



A-level HISTORY 7042/2T

Component 2T The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the
Soviet Empire, 1953–2000

Mark scheme

June 2023

Version: 1.0 Final



2 3 6 A 7 0 4 2 / 2 T / M S

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity, you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level, you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, i.e. if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A

- 0 1** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the USSR's involvement in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

[30 marks]*Target: AO2*

Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25–30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19–24**
- L3:** Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13–18**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7–12**
- L1:** The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1–6**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.

Source A: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- as an adviser in the Soviet Embassy in Havana, Bolshakov's views are likely to be well informed and therefore of value
- Bolshakov writes with the benefit of hindsight and therefore is in a position to consider more fully the causes of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Also, he likely holds off on publishing his memoirs until after the fall of communism, due to his desire to speak truthfully and openly
- ordinarily, Pravda would publish propaganda in order to promote the Soviet cause. However, the date is significant here. By 1989, the Cold War is lost and the USSR is collapsing, and there is perhaps not the need for Pravda to print propaganda
- the tone gives the source value – it is both measured and balanced in its portrayal of the causes of the crisis.

Content and argument

- it is true that there was a thermonuclear crisis and that mankind was indeed at the epicentre of a nuclear abyss. On 27 October, Kennedy threatened to go to war with the USSR unless the missiles were withdrawn
- the USSR was perhaps attempting to correct the nuclear imbalance. The previous year, the USA had installed missiles in Turkey, which was on the Soviet doorstep
- it is probable that the USA intended to destroy Castro's Republic of Cuba and return it to what existed previously – a nationalist state loyal to the USA, in which American business could thrive
- it is likely that this was an attempt by the Soviets to consolidate the position of a Socialist camp on the American continent, in response to American attempts to consolidate Capitalist camps across Eastern and Central Europe, and in parts of Asia.

Source B: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- as leader of the USSR, Khrushchev played a pivotal role in the Cuban Missile Crisis
- the source is of value because of who Khrushchev is writing to. Kennedy is the President of the USA and it is his decisions, alongside Khrushchev's, that determine the outcome of the crisis in Cuba
- Source B could be problematic due to Khrushchev's desire to present himself in a positive light in order to encourage his countrymen to overlook that he had not only brought the USSR to the brink of nuclear war, but had accepted rather humiliating terms
- the tone is congratulatory. Khrushchev clearly feels that both he and Kennedy are deserving of praise for reaching such a satisfying resolution and securing peace.

Content and argument

- it is true that Khrushchev ordered for weapons to be removed from Cuba. Khrushchev's implicit portrayal of these Soviet weapons being non-aggressive is understandable but inaccurate – they were nuclear missiles, placed in America's backyard
- Khrushchev is keen to point out that both Kennedy and himself conceded, equally, in order to reach the resolution. In truth, this is correct – the USSR agreed to withdraw missiles from Cuba and the USA to withdraw its missiles from Turkey. However, the withdrawal from Turkey was kept secret
- Khrushchev repeatedly points out that the problem in Cuba had been resolved. It is important to stress that whilst the immediate crisis had seemingly been averted, Cuba remained under Communist rule and, with this, the problem was far from resolved for the United States
- Khrushchev's claims that he had acted selflessly, sensibly and with reason in order to reach a resolution with Kennedy is misleading. In fact, Khrushchev arguably acted recklessly by planning to install nuclear missile sites in Cuba, just 90 miles from the American coast; by, at first, denying all knowledge of this plan, despite the US having photographic evidence of the sites being constructed; by not backing down until the US navy had set sail and set up a naval blockade.

Source C: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- as leader of the Republic of Cuba, Castro played a central role in the Cuban Missile Crisis
- Source C could be problematic due to Castro perhaps exaggerating the despair and disappointment felt by the Cubans in order to secure further Soviet sympathy and support in the form of Soviet financial aid
- the source is of value due to its date. By November, it appeared as if the USA had emerged the victor – Khrushchev had publicly agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba, whilst the American withdrawal of missiles from Turkey was kept secret
- the tone is one of shock and bewilderment. Castro is seemingly annoyed at neither being consulted nor being involved in the decision making.

Content and argument

- it is true that the Soviet concession to the USA had a depressing effect. It appeared as if the USSR was too quick to concede and that it had suffered a humiliating defeat
- Castro's claim that Cuba had been deprived of Soviet support is misleading. Cuba and the USSR remained close allies, and Cuba continued to benefit from subsidised trade, protection and financial aid
- Castro is clearly upset at the removal of missiles from Cuba, as expected – first, he is a radical revolutionary who had just seized power in Cuba via a coup d'état; secondly, he felt betrayed by Khrushchev, who had promised him support
- Castro's understanding of what was agreed on the 27 and 28 October is correct. However, he remains dissatisfied, despite the USA agreeing to dismantle weapons in Turkey. In his eyes, the withdrawal of nuclear missiles from Turkey had limited relevance to Cuba.

Section B

- 0 2** 'Western influence was the most significant challenge to Soviet control of the satellite states in the years 1968 to 1980.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that Western influence was the most significant challenge to Soviet control of the satellite states in the years 1968 to 1980 might include:

- Western media counteracted the Communist idea of society, and there were numerous accounts of people turning to Western media sources for more accurate information about current events in their countries
- Radio Free Europe (RFE) played a significant role in encouraging political opposition in the satellite states. For example, the RFE reported extensively on the Warsaw's Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the Helsinki Accords of 1975
- Western elements to the Helsinki Accords gave impetus to dissident movements in the satellite states. The Final Act ruled that the USSR was to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Helsinki Watch groups monitored the satellite governments for any infringement and reported any wrongdoing to the Western media who in turn broadcasted to the satellite states and the West
- the satellite states were dependent on Western investment and trade, and so how they were perceived by the West was of paramount importance.

