

GCSE History

Teaching and assessing
interpretations



Welcome to this Professional Development Course

Welcome to this training session on teaching and assessing interpretations.

The session will recap briefly on the assessment model for interpretations on Paper 3.

It will consider what went well and where there is room for improvement across each of the question types, using exemplar student scripts.

The session will consider strategies for teaching interpretations, and will conclude with a chance to share best practice and ask questions.

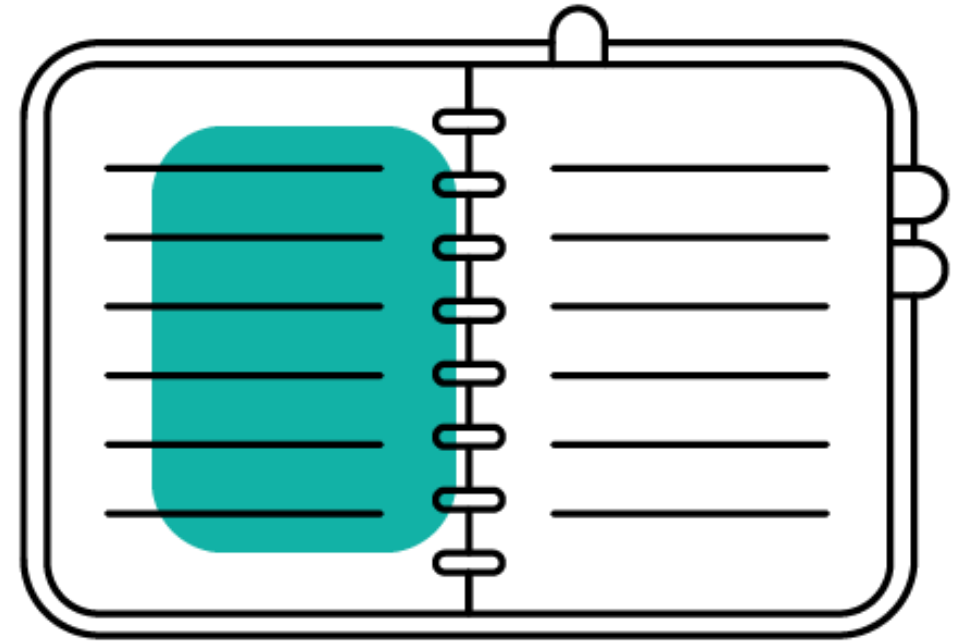
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Agenda – GCSE History interpretations

In this session we are going to look at:

- how interpretations are assessed across Paper 3
- what students have done well and where there is room for improvement
- strategies for teaching interpretations
- common issues and FAQs.



Assessment of AO4 (Interpretations) Paper 3



AO4

Analyse, evaluate and make substantiated judgements about interpretations (including how and why interpretations may differ) in the context of historical events studied. 15%

Q	Total marks	Question description	Example question stem
Paper 3 Modern Depth Study: Section B			
3b	4	Analysis of interpretations for difference of view	What is the main difference between the views?
3c	4	Explanation of a reason for a difference of view	Suggest one reason why Interpretations 1 and 2 give different views about...
3d	16 + 4 SPAG	Evaluation of a historical interpretation	How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about...?

AO4 Interpretations of history

- An interpretation is an attempt to portray and/or make meaning of the past using evidence.
 - A deliberate construct created after the event(s).
 - Can include both academic and non-academic interpretations.
- Sources (AO3) are the 'building blocks' of the interpretation.
- Interpretations (AO4) are the views constructed from the evidence.

