



GCSE MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

GCSE

HISTORY

**UNIT 2: STUDY IN DEPTH - HISTORY WITH A
EUROPEAN/WORLD FOCUS**

**2A. RUSSIA IN TRANSITION, 1905–1924
3100UE0-1**

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

UNIT 2: HISTORY WITH A EUROPEAN / WORLD FOCUS

2A. Russia in Transition, 1905-1924

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

Instructions for examiners of GCSE History when applying the mark scheme

Positive marking

It should be remembered that learners are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the learner writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

GCSE History mark schemes are presented in a common format as shown below:

This section indicates the assessment objective(s) targeted in the question

Mark allocation:	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4
6	4		2	

Question: e.g. **Use Source A and your own knowledge to describe the February revolution of 1917.** [6]

Band descriptors and mark allocations

This is the question and its mark tariff.

	AO1 4 marks		AO3 2 marks	
BAND 2	Demonstrates detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	3–4	Accurate analysis of the source set within its historical context.	2
BAND 1	Demonstrates some understanding of the key feature in the question.	1–2	Source is analysed through reference to its content only.	1

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

This section contains the band descriptors which explain the principles that must be applied when marking each question. The examiner must apply this when applying the marking scheme to the response. The descriptor for the band provides a description of the performance level for that band. The band descriptor is aligned with the Assessment Objective(s) targeted in the question.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below.

- Source A shows a photograph of Tsar Nicholas looking unhappy – it shows him under guard, and he is sitting on a tree stump.
- He is not on a throne as he had abdicated in March 1917.
- In February 1917 food shortages and strikes were common; on 23 February, International Women's Day 90,000 strikers and protestors joined a group of women protestors; there were 250,000 on strike by 26 February; soldiers refused to shoot them.
- On 27 February soldiers in Petrograd mutinied and marched to the Duma to demand that it take control of the government; the Provisional Government intended to rule until elections could be held for a new Duma.
- The Petrograd Soviet was reformed by workers; more soviets appeared across Russia in the coming weeks; the Tsar was stopped and arrested on a train whilst trying to get back to Petrograd; Alexei was too ill to rule – the 300 year Romanov dynasty at an end.

This section contains indicative content (see below under banded mark schemes Stage 2). It may be that the indicative content will be amended at the examiner's conference after actual scripts have been read. The indicative content is not prescriptive and includes some of the points a candidate might include in their response.

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor for the band provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a learner's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two stage process.

Banded mark schemes Stage 1 – Deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the learner's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the learner's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the learner's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark learners down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

Banded mark schemes Stage 2 – Deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a learner's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided.

Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is contains nothing of any significance to the mark scheme, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

UNIT 2: HISTORY WITH A EUROPEAN / WORLD FOCUS

2A. RUSSIA IN TRANSITION, 1905–1924

Question 1

Mark allocation	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4
6	4		2	

Question: **Use Source A and your own knowledge to describe the February Revolution of 1917.** [6]

	AO1 4 marks		AO3 2 marks	
BAND 2	Demonstrates detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	3–4	Accurate analysis of the source set within its historical context.	2
BAND 1	Demonstrates some understanding of the key feature in the question.	1–2	Source is analysed through reference to its content only.	1

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- *Source A shows a photograph of Tsar Nicholas looking unhappy – it shows him under guard, and he is sitting on a tree stump.*
- *He is not on a throne as he had abdicated in March 1917.*
- *In February 1917 food shortages and strikes were common; on 23 February, International Women's Day 90,000 strikers and protestors joined a group of women protesters; there were 250,000 on strike by 26 February; soldiers refused to shoot them.*
- *On 27 February soldiers in Petrograd mutinied and marched to the Duma to demand that it take control of the government; the Provisional Government intended to rule until elections could be held for a new Duma.*
- *The Petrograd Soviet was reformed by workers; more soviets appeared across Russia in the coming weeks; the Tsar was stopped and arrested on a train whilst trying to get back to Petrograd; Alexei was too ill to rule – the 300 year Romanov dynasty was at an end.*

Question 2

Mark allocation:	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4
8	8			

Question: **Describe the unpopularity of Tsar Nicholas II between 1905 and 1914. [8]**

Band descriptors and mark allocations

	AO1 8 marks	
BAND 3	Demonstrates detailed knowledge to fully describe the issue set within the appropriate historical context.	6–8
BAND 2	Demonstrates knowledge to partially describe the issue.	3–5
BAND 1	Demonstrates limited knowledge to describe the issue.	1–2

