

# A level History

Feedback on June 2018  
series





# Assessment Objectives (AOs)

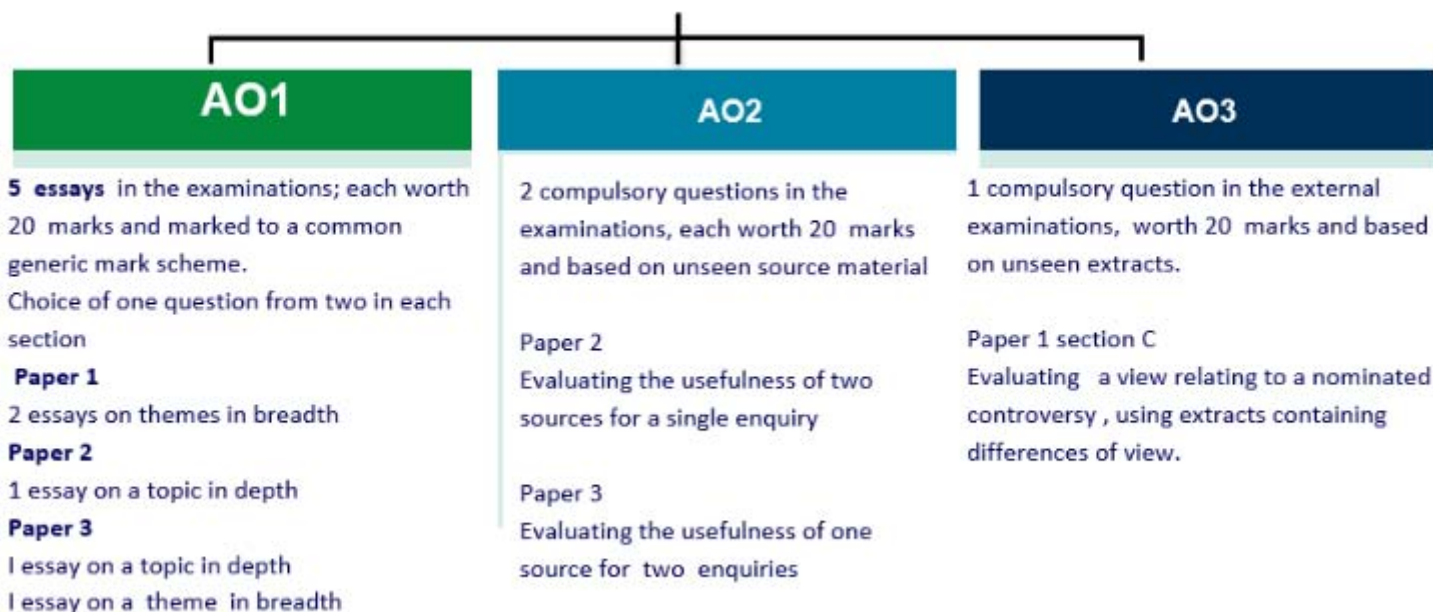
**AO1** - Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance

**AO2** - Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context

**AO3** - Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted



# Key features of external assessment





# Principles of the AO1 essay generic mark scheme

- Progression is traced in the level descriptors in four elements:
  - Analysis of key features of the period in relation to the conceptual focus of the question (cause, consequence, significance, etc.)
  - Selection and deployment of knowledge
  - Substantiated evaluation and judgement
  - Organisation and communication of argument

June 2018

AO1

Papers 1, 2, 3





# AO1 essay responses – key elements of good responses

- **Analysed** and **explored** the **question focus** presented for consideration
- **Considered** both the **given factor/feature/issue** and **counter points** with sufficient **precisely-selected knowledge** to show **understanding**
- **Reached a judgement** - addressing the **AO1 historical concept** focus e.g. change, significance
- **Established criteria for judgement** by explaining and justifying decisions reached e.g. why x main reason, why x more significant
- **Well-constructed argument** providing **clarity** about the **focus** for **discussion**



## Pitfalls and weaknesses – summer 2018

- did **not address** the **conceptual focus** of the question with **sufficient clarity**
- included **supporting knowledge not relevant** to question asked and/or very **descriptive**
- **failed to focus on the key time periods** under consideration
- asserted judgments without the **application of criteria**



# Making judgements and applying criteria

- For AO1 the requirement for applying valid criteria is found in the mark scheme element that is related to substantiated evaluation and judgement (bullet point 3).
- The mark scheme progression moves from the lack of, or implicit use of, criteria through to the selection and application of valid criteria that enable a judgement to be made and supported in the response.
- For example, a ‘main consequence’ question would use criteria that determine the relative importance of effects: e.g. groups affected; how widespread; knock-on consequences; lasting impact, etc.





