

Examiners' Report

June 2012

GCSE History 5HA02 2B

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Introduction

There were some very impressive responses to this year's questions and it was particularly pleasing to see the approach to Question 3 becoming more secure. Whilst there was a time when Question 3 proved the most challenging on the paper, it is true to say that for a growing number of candidates it is now where their best answer is seen.

Although candidates coped well with almost all questions, Question 1(b) appeared to show that the Constitution of 1936 is not being taught in some centres. It is important that all elements listed in the Amplification of Content are covered, as any of them could form the basis of a question on the paper. It also seems that further guidance is needed on the use of events before 1917 and this is set out in the report on Question 2(a).

One area which schools might like to continue to address is the use of dates in a question. Often they act as means of helping candidates to avoid writing on events which are not relevant to the question. On Question 2(b) candidates should have spotted that the question talks about 1924-29 and so the purges and show trials of the 1930s were outside the time frame of the question.

In general, however, it is evident that there is some very good teaching of this specification taking place and examiners saw some thoughtful and analytical answers from candidates.

Question 1 (a)

This question was generally well answered, although a significant minority of responses included an inference that was little more than a paraphrase which could not, therefore, receive high level reward (e.g. 'We can learn that there was a desire for traditional education') However, most candidates were able to reach Level 3 by providing a supported inference. Most common was the suggestion that there was tight government control as not only were books controlled, but so were hair styles.

It is good to see that the candidate has gone straight into the question with no time wasted in describing the source or considering its provenance.

Study Source A.

Source A: From a history of the modern world, published in 2000.

Stalin introduced education reforms. Schools were told which textbooks to use, formal examinations were reintroduced and Communist ideology became a compulsory subject. By the end of the 1930s there was an emphasis on traditional values, including compulsory pigtails for girls. Higher education focused on technical and scientific learning to meet the needs of the Five-Year Plans.

(a) What can you learn from Source A about the Soviet Union in the 1930s?

(4)

You can learn that the Soviet Union was under complete state control. The introduction of education reforms by Stalin showed that the state was forced to be mainly communist. ~~and~~ the fact that Stalin made higher education focus on technical and scientific learning showed that he was thinking ahead and everything done was eventually beneficial to what he wanted. This showed that Russia was based on Stalin's own interests.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate has provided several inferences. The inference that the Soviet Union was under complete state control is valid and is supported in lines 2 and 3, so full marks are earned by the end of Line 4.



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Examiner Tip

There is no need to describe the source or its provenance and certainly no need to discuss reliability. Equally, using a large amount of contextual information is unnecessary and won't be rewarded as support must come from the source.

There should be no need to use an extension sheet for this answer.

Question 1 (b)

This question proved very challenging for some candidates. There were a large number of blank pages in response to the question and comments from a number of candidates who wrote that they didn't think they had studied this topic. Examiners were surprised by the difficulty that the question caused as 'the 1936 Constitution' is clearly listed in the Amplification of Content in the specification.

Those who did know about the constitution were able to gain marks by describing how the Constitution changed the name of the Central Executive Committee to the Supreme Soviet and how it centralised power in Stalin's hands. The right to vote was extended, but only Communist candidates stood. Some answers described how the Constitution was a sham, designed to fool other countries or deflect criticism away from the purges.

This answer takes a slightly unusual route in that it begins with an explanation of why the Constitution was introduced, but the approach is a valid one.

(b) Describe the key features of the 1936 Constitution.

(6)

~~The 1936 Constitution = tried to convince democracy~~
~~elections every 4 years, one 18 abroad to vote~~
~~rigged~~

The 1936 Constitution was introduced to convince the rest of the world that the Russian Communist state was a fair and prosperous country. Stalin was concerned with ~~the~~ the increasing feeling of diplomatic isolationism - countries refusing to have Russian embassies and refusing to trade. For industrialisation to work, Stalin needed to create an income from selling grain abroad. Diplomatic isolation meant that he was unable to do that so the Constitution was designed to ~~encourage~~ improve international views of the Soviet Union.

~~The~~ The Constitution consisted of secret ballots and Stalin stated that elections would be held every 4 years. Apparently, all Russian people ~~were allowed to~~ over 18 were allowed to vote and these would be cast fairly and democratically. The ~~can~~ policy of the Constitution seemed democratic at first glance.

However, the 1936 Constitution actually gave Stalin greater control. Only ~~A~~ members of the Communist Party could be voted for and Stalin had the power to dissolve the 'government' whenever he wanted. Stalin also played the role of Chairman of the party, Prime Minister of the government and head of the politburo - the policy making committee.



