

Mark Scheme (Results)

January 2026

Pearson Edexcel International

Advanced Level in History (WHI04/1B)

PAPER 4: International Study with Historical Interpretations

Option 1B: The World in Crisis, 1879–1945

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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 4

Section A

Targets: A01 (5 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.

A03 (20 marks): Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material
1	1–4	• Demonstrates only limited comprehension of the extracts, selecting some material relevant to the debate. • Some accurate and relevant knowledge is included and presented as information, rather than being linked with the extracts. • Judgement on the view is assertive, with little supporting evidence.
2	5–8	• Demonstrates some understanding and attempts analysis of the extracts by describing some points within them that are relevant to the debate. • Mostly accurate knowledge is included, but lacks range or depth. It is added to information from the extracts, but mainly to expand on matters of detail or to note some aspects which are not included. • A judgement on the view is given with limited support, but the criteria for judgement are left implicit.
3	9–14	• Demonstrates understanding and some analysis of the extracts by selecting and explaining some key points of interpretation they contain and indicating differences. • Knowledge of some issues related to the debate is included to link to, or expand, some views given in the extracts. • Attempts are made to establish criteria for judgement and discussion of the extracts is attempted. A judgement is given, although with limited substantiation, and is related to some key points of view in the extracts.
4	15–20	• Demonstrates understanding of the extracts, analysing the issues of interpretation raised within them and by a comparison of them. • Sufficient knowledge is deployed to explore most of the relevant aspects of the debate, although treatment of some aspects may lack depth. Integrates issues raised by extracts with those from own knowledge. • Valid criteria by which the view can be judged are established and applied and the evidence provided in the extracts discussed in the process of coming to a substantiated overall judgement, although treatment of the extracts may be uneven. Demonstrates understanding that the issues are matters of interpretation.

5	21–25	• Interprets the extracts with confidence and discrimination, analysing the issues raised and demonstrating understanding of the basis of arguments offered by both authors. • Sufficient knowledge is precisely selected and deployed to explore fully the matter under debate. Integrates issues raised by extracts with those from own knowledge when discussing the presented evidence and differing arguments. • A sustained evaluative argument is presented, applying valid criteria and reaching fully substantiated judgements on the views given in both extracts and demonstrating understanding of the nature of historical debate.
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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.

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.
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Section A: Indicative content

Option 1B: The World in Crisis, 1879–1945

Question	Indicative content
1	Answers will be credited according to candidates' 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 expected to use the extracts and their own knowledge to consider the views presented in the extracts. Reference to the works of named historians is not expected, but candidates may consider historians' viewpoints in framing their argument. Candidates should use their understanding of issues of interpretation to reach a reasoned conclusion concerning the view that the evolution of 'two gigantic armed camps' was responsible for the outbreak of general war in Europe in 1914. In considering the extracts, the points made by the authors should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: Extract 1 • The Triple Alliance and Triple Entente became more militarised over time and an arms race developed, creating two militarised blocs supplying themselves with ever increasing numbers of men and materiel • The entrenchment of the rivalry between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente in the years up to 1914 was characterised by the development, and continual renewal, of plans for war • Military leaders within the alliances felt that the instability of international diplomacy meant that they had to be ready for war at any time • Although crises involving the Great Powers had been resolved without recourse to war in the years 1905-13, it was only a matter of time before an event triggered war; that trigger was the Sarajevo assassination. Extract 2 • Germany played a decisive role and manipulated the events that led to the outbreak of general European war in 1914 • German political and military leaders were willing to pursue an aggressive and risky foreign policy in their determination to gain success in their foreign policy objectives • German diplomacy in July 1914 was built on the premise that they were willing to take events in the Balkans to the very brink of war, e.g. the blank cheque to Austria-Hungary, acceptance of general war • General war broke out as a result of the Germans issuing an ultimatum to Russia on 31 July 1914 from which there was no turning back. Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to support the view that the evolution of 'two gigantic armed camps' was responsible for the outbreak of general war in Europe in 1914. Relevant points may include: • European alliances seemed to move away from defensive 'friendships' to become aggressive blocs continually at loggerheads over a series of crises; general war appeared only a matter of time in 1913-14 • In the early 1900s, an Anglo-German naval arms race developed with the arrival of the British Dreadnought class and, by 1914, the continental powers were committed to increased conscription, particularly Russia

- All the continental European powers developed military plans for war that were predicated on an aggressive use of their 'defensive alliances' if necessary, e.g. the Schlieffen Plan, Plan XVII
- The instability of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was highlighted by an unexpected assassination in Sarajevo in June 1914, which resulted in the alliance system causing diplomacy to spiral out of control.

Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to counter or modify the view that the evolution of 'two gigantic armed camps' was responsible for the outbreak of general war in Europe in 1914. Relevant points may include:

- Germany was the country most prepared for a general war in July 1914, e.g. the Kaiser's commitment to *Weltpolitik*, increased military spending, battleship construction, the Schlieffen Plan
- German support for Austria-Hungary in its response to Serbia, in the wake of Archduke Franz Ferdinand's assassination, was a key moment in the July Crisis. From this point it was always likely that Russia would mobilise
- Germany's insistence that Russian mobilisation (30 July 1914) was an act of aggression, rather than defensive, brought the Schlieffen Plan into play and meant that, as of 31 July, a general war was effectively inevitable
- The existence of the alliance system did not mean that war was inevitable, e.g. Anglo-German relations were improving in 1913-14, or that the alliances were solid, e.g. Italy did not join the war in 1914.

Section B: Indicative content

Option 1A: The Making of Modern Europe, 1805–71

Question	Indicative content
2	Answers will be credited according to candidates' 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 the extent to which the treaties of the Versailles settlement (1919-23) were successful in maintaining peace in the years 1923-33. Arguments and evidence that the treaties of the Versailles settlement (1919-23) were successful in maintaining peace in the years 1923-33 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • The Covenant of the League of Nations, set up to prevent the breakdown in international diplomacy that had started the First World War, was generally successful in maintaining peace across the period • The League of Nations managed to keep the peace in relation to specific incidents in the 1920s, e.g. it prevented war between Greece and Bulgaria (1925) • Attempts, in the treaties of Versailles and St Germain, to prevent future German aggression through disarmament and the proscription of Anschluss were successful in the years 1923-33 • Attempts at general disarmament continued during the decade, e.g. Geneva Disarmament Conference opened in 1932 • The creation of newly strengthened states in central Europe, e.g. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and in the Balkans, e.g. Yugoslavia, resulted in a decade of relative peace and stability in those regions • After the initial failure of the Treaty of Sèvres, the Treaty of Lausanne brought the recognition of the Turkish republic, greater stability in the eastern Mediterranean and the opening up of Black Sea shipping lanes. Arguments and evidence that the treaties of the Versailles settlement (1919-23) were not successful in maintaining peace in the years 1923-33 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • Features designed to 'keep the peace' such as the disarmament of the 'losing' powers, proscribing Anschluss and the ceding of land to countries bordering Germany created resentment and tensions across the period • Features of the settlement that blamed or punished the 'losing' powers undermined the peace-making features, e.g. reparations led to the occupation of the Ruhr, the War Guilt clause created resentment • Weaknesses in the leadership and organisation of the League of Nations meant that international diplomacy was often agreed outside of its remit, e.g. the Locarno treaties, the Kellogg-Briand Pact • The League of Nations was not able to deal effectively with all disputes, particularly those involving major powers e.g. Corfu Incident (1923), Japanese invasion of Manchuria (1931) • Attempts at disarmament effectively came to an end in October 1933 when the newly-appointed German Chancellor, Hitler, withdrew Germany from the Geneva Disarmament Conference • The use of self-determination as a means to resolve disputes over sovereignty and independence was not always applied consistently leaving festering resentments across the world, e.g. ex-German colonies in Africa. Other relevant material must be credited.

Question	Indicative content
3	Answers will be credited according to candidates' 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 whether the breakdown of the Munich Agreement was the most significant influence on the decision of Britain and France to confront Germany over the invasion of Poland in September 1939. Arguments and evidence that the breakdown of the Munich Agreement was the most significant influence on the decision of Britain and France to confront Germany over the invasion of Poland in September 1939 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • The invasion of Czechoslovakia (March 1939), in direct breach of the Munich Agreement, made it clear that the policy of appeasement had failed and future developments would require a more decisive response • The breakdown of the Munich Agreement in March 1939 resulted in Britain and France coming to an official agreement to guarantee the sovereign borders of Poland • Hitler's complete disregard for an Agreement that had been hailed as a triumph of peace-making in the autumn of 1938 was so humiliating that Britain and France undertook massive rearmament • The similarity between the demands made by Hitler over disputed Polish territory in August 1939 and his demands in 1938 over Czechoslovakia made at Munich led to final realisation that diplomacy would not work. Arguments and evidence that the breakdown of the Munich Agreement had limited influence/ other factors influenced the decision of Britain and France to confront Germany over the invasion of Poland in September 1939 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • France and Britain continued to believe that negotiations were a valid counter to Hitler's foreign policy ambitions in Poland until the final week of August 1939 • Even before the breakdown of the Munich Agreement in March 1939, the British and French had increased their programme of rearmament • The unexpected signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact (August 1939) sent shock waves through western Europe; the audacity of the move led to increased preparations in both Britain and France for imminent war • The Nazi-Soviet Pact left Poland completely open to German attack as, at the very least, the Soviet Union would remain neutral. Britain and France signed a formal military defensive agreement with Poland (25 August) • Hitler's strengthening of ties with Japan in the summer of 1939 threatened the security of British and French territory in Asia and this encouraged them to consider taking decisive action over Hitler's next move in Europe • The invasion of Poland meant the long-term tensions created by the growth of militarism, fascism and nationalism had finally come to a head and that Britain and France had little choice but confrontation. Other relevant material must be credited.