



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Level In History (WHI04)

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

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2023

Publications Code: WHI04_1C_2306_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2023

Introduction

General Comments

With four consecutive series having been sat it is now possible to make some general comments on series-on-series developments. The 2023 series is the first series where there is an acknowledgement of a return to 2019 examination conditions but there is awareness that many candidates are still being prepared in challenging circumstances.

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 clearly taken heed of previous comments with regard to the need for more discrimination in the selection and deployment of knowledge in both Section A and Section B. However, 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. Please see comment in Section B below.

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. Centres now understand more fully the AO3 to AO1 balance of rewardable content in Section A and, where this is the case, it has been a real pleasure to see the progress made in the approach to Section A questions.

Conceptual understanding and application of skills - As stated previously, 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 a ‘yes-no’ debate that looks at argument and counter-argument in relation to the view. Question 1 for 2023 is just such an example. 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.

In June 2022, it was noted that many introductions written for both Section A and B were written in a formulaic way both in terms of knowledge about the topic and in terms of references to criteria and the defining of terms. There was much less evidence of this in June 2023, with candidates being more direct in responding to the question asked and not wasting time by writing contextual knowledge that was not really relevant to the questions. There was also a decrease in candidates telling the examiner that the criteria being used and applied by them were 'valid'. There were a few centres that seem to encourage candidates to define every word of the question before starting a response. While it is useful to show in an introduction that candidates understand the question, word for word analysis is probably more useful as the starting point of a plan.

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.

Very few candidates 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

See above for general comments but it was very pleasing to see some excellent Interpretation responses. Some candidates are really evaluating the Extracts with regard to the convincing nature of the views, and this makes for some very interesting and thought-provoking responses.

It is worth reminding centres that although candidates are evaluating the extent to which the author's views in the Extracts are convincing, this is not a source evaluation exercise. There is no requirement in the specification for candidates to know any historiography surrounding the debate and candidates are not expected to know about the views of specific historians. This is particularly so for WH10 1C and candidates often get confused in discussing different historiographical approaches when their evaluation of the Extracts are perfectly valid. In some responses, candidates evaluate the provenance of the Extracts. This is not required and can lead to time wasting in writing about the speculated origins of the books and the author's themselves, for example, making assumptions about nationality and bias. A significant number of responses being their evaluation with a statement that 'this is a secondary source' when by their very nature the Extracts are historical interpretations. It is very helpful if centres clearly distinguish between AO2 source evaluation in Papers 2 and 3 and the AO3 evaluation of interpretation in Paper 4. One way to do this is to always refer to sources as Sources and interpretations as Extracts or referring to authors of the Extracts.

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 the power of the USSR was greatly threatened by the US monopoly of the atomic bomb in the years 1945-49. The authors of Extract 1, C Craig and S Radchenko, put forward the view that US possession of the atomic bomb undermined the power of the USSR and, therefore, had a profound impact on Stalin's post-1945 policies. The author of Extract 2, A B Ulam, suggested the opposite, that the US possession of the atomic bomb did not threaten the power of the USSR and that this can be seen in its actions post-1945. Some candidates looked to find other reasons for USSR power being greatly threatened or for other threats created by the US monopoly of the atomic bomb, which usually resulted in very confused arguments being developed. These responses were often generated because candidates did not look to address Extract 2 at all or chose to dismiss the viewpoint in Extract 2 without considering it.

Candidates were well prepared for discussion of major themes raised by the Key Topic controversy. There was some impressive knowledge of events at Potsdam, the development of the Cold War in 1947 and developments in nuclear warfare. Some candidates confused the Yalta and Potsdam conferences and were unsure as to when Truman became US president. 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 undermining of

Soviet power as a result of the development of the atomic bomb, the threats felt by Stalin and its impact on Soviet foreign policy. For Extract 2, responses referred to Stalin's reaction at the Potsdam Conference, the expansion of Soviet control over eastern Europe and the extent to which the USSR was impacted by World War Two. Some candidates were able to compare the Extracts skilfully and to suggest that the USSR was threatened but not to the extent suggested in Extract 1. It is important that candidates read the Extracts carefully, many candidates suggested that both Extracts referred to the US use of the atomic bomb as an attempt at blackmail but failed to identify that, in Extract 2, Ulam states that it was 'only much later' that Soviet politicians claimed 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 events at Potsdam, Truman's policy developments in 1947 and the development of nuclear technology on both sides. For Extract 2, candidates referred to the actions of the Soviet Union in eastern Europe, the advancement of communism in China and the economic conditions in the Soviet Union post-World War Two. There is now very little evidence of time wasted by writing long explanations of the developments of the Cold War since 1917 or events after 1949.