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- *There were several factors for the unpopularity of the Tsar between 1905 and 1914.*
- *The 1905 Revolution was due to years of growing discontent – industrial slump, the Russo-Japanese War and Bloody Sunday; 400,000 were on strike in January due to this, and the Tsar's uncle was assassinated; after the mutiny on the Potemkin in June the St Petersburg Soviet was formed on 26 October; Trotsky was the chairman.*
- *The October Manifesto introduced some constitutional changes – elections for Russia's first Duma were held in March 1906; but the working classes continued to be neglected; force was used to shut down the St Petersburg Soviet.*
- *Peter Stolypin was another factor – he limited the power of the Duma, which lasted just 75 days; the 2nd Duma ran for 3 months in 1907; voting changed for 3rd Duma – 1% of the richest Russians accounted for 2/3 of the representatives; Stolypin had a policy of severe repression – 1000 arrested and executed in 1908, and 21,000 sent to Siberia; 1800 hanged 1907-11 – Stolypin's necktie; he was murdered in 1911 showing discontent for the Tsar.*
- *Rasputin was another factor; he had too much hold on the Royal family, especially after Stolypin; he was accused of using dark forces; the Tsarina relied heavily upon him, and as she was German, both were accused of wanting to betray Russia therefore, the Tsar was very unpopular between 1905-1914.*

Question 3

Mark allocation:	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4
8	4		4	

Question: **What was the purpose of Source B?** [8]

Band descriptors and mark allocations

	AO1 4 marks		AO3 4 marks	
BAND 3	Demonstrates very detailed understanding of the historical context.	3–4	The purpose of the source is fully analysed and evaluated. A substantiated judgement regarding purpose is reached.	3–4
BAND 2	Demonstrates some understanding of the historical context.	2	The purpose of the source is partially analysed and evaluated. A judgement regarding purpose is reached.	2
BAND 1	Demonstrates only basic understanding of the historical context.	1	Answer mainly describes or paraphrases the source material with little analysis or evaluation.	1

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- *Source C is a painting of Lenin's funeral in 1924 that was altered in 1925 to include Stalin.*
- *Its main purpose was to show that Stalin was trying to influence how he was perceived after Lenin's death; he was not included in the original painting, but was added in a year later.*
- *It reflects the type of tactics used by Stalin in trying to become leader after Lenin's death.*
- *It is trying to influence other leaders and the Soviet population into supporting him.*
- *Lenin died on 21 January 1924; he had been ill since 1922 suffering from strokes; he wanted a collective leadership as he didn't trust Trotsky or Stalin; Trotsky was discredited by Stalin, and appeals to publish Lenin's Testament were blocked.*
- *Stalin was made General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1922 which enabled him to build up a strong challenge for the leadership after Lenin's death.*
- *The struggle between the main leaders continued into the 1920s, and Stalin's manipulation of works such as this helped him gain power.*
- *Published by the official artist for the Communist State it would be subject to Russia's censorship; but has been changed to make Stalin look good.*
- *The purpose was therefore to change the minds of the leadership and the Soviet people in appointing Stalin as the next leader of the Soviet Union.*

Question 4

<i>Mark allocation:</i>	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4
12	6		6	

Question: **Which of the sources is more useful to an historian studying Lenin's success in spreading Communist ideas?** [12]

Band descriptors and mark allocations

	AO1 6 marks		AO3 6 marks	
BAND 3	Demonstrates detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	5–6	The relative usefulness of the source material is fully analysed and evaluated. Analysis of the content and authorship of the source material is undertaken to produce a clear and well substantiated judgement, set within the appropriate historical context.	5–6
BAND 2	Demonstrates some understanding of the key feature in the question.	3–4	The usefulness of the source material is analysed and partially evaluated. Analysis of the content and authorship is undertaken to reach a supported judgement, set within the appropriate historical context.	3–4
BAND 1	Demonstrates limited understanding of the key feature in the question.	1–2	Copies or paraphrases the source material with little or no analysis and evaluation undertaken.	1–2

