

Mark Scheme (Results)

January 2026

Pearson Edexcel International

Advanced Level in History (WHI02/1C)

Paper 2: Breadth Study with Source Evaluation

Option 1C: Russia, 1917–91: From Lenin to Yeltsin

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

January 2026

Question Paper Log Number P78978A

Publication Code WHI02_1C_2601_MS

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd

General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Generic Level Descriptors for Paper 2

Section A: Question 1(a)

Target: AO2 (10 marks): Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material
1	1–3	• Demonstrates surface level comprehension of the source material without analysis, selecting some material relevant to the question, but in the form of direct quotations or paraphrases. • Some relevant contextual knowledge is included but presented as information rather than applied to the source material. • Evaluation of the source material is assertive with little substantiation. The concept of value may be addressed, but by making stereotypical judgements.
2	4–6	• Demonstrates some understanding of the source material and attempts analysis by selecting and summarising information and making inferences relevant to the question. • Contextual knowledge is added to information from the source material, but mainly to expand or confirm matters of detail. • Evaluation of the source material is related to the specified enquiry and with some substantiation for assertions of value. The concept of value is addressed mainly by noting aspects of source provenance and some judgements may be based on questionable assumptions.
3	7–10	• Demonstrates understanding of the source material and shows some analysis by selecting key points relevant to the question, explaining their meaning and selecting material to support valid developed inferences. • Sufficient knowledge of the historical context is deployed to explain or support inferences, as well as to expand or confirm matters of detail. • Evaluation of the source material is related to the specified enquiry and based on valid criteria although justification is not fully substantiated. Explanation of value takes into account relevant considerations such as the nature or purpose of the source material or the position of the author.

Section A: Question 1(b)

Target: A02 (15 marks): Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material
1	1–3	• Demonstrates surface level comprehension of the source material without analysis, selecting some material relevant to the question, but in the form of direct quotations or paraphrases. • Some relevant contextual knowledge is included, but presented as information rather than applied to the source material. • Evaluation of the source material is assertive with little supporting evidence. The concept of reliability may be addressed, but by making stereotypical judgements.
2	4–7	• Demonstrates some understanding of the source material and attempts analysis, by selecting and summarising information and making inferences relevant to the question. • Contextual knowledge is added to information from the source material but mainly to expand, confirm or challenge matters of detail. • Evaluation of the source material is related to the specified enquiry but with limited support for judgement. The concept of reliability is addressed mainly by noting aspects of source provenance and some judgements may be based on questionable assumptions.
3	8–11	• Demonstrates understanding of the source material and shows some analysis by selecting key points relevant to the question, explaining their meaning and selecting material to support valid developed inferences. • Detailed knowledge of the historical context is deployed to explain or support inferences as well as to expand, confirm or challenge matters of detail. • Evaluation of the source material is related to the specified enquiry and explanation of weight takes into account relevant considerations such as nature or purpose of the source material or the position of the author. Judgements are based on valid criteria, with some justification.
4	12–15	• Analyses the source material, interrogating the evidence to make reasoned inferences and to show a range of ways the material can be used, for example by distinguishing between information and claim or opinion. • Deploys well-selected knowledge of the historical context, but mainly to illuminate or discuss the limitations of what can be gained from the content of the source material. Displays some understanding of the need to interpret source material in the context of the values and concerns of the society from which it is drawn. • Evaluation of the source material uses valid criteria which are justified and applied, although some of the evaluation may not be fully substantiated. Evaluation takes into account the weight the evidence will bear as part of coming to a judgement.

Section B

Target: AO1 (25 marks): 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.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material
1	1–6	• Simple or generalised statements are made about the topic. • Some accurate and relevant knowledge is included, but it lacks range and depth and does not directly address the question. • The overall judgement is missing or asserted. • There is little, if any, evidence of attempts to structure the answer, and the answer overall lacks coherence and precision.
2	7–12	• There is some analysis of some key features of the period relevant to the question, but descriptive passages are included that are not clearly shown to relate to the focus of the question. • Mostly accurate and relevant knowledge is included, but lacks range or depth and has only implicit links to the demands and conceptual focus of the question. • An overall judgement is given but with limited support and the criteria for judgement are left implicit. • The answer shows some attempts at organisation, but most of the answer is lacking in coherence, clarity and precision.
3	13–18	• There is some analysis of, and attempt to explain links between, the relevant key features of the period and the question, although some mainly descriptive passages may be included. • Mostly accurate and relevant knowledge is included to demonstrate some understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question, but material lacks range or depth. • Attempts are made to establish criteria for judgement and to relate the overall judgement to them, although with weak substantiation. • The answer shows some organisation. The general trend of the argument is clear, but parts of it lack logic, coherence or precision.
4	19–25	• Key issues relevant to the question are explored by an analysis of the relationships between key features of the period. • Sufficient knowledge is deployed to demonstrate understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question and to meet most of its demands. • Valid criteria by which the question can be judged are established and applied in the process of coming to a judgement. Although some of the evaluations may be only partly substantiated, the overall judgement is supported. • The answer is generally well organised. The argument is logical and is communicated with clarity, although in a few places it may lack coherence or precision.