Arguments challenging the view that Western influence was the most significant challenge to Soviet control of the satellite states in the years 1968 to 1980 might include:

- political activism; notably the work of Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia and KOR in Poland. Charter 77 published many samizdat articles and KOR paved the way for independent trade unions in Poland
- the Catholic Church challenged the authority of the USSR, particularly in Poland, with the election to the Papacy of the first Polish Pope in 1978 – John Paul II. In the PUWP, 50% of members were churchgoers
- the Lutheran Church challenged the authority of the USSR. The March 1978 Agreement allowed discussion meetings on church premises, giving dissidents a space for debate
- economic problems; notably, food price rises and the housing crisis in Poland, shop shortages in Czechoslovakia and the impact of the global oil crisis on Hungary.

Students may argue that Western influence was the most significant challenge to Soviet control in the satellite states, particularly regarding Western media. Students may even argue that political activism was encouraged by the West. However, students will also likely emphasise the challenges posed by the Church and deteriorating economies.

- 0 3** 'Opposition to the Communist regime in Hungary, in the years 1980 to 1989, was mainly the result of economic difficulties.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that opposition to the Communist regime in Hungary, in the years 1980 to 1989, was mainly the result of economic difficulties might include:

- Hungary's export-led economy was hit hard by the recession of the 1970s and this had an adverse impact on living standards. The ageing Kadar failed to convince Hungarians that he knew how best to respond to the growing economic difficulties
- Hungary's national debt increased over the period; Hungary looked to the West for loans and debts to the West increased significantly
- Kadar's government extended austerity measures, including raising prices, which were unpopular with the Hungarian people
- political opposition grew out of discontent with the economic situation, eg in 1987, Pozsgay's report on Hungary's economy, which argued that the problem was the central planning system.

Arguments challenging the view that opposition to the Communist regime in Hungary, in the years 1980 to 1989, was mainly the result of economic difficulties might include:

- some economic measures had a positive impact. For example, an economic liberalisation scheme encouraged a large number of Hungarians to act as independently-minded entrepreneurs, which substantially increased the numbers of independent small businesses. Also, skilled workers were allowed to contract out their labour after their day job was complete and perform, and get handsomely paid for, multiple jobs
- some opposition was born out of concern for the environment, in particular the building of the Nagymaros Dam, which had flooded large areas and changed the ecology of the river
- some Hungarians demonstrated their upset at the lack of action taken by Kadar's government regarding the poor treatment of Hungarians living in Transylvania by Ceausescu's regime
- conflict arose over the government's representation of the past, particularly of the 1956 Revolution
- Pozsgay's push for democratisation; for example, his call for contested elections, true pluralism, Kadar's resignation and opposition political parties.

Opposition to the Communist regime was the result of many factors, and economic difficulties undoubtedly played a part. However, the economic situation improved for some, notably skilled workers. Arguably, opposition was more so the result of the push for democratisation from within Hungary. It was a movement led by the influential Pozsgay and Grosz, which not only gained significant support from within Hungary, but from the USSR too with the backing of Gorbachev.

- 0 4** To what extent was Gorbachev's attempt at political reform the main reason for his downfall in 1991?

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that Gorbachev's attempt at political reform was the main reason for his downfall in 1991 might include:

- Glasnost led to Gorbachev's downfall. It got off to a bad start because the regime dealt badly with the Chernobyl disaster. Political debates were televised live and any failure in his reforms could be criticised on national TV. Yeltsin did extremely well out of this new-found publicity
- while Gorbachev hoped that socialist democracy would re-energise the relationship between the Soviet people and their Communist Party, Demokratizatsiya meant that alternatives to the Party were now allowed and the Party no longer had control over key aspects of the state
- the nomenklatura was directly threatened by the party reforms, so there was considerable opposition from those whom Gorbachev relied on to implement his plans
- Gorbachev did not seem to understand the strength of nationalist feeling across the USSR and never dealt with it effectively. Demokratizatsiya allowed nationalist politicians to gain influence and push for independence. His decision to create the role of President in the USSR, in March 1990, was mirrored in the creation of presidencies in the republics too.

Arguments challenging the view that Gorbachev's attempt at political reform was the main reason for his downfall in 1991 might include:

- Gorbachev was, at times, unpredictable, severely cracking down on nationalist unrest in the Baltic republics and in Georgia
- Gorbachev often contradicted himself – he brought in the role of President of the USSR, in March 1990, to impose political stability. He stood as the only candidate and was duly elected. Many feared that he would rule as dictator. Also, preserving key elements of the Soviet system alongside the introduction of market economics and democratic politics made for huge difficulties
- Gorbachev's economic reforms ran into serious problems, causing increased international debt and inflation. Gorbachev did not truly understand economics and could not explain what Perestroika actually meant. The Soviet budget deficit soared from about 3% of national income in 1985 to 14% by 1989
- he seemed too concerned with maintaining his good international reputation as a man of peace, and at times skirted around domestic issues.

Students may argue that Gorbachev's downfall was mainly due to his attempt at political reform, particularly regarding Glasnost and Demokratizatsiya. However, students will also likely point out the failings of Perestroika and Gorbachev's unpredictability and contradictions as contributory factors.