

GCSE (9–1)

Examiners' report

**HISTORY A
(EXPLAINING THE
MODERN WORLD)**

J410

For first teaching in 2016

J410/06 Summer 2023 series

Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Paper 6 series overview | 4 |
| Section A overview | 5 |
| Question 1 | 5 |
| Question 2 | 6 |
| Question 3 | 8 |
| Question 4 | 10 |
| Section B overview | 11 |
| Question 5 | 11 |
| Question 6 | 12 |
| Question 7 (a) | 12 |
| Question 7 (b) | 13 |
| Question 8* | 14 |

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as . . .** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

Paper 6 series overview

This was the third full examination of Specification A Paper 1. In the three other years of examination since 2018, there was either covid disruption resulting in low numbers, or the need to make changes to the paper to allow for student absences. Last year that resulted in sections A and B being examined separately. Centres should be congratulated for how well they have managed this disruption, and how well they are preparing their candidates for the interpretations section of the paper, and indeed the whole paper. This year candidates performed particularly well in the interpretations section, and centres have clearly devoted time and energy in helping candidates understand the processes historians go through in coming to conclusions about the past. It was also notable how much knowledge and understanding candidates have of international relations to support this study, especially notable in responses to Questions 1 and 2. This year also sees some improvement in how candidates handle historical sources.

| Candidates who did well on this paper generally: | Candidates who did less well on this paper generally: |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used a wide range of contextual knowledge examples across all questions • were able to explain contextual knowledge examples about the question being asked • were able to analyse the content and context of historical interpretations • were able to compare their own historical knowledge to the interpretations provided • were able to draw complex inferences from the sources provided • were able to draw judgements from the sources provided to assess their historical utility • were able to provide balanced arguments to essay questions • were able to provide summary and comparative conclusion arguments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used generalised rather than specific historical examples • left identified factors undeveloped or did not relate them directly to the question asked • took historical sources at face value rather than placing them in context • were descriptive rather than analytical of sources and interpretations • listed historical knowledge regarding interpretations rather than analysing them in context • spoke about historical issues outside of the time periods covered in the questions asked • did not provide explanations relating to the question asked or conclusive paragraphs to compare arguments. |

Section A overview

To perform well on this International Relations period study candidates need to show understanding of the unfolding narrative of developments and issues between 1918–c.1975. This includes the clash of ideologies between the East and West, and how commentators and historians have viewed these differently. These skills focus on Assessment Objectives 1, 2 and 4, showing knowledge, understanding and the ability to explain, as well as analysis and evaluation of historical interpretations.

Teachers and candidates are to be congratulated for the thoroughness of their preparation for this part of the course. The overwhelming majority of candidates attempted to respond to all the questions, and many wrote with excellent knowledge and understanding. The range and quality of responses was impressive, in the questions on the Historical Controversies, as well as the overview questions 1 and 2.

Question 1

- 1 Outline how the USA took action against the spread of communism around the world in the 1960s.

[5]

Most candidates found this question very accessible and were able to reach Levels 2 and 3, often at 3 or 4 marks. To achieve Level 2 an example of US action needed to be identified with a little detail; more development resulted in full marks within the level. As the question asked about worldwide actions, the highest level was for those candidates who outlined (described) US action in two arenas, for example, Cuba and Vietnam, or Vietnam and Berlin. Answers showed that candidates were secure in their knowledge and had good mastery of not only US actions but the contexts of involvement, be it trying to overthrow Castro, defuse a missile crisis, or actions in Vietnam.

A significant number of candidates did not reach above Level 1 because they did not pay close attention to the timeframe given, i.e. the 1960s. As a result they explained US actions in offering Marshall Aid. This could receive no credit, unless the idea of aiding countries to stop the spread of communism was somehow separated from Marshall Aid itself, or they mentioned the Truman doctrine. Likewise, some talked about containment or the domino theory in the abstract. These ideas needed to be securely linked to what happened and where, in order to achieve Level 2.

Highly Recommended

Candidates should pay close attention to the **timeframe** given in the question, in this case the 1960s. They should also look for **trigger words**. In this case we were looking for US actions, not a general account of reactions to the wars back in the US.

