'reports of extra-large grain harvest have been exaggerated' showing that China didn't have the amount of food that <sup>said</sup> they had. Furthermore this leads to food being 'wasted' which shows that they were being careless with what they had already leading them to be 'damaged' as it has ~~not~~ affected them. This source is very biased as this was written by Peng Dehuai who had been their physical presence which shows that it did happen. As well as that Peng Dehuai sent this letter privately to Mao which means that Peng had no reason to conceal what he had seen happening. However, this may not be typical as Peng was close with Mao which may influence what he said to not disrespect or anger Mao.

### Comment

This answer has excellent consideration of the effect of the provenance on the usefulness of the sources. The content of each source is discussed, and some contextual knowledge is included in the evaluation of Source B. This means that the strands of the mark scheme are all met at Level 3 for Source B and Level 2 for Source C. A 'best-fit' approach produces a mark of 7, Level 3.

### Tip

Make sure you evaluate the usefulness of the content of each source for the enquiry, using the provenance and some contextual knowledge.

## SECTION B

For this section, you will need to use the sources and interpretations in the Sources/Interpretations Booklet.

### 3 (a) Study Sources B and C.

How useful are Sources B and C for an enquiry into the causes of the Great Famine (1958–62)?

Explain your answer, using Sources B and C and your knowledge of the historical context.

(8 003a 2)

Source B is not a useful source because the information about the causes of the ~~great famine~~ Great Famine come from a Chinese official. The official is blaming poor weather conditions for the bad harvest instead of blaming policies like Lysenkoism. China was a country that always had unfortunate weather but only between 1958 and 1962 was there a famine to such a massive extent.

Source C is a more useful source because it is more honest about the failures of the CCP. For example, the source mentions the lies told to Chinese peasants about the grain harvest. This makes the source trustworthy because the source is actively condemning Chinese propaganda.

#### Comment:

The answer dismisses Source B because it is from a Chinese official but there is no explanation of why this makes the source less useful. It then summarises the content of Source B. Source C is stated to be more useful because it is 'honest' and admits lies were told about the grain

harvest. The answer shows comprehension of the source content but does not develop comments into an evaluation of the sources' usefulness. It remains at Level 1.

### Tip

Make sure you show how the content would help to answer the enquiry in the question.

### Question 3b

In this question, students are asked to identify a difference in the overall view being offered in the interpretations; these do not necessarily contradict each other but they do provide alternative views. The answers should identify the key difference but also provide support from each interpretation to demonstrate that difference. Many answers recognised that the two interpretations offered different views about the causes of the famine and could select detail from the two interpretations to support the explanation of that difference. However, some answers simply selected details from the interpretations without explaining them, for example focusing on Interpretation 1's mention of false reporting of grain harvest and the setting up of blast furnaces, without explaining how this led to famine or how this was a different view from the interpretation focusing on natural disasters.

It is important for students to remember that the focus of this question is to identify the differences between the views rather than identifying differences of surface detail, as the latter can only be awarded marks in Level 1. Responses which asserted differences without support, for example stating that Interpretation 1 claimed the famine was caused by Mao's policies and that Interpretation 2 said natural disasters were responsible, stayed in level 1.

Level 2 was achieved when the students indicted a clear difference of view and supported it with detail from the interpretations. It was pleasing to see that many students were able to score full marks.



(b) **Study Interpretations 1 and 2.**

They give different views about the causes of the Great Famine (1958–62).

What is the main difference between these views?

Explain your answer, using details from **both** interpretations.

Q03b 4

Interpretation 1 shows a negative aspect of the Great Famine as it shows that it was human error that caused the Great Famine. This can be seen when it says 'false reporting of grain production'.

Interpretation 2 shows a more natural problem more positive aspect of the causes of the Great Famine as it says that it was Nature's fault and could not be prevented by humans. This is seen when it states 'Three Years of Natural Disasters'.

Furthermore Interpretation 1 uses <sup>negative</sup> language such as 'three bad years' whereas Interpretation 2 uses <sup>environmental</sup> language such as 'droughts', 'floods' and disease.

**Comment:**

The answer identifies the different thrusts of the interpretations: human error and natural disasters. Supporting detail from each interpretation is provided. It is Level 2 and received the full 4 marks.

**Tip**

Make sure the difference between the views in the interpretation is clearly stated and supported with details from each interpretation.

