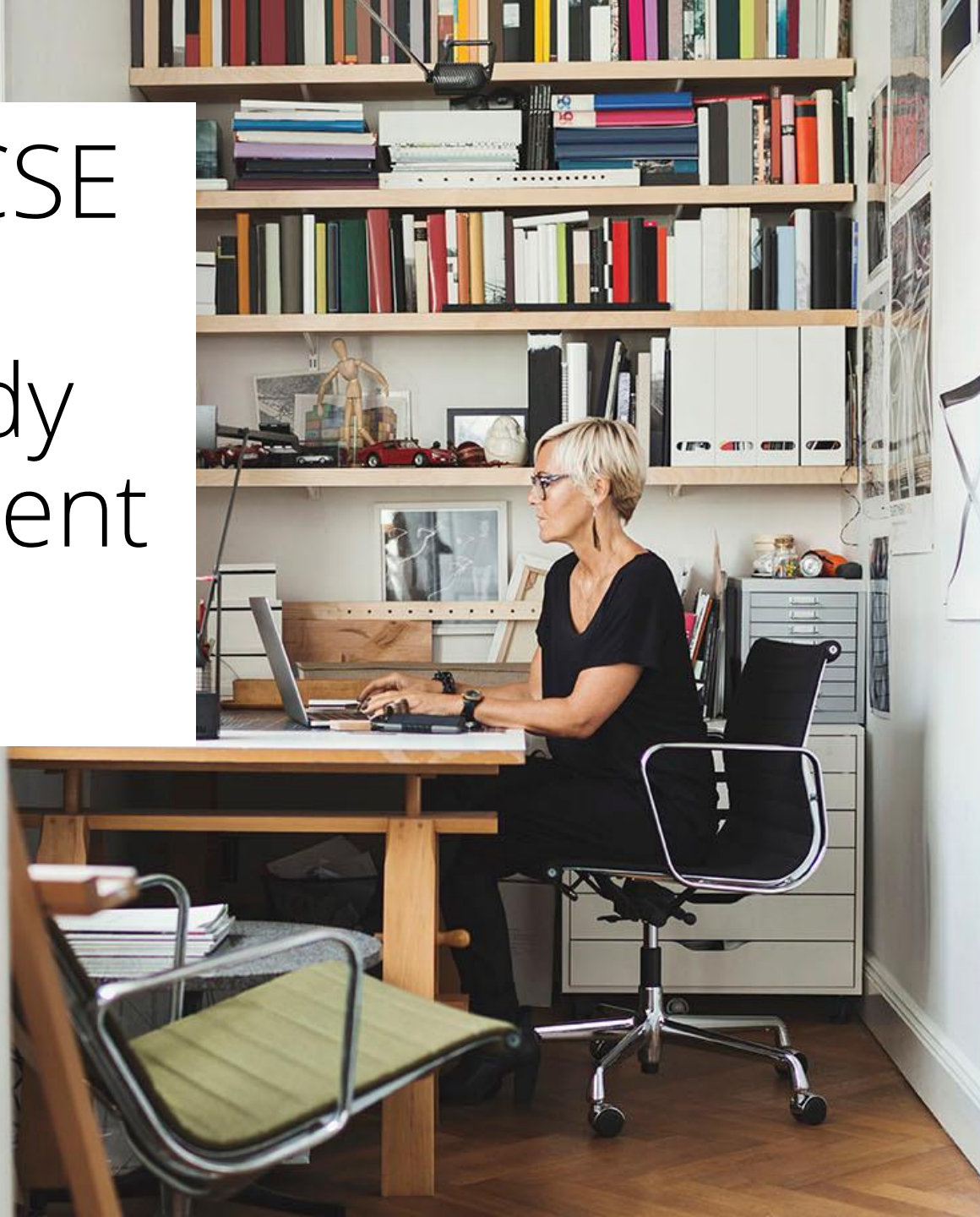


# Edexcel GCSE History Period study network event

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# Agenda

This GCSE History feedback event will allow delegates to:

- remind themselves of the purpose, content structure and assessment model for the Period study
- review and discuss student exemplar answers
- network and share teaching ideas and strategies.

This is an updated version of the November 2022 Period study network event, with a focus on Cold War exemplars.

# The nature of the Period study





# The Period study

“Period studies should focus on a substantial and coherent medium time span of at least 50 years and require students to understand the unfolding narrative of substantial developments and issues associated with the period.”

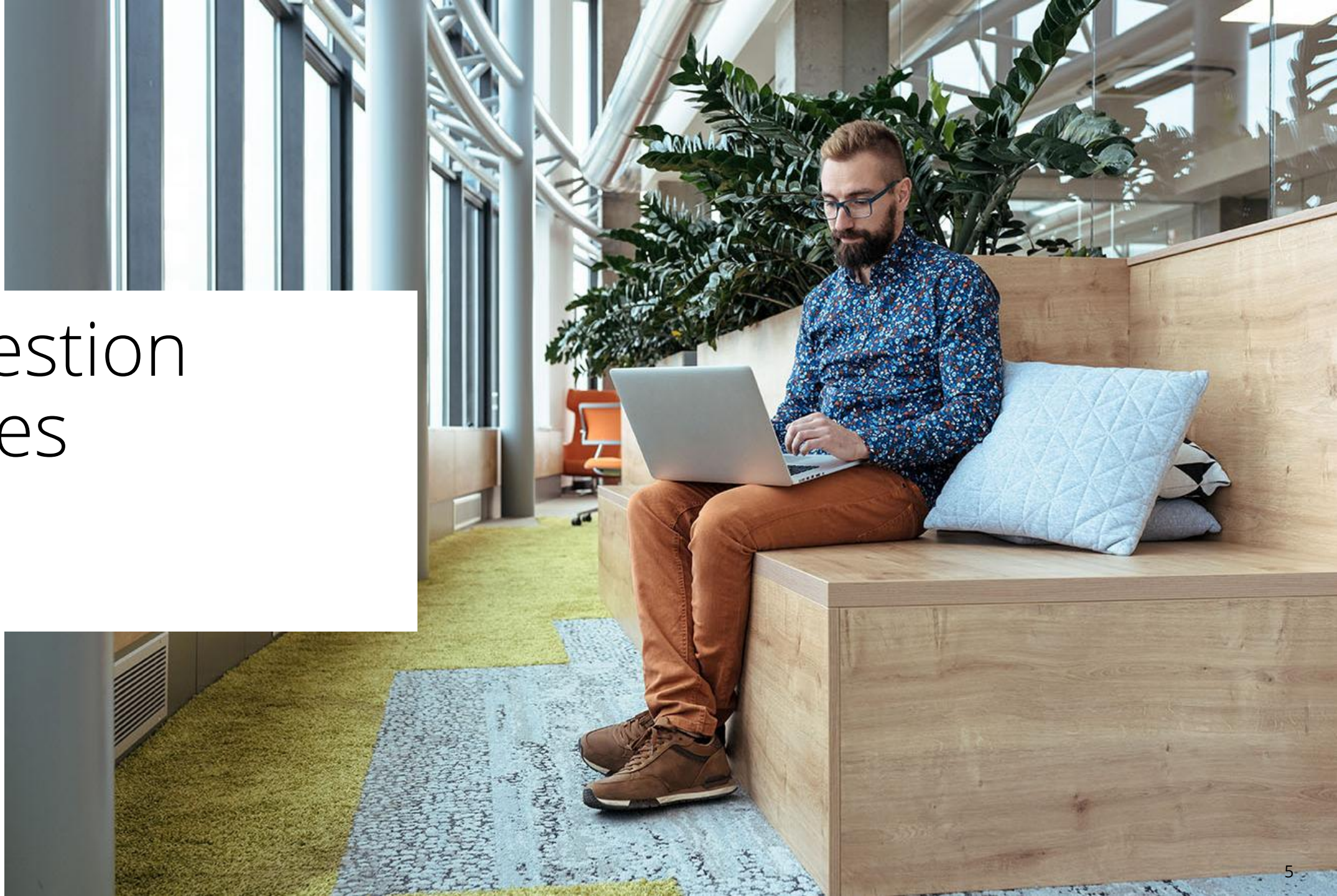
*from Dept for Education subject criteria*

Students should focus on the sequence of events through the period, considering the causes, consequences and effects which connect them together.

Students will see the topic as a progressive development, understanding the significance of the events in the wider chronology and seeing change and continuity through the period.

The content for each Period study is presented as three chronologically consecutive key topics, a structure to help make clear the unfolding story.

# Question styles



# Paper 2 assessment model

- 1 hour 50 minutes
- 64 marks (Period study = 32 marks)
- 40% of the total examination (Period study = 20%)
- Only paper covering two discrete topics
- Paper 2 assesses AO1 and AO2
  - AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied
  - AO2: Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order historical concepts
- AO1 and AO2 account for 70% of the total marks awarded for GCSE History.

# Period study questions

	Question description	Example question stem	AO and marks
Qu.1	Explanation of consequences	a) Explain <b>one</b> consequence of ... b) Explain <b>one</b> consequence of ...	AO1 + AO2 8 marks (2 × 4)
Qu.2	Writing an analytical narrative	Write an account which explains ... <i>+ two stimulus points</i>	AO1 + AO2 8 marks
Qu.3	Explanation of importance	Explain <b>two</b> of the following: • The importance of ... for ...	AO1 + AO2 16 marks (2 × 8)



# Period study question styles

The Period study questions focus on the significance of events and developments for what followed from them, rather than in-depth study of key features/characteristics – importance of the ‘unfolding narrative’.

- **Question 1** asks for one consequence of two events, developments, ideas, etc.
- In **Question 2**, the account of events or developments should provide a sequenced, unfolding narrative. This means that the links between different stages of the account need to be explained, which involves some explanation of how the consequences of one event links to another.
- **Question 3** asks about the significance of one event or development (X) for another aspect (Y) – the difference made by an event, person or development to how subsequent events developed.



# Low-level responses

The specific nature of questions on the Period study paper and the focus on second-order concepts such as consequence and significance can be a reason why some students do not reach higher levels.

- If students do not recognise the events, developments or ideas named in Question 1, they usually fall back on vague generalities or leave the answer space blank.
- Question 2 often has a specific date range – details outside that time frame will not be rewarded.
- In Question 3, high-level answers need to discuss the significance of X specifically in terms of its impact on Y; simply explaining why X was significant in general terms is not likely to go beyond Level 2.

# Question 1: consequences



# Question 1

The question asks candidates to identify one consequence each of two events, developments or ideas.

The two consequences are marked separately and two Assessment Objectives are identified in each level of the mark scheme.

Level	Marks	Descriptor
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simple or generalised comment is offered about a consequence. [AO2]</li><li>• Generalised information about the topic is included, showing limited knowledge and understanding of the period. [AO1]</li></ul>
2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Features of the period are analysed to explain a consequence. [AO2]</li><li>• Specific information about the topic is added to support the explanation, showing good knowledge and understanding of the period. [AO1]</li></ul>

# Question 1: Focus on consequence

A consequence is not simply something that happened afterwards – the answer must explain the link to the event in order to explain how it is a consequence of the event. Learners should consider and explain 'what happened as a result of'.

Three sample answers are provided in the delegate booklet.

- A: Explain two consequences of Gorbachev's 'new thinking'.
- B–C : Explain two consequences of the Prague Spring (Czechoslovakia, 1968).



# Question 1: Answer A commentary

**Answer A received the full 4 marks**

(Consequence 1 only provided in the delegate booklet)

The first consequence shows that Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika weakened the USSR's sphere of influence in eastern Europe, leading eventually to collapse of communism in many of those countries.

The link between Gorbachev's 'new thinking' and subsequent developments is made clear and supported with specific detail.

Please mark Answers B and C and type your level and mark and an explanation into the group chat box.

# Question 1: Answers B and C commentary

## Answer B received 3 marks

This answer received low Level 2 with stronger performance at AO2 with 'tried to rebel' and 'advocate its power and controlling abilities'. The response is weaker for AO1 and so therefore the response is low Level 2.

## Answer C received 2 marks

This response is high Level 1. The response from 'despite the promises of Truman' onwards is unrewardable as it shows a misunderstanding of the Truman Doctrine promising to aid communist countries rather than the principle of containing the spread of communism.

# Question 1: Examiner Reports

The Period study examiner reports stress that students should not waste time on lengthy answers. Each consequence is marked out of 4 and the answer space provided in the booklet should be sufficient for an answer gaining full marks. Answers which require extra paper may be very thorough but cannot gain more than 4 marks each, and a lengthy answer to Question 1 may reduce the time available for other answers.

The reports also point out that a list of several simple or generalised points within an answer would be marked as Level 1. Level 2 is accessed by more thorough explanation and detail of the identified consequence, not by additional Level 1 points being made.

## Question 2: analytical narrative





# Question 2: Understanding the question

Write a narrative account analysing US-Soviet relations in the years 1945-47.

The question contains four key elements:

- The date range: 1945-47
- The focus: US-Soviet relations
- Two stimulus points: Yalta Conference (February 1945), Cominform (1947)

(Summer 2023 Q2)

## Question 2: What is an analytical narrative?

An answer to this question should show how events unfolded to reach a specific outcome.

It is not a timeline of events and it is not a narrative where the connectors simply show events happening in sequence (and then ... next ...).

High-level answers use phrases which analyse the connections between the key events, for example:

- Which meant that they ...
- When they saw what had happened they ...
- They felt threatened and therefore they ...
- These actions convinced X that he had to ....

Consider how second-order historical concepts may connect, e.g. causation and consequence, or significance and causation.

## Question 2: Common problems

The Principal Examiner's Reports for the Period studies identify the following weaknesses in low-level answers:

- Providing detailed background information – this is unlikely to be rewarded and wastes time
- Not recognising the time frame of the question – details outside the time frame are likely to be irrelevant
- Answers containing irrelevant information are unlikely to be seen as a coherent or organised answer and thus are unlikely to be awarded Level 3.

## Question 2: Paragraph breaks

Examiners are looking for a narrative which has a beginning, middle and end, so it is helpful to write in paragraphs.

However, in contrast to other extended answers, where paragraph breaks usually identify a new aspect of content, in these answers a new paragraph should not form a break with the previous one but should stress that there is an ongoing thread, for example starting a new paragraph with phrases such as:

- The next year...
- X's response to this was...
- The situation changed when...
- Nothing was done until...



## Question 2: The stimulus points

As in the 12- and 16-mark questions on other papers, it is not necessary to use the stimulus points in the answer. Their function is to remind candidates of aspects of content that could be used to cover the whole period in the question.

Candidates may use any combination of stimulus points and own knowledge, including answers based entirely on own knowledge, but they should remember that answers should cover three aspects of content in order to show breadth and depth of coverage.

# Annotated exemplar answer, 2023

Firstly, relations started positive with the Yalta Conference. The USSR and USA had agreed to both fight Germany as well as Japan together. This meant they had a common goal. However the US deployed the atomic bomb on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in August 1945. This led to the beginning of the arms race as the Soviet Union felt intimidated by the sudden american display of power and wanted to catch up. The arms race began after the dropping of the atomic bomb and involved a souring of relations as the two were now directly competing with each other. It was compounded by the Long and Novikov telegrams which both highlighted anxieties at the other and the need for the preparation of war. It also highlighted ideological differences. This led to the Truman Doctrine and Cominform as the two countries also sought to settle their ideological dominance. The Truman Doctrine focused

The response has a clear beginning, middle and end, effectively using the stimulus to frame their response.

For AO2 there is a clear narrative giving a coherent and logical sequence of events leading to a conclusion and there is clear linkage between the events (red).

# Annotated exemplar answer, 2023 (cont'd)

on the containment of the spread of communism and therefore resulted in Marshall Aid being given to European countries to alleviate their <sup>economic</sup> struggles after the war, making them less likely to turn to communism. Cominform was created by the Soviets as a direct response to this and organised communist countries, urging them to reject the Marshall plan. This therefore increased tension between the two countries as they were competing against each other for the control of Europe and therefore US-Soviet relations decreased in 1947.

For AO1 accurate and relevant information shows good knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of events within the specified time period of the question (blue).

Students can only access Level 3 by going beyond aspects prompted by the stimulus points. In this response there is a wide range of material outside of the aspects prompted by the stimulus points.

## Question 2: Room for improvement

- Responses included material outside of the time frame in the question. In some instances, the response was entirely outside the timeframe of the question.
- Some students wrote irrelevant responses about (using 2022 examples) Columbus' expeditions (Spain and the 'New World'); or unrewardable material on the Berlin Airlift, Berlin Blockade, COMECON and the setting up of NATO (Superpower relations).
- Some students had a confused chronological understanding of events and so gave an incorrect narrative account.
- Individual events or developments were **not linked** and there was **little sense of an over-arching narrative**. Such responses often write two or three descriptive paragraphs of individual events rather than an 'unfolding narrative'.
- There was still the occasional response that used a 'story-like' approach written in the first person. Such an approach should be avoided.



## Question 2: Marking exercise

Study the mark scheme on the next slide and use it to mark Answer E in the delegate booklet. Type your levels and marks and a brief explanation into the group chat box.

A commentary on Answers D and E is provided in the delegate booklet.

- Write a narrative account analysing US-Soviet relations in the years 1945-47.

## Question 2: Marking exercise

Level	Marks	Descriptor
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A simple or generalised narrative is provided; the account shows limited analysis and organisation of the events included. [AO2]</li><li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of the events is shown. [AO1]</li></ul>
2	3–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A narrative is given, showing some organisation of material into a sequence of events leading to an outcome. The account of events shows some analysis of the linkage between them, but some passages of the narrative may lack coherence or organisation. [AO2]</li><li>• Accurate and relevant information is added, showing some knowledge and understanding of the events. [AO1]</li></ul>
3	6–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A narrative is given which organises material into a clear sequence of events leading to an outcome. The account of events analyses the linkage between them and is coherent and logically structured. [AO2]</li><li>• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing good knowledge and understanding of the key features or characteristics of the events. [AO1]</li></ul> <p><i>No access to Level 3 for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.</i></p>

## Question 2: Commentary

Answer E received 4 marks.

The response is mid-Level 2. The response shows a sequence of events but with only some analysis of the linkage between them. Some accurate and relevant information is added to show some knowledge and understanding of the events.

Candidates should try and cover the date range stated in the set question which will allow them show sufficient information and knowledge for higher marks to be awarded for AO1.

# Question 3: significance





# Question 3: Analysing the question

This question is the only one on the paper where candidates have a choice. They must answer two out of three options.

This is one of the options on the Summer 2022 P4 paper:

- Explain the importance of the Marshall Plan (1947) for relations between East and West.

The question is focused on significance. It involves looking at the consequences of X in order to explain **the importance of its impact on Y**.

Answers which explain the importance of X without making the link to Y cannot progress beyond Level 2.

High-level answers will explain what difference has been made to Y **as a result of X**: in the example above, not just the importance of the Marshall Plan but its importance for relations between East and West.



# Question 3: Marking exercise

Level	Marks	Descriptor
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A simple or generalised answer is given, showing limited development and organisation of material. [AO2]</li><li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of the topic is shown. [AO1]</li></ul>
2	3–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An explanation is given, showing an attempt to analyse importance. It shows some reasoning, but some passages may lack coherence and organisation. [AO2]</li><li>• Accurate and relevant information is added, showing some knowledge and understanding of the period. [AO1]</li></ul>
3	6–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An explanation is given, showing analysis of importance. It shows a line of reasoning that is coherent and logically structured. [AO2]</li><li>• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing good knowledge and understanding of the required features or characteristics of the period studied. [AO1]</li></ul>

# Question 3: Feedback

Answer F is Level 2; use the text box to explain why it does not reach Level 3 and what feedback you would give to a student explaining how to make this a Level 3 answer.

A commentary on Answer F and G is provided in the delegate booklet.

## Question 3: Exemplar F commentary

The answer is high Level 2 because it includes valid, specific detail (although the suggestion that the Marshall Plan provided military equipment is inaccurate) and suggests that this was an important policy. It also offers some explanation of the impact of this on East–West relations.

To develop the answer, it could explore the wider aims of economic stability and support for democracy in other countries, or the impact on the existing divisions between the allies. The answer explains that the Plan made the USSR suspicious and that war was a possible outcome; it could go on to explain how it drew Western countries together and exacerbated the rivalry between East and West, putting pressure on the USSR to offer similar support to the satellite states.

# Question 3: Exemplar G commentary

Answer G is Level 3.

An analysis of importance is shown for AO2 with comments such as 'relations ... were good', 'they were agreeing to help each other', 'this agreement strengthened East and West relations'.

For AO1 there is clear accurate and relevant information showing good knowledge and understanding with the correct names of the three leaders present at Yalta, discussions over Germany and the fight against Japan.



# Teaching strategies



# Making links

These activities could help students to prepare for any of the three question styles, but especially Question 1.

1. A key event is identified and individual students are given cards, each containing something that could be considered a consequence of the event. The teacher calls on random individuals who have to explain why their card shows a consequence of the key event; the class then votes on the best explanation and highlights key phrases that demonstrate consequence rather than simply a chronological sequence.
2. Students all write an individual event / development on a card; the teacher calls on two random students who have to explain whether one event is or is not linked to the other.

# Consequences

1. The teacher names an event and students are asked to identify two different types of consequences, e.g., political and social; economic and religious; national and international; positive and negative.
2. The teacher names an action / event (e.g., a treaty, a build-up of weapons, a rebellion) and students are asked to identify a consequence that was intended and also one that was not.
3. The teacher describes the consequences of an event / development and students must guess the event / development.
4. The teacher provides a list showing various consequences of an event and students are asked to rate the strength of the connection.
5. Students could also be asked to differentiate between the short-term and long-term consequences of an event.

# Sequencing events

These activities would help students to prepare for Question 2, the analytical narrative. They can be done as an individual paper activity but can also be done as a group discussion or as a more active exercise.

1. Individual students can be given cards showing key episodes / developments and asked to arrange themselves into a line showing the correct order of events.
2. The number of events to sequence can be adapted to suit the ability of the students, or able students can be asked to suggest an additional event and explain where it would fit in the sequence.
3. Once events have been placed in sequence, individual students can be asked to explain the link between events.

# Sequencing events (continued)

4. Give every student a card with an event on it (they do not all need to be different). Choose (e.g.) three individuals and give each of them a ball of coloured wool. The three individuals compete against each other to connect students, forming a chain of events. Points can be given for the number of events correctly sequenced and the explanation of each link.
5. The teacher provides a skeleton narrative analysis with the events / developments left blank; students fill in the blanks, using the explanation of the links to identify the correct event.
6. The teacher provides an analytical narrative which has been cut into strips or boxes, each containing a numbered point; students have to arrange them into the correct sequence.
7. The teacher provides a flowchart of events / developments and students have to annotate the chart to explain how the events are linked.

# The importance of X for Y

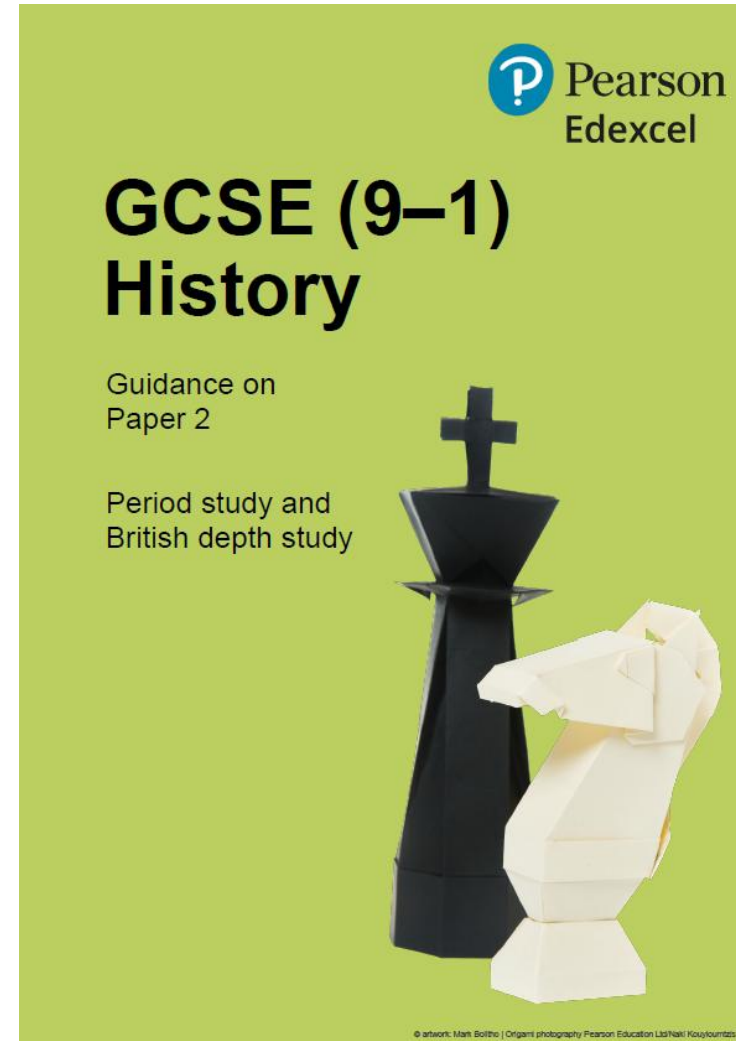
1. The teacher provides three comments about the importance of X and students are asked to identify which one does not have an impact on Y.
2. Half of the students are given cards showing an event X; the other half of the students have cards showing the impact of something on Y. The students then have to find their 'partner' to make the correct link between X and Y.
3. Students are given a list of changes / consequences / impact on Y and have to identify X.



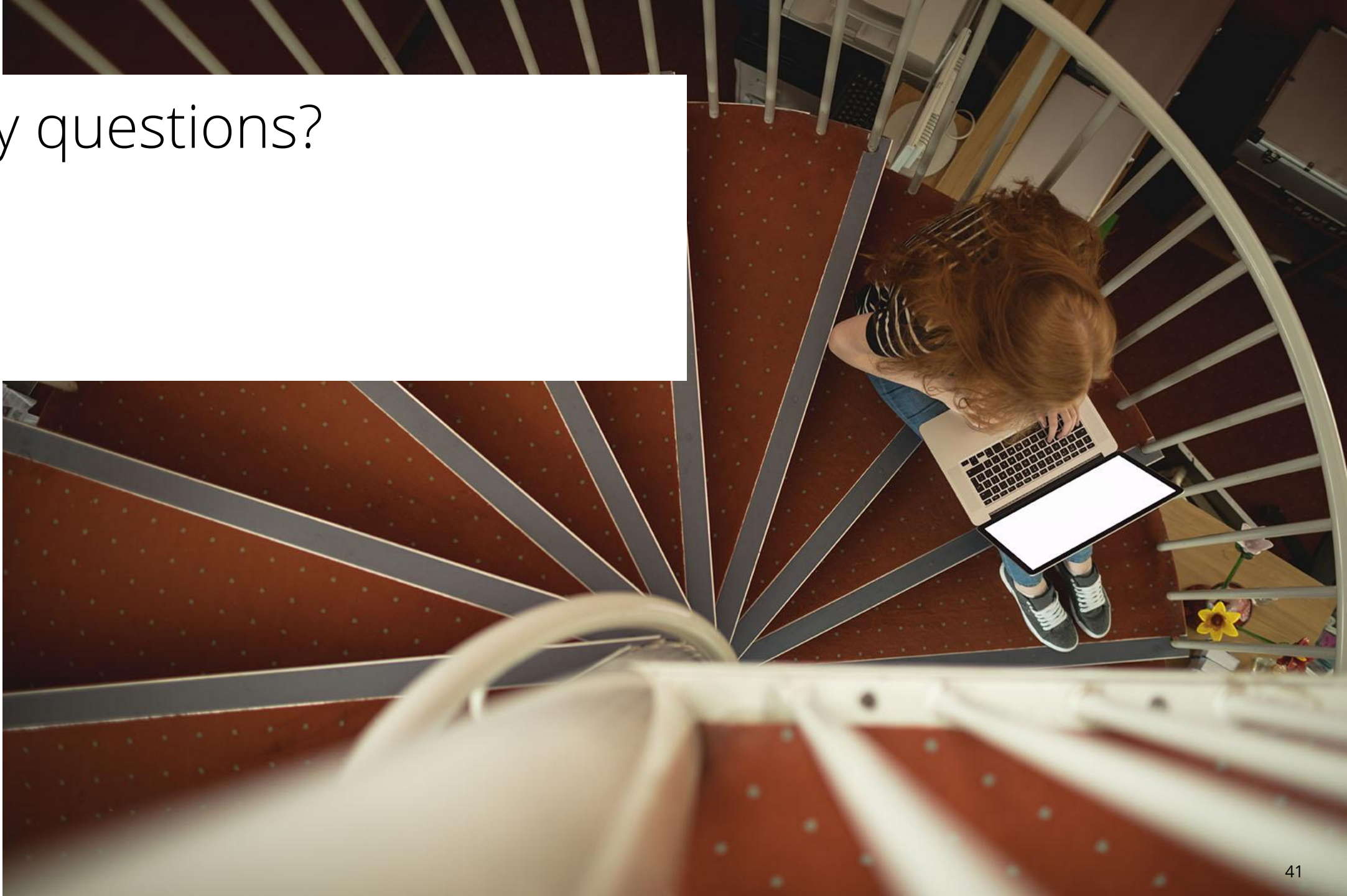
# Paper 2 guide

More ideas and activities in section 2 of the [Paper 2 guide](#)

- Setting the scene
- Common barriers and pitfalls
- Teaching the content
- Teaching second-order historical concepts.



Any questions?



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