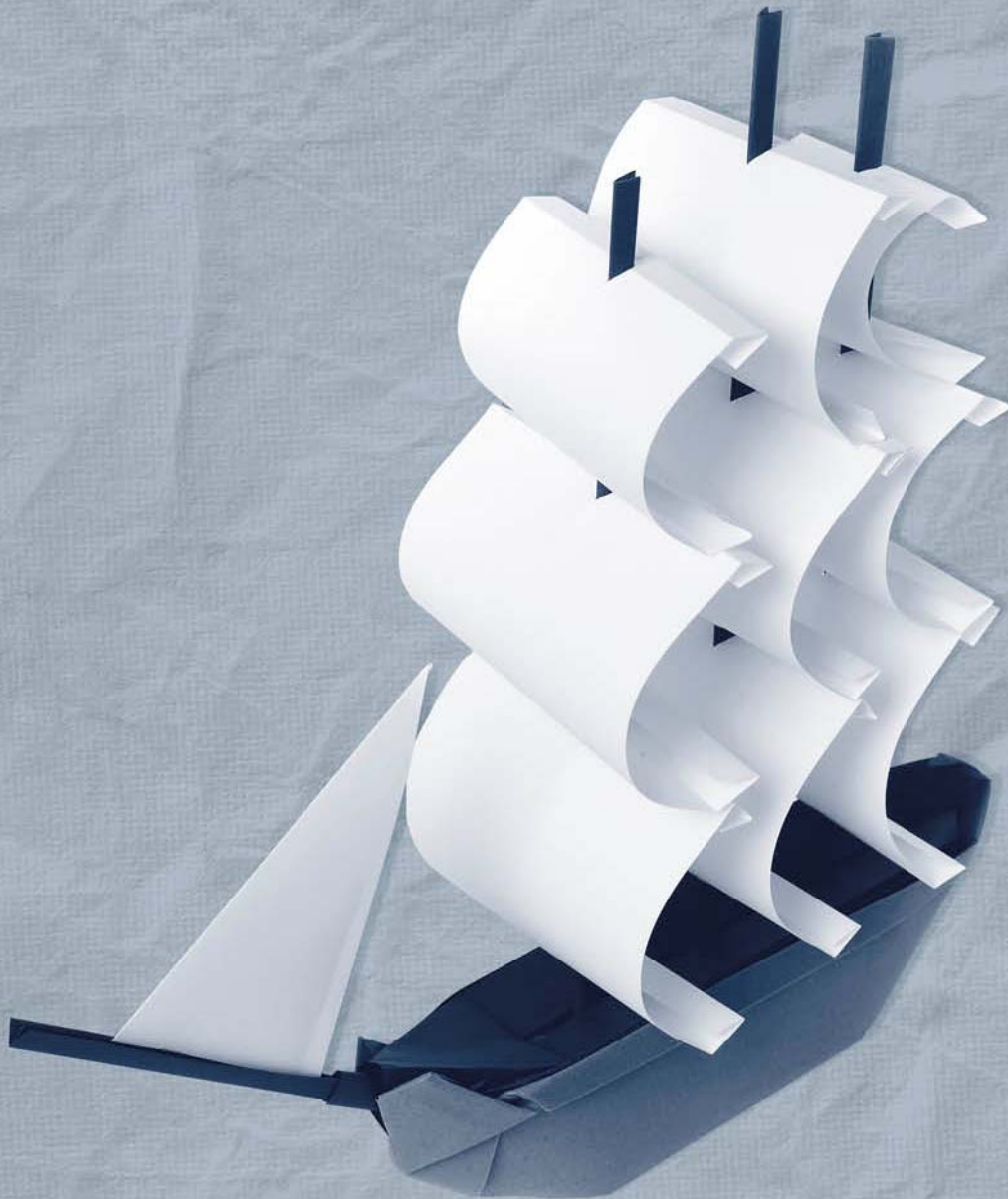


Pearson Edexcel AS History



**STUDENT ANSWER
PAPER 1 SECTION C**

About this exemplars pack

This pack has been produced to support History teachers delivering the new AS History specification (first assessment summer 2016). Existing exemplar packs for both AS and A Level can be found on the [Edexcel website](#) and further packs will be published as centres progress through the course.

The pack contains a high level exemplar student response to AS History Paper 1 Section C.

Following the student response, you will find the mark scheme for the band that the student has achieved, with accompanying examiner comments on how the level has been awarded.

