

Explain: Paper 2P

Explain means to make something clear, supporting your answer with reasoning and examples.

In order to explain something, you need to do more than simply describe events. To explain something effectively is to ‘analyse’.

Useful words for **explaining**:

- Because...
- Therefore...
- This means that...
- This is supported by...
- An example that shows this...

The focus of the question

Such as smaller events or different factors

Analysis means to break down a complex issue into more manageable parts to help people to better understand the issue. This is done by writing an account that considers the role of each part, and/or the relationship between the parts, in bringing about an outcome.

How they link to the question

Its link to the issue

Such as how they interact or affect each other

A good explanation should be:

- Coherent – this means it makes sense.
- Sustained – this means it is focused on answering the question.
- Logically structured – the response is set out in a sensible way.

Consequence & importance

In the Period study paper, you will be asked to explain **consequence** and **importance**.

Consequence means the results or outcomes of an event or development. You need to know what happened next in the story. To explain a consequence, you need to **make clear the link** between the event and what happened next...

Importance is like a consequence that is significant – it **makes a difference** or **has an impact**. If we think about the importance of revising for your GCSE History mock exam it is more than just getting a good mark. What difference did it make to your final GCSE grade? What impact did it have on your education – were you able to go on to study History at A level or university? How significant was it for your future career, e.g., did you go on to work in a History-related job?

Explain one consequence of revising for your GCSE History mock exam:

- One consequence of revising for my mock exam was that I got a good mark. [*this **identifies** a consequence but doesn't **explain** the consequence*]
- This was because I was able to remember key parts of the topic which came up in questions, giving me more confidence when writing my responses. [*this **makes clear the link***]

To decide how important something is we need to really consider 'Important for what?'

The importance of Gorbachev's 'new thinking' for **Soviet control of Eastern Europe**.

The question above is not just asking for the importance Gorbachev's 'new thinking' – it is asking you to explain the importance of Gorbachev's 'new thinking' **for Soviet control of Eastern Europe**. If we were to change the last part of the question to 'US attitudes to the USSR' it would completely change how you answer the question! So, if you do not focus your explanation of importance on the last part of the question you are unlikely to score highly in this question.

Consequence & importance

Your explanation should be directed at the **conceptual focus** of the question – the relevant second-order concept.

Second-order concepts are ideas which can be used to explain things in history, e.g.

- Consequence = explain how something happened as a result of an event or development.
- Importance = explain significance / impact i.e. what difference did something make?

Explain one consequence of the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962).

As well as **identifying** the consequence, you need to **explain** how it was a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Remember: consequences can be good or bad!

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

When thinking about the importance of the Marshall Plan (1947) you need to explain what impact it had **on relations between East and West**. You should use your **knowledge of the period** to support your explanation.

One reason the Marshall Plan was important for relations between East and West was because it further divided Eastern and Western Europe. The Marshall Plan was the Truman Doctrine in effect. It gave war-torn countries money so they wouldn't fall into Communism out of desperation but the aid was only given to Western non-Communist countries so Stalin would not allow Eastern European countries to accept it. This led to greater division as living standards under non-Communists increased whilst living standards under Communist rule decreased. As such East and West became more polarised due to the Marshall Plan and Stalin's critique of it as 'dollar imperialism'.