Section A: indicative content

Option 1C: Russia, 1917-91: From Lenin to Yeltsin

Question	Indicative content
1a	Answers will be credited according to their deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Candidates are required to analyse the source and consider its value for an enquiry into the employment of women in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. 1. The value could be identified in terms of the following points of information from the source, and the inferences which could be drawn and supported from the source: • It provides evidence that women have been effective workers in the mines ('a result of satisfactory reports ... the Soviet authorities have decided to employ 'shock brigades of women' in other coal mines.') • It indicates that women have been employed in strenuous work in the mines ('gangs of women were employed in loading and pushing trolleys from the interior of the mines.') • It suggests that women's employment was changing ('section of the Labour Code forbidding ... not enforced ... gangs of women were employed', 'Since the springtime, women have worked ... extracting coal') • It implies that the authorities intend to employ more women in coal mines ('Many new pits have been opened and several hundreds of thousands of additional miners have been employed.'). 2. The following points could be made about the authorship, nature or purpose of the source and applied to ascribe value to information and inferences: • The reporter, stationed in Russia and with access to reports about women working in coal mines, was in a good position to comment on female employment there • The report was published in <i>The Times</i> newspaper, a British newspaper that would not be subject to Soviet censorship • The tone and content of the report are relatively neutral with the focus on relaying what has been reported by Soviet authorities. 3. Knowledge of the historical context should be deployed to support and develop inferences and to confirm the accuracy/usefulness of information. Relevant points may include: • In 1928, the last year of the NEP, only 3 million women worked in Soviet industry. By the end of the 1930s, female employment had increased to 13 million • In addition to doing unskilled work in factories and mines, increasing places were allocated to women to train for technical and skilled roles in industry • Parts of the Moscow underground were built by brigades of female workers • Under the Five-Year Plans, women dominated the workforce in textiles and began to enter the construction industry and worked in lumbering and engineering. Other relevant material must be credited.

Question	Indicative content
1b	Answers will be credited according to their deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Candidates are required to analyse and evaluate the source in relation to an enquiry into the extent of freedom in the arts allowed under Khrushchev. 1. The following points could be made about the origin and nature of the source and applied when giving weight to selected information and inferences: • Gunther had been present in Russia during Stalin's regime and was thus in a good position to comment on changes to policies towards the arts he had observed when he travelled in Russia during Khrushchev's regime • Gunther was an American journalist publishing in the west and was not restricted in any way by Soviet censorship • Gunther wrote his account in 1958, during a period of liberalisation, and was able to comment on the lessening of controls at that point • It is likely that there were restrictions on where Gunther could travel and what he could observe and this would place limitations on his observations. 2. The evidence could be assessed in terms of giving weight to the following points of information and inferences: • It claims there were greater freedoms as some western culture was more accessible to the Soviet population ('this is now being let into Russia to a limited extent') • It suggests that there were still limitations to freedoms ('Foreign films are slowly being introduced, but none from the United States.', 'nothing is ever presented that will undermine Soviet ideas.') • It provides evidence that previously banned material was becoming available ('composers like Shostakovich, ...freely played again. ... the ban ... lifted from Soviet plays not been performed since the 1920s') • It indicates that Soviet artists were permitted more freedoms ('Soviet writers, dozens who could not be published at all under Stalin are emerging.'). 3. Knowledge of historical context should be deployed to support and develop inferences and to confirm the accuracy/usefulness of information or to note limitations or to challenge aspects of the content. Relevant points may include: • Under Khrushchev's 'thaws', Soviet citizens gained access to a range of foreign literature and film, as long as it was passed as 'safe' by Soviet censors • Soviet artists enjoyed greater freedoms as a result of Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation, e.g. Solzhenitsyn was allowed to publish <i>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</i> • Greater exposure to other cultures and ideas was promoted in 1957 when the World Youth Festival was held in Moscow. Young Soviet citizens were able to dance to jazz music and African drumming • The 'thaws' were punctuated with 'freezes'. Pasternak's <i>Doctor Zhivago</i> was banned, poet Josef Brodsky was arrested, and Khrushchev harangued abstract artists at a display at the Kremlin in 1962. Other relevant material must be credited.