Paper 1 Section C

AO3 AS mark scheme

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

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates only limited comprehension of the extracts, selecting some material relevant to the debate. • Some relevant contextual knowledge is included, with limited linkage to the extracts. • Judgement on the view is assertive, with little or no supporting evidence
2	5–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates some understanding and attempts analysis of the extracts by describing some points within them that are relevant to the debate. • Contextual knowledge is added to information from the extracts, but only to expand on matters of detail or to note some aspects which are not included. • A judgement on the view is given, but with limited support and related to the extracts overall, rather than specific issues
3	11–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of the extracts and shows some analysis by selecting and explaining some key points of interpretation they contain and indicating differences • Knowledge of some issues related to the debate is included to link to, or expand, some views given in the extracts. • A judgement is given and related to some key points of view in the extracts and discussion is attempted, albeit with limited substantiation.
4	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of the extracts, analysing the issues of interpretation raised by comparison of them. • Integrates issues raised by extracts with those from own knowledge to discuss the views. Most of the relevant aspects of the debate will be discussed, although treatment of some aspects may lack depth. • Discusses evidence in order to reach a supported overall judgement. Discussion of points of view in the extracts demonstrates understanding that the issues are matters of interpretation.

Question 5

Study Extracts 1 and 2 in the Extracts Booklet before you answer this question. 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.

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?

Extract 1: From Martin McCauley, *The Soviet Union, 1917–91*, published 1993.

When Gorbachev took his leave of the Soviet people on 25 December 1991, he did so a saddened man. The Soviet Union, which he had tried so bravely to reform, was about to pass into history.

Gorbachev had a clear agenda before he took office. In a speech in December 1984, he spoke of the need to make 'deep transformations in the economy and the whole system of social relations'. His intention was to set in motion a revolution, controlled from above. His reforms quickly reached their limits. Gorbachev's intention was not to achieve fundamental changes but to make the existing structures function more efficiently. The state created by Lenin and the centrally planned economy were to remain. He rejected Stalin's legacy and searched for a more humane socialism. However, he never had a clear vision of how political, economic and social reform would interact and allow the USSR to progress. Unfortunately for Gorbachev, public, social and political forces, awakened by *perestroika*, could not be regulated from above.

Extract 2: From Robert Service, *The Penguin History of Modern Russia*, published 1997.

Nowhere was Gorbachev's complacency more harmful [to the Soviet Union] than in relation to the 'national question'. Gorbachev was not a pure Russian: he was born to a couple consisting of a Russian and a Ukrainian. He was comfortable with his dual identity, and this produced casualness that gave much offence. For example, when he visited Ukraine in 1986, he spoke about Russia and the USSR as if they were one and the same. Ukrainian national sensitivities were outraged.

The nationalist resurgence in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia had become more defiant by 1988. Not all the dissenters were calling for outright independence, but the degree of self-government demanded by them was rising. Their example stimulated national movements elsewhere.

Exemplar script A

The USSR unravelled spectacularly at the end of 1991 and since then historians have attempted to find reasons to explain why such an unpredicted and wholesale dismantling of the Soviet Union came about. Martin McCauley's interpretation in extract 1 centres on the actions of Gorbachev and the fact that his attempts to reform the communist system essentially destabilised it to such an extent that instead it hastened its demise. However, Robert Service in extract 2 presents a different view, for him the key issue revolves around the rise of national sentiment and crucially Gorbachev's mishandling of those aspirations.

Martin McCauley argues that Gorbachev's reforms were the key to explaining the collapse of the USSR. He suggests that whilst Gorbachev had a 'clear agenda' about what he wanted to achieve, in short a 'more humane socialism,' he was really uncertain about the strategies that might achieve this and that consequently they proved counter-productive. There is plenty of evidence to support this view, for example the fact that Gorbachev was making substantial changes to the economy, such as the ill-advised introduction of 'uskorenie', headlined by his anti-alcohol crusade, without any real economic understanding or expertise. The fact that he read the Novosibirsk Report of 1983 and accepted its findings did not make him an economic expert who had a strong understanding of macroeconomics. The experimental nature of Gorbachev's economic reforms and the speed with which they were replaced with others suggest that Gorbachev was grappling with issues he did not completely understand. As a consequence his economic reforms did not bring the improvement he desired and in fact they destabilised the USSR to such a point that food rationing, unacceptable price hikes and widespread strikes became commonplace by 1988. Understandably the soviet people judged the success of their regime by how it impacted on their day to day living standards and by the late 1980s they were losing faith in Gorbachev's ability to reform the USSR. McCauley makes the point that critically Gorbachev had miscalculated; he thought that the changes could be 'controlled from above' but this was an error, and he goes on to emphasise this by almost repeating that they 'could not be regulated from above.' Clearly Gorbachev attempted too much economic reform in too short a space of time and when coupled with the policy of Glasnost, which encouraged a more frank exchange of views and opinions and allowed a degree of democratisation to politics, proved a toxic mix for Gorbachev to have to deal with. I believe it is a convincing argument to say that Gorbachev and the USSR would have had carried on for longer had Gorbachev not attempted such wide ranging reforms, which clearly underlines the accuracy of the assertion in this question.