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- *Both sources are of varying usefulness to an historian studying Lenin's success in spreading communist ideas.*
- *Source C shows that the Comintern is trying to spread ideas across Europe and the world.*
- *It states that capitalist countries are not helping poor people, spending money on weapons instead of food for the workers.*
- *They are encouraging people to rise up against these countries.*
- *A speech at the Comintern itself – it is bound to be biased; points out only negatives about the capitalists and calls people to rise up.*
- *The source accurately reflects how Lenin wanted to spread communism beyond Russia; he announced the creation of the Comintern in 1919 at the 10th Party Congress; its purpose was to organise socialist revolutions across Europe and to spread communism beyond Russia; this would have alarmed western countries and led them to continue to support the whites in the Civil War.*
- *The source is however clearly biased; it would be expected for the Comintern Manifesto to focus fully on communist ideals; these would be rejected by the majority of people in western countries, and be supported by the few who were at the conference in the Netherlands.*
- *Source D is also useful; it shows that communism needed to be spread through education inside the Soviet Union too; it says that liquidating illiteracy is crucial for the spread of communism in the country; it shows adult men and women in the classroom, and the rise of literate people from 1 million in 1921 to 15 million by 1931.*
- *The Communist Party used propaganda and censorship to spread the communist message; newspapers, books and films carried the 'right' messages; much of the country couldn't read or write – Lenin launched a massive literacy programme to help spread ideas.*
- *The source is of great use to an historian; created by communist propagandists, it would be heavily biased to get people to follow Lenin and spread communist ideas, but it gives the historian an excellent understanding of how Lenin wished to spread communist ideas.*
- *It would have been seen by a great many Russians and would have encouraged them to improve their literacy.*
- *Neither source is necessarily more useful than the other, but answers should be able to reach a judgement about the varying utility of the sources in an investigation into the spreading of communist ideas.*

Question 5

<i>Mark allocation:</i>	<i>AO1</i>	<i>AO2</i>	<i>AO3</i>	<i>AO4</i>	<i>SPaG</i>
19	4	12			3

Question: **To what extent was the role of the Royal family the reason for Russia losing the First World War?** **[16+3]**

Band descriptors and mark allocations

	AO1 4 marks		AO2 12 marks	
BAND 4	Demonstrates very detailed knowledge and understanding of the key feature in the question.	4	Fully analyses the key issue. There will be a clear analysis of other factors and their relative impact set within the appropriate historical context.	10–12
BAND 3	Demonstrates detailed knowledge and understanding of the key feature in the question.	3	Partially analyses the key issue along with a consideration of the impact of other factors in the historical context.	7–9
BAND 2	Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the key feature in the question.	2	Basic analysis while considering some other factors and their impact.	4–6
BAND 1	Demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the key features in the question.	1	Offers a generalised response with little analysis of impact.	1–3

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- *Answers will provide a reasoned analysis of the issue covering a range of factors to help explain the impact of the First World War on Russia.*
- *Initially news of the war was received with enthusiasm; there were several patriotic demonstrations across Russia; only Bolsheviks showed open opposition to the 'imperialist war'.*
- *However, this soon ended after defeats of Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes in the autumn of 1914; over 250,000 were killed, wounded or taken prisoner; despite having greater numbers, the Russian army lacked weapons – nearly 1,000,000 soldiers were without rifles or boots; the Germans advanced 300 miles into Russia during 1915.*
- *These significant events happened before the Tsar took charge of the war effort in 1915.*
- *The Tsar, however, was a weak and incompetent commander and would now take the blame for Russia's military failures; he left Petrograd for the front, leaving the Tsarina in charge of the government; she relied heavily on Rasputin, was distrusted as a German and she frequently changed ministers; this led to a great resentment of the Royal family.*
- *The Royal family can also be blamed for the poor conditions in Russia; 15 million men were drafted into the war, leaving not enough people to run factories or farms; transport was poor with too few trains to keep up supply of food and materials; there was a 400% rise in prices 1914-17.*
- *However, after the Tsar had abdicated in March 1917, the Provisional Government continued with the war; food and fuel shortages continued, along with extremely low temperatures; in June 1917 Russia launched another offensive which cost over 60,000 lives; soldiers began to desert and increased calls for the war to end.*
- *This led to the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917, and in turn to the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, where Russia had to pay a heavy price for peace.*

Candidates may conclude that either the Royal Family were the reason for Russia losing the First World War, or that other factors were more significant, but a valid conclusion should be reached.

After awarding a level and mark for the historical response, apply the performance descriptors for spelling, punctuation and the accurate use of grammar (SPaG) and specialist language that follow.

Having decided on a band, award a second mark (out of 3) for SPaG. In applying these indicators:

- learners may only receive SPaG marks for responses that are in the context of the demands of the question; that is, where learners have made a genuine attempt to answer the question
- the allocation of SPaG marks should take into account the level of the qualification.

Band	Marks	Performance descriptions
<i>High</i>	3	• Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall • Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate
<i>Intermediate</i>	2	• Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall • Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate
<i>Threshold</i>	1	• Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall • Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate
	0	• The learner writes nothing • The learner's response does not relate to the question • The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning