



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In History (4WHI1)
Unit 1R: Depth Studies

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Paper 1 : Depth Studies

The assessment requirement was that candidates answer a set of questions from **two** options from a choice of eight. The most popular options were:

Option 3 : Germany: development of dictatorship, 1918-45

Option 6 : A world divided: superpower relations, 1943-72

Option 7 : A divided union: civil rights in the USA, 1945-74

and the most popular combination of options was:

Option 3 and 6

Option 3 and 7.

All eight options required candidates to answer three sub-questions on the option topic. Each question had a different focus and tested a range of assessment objectives. Question (a) required candidates to identify the impression given by an author based on a small written extract and tested AO4. Question (b) required candidates to explain two effects and tested AO1 and AO2. Question (ci) and (cii) required candidates explain, analyse and make judgements about key features, events, causes, effects and significance and tested AO1 and AO2.

General comments

Across all eight options the following generic comments in relation to each sub question should be noted:

In question (a) selecting information to support the impression will limit the answer to marks within level 2; to move into level 3 the answer requires analysis of how the impression has been created by consideration of the author's selection of evidence, tone, emphasis or omission.

In question (b) knowledge of the effect is not in itself sufficient, there is a requirement to explain the effect in terms of how the given issue in the question has led to/brought about the outcome(s).

In question (c) knowledge needs to be used to develop an answer that considers the issue raised by the question and a criteria-based judgement is made. As well as the precise issue the question is focused on, candidates should pay careful attention to the requisite second-order concept (i.e. causation, consequence, significance), and the given date range.

Option 3: Germany: development of dictatorship, 1918-45

This option was attempted by many candidates and on the whole was answered well.

In question (a) many candidates were able to identify that the impression given by the author about the Weimar Republic in 1920 was typically along the lines of it being in a chaotic situation.

Candidates who scored marks in level 2 (3-4 marks) were able to support their inference of the impression by selecting examples of language used by the author. Those candidates who moved into level 3 (5-6 marks) also considered the author's treatment, emphasis and selection of material in order to explicitly show aspects of how the author created the impression that was inferred.

In question (b) many candidates were able to explain the effects of the opposition to Hitler on the Third Reich in the years 1939-45. Common effects being that it disrupted the war effort with many noting that youth opposition to Hitler's rule continued during the war years. Level 2 (3-5 marks) answers gave a valid consequence with some support going beyond the general. A few answers remained in level 2 even though the quality of their response was excellent. This was because they had only dealt with one consequence. Level 3 answers gave an analysed feature of the period that explained the consequence and showed how it led to the outcome. This is key to achieving level 3 if the AO2 is supported with accurate and relevant information (AO1). Some less successful responses lacked relevance and offered generalised information. It was not enough for candidates to just describe the effect. It is important for candidates to realise that in this question it is about the effect 'of' something 'on' something. Whilst this was perhaps not a part of the specification which seemed as well known by candidates, many were able to make use of the knowledge that they did have to explain how it brought about the effects they chose to write about.

In question (c) candidates who clearly focused material towards the question from the start of points tended to do better. The strongest responses were able to sustain a focus on the demands of the question, deploying knowledge to discussion of the appropriate second-order concept, e.g. significance or causation. Some responses included effective judgements at the end of each point, e.g. explaining the relative importance of the point under discussion.

On (ci), most students were fairly secure in their knowledge of the main reason for the recovery of Germany in the years 1923-29. Candidates chose a range of points with the most popular being the Dawes Plan, the Rentenmark and Germany's membership of the League of Nations. A good number of students demonstrated detailed and accurate knowledge. It should be noted that many students chose not to use the Locarno Treaties as an aspect to discuss with some students showing an obvious lack of specific knowledge of the Locarno Treaties. The highest-scoring responses typically explored three points, included detailed knowledge and made a clear judgement or hierarchy throughout.

