



# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2023

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Level In History (WHI04/1C)

Option 1C: The World Divided: Superpower  
Relations, 1943–90

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## Introduction

### General Comments

With three consecutive series having been sat it is now possible to make some general comments on series-on-series developments. However, it is acknowledged that many candidates are still being prepared in challenging circumstances. (see below for more specific feedback):

**Selection and deployment of knowledge** – As previously noted, candidates, in general, produce interesting responses that it is a pleasure to read and reward. The candidates were usually very well prepared in relation to knowledge of the specification and centres are to be commended for this. Candidates have good, detailed knowledge of the specification content and this is a facet that often stands out. Many responses were well-informed and well-written.

There was some evidence that candidates and centres have taken heed of the of the June 2022 Examiner Report with regard to the need for more discrimination in the selection and deployment of knowledge in both Section A and Section B. However, as in January, some candidates still write ‘all they know’ about a topic without selecting and deploying information and evidence relevant to the question being asked. It was very noticeable this series for WHI04 1C that in Section B candidates often could only be rewarded in Level 1 or Level 2 because they either misread the question and deployed supporting knowledge that was irrelevant to the time period or confused time periods to such an extent that it was difficult to determine whether knowledge of the time period was secure.

In Section A, to reach the higher Levels, the use of own knowledge is required to discuss the views being presented in Extracts, not as stand-alone information, and in Section B, to reach Level 5, knowledge should be *‘precisely selected’*(L5-BP2). For Q1, candidates often feel the need to develop a ‘third’ aspect of debate beyond the discussion being ‘set up’ by the Extracts. This is rarely necessary or relevant and often leads to responses that end up ignoring the Extracts or using them very thinly. The Extracts create the debate for discussion and own knowledge is best used validating the evidence in the Extracts and showing understanding of the basis on which the Interpretation has been founded by the author(s). There were fewer candidates this series who wrote responses deploying solely own knowledge but there are still a significant number.

**Conceptual understanding and application of skills** – As stated in the June 2022 Examiner Report, despite good knowledge, candidates were not always able to access high Level 3 marks and above due to a limited understanding of the conceptual focus of questions and the application of analytical skills. Some candidates are still not using the Extracts as the basis of their response in Section A and candidates do need to reach a judgement on the given view to access the higher Levels. Many candidates assume that

the debate will be centred around different factors (and here knowledge of other factors could be brought into the discussion if the candidate feels that another factor is more significant) but sometimes the Extracts set up and 'yes-no' debate that looks at argument and counter-argument in relation to the view. Candidates who identify the nature of the debate being put forward by the two Extracts as part of their planning, so that they can plan a relevant organised response, often produce higher Level responses. There are still many candidates for WHI04 1C that write an explained commentary of both Extracts linking quotations with information or analytical phrases and then sum up each view in a conclusion. These responses usually are indicative of a Level 3 response and will be higher or lower in Level 3 depending on how much of the Extract is analysed rather than just paraphrased with some connecting words. The bottom of Level 4 can be achieved with a more analytical conclusion but to be rewarded in Level 4 there needs to be an understanding that the Extracts are interpretations and it these interpretations that are being discussed. There were a significant number of candidates that were still just writing out the Extracts verbatim or paraphrasing without any hint of analysis or own knowledge.

In Section B, lower-Level responses often lack focus on the wording of the question and/or the second-order concept being targeted. Awareness of the second-order concept(s) being targeted (cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference, significance) allows candidates to use criteria with discrimination and to come to judgements that are evaluated, e.g. the primacy of the given factor in relation to other factors, the extent to which there has been change.

As in the June series, it was noticeable that introductions to responses often did not clearly reflect what was later discussed (Section A and B) or provided detailed contextual knowledge that was not always relevant to the question or prevented the candidate from completing the response effectively. The best introductions are those that directly address the question and show an understanding of the second-order concept(s) being targeted, the given focus and the time period but this also should not lead to a formulaic indication of the question elements. However, in Section A, there was a clear move away from responses that often seem to have a 'learned' introduction to the whole controversy towards a more focused approach.