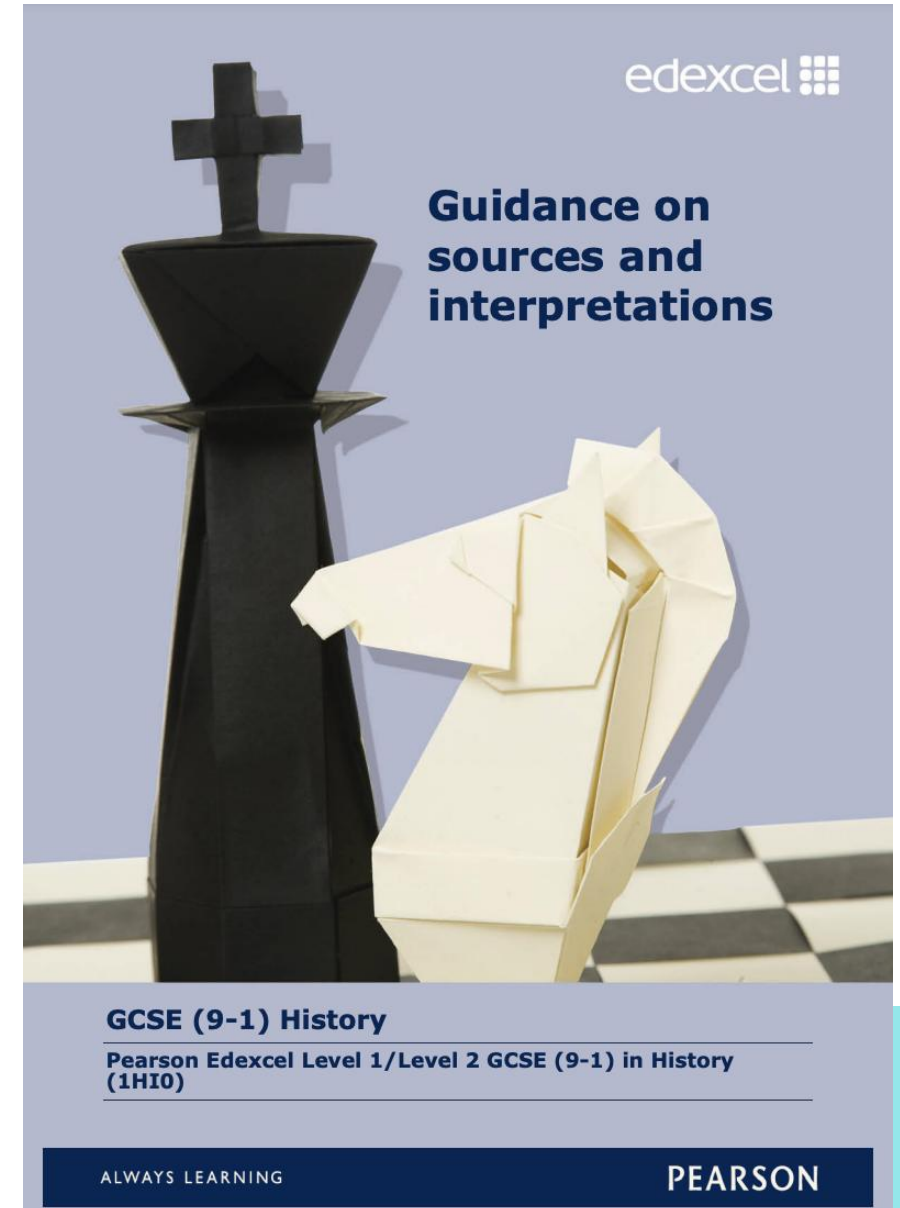


AO4 Interpretations of history

In contrast, 'interpretations' are secondary extracts. These are labelled 'interpretations' to distinguish them clearly from the sources. Strictly speaking these are secondary extracts which could be said to offer an interpretation within them; at GCE the term 'extract' is used. The extracts may be interpretations of an aspect of the period taken from textbooks or from the writings of historians, suitably eased for accessibility. Where an extract is eased, the original meaning of the author will not be altered in the process.

[Paper 3 Guide](#), p.13.

[Guidance on sources and interpretations](#)



Planning and teaching interpretations (AO4)



Activity 1

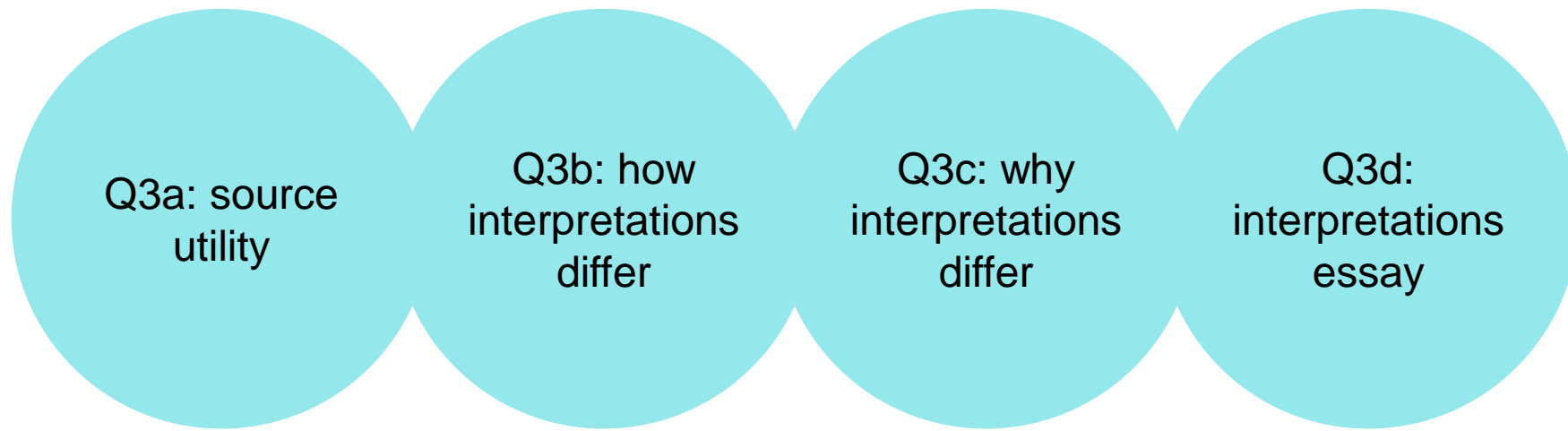
Using the chat.

- What challenges have you faced when preparing students for the interpretation questions?
- What changes have you made so far to overcome these challenges?

Feedback from the 2024 exams Exemplar answers



Paper 3 Question 3 – the enquiry package



- The enquiry 'package' in Paper 3 looks at the later stages of the historian's work.
- We've looked at Q3a source utility (AO3) – students analyse the strengths and weaknesses of sources and this prepares them to look at how historians build their interpretations.

Question 3b – how interpretations differ

- Question 3a leads the candidates to think about the strengths and weaknesses of sources (source utility) and in Question 3b to recognise that historians may validly reach different conclusions (possibly linked to the sources consulted or the focus of the research).
- Top marks in this question require explicit reference to the Interpretations – the mark scheme for Level 2 states:

The interpretations are analysed and a key difference of view is identified and supported from them.

- Many candidates scored the full 4 marks on Question 3b.
- Where answers failed to score 4 marks, the common problems were:
 - Identifying the difference between the Interpretations but not supporting the explanation by referring to details from each Interpretation.
 - Summarising the view in each Interpretation but not explicitly identifying the difference.
 - A few answers wrote about the Sources instead of the Interpretations.

