

O Level History (2158)

We have access to the syllabus and past papers. Is there also a mark scheme available for centres? If each question is worth 20 marks, how do I divide marks between the factual and the analysis part of the answers when grading my candidates class and home assignments, and how can I be sure that I am conforming to the mark scheme?

There is a mark scheme for 2158, but it is not published. However, upon request, CIE can send you a copy. Currently, for all sections of this paper, narrative is awarded out of 14 marks and analysis out of 6 (each question is marked out of 20). In answers to part (a) of each question, candidates should be able to narrate or describe the issues or events they have studied. Credit is given for accurate and relevant recall. Part (b) of each question is intended to assess the candidates' ability to analyse historical issues and/or show an understanding of historical concepts. Where part (b) questions start 'To what extent', or 'How far', candidates are better able to deal with these questions by using the approach: 'On the one hand...on the other hand'.

How far do you penalise a student for poor English/spellings if they have their facts and analysis down correctly?

We recognise that a majority of O level History candidates are not First language English speakers. Examiners are instructed to be sensitive in interpreting what has been written, and to give the benefit of the doubt to the candidate. No marks are given for spelling, grammar, expression or any other non-historical criterion. Most candidates have no difficulties in making themselves understood, but for a few, weaknesses in their English may prevent them from expressing their answers as effectively as possible – the History they produce is weakened by their lack of ability to express what it is they have to say, and this may depress their grades. However, it should be stressed that candidates are being assessed on their History and not on their English.

The exam allows half an hour per question. Isn't that too short a time limit for a student to answer if details are to be included?

No, not at all. We have found from previous exam sessions that 30 minutes per question is an ample and generous time allowance. Few candidates have difficulty in completing their 5 answers, although of course, rubric infringements sometimes occur. Where this is the case, examiners are instructed to mark all questions and delete the lowest mark consistent with the rubric, thus enabling the candidate to achieve the highest mark possible.

Where can I receive guidance on choosing relevant textbooks for this syllabus?

There is a resource list available on the CIE website (<http://www.cie.org.uk>). This contains sections on books suitable for the whole syllabus and books available for various regional options.