It is always worth noting that the responses are marked using a 'best-fit' process. Each bullet point strand within the generic mark scheme is considered to create an overall sense of Level and a mark applied within the Level. If a response has qualities which exemplify a variety of Levels or a strand is missing then this will be reflected by applying a 'best-fit' Level and mark. For responses which do not address an aspect of a particular strand, for example reaching a judgement in bullet point 3 for Q1, this will be reflected in the mark rewarded.

As in June, despite the ongoing challenges faced by candidates, very few failed to attempt both Sections, and most were able to produce two balanced responses, so enabling them to show their ability across AO1 and AO3 skills.

**Please note:** that it is recommended that centres look at a selection of Principal Examiner Reports from across the different options within WHI04 1A-1D and previous series to get an overall sense of examiner feedback, centre approaches and candidate achievement. It is also highly recommended that centres read the general Introduction and Section A and B introductions in the Principal Examiner Reports for June 2017. These generic introductions outline the assessment requirements for WHI04 and give an indication of the skills required.

Centres may wish to refer to the *Getting Started* guide that is to be found on the IAL History Pearson Edexcel website. It is also useful to take note of the indicative content in the mark schemes.

Further resources that may be of use are the *Applying Criteria* and *Developing Student's Understanding of Historical Interpretations* documents to be found on the Pearson Edexcel History GCE website along with the Principal Examiner Reports for Paper 1 of the Pearson Edexcel History GCE. The *Applying Criteria* document gives guidance with regard to the application of criteria for the different AOs tested at A level. The GCE Paper 1 Reports will be particularly useful for exemplification of AO3 interpretations skills (but please be aware that there are slight differences within the general Level descriptors and that AO1 is assessed for IAL). Exemplification documents are also available on the Pearson Edexcel History IAL website.

General candidate performance on each Section and specific performance on individual questions for Paper 1C are considered below.

## **Section A**

Q1. Question 1 required candidates to analyse and evaluate the two Extracts provided while deploying knowledge related to the issues raised in the Extracts to determine whether Churchill's Iron Curtain speech had the most significant impact on the development of the Cold War in the years 1946-49. The author of Extract 1, P White, put forward the view that, despite there being other influential factors, the Iron Curtain Speech was the most significant factor in the development of the Cold War in the years 1946-49. The author of Extract 2, W J Hitchcock, suggested the Marshall Plan was the most significant development. This debate allows for the introduction of other factors and this was done successfully but there were some responses that spent more time discussing other factors in the form of AO1 knowledge and understanding than applying the AO3 skills that are required here. It is important for candidates to note that the views stated in the question need to be specifically addressed.

Candidates were well prepared for discussion of major themes raised by the Key Topic controversy. There was some impressive knowledge of Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech. Most candidates were able to explain the context of the interpretations, and some were able to show clear understanding of the basis of the views being outlined in the Extracts. For Extract 1, responses referred to the impact of the symbolism drawn by the

concept of an Iron Curtain, the impact on Truman's decision to put forward the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, the impact on Russia and the Marshall Plan's influence on the creation of NATO. For Extract 2, responses referred to the Marshall Plan being seen as a turning point, its impact on Europe, its impact on the Soviets and the formation of NATO. Some candidates were able to compare the Extracts skilfully in addressing the formation of NATO, and as to which Extract was more convincing in relation to this.

Candidates were, in general, able to deploy contextual knowledge to underpin the discussion of the interpretations in the Extract. For Extract 1, candidates were able to use their knowledge of the context of Churchill's speech in the USA, the close chronology between the speech and the declaration of the Truman Doctrine, events in Europe and the reasons for the formation of NATO. For Extract 2, candidates referred to the context of European recovery after the Second World War, the division of Germany and US attitudes towards the Soviet Union. It was good to see that there was less time wasted by writing long explanations of the developments of the Cold War since 1917 or events after 1949.