# Valid criteria made explicit

Option 2C.2: Russia in revolution, 1894–1924

How far do you agree that the survival of the Tsarist system, in the years 1894–1906, owed more to the weaknesses of its opponents than to government policies?

In the example provided in the pack, the student makes clear the bases for the judgments

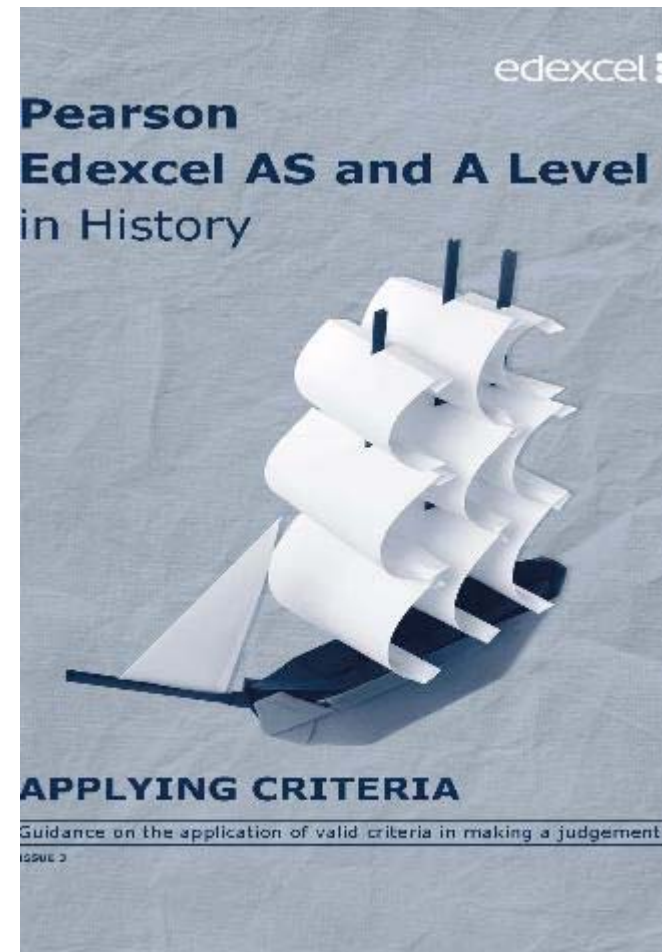
The answer gives criteria for judgments on the significance of the required key features – opposition / government policy.



# Guidance

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/History/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCE-History-guidance-to-application-of-valid-criteria.pdf>

This booklet gives guidance and exemplification for teachers. It is relevant to AO1 essays, AO2 source evaluation and AO3 coursework evaluation of interpretations.



June 2018  
AO2  
Papers 2, 3





# Pitfalls and weaknesses – summer 2018

- Focus on answering the enquiry rather than on the value of the source *for* the enquiry
- Source material used only for information and quoted or paraphrased with no attempt at inference
- Knowledge free-standing and/or lacked relevance to the enquiry
- Consideration of both sources (P2)/ both enquiries (P3) seriously unbalanced.
- Evaluation of the source asserted with no explanation or development from the sources
- Substantial time spent on content limitations which the source could not be expected to provide.



## Why candidates did well – summer 2018

- Clear comprehension of the source and analysis developed by drawing out key points relevant for the enquiry; valid inferences developed with support from the source material and meanings explained

- Relevant knowledge of the historical context used effectively to explain the inferences and to expand on details

- Valid criteria established to develop the evaluation which takes into account relevant considerations such as the nature and purpose of the source and/or the position of the author



## Example – Paper 2C

Option 2C.1: France in revolution, 1774–99

How far could the historian make use of Sources 1 and 2 together to investigate the extent of the Directory's success?

Explain your answer, using both sources, the information given about them and your own knowledge of the historical context.