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Examiner Comments

Two paragraphs each addressing a key feature. One feature is the reason for the Constitution. Although the second paragraph is not strong, this answer scored a high Level 2 for two supported statements.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates need to support two statements to reach a high mark in Level 2. They should, therefore, look to write two separate paragraphs emphasising how they have organised their answer into separate features.

Question 1 (c)

Few candidates had any difficulty explaining how the decision to keep Russia in the First World War caused discontent in the army and created shortages and resentment in Russian cities. Such answers generally scored well in Level 2. Where candidates were able to explain how the Bolsheviks exploited the resentment to bring down the government, or explained how the government should have seen it was creating its own downfall because a similar approach had brought the Tsar down, then Level 3 was awarded.

A standard approach to this question. The first two paragraphs (not shown) set out how the war caused resentment amongst the soldiers and unrest in Petrograd. Then there is an attempt at analysis in the final paragraph.

These factors are linked as the decision to keep Russia in the First World War caused rioting and demonstrations, which deserting soldiers added to, causing further chaos and violence. ~~The~~ However, the growth in discontent was the more important effect as it gave support to opposition to the Provisional Government and caused widespread violence across Russia's towns and cities.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The top of Level 2 was awarded for two good paragraphs on the growth of resentment at the front and at home. The final paragraph is not strong, but does attempt to explain how the discontent brought down the Provisional Government. The response was awarded a mark at the lower end of Level 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates need to avoid wasting time by describing the event itself, rather than its impact. A good way to start an answer to this type of question is to say 'One effect of was'.

Question 1 (d)

Although a minority of candidates could not explain why Stalin introduced reforms (and a number of candidates confused Lenin with Stalin), most candidates coped well with the demands of the question. It may not have been quite the case that women were not used to work before Stalin's reforms (as some candidates stated), but certainly it is true that under Stalin there was a determined effort to increase the female workforce in industry. It was slightly disconcerting that some candidates thought that women had to work in the factories because their husbands were away at war, but it was definitely true that they played a major part in boosting industrial production. Some candidates talked of how Stalin's political beliefs would have favoured female equality, though more perceptive candidates noted that such equality did not seem to extend to membership of the party.

The answer addresses only one reason (to boost production) but explains it well.

(d) Explain why reforms affecting the position of women in Russia were introduced in the years 1928–39.

After Stalin came to power, ^{in 1928} he introduced the ~~the~~ First Five-Year Plan to industrialise the Soviet Union. Women at the time usually had a rather traditional role of caring for and educating the children of the family, while the men went out and worked. Stalin decided that it was impossible for the Soviet Union to catch up with Western Capitalism if half of the population (or workforce) were ignored as candidates because of their gender. After compulsory collectivisation was introduced in 1929, childcare facilities were implemented in Kolkhozes and women were encouraged to work alongside men on the fields. Propaganda posters encouraged more women to work and be more independent and this rapid influx of ~~was~~ willing workers and farmers helped Stalin's ~~the~~ Five-Year Plans be so successful in improving the long-term output of heavy industry. During the third Five-Year Plan which focused on armaments

and weaponry in the build up to the Second World War, again women were encouraged to work alongside their husbands for the good of 'Mother Russia'. The influx of women into manual labour jobs was huge however less than 20% of the Communist Party were female in 1939.



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Examiner Comments

One reason, explained well, scores a middling mark in Level 3. There is a good explanation of how the reforms were to revolutionise the position of women and their role was to work 'for the good of mother Russia.'



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Examiner Tip

It is a good idea, on questions about causation, to try to prioritise between them. A consideration of whether one cause was more important than others will help you to analyse why a particular cause was important and you will be more likely to score high marks for in-depth explanation.

Question 2 (a)

Questions based on the early part of the specification always raise the issue of how much pre-1917 material candidates can use. It is worth stating here that we do not expect candidates to *know* the pre-1917 period, but some coverage is necessary in order to understand the 1917 events, since the earlier period has an impact upon them. With that in mind, examiners will reward material which reflects the 1917 position, but will not give reward to information that is a self-contained pre-1917 issue. So the Tsar's autocratic government in 1917 is valid and could be supported by reference to earlier events (though need not be and could be supported by 1917 material). Equally, the poor showing in war is predominantly pre-1917, but continues in 1917. What is not rewardable is the suggestion that the Tsar was brought down by mistakes such as losing the Russo-Japanese War, Bloody Sunday, or even the supposed sexual exploits of Rasputin.

Question 2 (b)

This question highlighted a problem with some candidates' grasp of chronology. The best answers were those which were able to explain how Stalin's position in the party, his treatment of Trotsky and his moves against the old Bolsheviks brought him the leadership of the Soviet Union. Where candidates were able to link these measures to see an overarching approach (e.g. manipulation or exploitation of others' weaknesses) high level reward was given.