**(b) Study Interpretations 1 and 2.**

They give different views about the causes of the Great Famine (1958–62).

What is the main difference between these views?

Explain your answer, using details from **both** interpretations.

(4) Q03b 2

Interpretation 1's main point of view is that the 'false reporting of grain production' and 'blast furnaces' was the cause of Famine, whereas Interpretation 2 gives weighting to the 'Three Years of Natural Disasters' being the main cause of famine.

**Comment:**

This answer juxtaposes details from the interpretations but does not explain what the overall difference is. It is Level 1.

**Tip**

Be explicit about the difference in the overall views of the interpretation; don't focus on minor details.

**Question 3c**

It is important that students recognise the relationship between questions 3b and 3c. Having identified that the two interpretations offer different views, students are asked to suggest a reason why these different views have been reached. They should be able to support their answer with reference to the interpretations. Examiners see each answer separately and therefore cannot be expected to know what has been said in a previous answer. For this reason, students should be explicit in their references to the interpretations. They should also make sure that their answer to 3(c) does not simply repeat their answer to 3(b).

The focus here is on the process by which the historian produces the interpretation. Where answers suggested that, when carrying out research, the authors had placed weight on different sources, students could easily score the full 4 marks by linking details in the interpretations with details in Sources B and C. However, this should be explained with reference to both the interpretations and the sources, rather than simply stating that 'Interpretation 1 links with Source C'.

Alternative explanations also recognise that the historians' approach may affect their research and conclusions. For example, whether an historian focuses on the government and political events, or economic developments. The difference could also be accounted for by an emphasis on human action or natural disasters.

Here again, the explanation needs to be supported by the use of the interpretations. Therefore, speculation that the difference in interpretation is a result of the date that the interpretations were produced is not valid as it cannot be substantiated effectively.

The full reasons for this are explained in the *Getting Started Guide* on pp 43-44. As stated in *Getting Started*: 'Students should distinguish between their comments on contemporary sources and on these texts. Responses based on matters such as the origin or time of production of these secondary works are unlikely to be valid for this question.' However, it is very pleasing to note that fewer students than previously tried to provide an explanation of the difference on the basis of such factors as the titles of the books, their origin or date of production. There was still a small number of students who gained no marks on this question as they merely repeated what had been said in question 3b.

(c) Suggest **one** reason why Interpretations 1 and 2 give different views about the causes of the Great Famine (1958–62).

You **may** use Sources B and C to help explain your answer.

(4)

Q03c

4

Interpretation 1 and 2 may give different views about the causes of the Great Famine, as they may have based their knowledge on different sources. Interpretation 1 may have used source C as it's form of knowledge as they both explore the cause of the Great Famine being a result of the blast furnaces which had "taken workers" or "taken away" workers from working in the fields. However, <sup>Interpretation</sup> ~~Source~~ 2 may have ~~used~~ <sup>used</sup> source B to structure their point of view as they both explore ideas of 'natural disasters' being the primary cause for the shortage of food. This is clear as interpretation 2 states "droughts ... floods" led to food production falling, and Source B states "agricultural areas ... affected by flooding."

### Comment

The answer explains that the historians may have used different sources for their research and provides explicit supporting details from both the interpretations and the sources. It gains the full 4 marks.

### Tip

Make sure your explanation includes precise supporting detail.

(c) Suggest **one** reason why Interpretations 1 and 2 give different views about the causes of the Great Famine (1958–62).

You **may** use Sources B and C to help explain your answer.

(4) Q03c 2

They give different views as both viewpoints were proved. Interpretation 1 was proved by Peng Dehuai's letter about the false reports to Mao and Interpretation 2 was proven by the Chinese officials. ~~Because~~ It could also be because both A Lawrence and the history website have different opinions on Mao ~~due~~ due to how A Lawrence criticises Mao and the history website giving lack of information about Mao's role.

### Comment

This answer has two potentially valid approaches. It links the interpretations with the sources but says that the interpretations are 'proved' by the source. This suggests the student is evaluating the interpretations instead of recognising that the research influences the historians' conclusions.

The answer also suggests that the authors of the interpretations have different views about Mao but does not provide support from the interpretations, just assumes this is because the interpretations are different in nature. Both of these approaches are Level 1.

### Tip

Think about how the historian works as a reason why different historians can produce different views.

### Question 3d

Question 3 (d) carries the highest number of marks on the paper. Successful students will have already seen how the views in the interpretations are different, why this might be the case and, in completing 3(a), have understood that there is likely to be evidence in support of both interpretations. They are now asked how far they agree with one of the interpretations. The strongest answers to 3(d), therefore, focused clearly on the interpretations themselves, reviewing the alternative views and coming to a substantiated judgement. Students need to recognise that they are not being asked to treat the interpretation as a source and evaluate its reliability or usefulness but to explain whether they think the historian has offered a valid view.

There is no expectation that both interpretations are dealt with in equal depth, but both should be examined explicitly. The use of contextual knowledge is an important element in this evaluation, but it must be precisely selected and linked to the evaluation of the interpretation rather than being offered as an answer to the enquiry question. At the same time, merely asserting agreement with points in the interpretation by saying 'from my own knowledge I know this to be true' is not sufficient evidence of contextual knowledge

Students often used details from Interpretation 1 to counter the view in Interpretation 2. At all levels of the mark scheme, answers are expected to analyse both interpretations and discuss the difference in the views being offered, so answers should explicitly state that Interpretation 1 is being reviewed rather than presenting these details as their own knowledge.

Many answers said that Interpretation 2 did not offer a full explanation of the reasons for the famine and discussed the impact of the Great Leap Forward, Lysenkoism and the culture of fear which led to exaggerated claims of grain production. However, these answers did not always make it clear whether this was being offered as contextual knowledge or if Interpretation 1 was being analysed – which is part of the mark scheme at Level 2 and above. Furthermore, contextual knowledge needs to be linked to the evaluation of the interpretation, whereas these answers often became an answer about why the famine happened, and therefore missed the focus of the question, which is about making a judgement on the view offered in Interpretation 2.

Examiners reported some impressive answers to 3(d) and many students were able to engage confidently with the interpretations, taking a range of approaches. In addition, some of the strongest answers were able to show how the differences of view in the two interpretations were conveyed, for example through the use of language, tone, selection or omission of detail, emphasis created by the structure of the interpretation, etc.

It is expected that students will reach a judgement when answering this question and the strongest students developed their evaluation throughout the answer, creating a consistently argued response. Less successful responses offered points to support the views expressed in interpretation 2, then discussed Interpretation 1, or used Interpretation 1 and contextual knowledge to challenge the views of Interpretation 2, before reaching the view that Interpretation 2 was 'somewhat accurate' or saying that they 'partially agreed with the view in Interpretation 2. In these answers, there was little sense of evaluation, simply an explanation of the different views, with the acknowledgement that each had some valid points. The strongest answers to question 3(d), therefore, focused clearly on the interpretations themselves, integrating evaluation while reviewing the alternative views and coming to a substantiated

judgement. Students who focused exclusively on the view provided in Interpretation 2 and used this as a basis for an essay based on their own knowledge were less successful.

Yet a full range of responses suggest this question was accessible to students of all ability and full answers were generally provided, showing that timing wasn't generally an issue on this paper.

**Spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology will be assessed in part (d).**

(d) How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about the causes of the Great Famine (1958-62)?

Explain your answer, using **both** interpretations and your knowledge of the historical context.

Intro => do not agree  
1 => bad weather affected /  
2 => more due to political  
3 => inter... 1st... 2nd...  
4 => political... 4 parts

003d 14  
30Spag 4  
(16)

Interpretation 2 states that the cause of the Great Famine was purely natural disasters and does not consider any other reason. Therefore, I disagree with Interpretation 2 about the causes of the Great Famine.

Although the interpretation contains information of events that did occur, natural hazards could not have been the leading cause for the famine as the bad weather only affected around 12% of China's land but as a result, the whole of China was starved. Therefore it cannot be true that the only cause of the Great Famine was the bad weather although this must have had detrimental effects on the harvest. The food production fell by more than half due to the bad weather however this was only in a number of areas and not across the whole country. Therefore Interpretation 2 has not fully considered all causes and is inaccurate.

To make the interpretation more accurate, more weight should be given to the political and its impact on the Great Famine. One reason crops failed was the weather.