## **Section B**

As in June, it was particularly noticeable for Paper WHI04 1C that a significant number of candidates wrote responses with a confused chronology or completely outside the timeframe of the question itself. The date periods for US Presidents and the Soviet leadership are also often confused. It is very important that candidates have a secure chronological awareness of the whole period from 1953-1990. The specification gives clear indications of time periods and the development of the Cold War both in the Key Topic titles and in the focus of some bullet points, e.g. Key Topic 4, bullet point 2 refers to heightened tensions in the early 1980s, which is a reference to what is often referred to as the 'Second Cold War' from c1980-1985.

In section B, Q3 was much more popular than Q2 but there were a significant number of Q2 responses, often with good knowledge and understanding.

**Q2.** Candidates were required to determine whether China was more responsible than the USSR for the Sino-Soviet split in relations in the years 1953-69. Overall, there was some excellent knowledge shown by candidates. Most candidates were able to argue for one side or the other and in the best responses there was some interesting and nuanced debate as to the changing relationship between the two countries. Some candidates argued that it was a complex relationship in which both were equally to blame.

The best responses often mentioned the complicated rivalry between Mao and Stalin, the ideological battle that underpinned the split and the more concrete factors such as border disputes and nuclear weapon development. At Level 2 and Level 3, responses

often described or explained the main features of the rivalry rather than focusing on causation..

**Q3.** Candidates were required to determine the extent to which US-Soviet relations were different the years 1980-85 from 1964-79. These periods in the specification are identified as being one of stalemate and détente (but mainly) in the years 1964-79 and of heightening tensions in the years 1980-85.

Confusion in chronology was particularly noticeable in this series. There were candidates obviously with good knowledge and understanding of the course who were often unable to be rewarded above Level 2 because of the deployment of inaccurate and irrelevant knowledge. Some confusion with one or other of the time periods, and within time periods, could also be seen in responses with Level 3 and even some low Level 4 marks. Some candidates thought the years 1964-79 covered the leadership of Stalin, Eisenhower and/or Kennedy while others thought that they covered the period of heightening tensions in the early 1980s. Many candidates thought that the period 1980-85 was the period covering the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although Gorbachev did come to power in 1985, reference to Gorbachev is only relevant with regard to the possibilities for change to come and a description of Gorbachev's policies and role in the Cold War was not applicable to the time period as a whole. Some candidates confused Nixon and Reagan. As stated above, it is vital for the Cold War paper that candidates know the basic pattern of the time periods of the Cold War as outlined in the specification and when US, Soviet and Chinese leaders were in power.

The best responses were those that looked for patterns of similarity and difference within the relations between the US and the USSR. Most clearly differentiated between the developing détente of the 1960s and 1970s and the heightening tensions of the early 1980s with reference to the 'turning point' of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the end of the spirit of co-operation, the return to nuclear tension and the presidency of Reagan but also explored some of the similarities such as continued nuclear build-up, proxy wars and continued fear of nuclear war. There were some well-constructed and interesting answers at high Level 4 and Level 5.

## **Paper Summary**

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

### **Section A (AO3/AO1)**

- Candidates should use the time available to read both extracts carefully all the way through before planning their answer; the information in the extracts should be the foundation upon which the answer is constructed

- Candidates should aim to interpret both extracts by analysing the issues raised and showing an understanding of the arguments presented by both authors
- Candidates should use their own knowledge of the specification content to validate and discuss the interpretations being presented.
- Candidates should come to an overall judgement with regard to the view stated in the question; it is not sufficient just to summarise the views presented in the extracts.

### **Section B (AO1)**

- Read the wording of the questions carefully, particularly if the time period of the question is stated; responses that refer to the wrong time period deploy irrelevant and inaccurate knowledge that does not directly address or only implicitly addresses the question.
- Candidates should provide more precise contextual knowledge as supporting evidence. Use knowledge to provide evidence to support a sustained evaluation in relation to the conceptual focus of the question. Secure chronological knowledge enables candidates to produce a logical and coherent answer.
- Introductions do not need to reflect a large amount of contextual detail; use introductions to establish the foundations of the argument you are about to present and to show that you understand the focus of the question.
- Use conclusions to state the judgement reached clearly and to show the relative significance of or the inter-relationship between key issues discussed in the main body of the essay; leave the examiner in no doubt as to what your judgement is and why.