On (cii), most candidates were able to offer a sufficient range of reasons as to what Nazi policies had the most significant impact on the lives of the German people. The main issue was that many responses were very generic on education itself and often did not offer much specific detail beyond boys did sport and girls learnt to be good wives. For some candidates this question allowed for some sophisticated responses with the best answers having a clear rationale for what had the most impact. For example, everyone was impacted by the economy, hence that was impactful on German people as a whole. A minority did wander into description of factors without a clear rationale.

Option 6: A world divided: superpower relations, 1943-72

This option was attempted by many candidates and on the whole was answered well.

In question (a) most candidates were able to identify a valid impression, typically along the lines that the Marshall Plan revealed the Superpower attitudes to aid were very different. Many supported this by selecting the author's language, and those who explicitly considered how the author's choice of words or selection of material helped form this impression moved into level 3 (5-6 marks). Some students struggled to find an omission. However, omission is only one way for candidates to show consideration of authors selection.

In question (b) some candidates had thorough and precise knowledge regarding the effects of disagreements during the Second World War on Superpower relations. The best answers knew specific details and could discuss effects much better. Many candidates discussed an effect was that the delay of opening up a second front in France caused immediate tension as Stalin believed it was deliberate. Some students discussed disagreements that happened after the Second World War, outside the remit of the question. Some gave generalised answers without specific detail.

In question (ci) candidates generally had good knowledge of relevant issues, with candidates typically writing about issues such as the Soviet invasion of Hungary or the nuclear arms race to consider the question's proposition. There was generally good knowledge of the Soviet Union's defence of the Warsaw Pact and other issues such as protests and popular risings against communist rule. Many highlighted that the Korean War had a major impact on relations as did Khrushchev's attempts to reshape communist control with de-Stalinisation. Only a minority considered the part played by the setting up of military alliances during the 1950s. Some responses did cover events outside of the 1950s such as the U2 incident and Cuba which could not be credited.

In (cii) many candidates showed good knowledge and a clear analytical focus, with issues covered including the refugee problem and Khrushchev. Many highlighted the propaganda disaster that the refugee problem was for the East German leadership. Some responses covered events outside of the timeframe and struggled with the chronology but most did not drift from the timeframe and had a clear grasp of aspects such as the U2 incident.

Option 7: A divided union: civil rights in the USA, 1945-74

In question (a) many candidates were able to identify an impression given by the author regarding Malcolm X. Many candidates recognised that Malcolm X was uncompromising in his views and supported that by considering the author's selection of material. The vast majority of candidates were able to support their explanation by using evidence from the extract, and many demonstrated how this had been created by emphasising the phrases used by the author or with reference to material that was omitted.

In question (b) most candidates were able to write about some relevant effects of the anti-Vietnam War movement on the USA. Knowledge was generally strong with some high scoring answers discussing an effect was that its protests attracted significant attention from the media and public. Many recognised that an effect was the impact it had on US politics, in particular LBJ being challenged for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. Candidates who had precise knowledge were usually able to explain the effects on the USA, with many developing clear points.

Question (ci) tended to be well answered, with most candidates being able to offer focused reasons for whether the main reason for the Red Scare was the Cold War. Candidates typically covered the Cold War and the best answers argued that concerns over the domestic threat of communism began in tandem with the Cold War events in the mid to late 1940s. Alongside the given point of the Hiss and Rosenberg cases, candidates typically covered the 'fall of China' in 1949 and the outbreak of war in Korea explained how they fuelled concerns over domestic communism. Many candidates showed detailed knowledge and understanding of McCarthy and the consequences of his claims and his personal motivation.

In question (cii) most candidates were able to cover a range of consequences of civil rights protests. A small number included events outside of the date range in the question, most frequently moving into the 1960s. The majority were able to offer valid material on the given issue of desegregation within transport with nearly all offering the Montgomery Bus Boycott and some more nuanced examples. Most candidates were able to offer a range of issues. Most included the case of Brown v Topeka and Little Rock. Stronger responses, as well as offering more specific detail, were more likely to focus this carefully towards an analysis of significance. Good answers thought about the impact a Supreme Court decision could have on all states with a few being able to cite that if Brown had been successful, there would have been no need for Brown II or Little Rock.