Other answers, however, confused the period 1924-29 with the time when Stalin was in control and consolidating his position. Such answers talked of the purges and the Cult of Stalin, neither of which was rewardable. The use of propaganda could be accepted (especially when referring to the link with Lenin) but some candidates were clearly writing about the wrong period.

The response strays outside the period occasionally but, generally, the candidate outlines and explains how Stalin established himself as leader.

Chosen Question Number: Question 2(a) Question 2(b)

Stalin's main concern was to eliminate all his opposition. Lenin had mentioned that Stalin should not be his successor, however, if Stalin managed to remove all ~~off~~ other potential successors, he would be the only one left to take power. ~~First~~ To do this, he played each member of the party against each other. First, he worked with Zinoviev and Kamenev to exile Trotsky from the party. Then he worked with Bukharin to denounce Zinoviev and Kamenev before finally turning on Stalin. This meant that he was the only candidate left. Also, as General Secretary of the Party, he was in control of the party members. Therefore, he removed all other opposition in the party by replacing them with ~~himself~~ supporters of himself. This led to ~~Stalin~~ ~~the~~ nearly all the party in the firm belief that Stalin should succeed Lenin.

Stalin also made himself popular throughout Russia by his glorification, using the propaganda skills he had learnt as chief editor of the Pravda (the Bolshevik newspaper). He created a 'Cult of Personality' including his image into every aspect of Russian life. Streets and cities were named after him, songs were written about him and plays were performed about his life. He also created the 'Cult of Lenin' but with himself close-by, creating fake photographs of him with Lenin. ~~Stalin also pre~~ In addition, Stalin presented himself as chief mourner of Lenin's death, showing his dedication to the ~~the~~ deceased leader and to his country.

These factors are linked as Stalin created support within the party, by removing opposition and filling the party with his supporters, and throughout Russia, glorifying himself, cementing his dictatorship.

However, Stalin's removal of opposition was a more important method of establishing himself as leader as the opposition within the party was his biggest threat and Lenin had stated that he was not to be put in power.



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Examiner Comments

Two points are explained - the exploitation of division within the party and the link to Lenin (though the glorification of Stalin is a little later). Together with the final paragraph which attempts to show how the factors combined, this answer reaches Level 3.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates must be very careful to take note of any dates given in questions. The dates of this question (1924-29) rule out the purges of the 1930s.

Question 3 (a)

This was a popular question with many candidates writing impressively on the way in which the various factors contributed to the maintenance of the Bolsheviks in power. Candidates had little difficulty explaining the contribution of each factor. Where prioritisation was attempted, there was a wide variation in the factor chosen as the most important reason. This was no surprise, a valid reason could be made for any of the factors.

It was interesting that hardly any candidates chose to bring other factors into their answer. There is no requirement to do so and no further reward, but examiners had expected to see factors such as the weaknesses of the Whites mentioned occasionally.

A solid essay explaining why the various factors helped to keep the Bolsheviks in power (not shown), plus an attempt at prioritisation at the end.

The Early Decrees I feel are the most important reason that the Bolsheviks remained in power. They not only gained them power but also put into place important security measures that would make sure they remained in control of the Soviet Union. The New Economic Policy was important but it wasn't implemented until 1921. War Communism had caused a lot of anger and led to the Kronstadt Mutiny of March 1921 which lost the Bolsheviks their biggest supporters, the sailors. Trotsky was one of the key reasons the Reds won the civil war but not the key reason they maintained power, that was down to Lenin.



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Examiner Comments

Good explanation of four factors takes the answer to Level 3 - 10 marks. The final paragraph does not quite make a direct comparison between the decrees and the NEP, but examiners thought that the answer came near enough to doing so to be awarded 12 marks.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates must compare factors in order to prioritise, not just say 'this is the most important because it was very important'.

Question 3 (b)

As with Question 3(a) candidates wrote well on all the factors given. It seems that this period of Soviet history is well known. Most answers explained the difference that collectivisation made to agriculture, with better answers showing how this impacted on the Soviet Union more widely. The same can be said of industrialisation. Candidates generally argued that the purges were widespread and created an ethos of fear, but that they were short term in their impact. Opinion was divided on the Cult of Stalin; some dismissed it as an unimportant PR stunt, others saw it as underpinning all that happened under Stalin. Once again, opinion was very much divided on which factor had the greatest impact.

Paper Summary

In summary, the following notes are offered as an aid to preparation for future examination sessions:

- Candidates should take particular note of dates in questions; they are there to help them
- Candidates need to be familiar with the whole specification
- Candidates should be discouraged from using pre-1917 material
- Candidates should make sure that they look to explain answers, not just support them with detail.

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