

## Paper 1 Section C Historical interpretations

The debate is expressed in the specification content in terms of four key issues. Questions may relate to one strand or to more (including all four). Differentiation between AS and A level is discussed above (page 19); although A level is more demanding than AS, the structure of the task in the two qualifications is similar in order to aid co-teaching and to facilitate progression. At both levels, students are expected to reach a judgement in relation to a given view.

The examples below relate to differing interpretations linked to the specified broad question in Paper 1 Option E: What explains the fall of the USSR, c1985–91?

AS	A level
<p>Historians have different views about the reasons for the fall of the Soviet Union. Analyse and evaluate the extracts and use your knowledge of the issues to explain your answer to the following question.</p> <p>How far do you agree with the view that the collapse of the Soviet Union came about because of the failure of Gorbachev's reform programme?</p>	<p>In the light of differing interpretations, how convincing do you find the view that the Soviet Union fell because of Gorbachev's misjudgement of the seriousness of the 'national question'?</p> <p>To explain your answer, analyse and evaluate the material in both extracts, using your own knowledge of the issues.</p>

In the AS paper, the extracts total about 300 words and may be amended for accessibility, if necessary. One of the extracts may be from an A level textbook. The first extract contains a clear expression of an interpretation which can be evaluated by students in the light of their own knowledge of differing views. The second extract adds a contrasting view which the answer should acknowledge. The summarised counter-view in the second extract provides support for students in constructing their argument.

The extracts provided for A level are longer (about 350 words) and more complex. Extracts from textbooks will not be used in the A level paper. The task requires students to reach a judgement about the extent to which a view expressed in one is convincing in the light of their own knowledge of differing views and of the differences which they should analyse in the presented extracts. The highest level requires students to display an understanding of the basis of the differing arguments (for example, what criteria are being used on which to base a claim or judgement). It also requires students to take account of the differences when coming to a judgement.

Reference to the works of named historians is not expected, but students may consider historians' viewpoints in framing their argument.

### Mark schemes for Section C

Section C questions target AO3 and the mark schemes identify progression in three separate elements or traits:

- Interpretation and analysis of extracts.
- Deployment of knowledge of issues related to the debate.
- Evaluation of and judgement about the interpretations.

As is the case for the AO1 level descriptions discussed above, Levels 1–4 for AO3 are defined in the same way in the AS and A level mark schemes, but A level students gain fewer marks for performance at lower levels and an additional level of performance is required for the highest mark band. It is expected that A level students will have developed a more secure grasp of the nature of history as a discipline and will explore and make judgements about historical interpretations with greater depth of understanding and confidence.