Section B

Please note that, as indicated in previous Reports, it is of concern how many WHI04 1C candidates continue to deploy a confused chronology either in regard to specific time periods of the Cold War or to US and Soviet leadership. Clearly, where there this happens once or perhaps twice in a response it is possible to allow that the candidate is writing in stressful conditions but in too many responses, particularly Section B, this is seen throughout the response. Common examples of this are Kennedy and Khrushchev as leaders in the 1970s, Gorbachev becoming leader of the USSR before 1985 and the period of détente happening in the 1950s.

In section B, Q3 was slightly more popular than Q2.

Q2. Candidates were required to determine the accuracy of the statement that the Soviet Union implemented an aggressive foreign policy along the European Iron Curtain throughout the years 1953-64. Most candidates had a very good grasp of the knowledge required to answer this question effectively and mainly used the events outlined in the specification, including events in Austria, Hungary and Berlin. Some candidates mentioned Finland and Czechoslovakia and Poland. A few candidates wrote a confused chronology that covered the events of 1945-53 and were focused on Stalin's leadership. Others attempt to suggest that it was the USA that implemented an aggressive foreign policy along the European Iron Curtain, which often led to some confused answers. This reading of the question was not intended. The responses were rewarded where it was possible but rarely led to a logical or coherent argument being made.

The best responses focused exclusively on the geographical area in the question and explored whether Soviet policy was aggressive or defensive. Other responses tended to discuss general developments in the Cold War and some even ventured into a discussion of the Cuban Missile Crisis. There were some responses that made a relevant connection to US missiles in Europe but in general Cuba was not rewardable. The European Iron Curtain is a distinct element of the specification and centres should be aware of this. At Level 3,

the situation was usually explained while at Level 2 key events were described. There were some knowledgeable responses that were a pleasure to read and most candidates were able to bring Austria into the discussion to create a counter-argument.

Q3. Candidates were required to determine whether, in the years 1962-79, the main consequence of the Cuban Missile Crisis for superpower relations was a commitment to reduce the spread of nuclear weaponry. Consequence responses should look to discuss what happened as a result of a particular incident, event or development. The use of the period 1962-79 in the question allowed candidates to discuss short-term and medium-term consequences of the Crisis. Some candidates seemed to misread 1979 for 1989 and went right up to the end of the Soviet Union. Other candidates suggested that Kennedy and Khrushchev continued in power into the 1970s or that Gorbachev was leader of the USSR during this time period.

The best responses explored the nature and impact of the consequences in relation to each other, taking the reduction of the spread of nuclear weaponry as the starting point and discussing other consequences such as increased diplomacy, détente and the emergence of war by proxy. In supporting the statement, candidates referred to negotiations and agreements, such as the Test Ban Treaty (1963) and the SALT 1 agreements (1972), the concept of MAD and the realisation of the impact of nuclear war that the Crisis brought about. There is some excellent knowledge of this period of time but many responses remained in Level 2 and 3 because they just explained or described what happened rather than linking them to the Crisis itself. Many candidates were aware that reference to superpowers allowed for a discussion of relations between the USA, the Soviet Union and China rather than just US-Soviet relations. Some of the best responses showed that nuclear weaponry continued to be developed and there were some excellent nuanced answers that took the focus of the spread of nuclear weaponry and discussed the global reach that developed in the period.

Paper Summary

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

Section A (AO3/AO1)

- Candidates should aim to interpret both extracts by analysing the issues raised and showing an understanding of the arguments presented by both authors. It is important to show awareness that it is historian's points of view that are the basis of a discussion; referring to the author by name helps this understanding (where there is more than one author, candidates can write the first name with et al after it.)
- Interpretations do not need to be evaluated in the same way as Sources. It is the views in the Extracts themselves that create the basis of the discussion. All the Extracts are 'secondary sources' and this does not need to be explained.
- 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.