Question 3b – how interpretations differ

(b) Study Interpretations 1 and 2.

They give different views about Nazi methods of controlling the German people in the years 1933–39.

What is the main difference between these views?

Explain your answer, using details from **both** interpretations.

(4)

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Limited analysis of the interpretations is shown by the extraction or paraphrase of some content, but differences of surface detail only are given, or a difference of view is asserted without direct support.
2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The interpretations are analysed and a key difference of view is identified and supported from them.

Marking instructions

Markers must apply the descriptors above in line with the general marking guidance (page 3).

Indicative content guidance

Answers must be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited.

- A main difference is that Interpretation 1 suggests the Nazis were able to control Germany through propaganda, which ensured that Nazi ideas were spread to the people. Interpretation 2, on the other hand, emphasises the Nazi creation of a police state, using the law to control people's behaviour.

Interpretation 1: From *The Third Reich, A New History* by M Burleigh, published in 2000.

Goebbels, as Minister of Propaganda, aimed to spread Nazi ideas in a variety of subtle ways in daily life. For example, photographs in magazines showed the Führer laughing on the telephone or admiring cars on display at the Automobile Show. Radio broadcasts created an emotional tone, using fanfares and warlike music.

Mass rallies, such as those at Nuremberg, were a combination of popular celebration, military parade, political meeting and sacred ceremony. These rallies were spectacular, themed events, reflecting how the Nazi regime wished to see itself.

Interpretation 2: From *Coercion and Consent in Nazi Germany*, an article by R Evans, published in 2007.

The main technique used to create terror was the use of the law. It was against the law to belong to any political group apart from the Nazi Party. It was also illegal to tell jokes about Hitler and illegal to spread rumours about the Nazi government.

The police had the legal power to open people's letters and listen to phone calls. The police could also imprison people without trial. For example, in 1933, 100 000 people were imprisoned without a trial. New laws were passed to extend the use of the death penalty.

Question 3b – how interpretations differ (Exemplar 1)

Interpretation 1 was mainly focusing on how Hitler spread his words and ideas in a ^{subtly} ~~subtly~~ way. However, for example, the highlighted quotation "Radio broadcasts created an emotional tone." this is using propaganda to get people to agree with Hitler and the Nazis. However, Interpretation 2 focused on mainly violence and the consequences if anybody talked bad upon Hitler and the Nazis. "109,000 people imprisoned without trial" this is using interrogation and violence through law to get people to ~~q~~ like Hitler and the Nazis.

A difference between the views is identified (propaganda v interrogation and violence) and supported by quotations from each interpretation.

Level 2, 4 marks

Question 3c – why interpretations differ

- Question 3c is aimed at helping students to realise that historians can validly reach different conclusions.
- Many students scored 4 marks by explaining that the authors of the Interpretations placed weight on different sources. For full marks, this needs an explanation of the link between the Interpretations and Sources, and this must be supported with references to each Interpretation and each Source.
- Some answers explained that the authors had a different focus, for example looking at political, social, or economic issues, different periods, or different groups in society. How this focus led to different views in the Interpretations must be explained and supported – it is not enough to say the authors have focused on different things and repeat the difference identified in Question 3b.
- A few explained that the authors were intentionally writing from different perspectives, for example attempting to explain success or failure; again, this must be supported from the Interpretations.
- The suggestion that the difference can be accounted for by considering the date it was produced, or the nationality of the author, is not valid, and no marks can be given for answers assuming the authors were writing from their own experiences.

Question 3c – why interpretations differ

- The key point here is the recognition that the authors have **chosen** to present their information in a way that creates a certain impression. The reason suggested must be supported from the Interpretations.
- Level 2 of the mark scheme says:

*An explanation of a reason for difference is given, **analysing the interpretations**. The explanation is **substantiated effectively**.*
- This means that whichever approach is used, explicit references to both Interpretations must be used to support the explanation.
- The table below shows how the average marks dip for Q3c compared to Q3b, even to an extent among higher-attaining students. (The pattern is very similar on the other three Paper 3 options.)

Germany (2024)	Global avge	Grade 9 avge	Grade 7 avge	Grade 4 avge	Grade 1 avge
Q3b how interps differ (4m)	3.17	3.92	3.77	3.35	1.45
Q3c why interps differ (4m)	1.94	3.75	3.10	1.65	0.21

Question 3c – why interpretations differ

- (c) Suggest **one** reason why Interpretations 1 and 2 give different views about Nazi methods of controlling the German people in the years 1933–39.

You **may** use Sources B and C to help explain your answer.

(4)

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A simple valid explanation is offered but displaying only limited analysis. Support for the explanation is based on simple undeveloped comment or on the selection of details from the provided material or own knowledge, with only implied linkage to the explanation.
2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">An explanation of a reason for difference is given, analysing the interpretations. The explanation is substantiated effectively.

Marking instructions

Markers must apply the descriptors above in line with the general marking guidance (page 3).

Indicative content guidance

Answers must be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive. The examples below show different approaches to explaining difference, any one of which may be valid. Other valid material must be credited.

- The interpretations may differ because the authors may have given weight to different sources. For example, Source C illustrates the use of the radio to convey messages, which provides some support for Interpretation 1 about various propaganda techniques used by Goebbels, while Source B gives some details about the systematic use of surveillance by the Nazi Party to control all aspects of people's behaviour and provides some support for Interpretation 2, which emphasises the use of the legal system to investigate and control people's behaviour.
- The interpretations may differ because the authors emphasise different techniques used to control the German people – Interpretation 1 focuses on the use of propaganda to persuade people to conform while Interpretation 2 emphasises the development of the police state to monitor behaviour and force people to obey.
- They may differ because the authors have a different approach to explaining Nazi policies – Interpretation 1 is suggesting Nazi control was done in a positive way, implying people were willing to conform to Nazi ideas, whereas Interpretation 2 is suggesting people were controlled in a negative way, through the state's legal powers and coercion.

Interpretation 1: From *The Third Reich, A New History* by M Burleigh, published in 2000.

Goebbels, as Minister of Propaganda, aimed to spread Nazi ideas in a variety of subtle ways in daily life. For example, photographs in magazines showed the Führer laughing on the telephone or admiring cars on display at the Automobile Show. Radio broadcasts created an emotional tone, using fanfares and warlike music.

Mass rallies, such as those at Nuremberg, were a combination of popular celebration, military parade, political meeting and sacred ceremony. These rallies were spectacular, themed events, reflecting how the Nazi regime wished to see itself.

Interpretation 2: From *Coercion and Consent in Nazi Germany*, an article by R Evans, published in 2007.

The main technique used to create terror was the use of the law. It was against the law to belong to any political group apart from the Nazi Party. It was also illegal to tell jokes about Hitler and illegal to spread rumours about the Nazi government.

The police had the legal power to open people's letters and listen to phone calls. The police could also imprison people without trial. For example, in 1933, 100 000 people were imprisoned without a trial. New laws were passed to extend the use of the death penalty.

Question 3c – why interpretations differ (Exemplar 2)

This is because people have different opinions on certain things that happen causing there to be two writings about the same objective but different views. This is also because interpretation 1 matches with Source C, while interpretation 2 matches with Source B, therefore the writers have different reference materials.

The answer states that people can have different views about the same thing and may have used different reference materials. It matches Source C with Interpretation 1, and Source B with Interpretation 2. However, no details are offered from either the Sources or Interpretations to support this claim.

Level 1, 2 marks

Question 3c – why interpretations differ



Activity 2

See delegate booklet

- p.1 – interpretations
 - p.3 – mark scheme and indicative content
 - p.4 – exemplar answer 3
-
- Form a best-fit judgement to the level and mark for Q3c Exemplar answer 3.
 - Complete Poll 1.

Question 3c – why interpretations differ (Exemplar 3)

One reason interpretations 1 and 2 differ is because the historians have given weight to different sources.

Interpretation 1 focusses on Nazi use of propaganda: 'photographs in magazines... radio broadcasts... mass rallies'. This means that the historian may have used a source like source ^C which also focusses on the use of propaganda: it shows Goebbels making a speech on a radio broadcast.

Whereas interpretation 2 focusses on the use of the police: 'the police had the legal power to open people's letters and listen to phone calls'. This means that the historian would have used a source similar to source ^B which also focusses on the role of the law and the duty people had to report others: 'report them to your local Party Leader so that these people can be reported to the authorities'.

The answer explains clearly that the Interpretations may be based on different sources and provides details from both the sources and interpretations to support this explanation.

Level 2, 4 marks

Question 3d – Interpretations essay

- Question 3d is the culmination of the enquiry package in Question 3.
- Students have already identified that there are two valid interpretations and are now asked how convincing they find Interpretation 2.

(d) How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about Nazi methods of controlling the German people in the years 1933–39?

Explain your answer, using **both** interpretations and your knowledge of the historical context.

(16)

- There are three key strands in the mark scheme which contribute to the judgement about Interpretation 2. Level 4 states:

Answer provides **an explained evaluation reviewing the alternative views in coming to a substantiated judgement. Precise analysis of the interpretations is shown, indicating how the differences of view are conveyed and deploying this material to support the evaluation. Relevant contextual knowledge is precisely selected to support the evaluation. An overall judgment is justified and the line of reasoning is coherent, sustained and logically structured.**

Question 3d – Interpretations essay

- Good answers identify the overall thrust of Interpretation 2 and examine the details that combine to create that view. Contextual knowledge is interwoven into this, confirming or challenging these details.
- Interpretation 1 should also be analysed – either used to challenge Interpretation 2 or examined independently.
- The most common weakness here is to use the Interpretations as a springboard for an essay offering the student's own judgement on the enquiry – there are no marks available for AO1 or AO2.
- A second, common weakness, is to omit contextual knowledge and to present the details from the Interpretations as evidence that the Interpretation is correct, or to simply state that they know these details are true.
- Contextual knowledge is a strand within the mark scheme, but it must be linked to the evaluation of the Interpretations rather than being offered as an answer to the enquiry or as a stand-alone section of information.

Question 3d – mark scheme

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer offers simple valid comment to agree with or counter the interpretation. Limited analysis of one interpretation is shown by selection and inclusion of some detail in the form of simple paraphrase or direct quotation. Generalised contextual knowledge is included and linked to the evaluation.
2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer offers valid evaluative comment to agree with or counter the interpretation. Some analysis is shown in selecting and including details from both interpretations to support this comment. Some relevant contextual knowledge is included and linked to the evaluation. An overall judgement is given but its justification is insecure or undeveloped and a line of reasoning is not sustained.
3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer provides an explained evaluation, agreeing or disagreeing with the interpretation. Good analysis of the interpretations is shown indicating difference of view and deploying this to support the evaluation. Relevant contextual knowledge is used directly to support the evaluation. An overall judgement is given with some justification and a line of reasoning is generally sustained.
4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer provides an <u>explained evaluation reviewing the alternative views in coming to a substantiated judgement</u>. <u>Precise analysis of the interpretations is shown, indicating how the differences of view are conveyed and deploying this material to support the evaluation.</u> <u>Relevant contextual knowledge is precisely selected to support the evaluation.</u> <u>An overall judgment is justified and the line of reasoning is coherent, sustained and logically structured.</u>

Question 3d – Interpretations essay example

(d) How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about Nazi methods of controlling the German people in the years 1933–39?

Explain your answer, using **both** interpretations and your knowledge of the historical context.

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The police had the legal power to open people's letters and listen to phone calls. The police could also imprison people without trial. For example, in 1933, 100 000 people were imprisoned without a trial. New laws were passed to extend the use of the death penalty.

Question 3d – exemplar answer 4 (extract)

I agree with Interpretation 2 to a large extent. I know that Hitler introduced a variety of laws and practices in order to keep control. When considering the phrase "the police could also imprison people without trial", I know from my own knowledge that Hitler abolished trial by jury, instead he left the decisions up to the judges who were forced to join the Nationalist Socialist League for the maintenance of the law if they wanted to continue practising. One judge, Roland Freisler was renowned for his trials, 90% of the defendants who faced trial before him received the death penalty. Moreover, in some cases, Hitler took it upon himself to decide the subject's penalty. This shows that the law had a huge part in controlling people. I also agree with Interpretation 2 when considering the impact of the law on banning political parties, as seen through "it was against the law to belong to any political party". In 1933, Hitler began by banning the communist party before banning all other parties except for the NSDAP. He ransacked SPD offices, destroying their contents and confiscating

their funds. Therefore, it is clear that the law played a major role in allowing him to control people and parties, consequently allowing the Nazi party to gain more support. Arguably, the most significant example

There is a clear focus on the overall view being evaluated.

Specific references to details within the Interpretation.

Precise contextual knowledge is used to evaluate the Interpretation.

Question 3d – exemplar answer 4 (extract), *cont'd*

However, there may be certain aspects of Interpretation 2 that force me to only partially agree with its sentiments. It may be argued that law was not used to completely control the German people and that it instead was a facade for Hitler to arrest those he simply saw as undesirable. Therefore, it may be argued that the main way of controlling people was by simply using brute force. I know that 150,000 people were put under protective arrest in 1933 showing that Hitler simply used force and ~~did~~ did not consider the law.

There is a clear focus on the overall view being evaluated.

Precise contextual knowledge is used to evaluate the Interpretation.

This extract shows good evaluation of Interpretation 2. There are regular references to the content of Interpretation 2 and precise details from contextual knowledge are used to both confirm and challenge the view offered in the Interpretation.

Level 4, 15 marks + 4 SPAG

Question 3d – evaluating the interpretations

- Most students understand that the Q3d mark scheme requires them to evaluate Interpretation 2, analyse both Interpretations and, at Levels 3 and 4, indicate the difference in the Interpretations.
- Consequently, the best responses remained focused on the Interpretations throughout the answer.
- Examiners can sometimes identify details from the Interpretations being used, but if this is presented as the student's own knowledge, it cannot be credited as analysis of the Interpretations. Higher-level responses make regular references to details within the Interpretations.
- When the answer discusses Interpretation 2, then Interpretation 1, before offering a judgement, there is a risk that the student shows little sense of evaluation until the end.
- Higher-level responses identify how the authors created different impressions by their choice of language, tone, emphasis and selection of details, etc. This was seen in comments such as 'details in the Interpretation are all positive', 'the language is entirely negative', and 'this Interpretation has a more balanced view as it mentions both positive and negative aspects'.

Question 3d – evaluating the interpretations



Activity 3

See delegate booklet

- p.1 (interpretations)
 - p.5 (mark scheme and indicative content)
 - pp.10–11 (exemplar script).
-
- Form a best-fit judgement to the level and mark for Q3d Exemplar answer 5.
 - Complete Poll 2.

Question 3d – evaluating the interpretations (Exemplar 5)

To some extent I agree with this interpretation and that the Nazis main way of control was through the use of ~~the law~~ ^{the law}. During many rallies/Reichstag voting elections members of the SA were known for targetting and physically attacking members of the communist party in hopes of scaring them into stepping down from elections. As a result of this the Nazis won 203 ^{seats} ~~votes~~ in the 1932 election and as a result very quickly changed the laws and created some new ones in order to support their ideologies. The most famous being the Nuremberg laws these were a set of laws implemented by the Nazis that helped to go against judaism these laws involved things such as Jews could not hold any high level occupation e.g doctor/teacher/judge and that Jews could not attend school. The laws were quickly followed by boycotts and attacks on both Jewish shops and places of worship.

The student has understood Interpretation 2, but the analysis lacks a focus on the Interpretations as there are few references to Interpretation 2 and no use of Interpretation 1. There is some relevant contextual knowledge included here, for example the Nuremberg Laws are a valid example of control through the use of law, but details about 1932 are out of period. Overall, a 'best-fit' approach results in a Level 2 mark.

Level 2, 6 marks (+ 3 SPaG).

Question 3d – room for improvement

- Every level of the mark scheme focuses on the Interpretations. Therefore, an answer where the student offers their own views on the enquiry can be credited for relevant contextual knowledge but cannot progress very far as the knowledge should be used in the evaluation of Interpretation 2 and the answer is not addressing the other strands of the mark scheme.
- Furthermore, except for Level 1, every level of the mark scheme refers to Interpretations and student who only refer to one Interpretation are again limiting their mark.
- Students often use the Interpretations as stimulus points for an answer presenting their own views, making a statement about the Interpretation before including a lengthy section of own knowledge.
- Sometimes, they treat the Interpretations as sources and try to evaluate them for reliability.
- The table below shows how the average marks for Germany Q3d compared to Medicine Q6 – SPaG marks not included. (The pattern is similar across the Paper 1 and Paper 3 options.)

2024	Global avge mark	Grade 9 avge mark	Grade 7 avge mark	Grade 4 avge mark
Medicine Q6 (AO1/2)	9.32	14.51	12.15	8.81
Germany Q3d (AO4)	7.54	13.66	10.94	7.15

Question 3d – command word guidance

- On the Edexcel website, there's a zipped file containing **student-friendly guidance** on command words, stimulus points and approaches to each question type.
- Download the zipped file [here](#). The materials have been updated to reflect the 2025 assessment amends.

How far do you agree? (Q3d)

The final step is to decide **how far you agree with Interpretation 2**, based on:

- Your analysis and evaluation of Interpretation 2...
- Your analysis and evaluation of Interpretation 1...
- Your contextual knowledge of the period and how it supports/challenges both views...
- Your clear judgement on how far you agree with Interpretation 2 and why.



I find Interpretation 1 more convincing because... **therefore I don't agree with Interpretation 2.**

Interpretation 2 is convincing because... this view is only partly challenged by... so overall **I agree with Interpretation 2 to a large extent.**

When making a judgement about how far you agree with Interpretation 2, you should remember that there is not one correct answer. The two interpretations offer different, **equally valid** views, and each of them can be convincing! You just need to **back up your argument** with evidence or 'valid criteria'.

Remember though the question specifically asks **How far you agree with Interpretation 2** – so your evaluation/ conclusion must address this even if you agree more with Interpretation 1!

E.g.: Overall, I agree with Interpretation 2 to a large extent, because although the Hitler Youth ran fun activities to attract many young people, as shown in Interpretation 1, the Nazis had to make it compulsory and punish parents who did not enrol their children. They also had to ban other youth groups such as Edelweiss Pirates. Interpretation 2 is therefore more convincing because it accurately shows the situation as Germany moved closer to war and reflects better the true purpose of the Hitler Youth movement, which was to indoctrinate young people into Nazi ideas and develop military skills, rather than to provide fun activities, therefore I agree less with Interpretation 1...

Teaching interpretations

Ideas and strategies



Teaching interpretations – ideas and strategies



Activity 4

Using the chat.

What lesson activities have you used that have been successful in developing students' ability to analyse interpretations?

Teaching interpretations – ideas and strategies

Evaluating interpretations

History is all about interpretations, and with Paper 3, this is important. Therefore, make interpretations a key part of your lesson. For a lesson plenary or starter, have a single sentence which expresses an interpretation and get students to discuss and vote on whether or not they agree with the viewpoint. By making interpretations, and the viewpoints expressed in them, a key part of teaching this topic, students will be more confident in analysing and evaluating interpretations in an exam question.

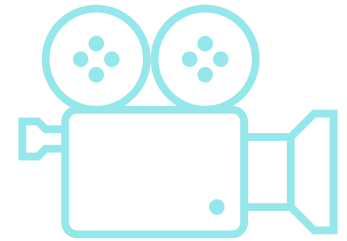
If you have the option, invite another history or humanities teacher into the class to express their opinion on a topic in 60 seconds or less. Students should then decide how far they agree with the viewpoint (possibly when that teacher has left if it will give students more confidence). For weaker students, you could provide a score system (e.g. 1–5) or a multiple-choice option of phrases. Challenge students to justify their judgement verbally. This could be followed up by holding a debate with this second teacher; where two contrasting views could be explored further.

You could introduce interpretations on other topics, for example find an article about a well-known current affairs event and ask students if they agree with the viewpoint or not.

Teaching interpretations – ideas and strategies

Make a documentary

Using a free app like Adobe Flash video, students can insert images and provide a news/documentary-style voice over. They should explain the reason for an event. For the most able students, the documentary or news report could include interviews with a student acting as an ‘expert’ who will express an interpretation, or two ‘experts’ who will express contrasting interpretations.



A debate

To further embed the concept of interpretations, students could prepare for and host a debate. Issues of success and failure are the most obvious, but equally, topics could be about the significance of the actions of a political leader in comparison to other factors, or the extent of progress that was achieved. This can embed knowledge, develop analytical thinking and also help students to better understand the concept of interpretations.



Teaching interpretations – ideas and strategies

Interpretations – Identifying and explaining different viewpoints (part 1)

Students need to be confident identifying and contrasting the arguments in two different interpretations.

Option for this example Option 30: Soviet Russia, 1917–41

These two interpretations are both about the problems facing the Provisional Government. Each one presents a different viewpoint.

Interpretation 1: From *The Russian Revolution* by Anthony Wood, published 1979

The Provisional Government could not take effective action without the agreement of the Petrograd Soviet, which controlled the railways and the postal and telegraph services. The Soviet's most devastating action was the issuing of Order Number 1, as it placed the Soviet in control of all military action and put the soldiers' councils in control of discipline. Soon after, local Soviets appeared all over the country. It would, therefore, seem surprising that the Provisional Government survived at all, especially as it had not even been elected to take over the running of the country.

Interpretation 2: From *Russia 1894–1941* by Michael Lynch, published 2008.

The most persistent problem was the war against Germany. The Provisional Government had to keep Russia fighting in the war so that it could get money and supplies from its allies. Russia would have collapsed without this money. However, continuing with the war stopped the Provisional Government from dealing with Russia's severe social and economic problems. So, the Provisional Government had to keep Russia in the war, but continuing to fight ruined the Provisional Government's chances of survival.

1

↓

The main viewpoint in Interpretation 1 is...

2

↓

The main viewpoint in Interpretation 2 is...

3

↓

The main difference between the two interpretations is...

- 1) Read interpretation 1 very carefully. In Box 1, summarise the main argument in one sentence.
- 2) Now read interpretation 2 very carefully. In Box 2, summarise the main argument in one sentence.
- 3) Compare the two main arguments. In Box 3, complete the sentence to identify the main difference between the two viewpoints.

Interpretations – evaluating a viewpoint

Students will need help in learning how to approach the evaluation of an interpretation. Although there is no set way to answer Q3(d) on Paper 3, this task can help to teach some of the analytical thought processes. This interpretation is Interpretation 2 from the 2018 paper.

Note to teachers – On Paper 3, Q3(d) stipulates that students should answer "using both interpretations and your knowledge of the historical context." This task is focused on helping students to evaluate one interpretation to develop the skills needed for AO4.

Option for this example Option 33: The USA, 1954–75: conflict at home and abroad

Interpretation 2 is a historian's view of the effects of the Tet Offensive on American attempts to win the Vietnam War.

Interpretation 2: From *Vietnam: Conflict and Change in Indochina* by A. Pollock, published in 1991.

After the Tet Offensive, the US public turned even more strongly against the war. With the Vietcong attacking across the country, and even in the grounds of the US embassy in Saigon, it seemed clear to the American public that the Vietnam war was not being won. It was time to begin the withdrawal of Americans from Vietnam. President Johnson gave in to public pressure and announced that America was ready to negotiate peace.

1

↓

The main viewpoint of Interpretation 2 is:

2

↓

How is this view conveyed in Interpretation 2?

3

↓

What do you know about the topic that agrees with the view in this interpretation?

4

↓

What do you know about the topic that disagrees with the view in this interpretation?

5

↓

Overall, how accurate do you consider the view in Interpretation 2?

- 1) Read Interpretation 2 carefully. In Box 1, write a short summary of the main view about the effects of the Tet Offensive on American attempts to win the Vietnam War.
- 2) Complete Box 2, by identifying how the interpretation conveys the viewpoint. (Hint – what language, selection of information or tone have been used to express the view?)
- 3) Complete Boxes 3 and 4 to identify contextual knowledge that you can use to agree with and disagree with the viewpoint in Interpretation 2.
- 4) Sum up your view in Box 5.

Extension – Find Interpretation 1 on the 2018 exam paper. Which viewpoint do you agree with more, Interpretation 1 or Interpretation 2? Why?

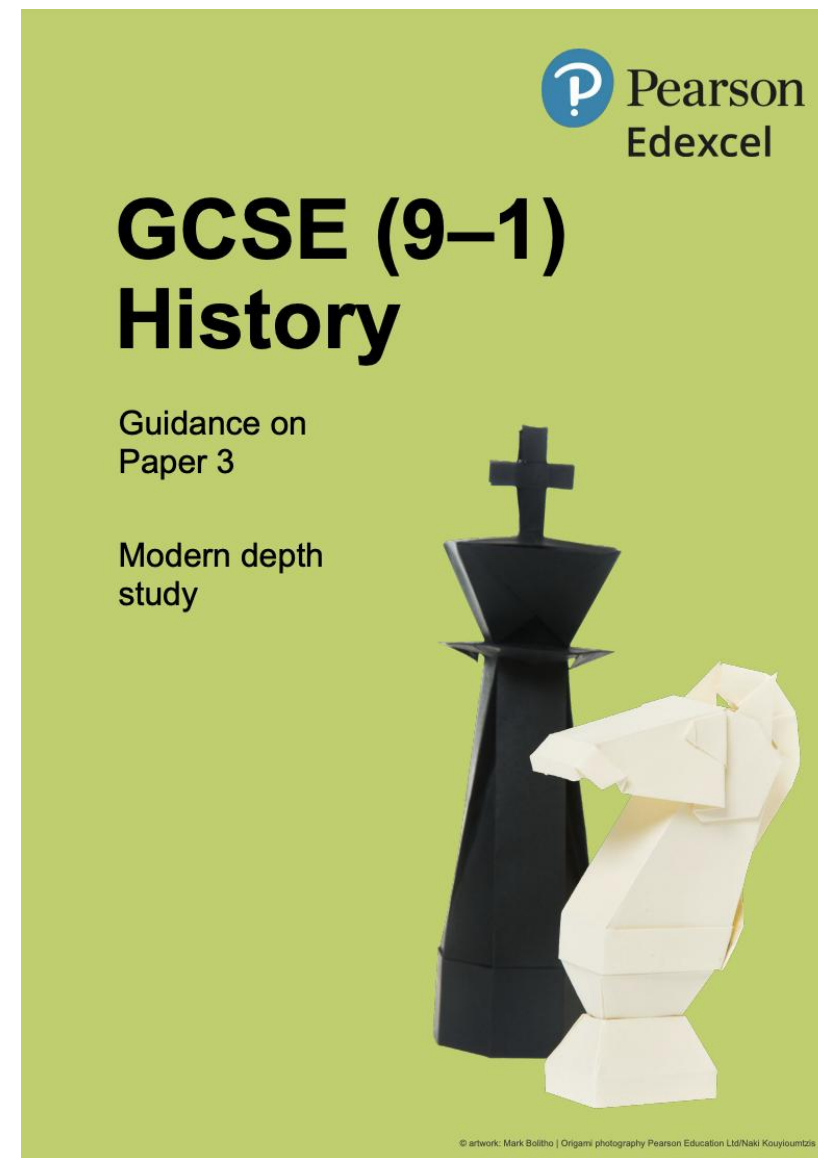
Paper 3 guide / Support and training

More ideas and activities in the [Paper 3](#) guide.

