

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

(EXPLAINING THE MODERN WORLD)

J410

For first teaching in 2016

J410/06 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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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. 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 exam paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 6 series overview

This was the second series of the new Specification A Paper 1. It was very clear that teachers and candidates had prepared thoroughly and learnt lessons from the previous series. They should be congratulated on the high standard of work and their commitment to high quality historical thinking and writing.

Section A overview

It was clear that centres had devoted more time and planning to the balance in this section between Questions 1 and 2 and the Interpretation based Questions 3 and 4. This resulted in a better performance overall than last year for most candidates.

Question 1

International Relations: the changing international order 1918–c.2001

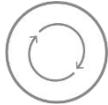
1 Outline how international peace was encouraged in the 1920s.

[5]

This question was generally tackled well with candidates showing impressive knowledge and understanding of the period but also of the issue being asked in the question. As a rule, the most successful answers combined three elements.

- They indicated an approach which was taken to encourage peace, most commonly focusing on international agreements of international organisations. The most common references were to the League of Nations or the Kellogg Briand Pact but candidates also referred to the Disarmament Conference and the Locarno Treaty.
- They explained how these approaches encouraged peace. Therefore, many candidates referred to the League's successful interventions in disputes such as the Aaland Islands or Poland. Other candidates referred to the terms of the Kellogg Briand Pact or the terms of the Locarno Treaty and explained how this encouraged peace.

A substantial number of candidates limited their responses by referring to activities or actions which were not relevant to the issue of encouraging peace. There were, for example, many descriptions of the Dawes Plan, the Treaty of Versailles and the humanitarian work of the League. These activities were not direct attempts to encourage peace and as a rule, candidates did not gain credit for them. A small number successfully argued that such actions improved the general climate, (e.g. the Dawes Plan reducing tension between France and Germany) and so were given. These were rare, and it was hard to escape the impression that candidates were simply writing things which occurred to them rather than focusing on the issue in the question.

	AfL	<p>The key point with Question 1 is to focus on the issue being asked about. Thus, in this instance they needed to focus on what was done to encourage peace rather than describe activities which were only indirectly related to this.</p>
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Question 2

2 Explain why the USA and USSR clashed over Germany in the period 1945 to 1949.

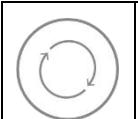
[10]

This question produced a very wide range of responses and approaches. A very common, but unexpected, approach was to argue that the clashes over Germany were part of the wider picture of ideological differences and rivalry between the USSR and the USA. While this was not expected it was accepted by examiners as a valid background cause of the clashes over Germany.

Stronger answers were usually able to combine this general background issue with causal factors which were more specific to Germany. Many candidates effectively linked the wider ideological tensions to the events of the Berlin Blockade very effectively. Other valid responses were the clashes between the USA and USSR at the Potsdam Conference in which the issue of reparations and the treatment of Germany generally was a source of tension.

In some cases, candidates struggled to clearly set out an explanation of why a particular factor caused tensions. Typical of this sort of approach were long descriptions of how Germany was divided in 1945 but with no identification of a clash or the reasons for it.

Another common problem was confusion between the events of 1948-49 in Berlin with events immediately before the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

	AfL	<p>Many candidates struggled to organise their thoughts and writing into a response which was coherently focused on the question. In questions of this type, they may find it helpful to think in terms of these simple steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearly identify a factor / event / development / person etc which could be considered a cause of clashes between the USA and USSR, (e.g. competing ideologies). - BRIEFLY describe what the clash was about, (e.g. differences between the ideologies). - Explain how the factor led to the clash, (e.g. each side anxious to impose their ideologies and anxious to prevent the other side from doing the same).
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Question 3

3 Study Interpretation A.

Do you think this interpretation is a fair comment on the reasons why the Cold War began? Use your knowledge and other interpretations of the early stages of the Cold War to support your answer. [25]

Most examiners agreed that this question was generally handled more effectively than last year, and centres and candidates should be congratulated for this.

The most effective responses usually took a very straightforward approach. They started by setting out the main arguments in Interpretation A. The first sentence argues that Stalin's policies on Eastern Europe were the main cause of the Cold War. The remainder attempts to mitigate this blame by setting out justifications for Stalin's actions.

The stronger responses then went on to explain whether they thought either or both of these aspects of Interpretation A constituted a fair comment. This was usually done by assessing how far particular historians or schools of thought would have supported or criticised these viewpoints.

Here is an example one of the stronger responses (Level 5). The candidate sets out the main arguments of Interpretation A clearly in the opening paragraph. In the second paragraph the candidate argues that A could be considered a fair comment because it would have the support of Orthodox historians. Crucially, the candidate then goes on to explain what the arguments of the Orthodox historians were and cited some examples of the evidence Orthodox historians used. It should be noted that the second half of the second paragraph, in which the candidate describes the context of the Orthodox view and the influence of the context on the Orthodox historians, is not relevant to this question.

Exemplar 1

Interpretation A states that it was Russia's desire to control Eastern Europe and to weaken Germany which was the main cause of the Cold War. However, this was fuelled by Stalin's fear of the events during the Second World War repeating themselves and his need to control Eastern Europe to prevent this happening again. This source was written in 1967 when revisionist ideas were starting to circulate.

Many historians would agree that this is a fair interpretation, primarily, the orthodox historians who believe Stalin and the USSR was to blame. One example is Bailey who argued that it was the USSR's intentions for expansion and their plans for a world revolution which fuelled the USA to retaliate and stand up to them. Kennan argued that Stalin needed a tough opponent to excuse his ~~the~~ the USSR's need for a hard-line dictator to protect its people and therefore purposely provoked the USA into retaliation. In addition, Fieris argued that Stalin's plans to spread communism around the world forced the USA to attempt to contain this and respond with the Truman

doctrine and Marshall Aid. These views may have been ~~of~~ brought about as a result of own personal experience as many of these historians were US officials which made decisions themselves. Also, it may have been due to fears of a 'Red Scare' as the US was said to be riddled with Soviet spies. In addition, another historian ~~which~~ who may agree with this interpretation is Gaddis who after the ~~the~~ collapse of communism, investigated new Soviet sources and concluded that it was the USSR who was responsible and reverted back to the orthodox view. ~~However~~

However, other historians may disagree and the revisionist view would argue it was the USA who caused ~~over~~ the Cold War. Revisionists such as Williams argued that the orthodox view does not explain the causes of the Cold War but merely excuses US actions. Williams argued that it was the USA's desire to take ~~control~~ economic control of Europe and the rest of the world and its expansionist views to dominate politically which caused the Cold War. Stalin was forced to respond with aggression to prevent this from occurring. This interpretation may have been as a result of the Vietnam War and the USA's support of a corrupt regime, with severe bombings and destruction, whilst acting in its own self-interest. This is also the case with the Cuban Missile Crisis. After Gaddis originally also argued that it was as a result of a misunderstanding and mistrust between the two nations which led to conflict.

There were many other responses which were able to reach Level 4 by effectively using one interpretation to develop an argument that Interpretation A was a fair comment (or not).

A relatively small number of candidates reached Level 3 by developing an argument and using their own factual knowledge to support that argument.

Responses which correctly deployed relevant interpretations to support an argument but did not move significantly beyond naming a particular interpretation, (e.g. Revisionists) were also given at Level 3.

There is a final and important reflection for centres and candidates to consider regarding Question 3. Many candidates attempted to classify Interpretation A as Revisionist, Orthodox, etc. This was an unexpected development and took examiners a little by surprise. It should also be emphasised that it is not required or expected and it generally proved to be unhelpful for two main reasons:

- By trying to categorise Interpretation A candidates neglected to spell out what the arguments of Interpretation A were. This sometimes made it difficult for examiners to determine what candidates were arguing was fair or unfair.
- Some candidates appeared to be trying to find a way to write a pre-rehearsed response by categorising Interpretation A and then critiquing a general school of thought rather than the specific points made in Interpretation A.

In most cases where this happened, it did no harm because the candidate referred to the contents of Interpretation A at other stages in their response. However, it should be emphasised again that it is not a helpful practice and should be discouraged.

Candidates should be made aware that schools of thought are often not homogeneous. Certain groups, such as Revisionists, often disagree on major points and they are only Revisionist because they disagree with previous interpretations, not necessarily agreeing with each other. In addition, in a short extract it is almost impossible to encapsulate a particular type of interpretation wholly and succinctly not least because schools of thought were often groupings imposed on historians after the event and they were not consciously trying to write revisionist or post-revisionist history. Therefore, candidates should be encouraged to simply analyse the main arguments in Interpretation A and build an argument from there.

	AfL <p>Candidates should pay careful attention to the arguments being made in Interpretation A and should not try to categorise it. Once they have done this, they should try to build an argument from here.</p> <p>Candidates should also try to be as clear as possible about the argument they are making. Some candidates regularly used the phrase 'Interpretation A links to school of thought X'. Examiners found it difficult to understand what point was being made in such responses because 'links to' is unclear. It is better to use clear terminology such as 'Interpretation / school of thought X would regard Interpretation A unfair because A argues whereas X argues that'</p> <p>Candidates do not need to cover every different interpretation on the issue. Two interpretations used well to support an argument about (un)fairness should be sufficient for Level 5.</p>
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Question 4

4 Study Interpretation B.

Explain why **not** all historians and commentators have agreed with this interpretation. Use other interpretations and your knowledge to support your answer. [20]

( Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology [5]

As with Question 3, this question was handled more effectively than last year. Candidates showed an impressive knowledge of the different interpretations and schools of thought on this controversy.

Unfortunately, many candidates did not help themselves by trying to categorise Interpretation B. As with Question 3, and for the same reasons and contexts, it must be emphasised that this is not necessary and generally turns out to be unhelpful. It is much more constructive to engage directly with the specific points being made in Interpretation B and then assess those in an argument.

The following mid-range answer (Level 3) illustrates how many candidates successfully did this. Interpretation A is analysed correctly and the candidate then goes on to argue that the Popular Majority view in 1938-39 would not have agreed with Interpretation A's assertion that Appeasement was a failure. The candidate then goes on to explain the main tenets of this interpretation and how it disagrees with the view in Interpretation A that Appeasement was a failure. It is worth noting that in this instance the candidate was credited for explaining how the two interpretations differ. S/he makes some attempt to also explain why they differ by referring to the horrors of war, but this lacked the requisite detail and explanation to lift the response to Level 4.

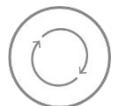
In AJP Taylor's book, "English History 1914-45," Taylor's view is that appeasement was a failure and taken advantage of by Hitler but Chamberlain did it in good intentions and faith in diplomacy.

Many historians between 1937 to 38 would disagree with Taylor, they viewed the They followed the 'well done Mr Chamberlain' view, this is the view that Chamberlain stopped war and saved countless lives. This view came about because of the Act Munich agreement. Chamberlain came back from Munich with document that Hitler signed saying Britain and Germany wouldn't go war. People were pleased; they remembered the horrors of WWI and how millions died and how their country was torn. So generally people at the time saw Chamberlain as a hero who saved people lives.

Many candidates were able to reach Level 3 by analysing Interpretation B correctly and then arguing that particular interpretations would not have agreed with Interpretation B's assertion that Appeasement was a failure, supporting this with the main tenets of the rival interpretation and how they disagreed with B.

Alternatively, many candidates used the contexts of respective interpretations to explain why these views were held at this particular time and could reach Level 3 in this way.

There were many weaker responses which were only able to reach Level 2. These usually consisted of two broad types: candidates who listed or briefly described several interpretations without addressing how or why it disagreed with Interpretation B; candidates who correctly identified schools of thought which would have agreed or disagreed with Interpretation but did no more than identify and did not develop their comments. Many candidates who could have reached Level 3 or above if they had focused on one or two interpretations ended up stretching themselves too thinly in trying to cover all of them.

	AfL	<p>As with Question 3, candidates should start by analysing Interpretation A and setting out the main view(s) contained in it. They should then construct an argument that the view(s) would find agreement or disagreement from a particular school of thought and support that argument by explaining what these other interpretations believed and how this differed from the views in Interpretation B. Ideally they should also consider why these other interpretations held the views they did by referring to the contexts in which they were created.</p> <p>Also, as with Question 3, candidates should also try to be as clear as possible about the argument they are making. Some candidates regularly used the phrase 'Interpretation A links to school of thought X'. Examiners found it difficult to understand what point was being made in such responses because 'links to' is unclear. It is better to use clear terminology such as 'Interpretation / school of thought X would disagree with Interpretation B because B argues whereas X argues that'</p> <p>Candidates do not need to cover every different interpretation on the issue. Two interpretations used well to support an argument about (un)fairness should be sufficient for Level 5.</p>
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Section B overview

Most candidates handled the questions in this section effectively. They were well prepared for Questions 6 and 8 in particular, and while there was a wide range of responses to Questions 7a and 7b there were few candidates who were unable to make use of the sources in some way.

Question 5

The USA 1919–1948: The People and the State

5 Describe **one** example of a group that did not experience prosperity during the 1920s. [2]

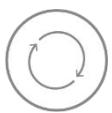
Most candidates were able to gain full marks on this question. A significant number of candidates chose to describe farmers. There were some slightly strange responses which tried to cover groups like immigrants or women and then went on to describe prejudice against them.

	AfL	Candidates need to read the question carefully and make sure they are addressing the issue raised in the question.
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Question 6

6 Explain why the American people responded positively to US involvement in the Second World War. [10]

This question was generally tackled well. Candidates used a range of different evidence to explain the positive reaction in the USA towards US involvement in the war. The most common approaches were to argue that the war was well received because it effectively ended the Depression. Candidates then showed impressive knowledge of the scale of production and recruitment into the US war economy to support this. Another common reason cited was a sense of national outrage as a result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Some candidates linked this event to the US propaganda efforts.

