

# Mark Scheme (Results)

## January 2026

Pearson Edexcel International

Advanced Level in History (WHI04/1C)

PAPER 4: International Study with Historical  
Interpretations

Option 1C: The World Divided: Superpower Relations,  
1943–90

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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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          | <b>0</b>     | No rewardable material                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>1</b> | <b>1–4</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates only limited comprehension of the extracts, selecting some material relevant to the debate.</li><li>• Some accurate and relevant knowledge is included and presented as information, rather than being linked with the extracts.</li><li>• Judgement on the view is assertive, with little supporting evidence.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>2</b> | <b>5–8</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates some understanding and attempts analysis of the extracts by describing some points within them that are relevant to the debate.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• A judgement on the view is given with limited support, but the criteria for judgement are left implicit.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>3</b> | <b>9–14</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates understanding and some analysis of the extracts by selecting and explaining some key points of interpretation they contain and indicating differences.</li><li>• Knowledge of some issues related to the debate is included to link to, or expand, some views given in the extracts.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>4</b> | <b>15–20</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates understanding of the extracts, analysing the issues of interpretation raised within them and by a comparison of them.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul> |

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| 5 | 21–25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interprets the extracts with confidence and discrimination, analysing the issues raised and demonstrating understanding of the basis of arguments offered by both authors.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> |
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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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          | <b>0</b>     | No rewardable material                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>1</b> | <b>1–4</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simple or generalised statements are made about the topic.</li><li>• Some accurate and relevant knowledge is included, but it lacks range and depth and does not directly address the question.</li><li>• The overall judgement is missing or asserted.</li><li>• There is little, if any, evidence of attempts to structure the answer, and the answer overall lacks coherence and precision.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>2</b> | <b>5–8</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• An overall judgement is given but with limited support and the criteria for judgement are left implicit.</li><li>• The answer shows some attempts at organisation, but most of the answer is lacking in coherence, clarity and precision.</li></ul>                                                                                |
| <b>3</b> | <b>9–14</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Attempts are made to establish criteria for judgement and to relate the overall judgement to them, although with weak substantiation.</li><li>• The answer shows some organisation. The general trend of the argument is clear, but parts of it lack logic, coherence or precision.</li></ul>                              |
| <b>4</b> | <b>15–20</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key issues relevant to the question are explored by an analysis of the relationships between key features of the period.</li><li>• Sufficient knowledge is deployed to demonstrate understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question and to meet most of its demands.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul> |

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| 5 | 21–25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key issues relevant to the question are explored by a sustained analysis and discussion of the relationships between key features of the period.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The answer is well organised. The argument is logical and coherent throughout and is communicated with clarity and precision.</li> </ul> |
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## Section A: Indicative content

### Option 1C: The World Divided: Superpower Relations, 1943–90

| Question | Indicative content                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <b>1</b> | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Candidates should use their understanding of issues of interpretation to reach a reasoned conclusion concerning the view that in the development of the Cold War, in the years 1943-50, the decisive year in the breakdown of relations between the USA and the USSR was 1945.</p> <p>In considering the extracts, the points made by the authors should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include:</p> <p>Extract 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, differences began to emerge that would be almost impossible to settle, particularly with regard to Eastern Europe and the future of Germany</li><li>• President Truman came away from the Potsdam Conference with complete mistrust of the Soviets and a belief that that it would not be possible to work in collaboration with them in the future</li><li>• The successful development and testing of an atomic bomb by the US in July 1945 meant that the USA was in a position to take a harder line against the Soviet Union</li><li>• The military and economic strength of the USA by the end of 1945 meant that it felt that it was in a position to challenge the USSR with impunity.</li></ul> <p>Extract 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was in 1947 that any hope of future co-operation between the USA and the USSR came to an end</li><li>• In 1946, there was still a belief in the USA that high level diplomacy could resolve the issues that existed between themselves and the USSR</li><li>• In 1947, there was a clear change in the mindset of US foreign policy leaders; the efficacy of 'moderation' was challenged by failures in diplomacy and Soviet determination to spread communism in Europe</li><li>• The crisis over Greece and Turkey that erupted in February 1947 led to a more assertive US foreign policy that brought the possibility of co-operation to an end.</li></ul> <p>Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to support the view that in the development of the Cold War, in the years 1943-50, the decisive year in the breakdown of relations between the USA and the USSR was 1945. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1945 was the year that brought an end to the Second World War, making the future collaboration between the communist Soviet Union and the western liberal democracies potentially more problematic</li></ul> |



- At the Potsdam Conference, Stalin had to negotiate with new Western leaders – Truman and Attlee, neither of whom were willing to be unduly influenced by Stalin's greater leadership experience
- Truman challenged the Soviets over their activities in Eastern Europe in May 1945 and Soviet intransigence over the right to free elections in Bulgaria, Romania and Poland at Potsdam only toughened his stance
- Truman used his knowledge of the successful testing of the A-bomb to bait Stalin at Potsdam and its use against Japan prevented the Soviets from being able to exert their influence at the end of the Asia-Pacific war
- After 1945, there were no further conferences or meetings between the heads of state of the USA and Soviet Union to attempt to resolve the aftermath of the Second World War or growing differences between them.

Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to counter or modify the view that in the development of the Cold War, in the years 1943-50, the decisive year in the breakdown of relations between the USA and the USSR was 1945. Relevant points may include:

- The Council of Foreign Ministers agreed to at Potsdam met regularly and it was really only in 1947 that it became obvious that the discussions concerning the future of Germany had become hopeless
- In 1945, Stalin's intransigence did frustrate Truman but the war-torn Soviet Union was not in a position to challenge its ally fully. In 1947, Stalin felt more confident to take advantage of Europe's economic crisis
- Truman's declaration of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947 and the announcement of the Marshall Plan in June 1947 made 1947 the year in which the Cold War lines between the US and Soviets were finally drawn
- The US unveiling of the A-bomb in 1945 did not lead to a deterioration in relations. Stalin was already aware of the bomb before Potsdam and continued to deploy the Soviet army in Eastern Europe after its use
- Other decisive years: 1944 - successes against Germany; 1946 - Churchill's Iron Curtain speech; 1948 - events in Berlin; 1949 - the aftermath of the Berlin Blockade and the founding of NATO.

## Section B: Indicative content

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

| Question | Indicative content                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| 2        | <p>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.</p> <p>Candidates are expected to reach a judgement on whether the influence of the Soviet Union along the European Iron Curtain was significantly challenged in the years 1953–64.</p> <p>Arguments and evidence that the influence of the Soviet Union along the European Iron Curtain was significantly challenged in the years 1953–64 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In response to growing discontent in Soviet-influenced states along the European Iron Curtain in the mid-1950s, Khrushchev made some concessions, e.g. disbanding Cominform in 1956</li><li>• Khrushchev's decision to withdraw from Austria in 1955 undermined Soviet military and political influence in southern-central Europe, highlighting the problem of overstretch that the Soviets were facing</li><li>• The outbreak of the Hungarian Rising in 1956, and the scale of hatred shown towards the Soviet Union during the rising, directly threatened the Soviet-supported communist government in Hungary</li><li>• The increasing scale of emigration from the GDR to the FRG (1958–61) undermined the economic and social fabric of the GDR and the security of the borders, so challenging Soviet political and military interests</li><li>• The challenges along the European Iron Curtain were so great at times that the Soviets felt forced to act or support drastic measures, e.g. the use of tanks in Hungary, the building of the 'defensive' Berlin Wall.</li></ul> <p>Arguments and evidence that counters the statement that the influence of the Soviet Union along the European Iron Curtain was not significantly challenged in the years 1953–64 should be analysed and evaluated.</p> <p>Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Soviet Union was able to maintain and strengthen its political influence over Eastern European states, e.g. in the GDR, Ulbricht was committed to communism; in Hungary, Nagy was replaced by Kádár</li><li>• The Soviet Union increased its military and economic influence along the European Iron Curtain with the development of Soviet-controlled organisations, such as the Warsaw Pact and COMECON</li><li>• The withdrawal from Austria did not substantially undermine Soviet influence, as it left an area along the Curtain that no longer needed to be protected; all occupying forces left, and Austria became a neutral state</li><li>• Soviet influence was entrenched by the show of force in Hungary to maintain Soviet-style government and by underwriting the reinforcement of the East German border by the GDR</li><li>• With the response of the West to events in both Hungary and Germany being one of rhetoric rather than action, the Soviet sphere of influence along the European Iron Curtain became entrenched.</li></ul> <p>Other relevant material must be credited.</p> |

| Question | Indicative content                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <b>3</b> | <p>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.</p> <p>Candidates are expected to reach a judgement on whether, in the years 1964-79, the superpowers became involved in wars by proxy mainly due to national security concerns.</p> <p>Arguments and evidence that, in the years 1964-79, the superpowers became involved in wars by proxy mainly due to national security concerns should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the Cuban Missile Crisis, the USA was particularly eager to prevent future growth of direct communist influence in South and Central America, whether this be by US support for or covert actions against governments</li> <li>• US belief in the 'domino theory', particularly in South-East Asia, meant the US was willing to become involved pre-emptively in struggles to protect its national security interests in the Asia-Pacific region, e.g. Laos, Cambodia</li> <li>• The USSR and China became involved in proxy wars in Asia to ensure national security; each had extensive borders with multiple nations all of which were potentially vulnerable</li> <li>• The strategic positioning and economic importance of the Middle East encouraged superpower involvement in the region for national security reasons, e.g. proximity to Soviet borders, access to oil</li> <li>• The policy of détente in the 1970s was primarily a thaw in the Cold War in Europe; the 'non-nuclear' world was viewed as an open opportunity to gain influence while not compromising national security.</li> </ul> <p>Arguments and evidence that, in the years 1964-79, the superpowers became involved in wars by proxy mainly due to other reasons should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The superpowers had a desire to spread their own political and economic ideologies in the newly-independent nations of Africa and Asia; support for capitalist liberal-democracies versus communist one-party state rule</li> <li>• The USSR and China became involved due to direct competition with each other to spread different versions of communism, e.g. in Zimbabwean liberation, China supported ZANU and the Soviet Union ZAPU</li> <li>• US involvement often came from the sheer fear of the expansion of Marxist influence, e.g. support for Somoza in Nicaragua, military government in Guatemala, UNITA in Angola, RENAMO in Mozambique</li> <li>• The decolonisation of the European empires created a potential power vacuum of external influence in the newly-independent states of Africa and Asia that the superpowers were eager to fill</li> <li>• The opportunity to protect access to existing, or exploit new, primary resources encouraged superpower involvement, e.g. US business interests in southern Africa, Congolese copper, South-East Asian rubber</li> <li>• Superpower nations became involved because of specific commitments to individual countries, e.g. US commitments to Israel, Soviet and Chinese commitments to North Vietnam</li> <li>• Before it was accepted by the UN in 1971, Chinese involvement in wars by proxy was often due to its desire to gain international prestige and standing in order to prove itself as a 'true' superpower.</li> </ul> |

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|  | Other relevant material must be credited. |
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