



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In History (8HI0/1E)

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1E: Russia, 1917–91: from Lenin to
Yeltsin

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at:

www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2024

Publications Code 8HI0_1E_2406_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2024

8HI0 1E

Introduction

It was pleasing to see candidates able to engage effectively across the ability range on this years AS Level Paper 1 Option 1E: Russia, 1917-91: from Lenin to Yeltsin. The paper is divided into three sections. Section A comprises a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1) by targeting the second order concepts of cause and/or consequence. Section B offers a further choice of essays, targeting any of the second order concepts of cause, consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference, and significance. Section C contains a compulsory question which is based on two given extracts. It assesses analysis and evaluation of historical interpretations in context (AO3).

Candidates mainly appeared to be able to organise their time effectively, although there were some cases of candidates not completing one of the three responses within the time allocated for this paper. Examiners did note a number of scripts that posed some problems with the legibility of handwriting. Examiners can only reward candidates for what they are able to read.

Of the three sections of Paper 1, candidates are generally more au fait with the essay sections, and in sections A and B most candidates were prepared well in centres to demonstrate their abilities to write, or to attempt, an analytical response. Stronger answers clearly understood the importance of identifying the appropriate second order concept that was being targeted by the question and using this to aid their approach to answering their chosen question. Largely candidates were able to apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner suited to the different demands of questions in these two sections, in terms of the greater depth of knowledge required where Section A questions targeted a shorter period, as compared to the more careful selection generally required for the Section B questions covering a broader timespan. Candidates do need to be mindful when formulating their planning that there is an argument and a counter argument within their answer; some candidates lacked sufficient treatment of these and therefore showed imbalance in their answers. The generic mark scheme clearly indicates the four bullet-pointed strands which are the focus for awarding marks and centres should note how these strands progress through the levels. Candidates do need to be aware of key dates, as identified in the specification, and ensure that they draw their evidence in responses from the appropriate time period.

In Section C, the strongest answers demonstrated a clear focus on the need to discuss different arguments given within the two extracts, clearly recognising these as historical interpretations. Such responses tended to offer a comparative analysis of the merits of the different views, exploring the validity of the arguments offered by the two historians in the light of the evidence, both from within the extracts, and candidates' own contextual knowledge. Such responses tended to avoid attempts to examine the extracts in a manner more suited to AO2, assertions of the inferiority of an extract on the basis of it offering less factual evidence, or a drift away from the specific demands of the question to the wider taught topic. This was pleasing to see.

Q1 This was the most popular question in Section A. On Question 1, stronger responses targeted the reasons for the difficulties faced by the Soviet regime in the years 1917-28 and included an analysis of the relationships between the key issues and the concept (causation)

involved in the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the stated factor (Bolshevik poor handling of the economy) and a range of other factors (e.g. personal rivalries, dealing with the First World War and the Civil War as well as resistance to the regime). Judgements made about the relative importance of Bolshevik poor handling of the economy were reasoned and based on clear criteria. High scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated. Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of the reasons for the difficulties faced by the Soviet regime in the years 1917-28. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on causation or were essentially a narrative of the period under discussion. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it was not developed very far making responses often fairly brief. There was also evidence of responses that were lacking in coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

Q2 There were a significantly lower number of responses to question 2. On Question 2, stronger responses targeted the reasons for the decline of the Soviet economy in the years 1964-82 and included an analysis of the relationships between the key issues and the concept (causation) involved in the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the stated factor (Brezhnev's leadership) and a range of other factors (e.g. inherited economic strife from both Stalin and Khrushchev and the financial constraints of the Soviet empire). Judgements made about the relative importance of Brezhnev's leadership were reasoned and based on clear criteria. High scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated. Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of the reasons for the decline of the Soviet economy 1964-82. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on causation or were essentially a narrative of the period under discussion. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it was not developed very far or remained generalised to Brezhnev as a conservative leader. Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

Q3 On Question 3, stronger responses targeted how accurate it is to say that the Soviet government's hostility towards religion did not change in the years 1917-85 and included an analysis of the relationships between the key issues and the concept (change/continuity) involved in the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the argument (e.g. continued persecution of religious personal and continued attempts to dismantle organised religion, in contrast to less hostility towards Islam and greater tolerance under Brezhnev to prevent western alienation). Judgements made about change/continuity regarding the Soviet government's hostility towards religion were reasoned and based on clear criteria. High scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated. Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of how accurate it is to say that the Soviet government's hostility towards religion did not change in the years 1917-85 . Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on change/continuity or were essentially a narrative of the period under discussion. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it was not developed very far or offered only one narrow aspect of the question. Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

Q4. On Question 4, stronger responses offered an analysis of the similarities and differences in the status of women in Soviet society under Stalin was different from under Khrushchev and Brezhnev and included an analysis of the relationships between the key issues and concepts

required by the question. Sufficient knowledge was used to develop the similarities/differences in the status of women in Soviet society during these years (e.g. similarities of working roles and the 'double burden', in comparison to improved healthcare, rights and childcare under Khrushchev and Brezhnev) with a consistent focus on the second order concept. Judgements made about the differences and similarities in the status of women in Soviet society under Stalin was different from under Khrushchev and Brezhnev were reasoned and based on clear criteria. High scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated. Weaker responses tended to offer limited knowledge of the similarities and differences in women's status through the time period, or largely narrative accounts of the status of women with little focus on similarity/difference. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it was not developed very far or was offered only on one narrow aspect of the question (e.g. economic similarities and differences). Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

Q5 On Question 5, stronger responses were clearly focused on the extracts, and possessed the confidence and understanding to develop an extract-based analysis of the view that the collapse of the Soviet Union came about because of the power of nationalism. Higher scoring answers offered some comparative analysis of the two extracts, and used own knowledge effectively to examine the merits/validity of the views presented (e.g. republics loyalties, large scale demonstrations, , economic decline, the mobilising power of popular nationalism in the republics, Gorbachev's limited reforms and the failings of these). Stronger responses were also focused on the precise question (the collapse of the Soviet Union came about because of the power of nationalism) rather than the general controversy and put forward a reasoned judgement on the given issue, referencing the views in the extracts. Weaker answers tended to show some understanding of the extracts and attempted to focus on the growth of nationalism but were likely to under-use Extract 2 (Aslund). At the lower levels, basic points were selected from the extracts for illustration and comparisons made between the two extracts were fairly rudimentary. Weaker candidates sometimes also relied almost exclusively on the extracts as sources of information about the issue in the question. Others made limited use of the two extracts and attempted to answer the question relying largely on their own knowledge. Moreover, in lower scoring responses, the candidate's own knowledge tended to be illustrative (e.g. just tacked on to points from the extracts) or drifted from the main focus of the question. Furthermore, these answers were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.