The example answer in the pack shows:

- good analysis of the sources – the implications of their contents for the given enquiry
- effectively-deployed contextual knowledge, used to illuminate and evaluate source content
- understanding of contemporary concerns
- discrimination in the use of evidence, considering the weight it will bear

June 2018

AO3

Paper 1  
section c





## Pitfalls and weaknesses – summer 2018

- Wrote **rehearsed answers** to the **key topic question** rather than the **view expressed** in the **question** itself
- Wrote about the **historiography of the key topic question** rather than the view expressed in the question itself
- Answered almost **wholly** through **comprehension of the extracts** or **own knowledge**
- Deployed **AO2 source evaluation skills** to address the extracts – candidates should discuss the views within the extract boxes not evaluate the historians





# Key elements of good responses – summer 2018

- **Interpreted** the provided extracts by **analysing** the issues raised
- **Integrated own knowledge** with the issues raised in the analysis
- **Demonstrated** a clear **understanding** of the **arguments** offered in **both extracts** and how arguments were established
- **Constructed** a response which considered the **given view**, the **counter-evidence** in the **other extract** and **own historical knowledge**
- **Reached a judgement** about the view, **taking account of the views of both extracts** in the process

June 2018  
Coursework  
AO3 and AO1





# Question framework

Historians have disagreed about [*the chosen question, problem or issue*].

What is your view about [*the chosen question, problem or issue*]?

With reference to three chosen works:

- analyse the ways in which interpretations of the question, problem or issue differ
- explain the differences you have identified
- evaluate the arguments, indicating which you found most persuasive and explain your judgements.



# Mark scheme progression

The mark scheme traces progression in five traits (see Specification, pp125–127):

- Identification of, selection from, and deployment of material relevant to an aspect of historical debate
- Ability to reach and sustain an overall judgement about a matter of historical debate in its historical context
- Analysis and explanation of differences in historians' views
- Evaluation of, and judgement on, historians' arguments
- Demonstration of understanding of relevant concepts and organisation and communication of a concisely-formulated argument



# Coursework – celebrating achievement

- The coursework requirements are helping students to engage with the subject and the nature of history
- Teachers are managing the coursework well – it's helping them to give their course an identity and tailor it to their own and their students' interests
- Free choice has allowed interesting topics and impressive work by candidates
- Progression from GCSE (9-1) and student engagement with interpretations
- Coursework is well marked – very low number of centres had their coursework marks changed
- Offering coursework marking training in early 2019 – exemplars available [online](#) as well



# Coursework example

Historians have disagreed about how far Cromwell himself was responsible for his limited success as Lord Protector.  
What is your view...

- The example extract is from an assignment awarded full marks (available online).
- The essence of the differing interpretations in the three chosen works is identified, contrasted and the basis of difference made clear.
- The student conveys a sense of the differing views being rooted in differing perspectives and approaches.
- Weaker work often rehearsed schools of thought; this seldom strengthened the answer.
- In this strong answer, there is no attempt to rehearse schools of thought; the answer focuses directly on the historians' views.
- The weaknesses and strengths in coursework and in Paper 1 section C have much in common.



# Coursework example

The extent to which Oliver Cromwell was personally responsible for his limited success as Lord Protector has been a topic of dispute among historians. Many interwoven factors ranging from individual bodies of power, to the constitution, to the deep divisions in society contributed to preventing the success of the protectorate government. The limited success of the Protectorate rests in these fundamentals; Cromwell's narrow basis of support among the ruling classes, his failure to gain a functional relationship with his parliaments, which ultimately prevented the establishment of a stable constitutional settlement. Coward's argument is centred on how Cromwell's failures were a consequence of his prioritizing godly reform over his want for 'healing and settlement'. Coward makes use of many of sources produced by Cromwell himself, which contrasts with Worden who uses the views of Cromwell's contemporaries to conclude that the major causes of failure were Cromwell's character and the military origins of the Instrument of Government. Unlike Coward and Worden whose

*should use*

*Multiple*

*of differences with some*

*view*

*like some*





# Coursework example

investigations surround the life and influence of Cromwell, Aylmer's focus is on constitutional changes throughout the Stuart age and their impact on society. Consequently, he argues that the failures were rooted in the deep divisions in society and that they were then worsened by the Army presence in protectorate rule. When considering the whole of the protectorate rule, it can be argued that the deep severances in society, coupled with the military influence in government were the underlying causes of the limited success, however, had it not been for Cromwell's strong desire for godly reformation preventing cordial relations with Parliament, the rule of the Lord Protector would most probably have experienced more success.

A major limitation of the protectorate was the amount of support it received from the ruling classes; according to Aylmer 'whatever constitution might be





# Further support

- History subject advisor  
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  - [TeachingHistory@pearson.com](mailto:TeachingHistory@pearson.com)
  - Sign up to Mark's regular email updates



# Any questions?

