



Examiners' Report

November 2021

GCSE History 1HI0 P4

Option P4 Superpower relations and the
Cold War, 1941–91

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Principal Examiner Report

Autumn 2021 Examination series: 1H10 GCSE History P4

Period paper - Introduction

The Period Study focuses on an understanding of the unfolding narrative of a time period, with candidates required to answer three questions targeted at Assessment Objective 1 (Knowledge and Understanding) and Assessment Objective 2 (Analysis of Second Order Concepts).

Question 1 will always focus on consequence, requiring candidates to explain two valid consequences, giving equal attention to both. It is deliberately designed to be accessible to the entire ability range, however some candidates provided more detail than was necessary, leaving less time to address higher tariff questions.

Question 2 focuses on analytical narrative. The analytical narrative will always focus on a period containing events or ideas that can be perceived as a sequence; this could cover a number of years or a much shorter period. Candidates should be clear about the time span of the question to ensure they cover an acceptable range and what it is the narrative is designed to analyse. It is vital they understand the narrative concept, with the sense of a beginning, development and end, rather than produce three paragraphs which do not directly link. These stimulus points serve a different purpose to those on other questions: they will be useful reminders to candidates of sign posts along the narrative and not things they need to develop. Candidates do not need to use these stimulus points but there is an expectation that there will be some depth of knowledge, shown by three aspects of content covered with outcomes, although this does not mean candidates need to identify three different events.

For Question 3 candidates were required to analyse the importance of an event/person/development. The question focuses on what difference the event/person/development made in relation to situations and unfolding developments. They had to answer two topics out of a selection of three. Responses ranged from impressive analysis focused on the appropriate second-order concept (AO2), which were supported with accurate, relevant and good knowledge (AO1), to those from candidates that offered simple comment with limited knowledge for support.

Progression in AO1 is shown by the candidate's increasing ability to select information precisely and to show wide-ranging knowledge and understanding. Progression in AO2 is shown by a candidate's response moving from simple or generalised comments to analytical explanations which show a line of reasoning that is coherent, logical and sustained. Centres are reminded that the indicative content in the markscheme does not imply what must be included in a response nor does it give any expectation as to how candidates are expected to structure their responses.

Paper P4

Students need to remember that similar content coverage to previous questions but with a different question type is assessed with a different second-order concept. A clear example is the Question 3 on détente requires a focus on consequence whereas Question 2 on détente in 2018 required an analytical narrative. The Question 3 on the Berlin Crisis (1948-49) and the Question 2 used in the second Specimen Paper is another example.

For Question 1 candidates were asked to provide two valid consequences of the Tehran Conference in 1943. Many candidates focused on the second-order concept of consequence and commented with specific information on the easing of pressure on Soviet troops by opening a 'second front,' reassurances for Stalin with plans for Poland's post-war borders and US-Soviet co-operation on the war with Japan. However, many candidates did not sustain a Level 2 mark for both consequences and sometimes offered the same consequence for a second time. A significant number of answers remained in Level 1 or low Level 2 overall with information clearly about the Yalta or Potsdam conferences.

For Question 2 candidates were asked to provide an analytical narrative on the 'Second Cold War 1979-85' using the second-order concepts of causation, consequence, and change. Candidates should focus on the time span in the question; the date range is specifically designed to cover a sufficient sequence of events leading to an outcome. Keeping within the date range also prevents wasting time with unrewardable material. This year's question for example on the 'Second Cold War' had the dates 1979-85 so lots of information about the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the USSR is not relevant. It is worth reiterating the point that the analysis required for Level 3 invariably uses language such as 'consequently', 'as a result', 'this led to'. The stimulus points do not indicate any preferred start or end points of a narrative and candidates do not need to use them. At Level 3 most candidates used the provided stimulus 'Soviet invasion of Afghanistan' as the starting point. Responses in Level 3 frequently showed how this led to a tough response from Reagan, the consequent Strategic Defence Initiative, the deterioration in Superpower relations with Olympic boycotts and the USSR's inability to maintain the arms race. There were however a significant number of responses which wrote extensively outside of the period and included unrewardable material on areas such as superpower relations following the Cuban Missile Crisis or events during the period of détente.

Question 3 is comprised of candidates answering two 8-mark questions based on the second-order concepts of significance and consequence. Candidates had to explain the importance of two topics in relation to a given situation or unfolding developments: the Berlin Crisis (1948-49), the Prague Spring or détente. Candidates' responses which coherently addressed the importance of the factor raised in relation to the

development (AO2) together with good knowledge and understanding (AO1) were awarded Level 3. Answers with a low or mid-level 2 mark were frequently either attempts to analyse importance (AO2) but with knowledge that was limited (AO1) or showed more accurate knowledge (AO2) but the attempted analysis was weak.

Almost the entire entry for this paper answered the first and second choices for Question 3, but relatively few responses gained mid to high Level 3. For the first choice of Question 3 at Level 3 candidates analysed the importance of the Berlin Crisis (1948-49) for Cold War developments such as the deterioration in superpower relations over Germany and the consequent setting up of the FRG and the GDR. However, many candidates remained in low to mid-level 2 with generally accurate and relevant information on the Berlin Blockade and Airlift (AO1) but with weak attempts to analyse importance. Some candidates remained in low Level 2 by primarily describing events focused on the Berlin Wall. As there were extremely few responses for the second Question 3 on the Prague Spring it is not possible to provide meaningful feedback to centres to benefit their candidates. For the third choice of Question 3 responses that gained Level 3 had a clear analysis of the importance of détente for reductions in arms spending, agreements to limit missile numbers and improved relations with the Helsinki Accords (AO2) supported with accurate knowledge for example on SALT 1 and specific declarations made in 1975. Many responses that were awarded Level 2 read more as descriptive or narrative accounts of relations between the USA and the USSR during the 1970s without sufficient focus on the second-order concept for AO2.

Paper Summary

Based on the performance seen on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Write about the knowledge that you have learned: if you are not sure how to answer the question, pick out the topic specified and write down what you can remember about it. Aim to write something for every question.
- When tackling Q1, ensure the explanation shows the link between the event and the consequence and don't simply describe something that happened after the event.
- On Q2, make sure your narrative response has a beginning, middle and end. Do not write it in the first person or as a story – a historical narrative is like a television documentary, as opposed to a drama, and it needs to be clear that the events you're writing about actually happened.
- On Q3, read the question really carefully to make sure you are selecting the correct content for your answer.

- Good answers on Q3 will explain why the development/event/person specified was important, but better answers explain the impact they had on the second development/event/person named in the question. So try to ensure that you can explain the impact for the second development/event/person, rather than keeping it general.