Section B: Indicative content

Option 1C: Russia, 1917-91: From Lenin to Yeltsin

Question	Indicative content
2	Answers will be credited according to their deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant. Candidates are expected to reach a judgement about whether the most significant development in education under Lenin and Stalin was the policy to improve literacy. The arguments and evidence that the most significant development in education under Lenin and Stalin was the policy to improve literacy should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • The policy to improve literacy was significant in improving literacy rates during the Civil War for soldiers in the Red Army, who had to attend literacy classes, and factory workers who had to attend remedial schools • The policy was significant in improving literacy levels in women. The <i>Zhenotdel</i> ran literacy classes for women and targeted areas in Central Asia, where there were very high levels of illiteracy among Muslim women • The policy was significant because it led to improving literacy rates during Stalin's first Five-Year Plan. Ninety per cent of adults attended a literacy course and, by the end of the first Plan, 68% of people were literate • The policy was a significant development in education because of its levels of success. Over the period literacy rates improved from 38 per cent in 1918 to 94 per cent (urban) and 86 per cent (rural) by 1941. The arguments and evidence that the policy to improve literacy was not the most significant/there were other more significant developments in education under Lenin and Stalin should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • The significance of the illiteracy liquidation campaign was limited by the Civil War, the closure of schemes during the NEP and the ending of the campaign in 1927, after rates had only risen from 38% in 1918 to 55% • The introduction of free primary education in 1918 was significant. It enabled more children to access education and improved not only literacy but also numeracy, and taught children the importance of labour • Lunacharsky's innovative methods of teaching and learning introduced in the early 1920s were significant educational developments. Classrooms became laboratories and teachers became facilitators of learning • Stalin's reversion to traditional methods of teaching was significant in education. It reintroduced discipline in schools and focused the curriculum on preparation for work in the command economy. Other relevant material must be credited.

Question	Indicative content
3	Answers will be credited according to their deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant. Candidates are expected to reach a judgement about whether Khrushchev and Brezhnev had very different priorities in their policies towards industry. The arguments and evidence that Khrushchev and Brezhnev had very different priorities in their policies towards industry should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Khrushchev prioritised the decentralisation of the management of industry to achieve greater innovation, whereas Brezhnev centralised the management of industry in ministries in Moscow, which were placed under the control of conservatives • Brezhnev gave greater priority to the military-industrial complex throughout his time in office, whereas Khrushchev prioritised light industry • Brezhnev prioritised the extraction of oil and mineral reserves discovered in Siberia in 1964. These resources were undiscovered during Khrushchev's period in office and therefore could not be prioritised • Whilst Khrushchev set priorities for industry through targets set for production, in the 1970s, Brezhnev set priorities through targets based on costs and profits. The arguments and evidence that Khrushchev and Brezhnev had similar priorities in their policies towards industry should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Both Khrushchev and Brezhnev used Five-Year Plans as the principal method of setting priorities for industry • Both Khrushchev and Brezhnev focused industrial production on innovative technology that would allow the Soviet Union to compete with the USA in the Space Race • Both Khrushchev and Brezhnev gave some priority to the production of consumer goods to ensure support for the Soviet system from the general population • Despite Khrushchev's attempts to cut military spending, a series of nuclear stand-offs with the USA meant he began increasing military spending, a priority that continued under Brezhnev. Other relevant material must be credited.

Question	Indicative content
4	Answers will be credited according to their deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant. Candidates are expected to reach a judgement about whether, in the years 1982-91, attempts by Soviet leaders to achieve reform within the Soviet Union were a complete failure. The arguments and evidence that, in the years 1982-91, attempts by Soviet leaders to achieve reform within the Soviet Union were a complete failure should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Attempts to strengthen control over the Party ultimately failed. Gorbachev's reforms that limited the time that Party positions could be held angered conservatives and were a key reason motivating the coup • Gorbachev's policy of glasnost was supposed to provide greater freedoms and increase support for the Soviet system. Instead, it led to fierce criticisms and weakened the system • Neither Andropov nor Chernenko were in office for long enough to implement meaningful economic reform and the Soviet economy continued to stagnate under them • Gorbachev's economic reforms ultimately failed. His policy of acceleration set unrealistic targets, corrupt managers embezzled funds, and loss-making enterprises required government funds, which increased the debt • Gorbachev's policy of glasnost was supposed to provide greater freedoms and increase support for the Soviet regime. Instead, it led to fierce criticisms and weakened the system by allowing nationalist separatism. The arguments and evidence that, in the years 1982-91, attempts by Soviet leaders to achieve reform within the Soviet Union had some success should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Reform of government enjoyed some success. Both Andropov's and Gorbachev's reforms of the Politburo removed opponents of reform and strengthened their control • Gorbachev succeeded in restructuring the economy. Newly-established private enterprises were able to determine their own direction, military spending was reduced, and foreigners were able to invest in the USSR • The relaxation of censorship as a result of glasnost allowed previously-forbidden works to be published as well as previously-forbidden topics to be discussed and was widely praised by liberals. Other relevant material must be credited.