Robert Service however presents a different interpretation to McCauley and instead he concentrates on Gorbachev's failings with regard to the nationalist question as a key reason for the soviet collapse. He claims that Gorbachev showed 'complacency' towards the Soviet Republics, implying that he did not fully understand or sympathise with what their nationalist grievances were. He goes even further than this and claims that this was 'harmful'. There may well be an element of truth in this, but to claim that this is the pivotal issue seems unconvincing. Service's evidence for this claim seems weak, he offers the fact that Gorbachev's mixed parentage 'produced casualness that gave much offence' but this somewhat anecdotal claim is not backed up with any harder evidence. The overall impression that Service gives is of a leader who blundered his way through the minefield of national and ethnic tensions, largely oblivious. However, it could be argued that accusing Gorbachev of 'complacency' is unfair. Gorbachev may have appeared to be less concerned about the national question as he believed that it would be wrong to force them to submit to staying in the USSR, therefore creating the impression that he was not so concerned by them. Equally it must be noted that Gorbachev worked very hard to keep the USSR together, especially in 1990 and 1991 and that he firstly allowed a referendum in March 1991 to allow the republics to determine their own future and secondly that he included lots of safeguards in this Union Treaty to protect local languages and customs so they did not feel swamped by Moscow. Therefore it seems a little unfair to paint this picture of Gorbachev as out of touch with nationalist feelings. However, without a doubt the emergence of national issues in the late 1980s was significant, and they must have added to the pressure that was on Gorbachev, but it is not in my view completely convincing to suggest that Gorbachev mishandled these issues and it should also be recognised that these tensions themselves were coming to the fore because of the 'public, social and political forces awakened by perestroika' in extract 1. This would therefore give primacy to the interpretation of McCauley again and suggest

that the emergence of nationalism was as a result of the reform programme rather than being a key factor in its own right. Neither of the extracts makes any reference either to Yeltsin either directly or by implication which again seems like an oversight. The combination of national tension with Yeltsin's political opportunism also proved significant. The Union Treaty looked like it was going to be signed until Yeltsin began to undermine it with his promises of 'take all the sovereignty you can stomach' to the republics and also his championing of Russian Nationalism and encouraging Russians to also turn their back on the USSR. Yeltsin also colluded with the Ukrainians and Belorussians to allow them to leave the USSR secretly which clearly in turn made it less likely that the other republics would see staying as a viable option. Without the added factor of Yeltsin it is possible that even the national question might not have been as critical as it was, which therefore reduces the weight that we should give to Service's interpretation.

In conclusion, it is clear that the collapse of the USSR is explained by a combination of factors that all served to fatally undermine the USSR. However, the failure of Gorbachev's reform programme, as put forward by McCauley, seems absolutely critical and can be seen as the source of many other grievances, or perhaps to be more precise it allowed those other grievances to be expressed, which then further eroded the USSR. National sentiment and the resentment of Eastern Europe at living under communism, coupled with the systemic problems of the soviet command economy all played their part in the collapse of the USSR, but the factor that galvanised them all was the genie that Gorbachev had let out when he attempted to reform the system and to allow liberalisation.

Marker's comment

Both extracts are well understood and effectively analysed in order to raise issues of interpretation. There is evidence of a discriminating consideration of the views advanced. This is informed by the use of material from both the extracts and the effective integration of the candidate's own knowledge of the context and understanding of the wider debate. The overall judgment is well supported and the basis for it is made clear (e.g. absolutely critical.... source of many other grievances... 'factor that galvanised...').

High Level 4

4	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of the extracts, analysing the issues of interpretation raised by comparison of them. • Integrates issues raised by extracts with those from own knowledge to discuss the views. Most of the relevant aspects of the debate will be discussed, although treatment of some aspects may lack depth. • Discusses evidence in order to reach a supported overall judgement. Discussion of points of view in the extracts demonstrates understanding that the issues are matters of interpretation.
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