

A-LEVEL HISTORY

A-level (7042)

Marked Papers

Paper 2R - The Cold War, c1945-1991

Understand how to apply the mark scheme for our sample assessment papers.

Version 1.0 October 2017

EXAMPLE RESPONSES



Example responses plus commentary

The following student response is intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. This response has not been completed under timed examination conditions. It is not intended to be viewed as a 'model' answer and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Specimen Paper 2R, The Cold War, c1945-1991, June 2016

Question 01

With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying 'detente'.

[30 marks]

Mark scheme

- | | | |
|------------|---|--------------|
| L5: | Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. | 25-30 |
| L4: | Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. | 19-24 |
| L3: | Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. | 13-18 |
| L2: | The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. | 7-12 |
| L1: | The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. | 1-6 |
| | Nothing worthy of credit. | 0 |

Student one

Response

It might be argued that Source A is valuable for explaining the long-term causes of the thaw in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, alluding as it does to the catastrophic potential impact of war between the superpowers. There is little question that the tone of Source A is sombre, with President Kennedy using powerful terms such as 'devastation' to emphasise the high stakes of continued tensions between the two countries. This tone should not come as a surprise, given that this speech comes less than a year after the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, which saw the world come to the brink of nuclear disaster. Indeed, then-Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara is believed to have said that he did not believe he would see 'another sunrise' at the height of the Crisis. This Source therefore has value in explaining the sobering impact of the Cuban Missile Crisis on Cold War relations, proving how the high tensions had developed a new sense of understanding between the nations - a fact demonstrated by the introduction of the Hot Line between the Kremlin and the White House in September 1963, and the signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty a month later in October 1963, which made atmospheric nuclear testing illegal under international law. In this light, Source A can be thought to help to explain the role of the Cuban Missile Crisis in instigating detente, giving it significant value to an historian exploring the factors which contributed to the thaw in relations between the superpowers.

There is further value to be found in Source A for an historian studying detente once the political context of the Source is taken into account. This Source is derived from a speech President Kennedy gave publically to an American audience, therefore one which the President knew would attract considerable press coverage - a point which cannot be understated, given that his fight for re-election to the White House was less than eighteen months away, and as a result any remark on the direction of foreign policy under his leadership would be heavily scrutinised. The fact therefore that President Kennedy adopts such a conciliatory position towards the Soviet Union must indicate that the White House believed a significant number of Americans to have become in favour of a softer stance against the Soviet Union, as otherwise the President would not risk being branded 'soft' by his opponents - a prospect which had prevented both Presidents Eisenhower and Truman from compromising more with the Soviet Union during their tenures. This Source therefore demonstrates a surprising change in the American zeitgeist, given that less than a decade before a 'Red Scare' led by Senator McCarthy had swept the United States. In this light, the value of Source A cannot be understated, showing as it does the changing sentiments of the American people away from staunchly anti-Soviet towards a softer stance - an important change to note, given that the sentiments of the people of any democratic nation determine the policies of its government, not least its foreign policy.

Source B, meanwhile, is without question valuable to an historian exploring detente, proving as it does the extent to which the Vietnam War proved an obstruction to detente under President Johnson. The Source details the reluctance of Alexei Kosygin to begin further talks with the United States until President Johnson has 'sent his troops home' from Vietnam, demonstrating the fact that the Vietnam War stoked tensions between the superpowers to no end. This was a result of the extensive involvement of both superpowers within the conflict - after all, by the time of the Glassboro Conference in June 1967, the United States had deployed over 400,000 troops to Vietnam, whilst it has been estimated that at the same point the

Soviet Union was providing up to three-quarters of the Viet Cong's military resources. The War therefore pitted the superpowers against one another in direct conflict, making any prospect of co-operation on other issues, such as reductions in nuclear weapons, much less feasible. In this light, the value of Source B to an historian cannot be understated, showing how the Vietnam War accounted for the failure for any concrete agreements to be reached at the Glassboro Conference, and how it perhaps proved responsible for the lack of progress in relations between the superpowers under President Johnson.

It is in its provenance that an historian studying detente might discover further value within Source B. This Source derives from a private exchange between current-President Johnson and former-President Eisenhower, a man known to have been a close confidant of LBJ over the course of the Johnson Administration. This therefore gives an invaluable insight into the thinking of the Johnson Administration, representing as it does a candid conversation without political or diplomatic considerations. It can therefore be inferred from the Source that President Johnson was genuine in his desire to build closer ties with the Soviet Union - the fact that he discusses how negotiations at the Glassboro Conference of June 1967 went with the Soviets with Eisenhower must prove as much - and thus Source B is valuable in demonstrating that there was an American commitment to improving relations. It can, however, be speculated that this same provenance might limit its value to an extent: the self-justifying tone which Johnson adopts at some points, for example claiming that he 'would be glad' to have a conference every year, is perhaps evidence of the fact that he wants to please former-President Eisenhower and convince him that he is a capable President - something which might have been in doubt given the growing embarrassment of Vietnam. In this light, its value is somewhat limited as it could well be that President Johnson is skewing information so as to justify his actions to the former President.

There is little doubt that Source C also has value to an historian studying detente, proving the extent to which the desire to normalise relations with China under Nixon helped to improve relations with the Soviet Union. By July 1969, relations between the Soviet Union and China were at their worst, with the Sino-Soviet border conflict, starting in March 1969, having placed the two sides into an undeclared state of war. This made the Soviets more eager than ever to prevent a strengthening of relations between China and the United States, as for both superpowers to turn against them would have placed the Soviet Union in a very dangerous position indeed. Indeed, the fact that the Soviet Ambassador to Washington dedicates much of a report to Moscow to outlining the US position on China attests to the growing fear surrounding the prospects of a diplomatic thaw between China and the United States at this point, and this might be valuable to an historian in demonstrating how Nixon and Kissinger used the prospect of diplomatic relations with China to force the Soviet Union to the negotiating table: the fact that negotiations for SALT I began a mere five months later in November 1969 should come as no surprise given this. In this light, it is possible that Source C gives a valuable insight into the nature of the tactics used under Nixon and Kissinger, making it valuable to any study of detente.

It might be argued that Source C has further value in explaining the extent to which relations between the superpowers had improved by July 1969. In his report to Moscow, Dobrynin adopts a relatively trusting tone, suggesting that relations have reached such a point where the Soviet Union do not consider the United States the imperialist deceivers they once were. In similar fashion, Henry Kissinger speaks of the Cold War as an historical event, rather than a current climate, suggesting that tensions were no longer at such a height as had been the case before. Indeed, even the provenance of the source, showing a private exchange between Nixon's closest confidant and the Soviet ambassador bodes well for relations, showing a newfound

spirit of negotiation and co-operation between the two sides. In this light, the value of Source C for an historian studying detente is clear.

Commentary

This is a well-focused answer which is consistently relevant and evaluative. There is effective and appropriate deployment of contextual knowledge to support the judgements and analysis offered. There are minor weaknesses but it would be wrong to allow them to detract too much. There could be more balance, suggesting how the sources might be of limited value (especially in relation to A) and a more developed assessment of Source C.

This is a strong Level 5 answer, not quite achieving the top mark.

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7042

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