
AS-LEVEL HISTORY

Component 7041/2R
Report on the Examination

Specification 7041
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Component 7041/2R

The Cold War, c1945–1991

Component 2R: To the brink of Nuclear War: international relations, c1945–1963

General Comments

It was good to find that most students took the new AS format in their stride and used their time to the full to write substantial answers to both the compulsory source question (Q01) and their choice of essay question (Q02 or Q03). Of the latter, Q02 proved slightly more popular, but there was, nevertheless, a range of good and weaker answers to both and there was little indication that students were pressed for time to complete their answers. The comments which follow are indicative of some of the strengths and weaknesses commonly seen in students' answers in this session. Question 01 has been addressed in some detail so as to provide teachers with further guidance as to what helped produce a good answer in this new style of question.

Section A

Question 1

There were three elements to this question: an evaluation of provenance and tone, an evaluation of content and argument (both requiring some application of own knowledge) and a comparison. Although these three elements did not need to be addressed in equal measure, and it was sufficient for the comparison to emerge in the conclusion (although many good responses did maintain a comparative element throughout the answer), something of each was expected (although not always found) in answers.

With regards to provenance and tone, most students were able to make good comments on the value of Source A in providing an overview of the Truman Doctrine due to its origin; Truman formally announcing and justifying his new policy to Congress. Some also commented on the possibility that certain elements of his speech could be exaggerated in order to win over a largely isolationist Congress. The language and tone of the speech was referred to by stronger candidates to support this latter point. The provenance of Source B caused problems for some students in that they did not realise that *Izvestia* would have been a state controlled newspaper and a mouthpiece for the Soviet government; this limited their analysis of the source in terms of value. The tone of the source was again used by stronger candidates to support the argument that this was mainly propaganda with the aim of attacking the USA.

Students need to be reminded that comments on provenance, (as much as those on content), need support. Simple statements of 'unreliability' or 'bias' were insufficient.

As far as the second element is concerned, the majority of students had little difficulty in understanding the content of the two sources and commenting on the opposing views of the Truman doctrine which they represented. Most were able to support and explain the content of Source A by reference to the events in Greece, the actions of the Soviet Union in eastern Europe, and the Kennan Telegram and Churchill's speech which had highlighted these events and which had provided the impetus for the Truman Doctrine. The less successful answers were those that tried to support Source B's claims of US expansionism by referring to US actions in the 1950s and

60s. The context of 1947 was key here, and stronger students were able to show a firm understanding of America's actions and motives at this particular time. Some mentioned The Marshall Plan to provide some credibility to Soviet concerns, but again there needed to be an awareness that this followed on from the Truman Doctrine and was not the actual focus of Source A.

In terms of the comparison, better students did as asked and commented on the 'value' of the sources as evidence and evaluated how each would contribute to an understanding of the Truman Doctrine. The strongest answers argued consistently throughout their answers that Source A was more valuable for an understanding of the Truman Doctrine, given that it came from the author of the Doctrine who was presenting it publically to Congress. Some argued that Source B was more valuable because it showed the hidden or 'true' aims of the Truman Doctrine regarding the expansionist goals of the USA – but again, this was more difficult to justify in the context of 1947.

Section B

Question 02

The majority of students had an understanding of the causes of the Korean War and factors that motivated the USA to intervene. However, in many cases, this understanding was quite superficial and valid points about, for example, the need for containment or to protect Japan were not supported with detail. Many students found the focus of the question on the USA's desire to defend South Korea rather challenging and often ignored this part of the question, just giving a range of other reasons for US involvement.

The strongest answers were able to discuss Truman's concern with ensuring that the UN did its job in protecting smaller nations, along with the USA's commitment to South Korea following its involvement with the country after World War Two for the focus of the question; they were then able to balance this with broader US concerns in Asia regarding containment of communism, the impact of the 'loss' of China, domestic pressures, and the need to protect Japan. As always, the more precise the information and the tighter the links to the question, the more likely the answer was to reach the higher mark levels.

Question 03

Most students who answered this question were familiar with Khrushchev's foreign policies and were able to talk about his actions with regard, for instance, to Berlin and summit diplomacy. Unfortunately, many students also confused deStalinisation with peaceful co-existence and wrote about the impact of deStalinisation on his domestic policy and his actions in Poland and Hungary. The latter point could certainly be linked to the issue of 'cold war confrontation' due to the US's interest in what was happening in Hungary, but many failed to make this link and focused instead on Khrushchev's relationship with the rebels.

Stronger candidates discussed the impact of Khrushchev's arms race and space race on raising cold war tension in Europe, and also Khrushchev's aggressive attitude towards the West, and Kennedy in particular at the Vienna Conference, regarding Berlin. Some answers also successfully provided balance by arguing that Eisenhower's policy of massive retaliation and the general fear of a nuclear conflagration on both sides also ensured that there was no cold war confrontation. Again, precise detail to support points, and clear links to the question throughout were needed to gain the higher mark levels.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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