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# A-LEVEL History

7042/2T - Component 2T

The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953-2000  
Mark scheme

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June 2018

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Version/Stage: 1.0 Final

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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

## Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

### Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, i.e. if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

### Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

**Component 2T The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953–2000**

**Section A**

- 01** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the economy of the GDR in the years 1970 to 1980. **[30 marks]**

*Target: AO2*

*Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.*

**Generic 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**

## Indicative content

**Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.**

**Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.**

**Source A: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:**

### Provenance, tone and emphasis

- this being written by a West German whose probable objective was to present the GDR in bad light
- that the source has been written just before Honecker overthrew Ulbricht to become leader of the GDR. Whilst some students may view this as a limitation in terms of value, others may comment that by 1970 Ulbricht was too unwell to govern, and that Honecker had built close links with the Brezhnev and, although not officially, was already in charge
- that the source being written in 1970 may provide useful background as to why Honecker chose the economic path that he did
- that the tone of the source is derisive.

### Content and argument

- that this source holds value as it presents the case for why economic reform in the GDR was necessary going into the 1970s
- the shortcomings of the GDR economy. Students may refer to how these weaknesses remained despite Honecker's attempts at reform, mainly due to the upkeep of the central planning system. Students may cite that Honecker nationalised all independent businesses and implemented state 'cooperation councils' to take control of non-collectivised farms
- the serious shortfalls in consumer goods. Students will likely refer to how this was not the case throughout the 1970s; that Honecker's decision to embark upon 'consumer socialism' was partly born out of the shortages of earlier decades
- the gap between production levels in FRG and GDR and how this likely convinced Honecker to adopt a different economic path to Ulbricht – one that did not confront or take on the West, but one that worked with them. Students may refer to how the FRG's policy of Ostpolitik, the GDR's unofficial membership of the EEC, and the loan deals between the GDR and the FRG improved relations, and boosted the economy in the GDR.

**Source B: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:**

**Provenance, tone and emphasis**

- this being a report by Honecker on his main economic reform – ‘the Unity of Social and Economic Policy’
- in June 1971 Honecker had just replaced Ulbricht as leader of the GDR
- this report was meant for internal consumption
- the tone of this source is positive. Students may state that this positivity stemmed from Honecker being new in post, Honecker trying to gain support for his new economic reform, and/or Honecker overcompensating due to the stagnant state of the Soviet economy under Brezhnev.

**Content and argument**

- Honecker’s economic reform did increase effectiveness and efficiency. Students may refer to the replacement of VEBs by combines, and how Honecker’s combines linked technological research, production and market research to make for more efficient production
- that Honecker, as part of ‘the Unity of Social and Economic Policy’, did intend to draw on the expert knowledge and creativity of workers, and that he intended for a more flexible decision making process at local level
- the contradiction in Honecker’s plan to pursue a more flexible decision making process alongside a central planning system
- that the central planning system held back innovation and initiative
- that Honecker intended to improve the standard of living – students may refer to Honecker’s increased welfare provision and how consumer goods became more readily available and services improved.

**Source C: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:**

**Provenance, tone and emphasis**

- this being a newspaper article, so its intention is to gain interest. Students may refer to the subject of the article – Christmas shopping being complicated and nerve-racking, and the author’s intention to grab attention
- the author being a West German journalist and his probable aim to present the GDR in a poor light
- that in 1980 relations between West and East were particularly strained due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the mass boycott of the Moscow Olympics
- that the tone is overly negative of the GDR’s economic performance.

**Content and argument**

- that the source gives the impression that economic reform under Honecker failed, which is problematic as the GDR’s economy was relatively successful under Honecker, particularly in relation to the economies of the other satellite states. Students may cite that the GDR’s economy was fragile as it was overly dependent on loans from the FRG
- that the source gives the impression that the GDR exported heavily, which resulted in shortages. Students may point out that the GDR was dependent upon foreign trade, that 1/3 of the GDR’s trade was with the West
- that the source indicates that the GDR became dependent upon imports. Students may agree pointing out that the GDR was forced to import coal, oil and gas from the USSR. However, students may also point out, that the GDR, under Honecker, achieved a high level of agricultural self-sufficiency

- that the source gives the impression that there were shortages. Students will likely point out that shortages were rare in the GDR; that by 1980 the East Germans enjoyed the highest standard of living in the Eastern bloc; that the ownership of luxury goods continued to grow.

**Section B**

- 02** To what extent did Khrushchev bring about social and cultural change within the Soviet Union during the years 1956 to 1964? **[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.*

**Generic Mark Scheme**

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16-20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6-10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**



**Indicative content**

**Note:** This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

**Arguments/factors suggesting that Khrushchev did bring about social and cultural change within the Soviet Union in the years 1956 to 1964 might include:**

- ‘Reform Communism’ and Khrushchev’s attempts at improving living standards and increasing personal freedoms, i.e. his attempts to tackle the housing crisis; increased welfare benefits; introduction of the minimum wage; longer holidays and maternity leave; the repeal of Stalin’s war-time rule that made absence from work a criminal offence
- the USSR was opened up to the outside world. Citizens gained wider access to a wider range of foreign literature and films, and for the first time in Soviet history they could listen to foreign radio stations. Foreign visitors were encouraged to visit the USSR
- that there was a relaxation of censorship (the ‘Thaw’). Artistic freedom was restored, i.e. Shostakovich, heavily criticised under Stalin, was free to flourish, and Solzhenitsyn was allowed to publish ‘One Day in the Life of Ivan Denishovich’, which provided a graphic account of a day in the gulag. In 1957, Moscow hosted the World Festival of Youth
- that there were increased cultural and sporting contacts with non-Communist countries. The Bolshoi Ballet and Red Army Choir toured abroad
- that there were more higher education opportunities for the workers.