- Setting the scene
- Common barriers and pitfalls
- Teaching the content
- Teaching historical skills for Paper 3.

The three Paper guides have been updated to reflect the 2025–26 amends.

- Paper 3 marking training was run at the end of 2024: [Paper 3 marking training recording](#)
- Student-friendly [command words guidance](#) and [revision tips](#) updated for 2025
- Student walkthroughs with 2025 updates – *due late March/early April*



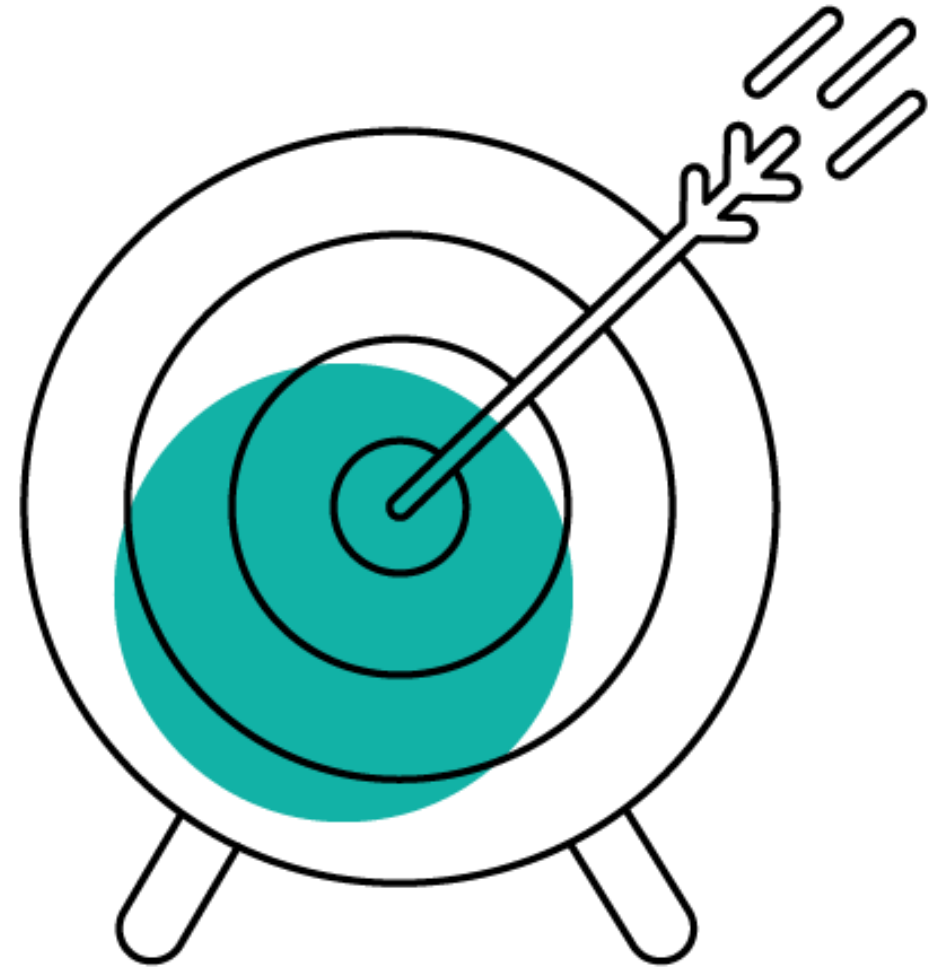


Questions?

Summary: GCSE History - interpretations

In this session we looked at the following objectives:

- how interpretations are assessed across Paper 3
- what students have done well and where there is room for improvement
- strategies for teaching interpretations
- common issues and FAQs.



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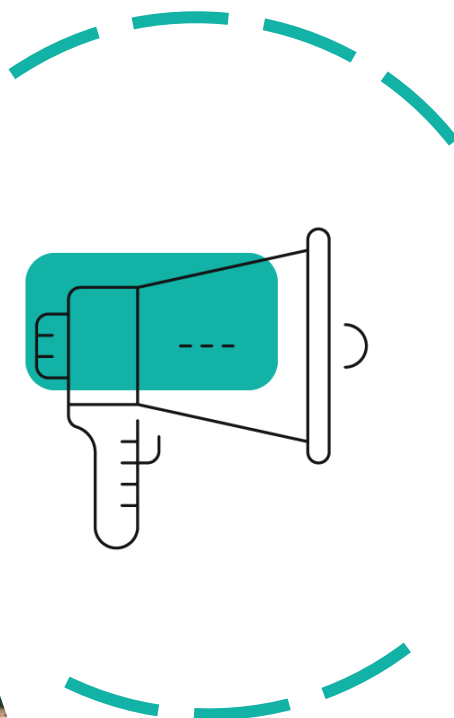
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Your Feedback Matters

Following this event, you will receive an invitation to share your thoughts about the session. Your feedback is invaluable to us, as it helps us tailor our professional development materials to better meet your needs. Please don't hesitate to let us know what you'd like to see more of and what areas you think could be improved.



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