

Mark Scheme (Results)

January 2026

Pearson Edexcel International

Advanced Level in History (WHI03/1A)

Paper 3: Thematic Study with Source Evaluation

Option 1A: The USA, Independence to Civil War,
1763–1865

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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 3

Section A

Target: AO2 (25 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	1–4	• 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 or no supporting evidence. Concepts of reliability or utility may be addressed, but by making stereotypical judgements.
2	5–8	• 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. Concepts of reliability or utility are addressed mainly by noting aspects of source provenance and some judgements may be based on questionable assumptions.
3	9–14	• 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 utility 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	15–20	• 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, although treatment of the two sources may be uneven. • 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.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
5	21–25	• Interrogates the evidence of both sources with confidence and discrimination, making reasoned inferences and showing a range of ways the material can be used, for example by distinguishing between information and claim or opinion. • Deploys knowledge of the historical context with precision to illuminate and discuss the limitations of what can be gained from the content of the source material, displaying secure 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 fully applied. Evaluation takes into account the weight the evidence will bear as part of coming to a judgement and, where appropriate, distinguishes between the degree of certainty with which aspects of it can be used as the basis for claims.

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	1–4	• 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	5–8	• 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	9–14	• 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	15–20	• 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.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
5	21–25	• Key issues relevant to the question are explored by a sustained analysis and discussion of the relationships between key features of the period. • Sufficient knowledge is precisely selected and deployed to demonstrate understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question, and to respond fully to its demands. • Valid criteria by which the question can be judged are established and applied and their relative significance evaluated in the process of reaching and substantiating the overall judgement. • The answer is well organised. The argument is logical and coherent throughout and is communicated with clarity and precision.

Section A: Indicative content

Option 1A: The USA, Independence to Civil War, 1763–1865

Question	Indicative content
1	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 must analyse and evaluate the sources to investigate the significance of the battle of Gettysburg in 1863. Source 1 1. The following points could be made about the origin and nature of the source and applied when evaluating the use of selected information and inferences: • The author was an eyewitness to some of the events described but would also have had to rely on others for information from different parts of the battlefield • The dispatch was sent immediately after the battle ended and so the information ought to be fresh in the mind of the journalist • The tone and language of the article are pro the Union and triumphant in a bid to both emphasise the scale of victory but also to dramatise the events being portrayed. 2. The evidence could be assessed here in terms of giving weight to the following points of information and inferences about the significance of the battle of Gettysburg in 1863. • The source indicates that the battle of Gettysburg is a decisive victory for the Union forces ('we announce the complete, overwhelming, magnificent victory ... over all the Rebel forces of General Lee.') • The source claims that the battle has been hard fought and implies it has been high in casualties ('most furious contests of the war', 'In this, the most bloody conflict of the war') • The source suggests that the battle was a turning point in the war ('Out of the darkness of the civil war a new day has dawned.'). 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 content. Relevant points may include: • The battle was the bloodiest of the civil war claiming over 50,000 casualties over three days • The battle halted General Lee's invasion of the north and forced his confederate army into retreat • The surrender of Vicksburg to Grant's Union forces on 4 July and the capture of 30,000 Confederate troops, further severely weakened the Confederacy.

Question	Indicative content
	Source 2 1. The following points could be made about the origin and nature of the source and applied when evaluating the use of selected information and inferences: • The speech was given by the President, Abraham Lincoln, and so was a moment of national significance • The speech was delivered on the battlefield at Gettysburg and so was an attempt to symbolically connect with the events of the battle • The tone and language of the speech are positive and rallying. 2. The evidence could be assessed here in terms of giving weight to the following points of information and inferences about the significance of the battle of Gettysburg in 1863. • The source indicates that it is part of a process of memorialisation for those who had lost their lives at the battle of Gettysburg ('We have come to preserve a portion of that battlefield, as a final resting place') • The source suggests that the battle had been fought for the basic principles upon which America had been founded ('Four score and seven years ago our founding fathers brought forth') • The source implies that the ideals for which the Union forces at Gettysburg were fighting had still not been secured ('to the unfinished work which they who fought here', 'they shall not have died in vain.'). 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 content. Relevant points may include: • The speech was delivered at the dedication of the Soldiers National Cemetery on the site of the battlefield at Gettysburg • Lincoln's relatively short address was not the main speech of dedication that day but followed a much lengthier oration by former senator Edward Everett • Lincoln's speech was greeted with a rather mixed reception both on the day and in subsequent reporting. Time has bestowed on it a gravitas not felt initially. Sources 1 and 2 The following points could be made about the sources in combination: • Both sources agree that the battle of Gettysburg was a moment of huge significance in the civil war • Both sources agree that although the outcome was significant it was not truly decisive in either military or political terms • Source 1 focuses mainly on the military significance of the battle whereas Source 2 emphasises the lofty political ideals that it suggests were being fought over in 1863.