## **Comment**

The answer examines Interpretation 2's view and disagrees that the famine was caused 'purely by natural disasters'. There is a clear sense of evaluation running throughout the answer. This is demonstrated when contextual knowledge is used to examine the impact of bad weather, and the view in the Interpretation is weighed, with the judgement that 'although' the interpretation contained accurate information, it had not fully considered all causes. Contextual knowledge is then used to explain what would make the interpretation more accurate, but the answer goes on to say that 'despite this' the main cause was false reports of the grain harvest, which is highlighted in Interpretation 1. Interpretation 1's emphasis on the effect of peasants working on the backyard furnaces is discussed, with the claim that 'this on its own' would result in lower levels of grain, but other aspects of Interpretation 1 are not explicitly reviewed. The conclusion makes the judgement on Interpretation 2 clear. The answer meets the descriptor for Level 4 although not all the contextual knowledge is directly linked to an evaluation of the interpretations and there is no discussion of how the different views are conveyed in the interpretations. The mark given was 14.

## **Tip**

Make sure that you focus on evaluating the interpretations and that contextual knowledge is linked to that evaluation.

**Spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology will be assessed in part (d).**

(d) How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about the causes of the Great Famine (1958–62)?

Explain your answer, using **both** interpretations and your knowledge of the historical context.

003d 9

3dSpag 4

(16)

I agree with interpretation 2 to a greater extent. I believe floods and droughts were a big factor that ultimately led to the great famine between 1959 and 1961. This meant that seeds could not germinate and grow due to ~~the excess~~ <sup>the excess</sup> or lack of water on fields. Although, I believe a bigger ~~reason~~ <sup>cause</sup> for the Great Famine was because Mao was ignoring and being oblivious to the Great Famine and other people with power such as government officials did not want to speak out about it because there was a chance that Mao would ~~remove~~ <sup>expel</sup> them from being part of the government. They were scared because due to the anti-rightist purge after the 100 Flowers campaign they had lost their freedom of speech and if they were to speak out, they would be put into labour camps or killed if they were to speak against Mao.

I also believe the four pests campaign was a major cause of the great famine as peasants ~~worked~~ worked hard to get rid of flies, mosquitoes, sparrows and rats that they couldn't spend as much time on tending after crops. Similarly, Mao wanted peasants to work less on ~~heavy~~ the ~~more~~ heavy industry and more on light industry such as making steel in back yard ~~furnaces~~ furnaces. Although this steel was impure so it was inefficient. Peasants spent more time on light industry so they had less time to care for the

### Comment

The answer starts by saying that they agree with interpretation 2 'to a greater extent' but goes on to say that a bigger cause was Mao ignoring or being oblivious of the causes of the famine. This is supported using contextual knowledge and also seems to be using material from Source C (which is a valid approach). Details about Mao's policies on the Four Pests and backyard furnaces are used to support Interpretation 1, but then the interpretation is challenged by the view that



weather conditions were a major cause of the famine. The judgement is not clearly an evaluation of Interpretation 2. This answer has considered points supporting and challenging the interpretations, which meets the descriptor for Level 2, and the discussion of the two interpretations moves into Level 3. This was awarded 10 marks.

### Tip

Analyse both interpretations, but plan what your judgement will be so that you can have a consistent line of reasoning, and build up your evaluation.

### Conclusion

Examiners commented that there were a number of impressive answers where students seemed well-prepared and demonstrated excellent knowledge being deployed to support thoughtful analysis and evaluation.

The following points should be noted:

- While there was good knowledge of some topics, students cannot rely on knowing just a few key topics and hoping to use that information whatever question is asked.
- Students need to recognise the specific focus of the question so that the information being offered is shaped to meet the demands of the question, rather than simply describing a situation or including irrelevant material.
- Students should appreciate the difference between sources and interpretations and be aware that interpretations are constructed by historians in order to offer their view of events.
- In all parts of Question 3, it is helpful to be explicit about the source or interpretation being discussed.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar were broadly accurate, and many answers used specialist terms with confidence, but a poor standard of handwriting made a number of answers difficult to mark and exacerbated the difficulty in understanding a badly expressed answer.

The SPaGST marks may be affected if there are weaknesses in these areas:

- Appropriate use of capital letters.
- Correct use of apostrophes.
- Weak grammar ('would of', 'based off of') and casual language which is not appropriate in an examination.
- Paragraphs: failure to structure answers in paragraphs not only affects the SPaGST mark but may also make it difficult for the examiner to identify whether three different aspects have been covered in question 2, or how well analysis and evaluation is developed in question 3.