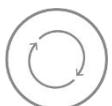
	AfL	<p>In questions of this type, candidates may find it helpful to think in terms of these simple steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Clearly identify a factor / event / development / person etc which could be considered a cause of the positive attitude.- BRIEFLY describe what the factor. <p>Explain how the factor led to the positive attitude.</p>
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Question 7 (a)

7 (a) Study Source A. What is the message of the cartoonist?

[5]

Centres and candidates should be congratulated on how well they tackled what was a potentially tricky source. Very few candidates achieved less than Level 2. There were plenty of sound answers which correctly identified the main message of the cartoon itself. A typical approach was to explain that it argues that the immigrants arriving in the USA in the 1920s were regarded with suspicion and we can tell this because they are portrayed as bombs about to go off. This is a valid comment, but it was not the primary intent of the source, which was to call for tighter controls on immigration. Many stronger responses recognised this subtle difference and these were given Level 3.

	AfL	<p>Many candidates wrote at great length about immigration or the Red Scare. While they were not penalised for this they gained nothing either. Candidates might find it helpful in questions of this type to consider some simple checks which will help guide their answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the source for or against something / someone? - What does this reveal about the aims or intentions of the person or group which produced it? - Why was it produced at this time rather than any other time?
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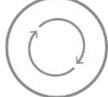
Question 7 (b)

(b) Study Source B. Explain how this source is useful to a historian studying the Red Scare. [5]

This question proved to be more problematic for many candidates. One of the key problems was a desire to assess the reliability of the source rather than do as the question asked which is to explain how it is useful.

Stronger responses found this relatively simple to do if they stuck to the question. Most argued that the source was useful as evidence of the hardships faced by immigrants, or the prejudice and intolerance which was directed towards them. Other responses argued the source was useful evidence of how it must have felt to be an immigrant in the USA at this time. Such responses, with support, usually reached Level 3.

Where candidates struggled was where they attempted to claim that the source was not useful, usually based on weak claims relating to bias or provenance. Some candidates also did not grasp that the phrase 'police protection' was a euphemism for arrest and not a positive outcome.

	AfL	<p>Candidates might find it helpful in questions of this type to consider some simple steps which will help guide their answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What information is contained in the source? (story of Sacco) - Why would a historian be interested in this information? What could the historian use it as evidence of? (interested because it is evidence of attitudes and actions towards immigrants) - What can we learn about the person who wrote the source? (we get a sense of the anguish and hardship suffered by the author) - What can we tell from the fact that the source was created at this particular time? (that this is part of the wider story of the Red Scare)
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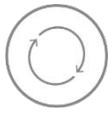
Question 8

8* 'Hoover's government did not respond effectively to the Great Depression.' How far do you agree? [18]

This was a challenging question and this was reflected in adjustments to the way it was marked. Even so, candidates generally handled the question well. Most candidates were able to argue effectively in favour of the statement. They supported this side of the argument with reference to Republican policies of laissez-faire, failure to support banks and also the general poor state of the US economy during the Depression, implying that Hoover's responses were inadequate. The following response makes three strong points on this element of the question.

'Hoover's government did not respond effectively to the ~~great depression~~ Great Depression' can be agreed with as due to the Republican policy of laissez-faire, the government decided to step back which led to people ~~leaving~~ losing their homes. Hoover even blocked WPA at 2.4 Billion Dollars from going to create new jobs for people, many thought that it would make people lazy. His government failed to listen to the ~~poor~~ working class who was most affected and so did not respond effectively to the Great Depression. Hoover's government did not support banks so when people started to lose trust and ~~left~~ withdraw all of their money, banks went bankrupt and people lost money. Businesses went bankrupt as the Government failed to restore confidence and so the economy declined.

Candidates often found it harder to argue the other side of the case. However, stronger responses did so well. They raised actions of Hoover's such as tax cuts, trying to maintain wages, Hoover Dam, Reconstruction Finance Company.

	AfL	<p>Candidates need to focus on developing an argument relevant to the question rather than writing a narrative about the issue and then trying to draw conclusions. In the case of this question, they could take the following steps.</p> <p>Deal with one side first – the agree side of the answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make a clear argument about Hoover's actions eg they did not help.- Make clear the importance of this eg in terms of effects on the economy or people.- Provide examples of this happening. <p>Deal with the other side – the disagree side:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make a clear argument eg some actions did help.- Make clear the importance of these actions.- Provide examples of this happening.
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