**Arguments/factors challenging the view that Khrushchev did bring about social and cultural change within the Soviet Union in the years 1956 to 1964 might include:**

- that despite Destalinisation, nearly all the fundamental features of ‘Stalinism’ remained in place
- that censorship was still enforced, i.e. Pasternak’s internationally renowned novel, Doctor Zhivago, was banned. Pasternak was prevented from travelling abroad to collect the Nobel Prize for Literature. Students may refer to Khrushchev’s stand against abstract/modern art
- the continued use of the KGB and the rounding up of political prisoners
- Khrushchev’s anti-religious campaign – Russian Jews were banned from emigrating to Israel; seminaries for the training of priests were closed down; the number of churches were more than halved; priests were imprisoned or killed; children were removed from Christian parents; Islam was persecuted; atheism was taught in schools
- that whilst incomes did rise there were shortages, meaning there was often nothing for the people to spend their surplus money on; that new apartments were low quality and unsafe.

Whilst Khrushchev’s ‘Reform Communism’ and the ‘Thaw’ brought about social and cultural development, they did so only steadily. Whilst most enjoyed more freedoms, rights and opportunities, some did not. Khrushchev, despite Destalinisation, believed in the essentials of Stalinism, seen most vividly in his revival of both Lenin’s and Stalin’s anti-religious campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s. Khrushchev’s ideological beliefs prevented him from bringing about far reaching social and cultural development in the USSR.

**03** To what extent was Yeltsin's resignation due to his economic policies? **[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.*

### **Generic Mark Scheme**

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16-20**
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- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

**Indicative content**

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**Arguments/factors suggesting that Yeltsin's resignation was due to his economic policies might include:**

- the desperate state of the Russian economy in 1991 – significant falls in GNP and foreign trade; the introduction of rationing; foreign debt of \$80 billion
- the consequences of 'Shock Therapy' and Gaidar's free market reforms – inflation and disuse of the Russian rouble; the black market, increased crime and corruption; collapse of businesses and unemployment
- the drastic drop in production levels across the Russian economy in 1992
- foreign debt and the financial crisis of 1998, and the social consequences of this.

**Arguments/factors challenging the view that Yeltsin's resignation was due to his economic policies might include:**

- political instability – Conservative unrest in the Congress of Deputies; Yeltsin's handling of Congress and the storming of the White House; Yeltsin's 1993 Constitution and elections from 1993 to 1996
- war in Chechnya
- Yeltsin's flamboyant lifestyle and hard drinking, i.e. on a state visit to Ireland Yeltsin was unable to disembark from his plane because he was too drunk
- Yeltsin's ill health, i.e. Yeltsin went on holiday for a month to recover from the strains of the August coup in 1991, and in 1996 he underwent heart surgery that left him in hospital for several months
- his lack of clear aims on coming into power.

Whilst not the sole contributing factor, Yeltsin's economic policies arguably contributed most to his downfall. It is what he invested most time in and it was his radical economic reform that was the main cause of the conservative unrest which triggered the political instability that then followed. Failings in Chechnya only compounded problems at home. Circumstance also contributed to his downfall. In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the USSR, Russia needed a solid, stable and visionary leader to steer them through these difficult years – Yeltsin did not fit the bill.

- 04** “Shock therapy’ was more effective than the ‘gradualist’ approach in restoring capitalism in the former Soviet satellite states in the years 1989 to 1997.’

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.*

### Generic Mark Scheme

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- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

**Indicative content**

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**Arguments/factors suggesting that ‘shock therapy’ was more effective than the ‘gradualist’ approach in restoring capitalism in the former Soviet satellite states in the years 1989 to 1997, might include:**

- the long-term economic impact of shock therapy in Poland – the drop in inflation; rise in the GDP and the advent of approximately half a million new businesses; increased foreign investment; the Polish economy became one of the most robust in central Europe
- the long-term economic and social impact of the ‘gradualist approach’ in Hungary
- the failings of the ‘gradualist approach’ in Romania – high inflation, shortages of consumer goods and high unemployment
- the successful adjustment to the market economy in Czechoslovakia.

**Arguments/factors challenging the view that ‘shock therapy’ was more effective than the ‘gradualist’ approach in restoring capitalism in the former Soviet satellite states in the years 1989 to 1997, might include:**

- the short-term economic and social impact of ‘shock therapy’ in Poland – the collapse of business; increased unemployment; deep recession; Solidarity’s loss in the September 1993 election
- the short-term economic and social successes of the ‘gradualist approach’ in Hungary. Students will likely compare the situation in Hungary with that of Poland
- the failings of ‘shock therapy’ in Bulgaria – strikes, demonstrations and the eventual collapse of the economy in 1997
- the corruption caused by shock therapy in Czechoslovakia, and the failings of ‘shock therapy’ in Slovakia – the dramatic fall in both industrial and agricultural production levels; fall in wages; mass unemployment – by 1993, 20% of the population in Slovakia was unemployed
- the adverse impact of ‘shock therapy’ on East German enterprises.

Building closer ties with the West was arguably the best approach for the former satellite states to restore capitalism. Yet, despite the former GDR being best placed in this regard, the consequences of securing closer links with West Germany through ‘reunification’ were mainly adverse. And so too were the short-term consequences of ‘shock therapy’ and the ‘gradualist approach’ adopted in the other former satellite states. It may be concluded that in the short-term the ‘gradualist approach’ proved superior, but in the longer-term, despite mixed results, it was ‘shock therapy’ that restored capitalism most effectively.