Section B: Indicative content

Option 1A: The USA, Independence to Civil War, 1763–1865

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 on whether resolving the issue of slavery was the main obstacle to the successful development of a new American nation in the years 1775-91. Arguments and evidence supporting the statement should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • The issue of slavery was a key division between states at the time of the formation of the new nation. The issue was divisive and highlighted emerging differences between northern and southern states • The need for a compromise acceptance of slavery in 1787, in terms of the allocation of congressional seats, showed the ongoing level of disagreement over the issue • Different attitudes towards the institution of slavery would always threaten harmony between the states of the new American nation if the colonies could gain independence from Great Britain • Southern states in 1787 made it clear that a continuation of their right to keep people enslaved was essential to the formation of the Union and its successful functioning • The disagreements over the slave trade continued and it was only a compromise in Philadelphia in 1787 that unblocked an obstacle to the successful development of the Union. Arguments and evidence opposing the statement should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Winning the war against Great Britain and achieving independence 1775-83 was the greatest problem faced in developing a new nation • Broader disagreements over political structures and principles hindered development. There were disagreements over the franchise, Presidential power and whether there should be a uni or bi-cameral legislature • Disagreements between Federalists and Anti-Federalists were a major problem for politicians looking to agree on how to develop a new nation • Disagreements between the states occurred over the relative importance attached to the differing population sizes of the individual states e.g. Virginia Plan v New Jersey Plan • Disagreement between states exacerbated the new nation's economic problems. Massachusetts and Rhode Island continually disagreed over the need to print paper money • Land and boundary disputes between states, e.g. Maryland and Virginia over the Potomac River, were sources of tension which needed attention before the new nation could be successfully developed

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|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Popular discontent, such as Shays' rebellion, was a hugely significant problem that hindered the development of a new nation. |
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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 on whether the most important event that contributed to increasing political tensions, in the years 1828-37 and 1850-61, was the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Arguments and evidence supporting the statement should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Douglas was an important figure in the Senate, having played a central role in the Kansas-Nebraska Crisis. A challenge to his position in the Senate increased political tension and attracted national attention • The debates increased political tension within the Democratic party. Douglas' support of the Freeport Doctrine did much to damage his support and weakened his cause in gaining the Democrat nomination in the future • Lincoln's attacks on the immorality of slavery and belief that it should face 'ultimate extinction', as earlier expressed in his 'House Divided' speech, played a role in increasing political tension immediately • Lincoln's attack on Douglas' policy of self-determination, as a mechanism for expanding slavery, increased political tension by convincing many in the North of the continued threat of 'slave power' coming from the South • The debates massively raised Lincoln's profile and contributed to his winning the election in 1860, thus fracturing the Union. Arguments and evidence opposing the statement should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Lincoln and Douglas had tried to constrain political tension by displaying themselves as moderates in the middle ground. There was much overlap between them on the issues of race, slavery and slavery expansion • The Nullification Crisis of 1832-33, with the threat by President Jackson to deploy federal troops, increased political tension by highlighting how close the possibility of civil war was and how far the Union was under threat • President Jackson's veto of the Second Bank's renewal bill highlighted how the issue over the right of the federal or states' governments to control the nation's finances was a politically fractious one • The violence of 'Bleeding Kansas' showed how politically impassioned the issue of states' rights and its intertwining with slavery had become in the 1850s • The poor leadership of Buchanan and his clashes with Douglas over the Lecompton Constitution were highly significant in raising political tensions and splitting the Democrat Party • John Brown's raid was significant in raising tensions, by convincing many in the South that the Republicans were all abolitionists. Other relevant material must be credited.