Question 2

2 Explain why there was tension in Europe in the 1930s.

[10]

While many candidates were able to access Levels 4 and 5 on this question, by explaining the link between actions in Europe in the 1930s and emergent tensions, there were many candidates who achieved a Level 3 by identifying and explaining such events and actions, without the direct link to tensions. Candidate knowledge of a wide range of events in the 1930s, such as those leading to the collapse of the League of Nations and the expansionist actions of Hitler and Mussolini, was of a high standard. Many responses showed that candidates had a complex contextual knowledge and understanding of the interwar period and were able to draw synoptic links between the issues of World War One and the potential for another war in Europe at the time. Nearly all candidates were able to identify key issues, such as the failure of the League of Nations and the emergence of dictators. Most candidates who did well on this question and attained Level 4 and above were those who focused on the tension caused by the Rhineland (France), Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia), appeasement (Britain and France) and the Nazi-Soviet pact (most of Europe).

A significant number of candidates did not reach Level 2 and above as they were utilising examples that were either outside the time period, such as the Corfu and Bulgaria Crises of the 1920s or outside the area of Europe, focusing on Manchuria or Abyssinia without being able to directly relate this to the tension in Europe. Without this link to the question, these responses were largely limited to Level 1. Many candidates were limited to Level 3 as they were unable to link their accurate explanation of European issues in the 1930s to specific emergent tensions. To achieve Levels 4 and 5, candidates needed to tie these tensions to a specific nation or issue impacted by the events outlined.

Exemplar 1

2 One reason why there was tension in Europe in the 1930s was the Wall Street crash and the great depression. Following the Wall Street crash in 1929, many European countries suffered economically throughout the 1930s. Such as Germany. This was ^{partially} because, in Germany's case, they had been receiving money from the USA (Dawson plan 1924), which had helped them recover from WW1 but the great depression ended that, and plunged the country into an economic crisis. This created tension because it obliterated the spirit of ~~internationalism~~ internationalism that had been present in the 1920s - countries no longer felt they could afford to help others, so acted selfishly, thus increasing tensions and reducing goodwill between them.

Another reason why there was tension in Europe in the 1930s was the growing power of dictators. After coming to power in 1933, Hitler began to build up the German military, despite it being forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles. This created tension as many in France and Britain began to suspect Hitler was preparing for another war. Tensions continued to rise as Hitler claimed territory - he annexed Austria into Germany in 1938 and claimed a strip of land called the Sudetenland that same year. This created tension in Europe because leaders began to fear that a second world war was a possibility which would have been catastrophic for everyone.

This response shows a very effective, yet concise, approach to the question. The candidate can effectively explain two different incidences where events culminated in tensions in Europe and is then able to describe and explain the events and then link them directly to nations or events directly impacted by this, increasing tensions. It received 10 marks from a possible 10.

Question 3

3 Study Interpretation A.

Do you think this interpretation is a fair comment on the British policy of appeasement? Use other interpretations of the events of 1937–1939 and your knowledge to support your answer.

[25]

This question was answered significantly better this year than similar ones in the past. This might be explained by the fact that candidates found the given interpretation clear, obviously part of the Popular Majority school. Another reason might be that now the approach has become established, centres have become much more familiar with what is expected of candidates, which has focused the teaching and learning of these sections. This is significantly helping candidates to achieve high marks.

Generally, there is an excellent level of knowledge of the historiography of the issue of appeasement. Most candidates are extremely well informed about the various ideas and approaches which historians have brought to the subject. They also overwhelmingly began by offering a summary of the interpretation and its view, and then as their response progressed, referred to specifics of the given interpretations to show a clear comparison with others they explained. This is the ideal approach and makes clear that they are evaluating the given interpretation with other views.

This year, most candidates achieved Level 3 or above and made effective use of other views. Most started by setting the interpretation in the context of the Popular Majority view, and then compared it to at least two other views. Far fewer confused the interpretations than in the past, and many could describe chapter and verse the various views. The skill was to be very accurate in what they said, offer development about each view, and link effectively to The Sketch's content. Level 4 was given if one other interpretation was well used and linked; Level 5 was given if this was done well for at least two interpretations. A conclusion was not necessary.

The reason some candidates achieved Level 3 was because they dealt mainly with the background to the interpretation accurately; in other words, the context of 1938 to early-1939. Many had excellent knowledge of this. Alternatively, or in addition, at Level 3, they named other schools or time periods of historians who would think the view was fair/unfair correctly, but their accurate knowledge beyond this was patchy. Far fewer candidates achieved Level 2 or Level 1 than in previous years, and those that did misunderstood the different views of historians.

A sizeable minority of candidates were slightly confused with the approach needed for this question compared to Question 4. This question **does not** require examination of why other historians think what they do. This question is about what others would think of the given interpretation; would they see it as fair, **not why they think what they do**. This could save candidates some time, as going into the backgrounds of each interpretation uses valuable examination minutes. That said, in doing so, some candidates deepened their explanation of what the historians believed, especially in the case of revisionist and post-revisionist historians.

Exemplar 2

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | An interpretation that would disagree with the statement, would be the popular political view, written in 1939-48. A group of 3 three journalists who named themselves Cato had created an article named the guilty men. In this they were criticising Chamberlain and the appeasement calling it immoral, foolish and cowardly response. They would've thought this to be because Hitler did invade Czechoslovakia and WW2 had still started. Appeasement had also made Britain look weak as they was were letting Hitler get a beat them. Some people thought it made the British leaders just as bad as the dictators. |
|--|--|---|

This response shows a very effective and successful attempt to link another view to Interpretation A to judge fairness. Having already shown a clear understanding of the view offered by The Daily Sketch, the candidate achieves a very solid Level 4 with this paragraph, before repeating it again to achieve Level 5, 23 marks overall.

Question 4

4 Study Interpretation B.

Explain why **not** all historians and commentators have agreed with this interpretation. Use other interpretations and your knowledge to support your answer.

[20]

(✍) Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology

[5]

As with Question 3, this question was notably improved from previous years with development of candidate awareness of interpretations in a wide contextual understanding of the reasons for the outbreak of the Cold War. Candidates were largely very well informed of the key interpretations and were able to outline key thinkers within each interpretation area and develop reasoning why the interpretation came about and the key historical context behind the thinkers in each area. This meant that most candidates were able to reach Levels 3, 4 and 5 as they were able to identify and explain the basis of at least one historical interpretation in direct comparison with the argument put forward in the interpretation.

The interpretation lent itself well to analysis as it was written by Gaddis and was recognisable as a post-revisionist standpoint. This naturally lent itself to candidates identifying elements of it that could be compared with the US Orthodox and US revisionist views. Some higher level responses were able to develop explanation of the nuanced opinions of Gaddis as he later changed his view to develop a New Cold War standpoint. There were many candidates able to reach Level 5 and full marks for this question as the depth of understanding of the schools of thought and the time period in which they were produced was comprehensive across a large number of candidates.

A sizeable number of candidates were limited by their approach to the question and only reached Level 2 because, while they were able to accurately describe and explain the differing interpretations in comparison with Gaddis, they had not accurately analysed what he said or provided any reference to it in comparison. Candidates needed to make sure that they made direct comparison with the interpretation to achieve Levels 3, 4 and 5. Higher level responses often referred to a quotation from Interpretation B that other interpretations would agree or disagree with early in the paragraph, so that it was clear to the examiner that they were making a direct comparison.

A small number of candidates were confused by the time period covered in the question and wrote about events or interpretations that should have been used in reference to Question 3. Most candidates, however, had their knowledge and interpretations rooted in the Cold War and were able to use these to make effective arguments.

Section B overview

To perform well on the non-British Depth Study, candidates needed to display an understanding of the relationship between the people and the state, and how key political, social and economic developments affected the people. Candidates' learning is examined through questions asking for knowledge and understanding and the ability to explain and analyse, as well as the use and evaluation of historical sources. These skills focus on Assessment Objectives 1, 2 and 3.

This section asked candidates to focus on knowledge and source-based questions relating to their study of the USA in the period 1919-1948. Candidates had a clear understanding of the period and were able to distinguish between knowledge needed for Section A and for Section B.

Question 5

5 Describe **one** organisation that tried to improve the lives of African Americans in the 1920s. [2]

This question was answered well by many candidates who could identify an organisation, such as the NAACP, that was accurate to the time period and their actions. Candidates that were able to discuss the organisations establishing the Harlem Renaissance and Howard University were rewarded for this impressive knowledge.

A small number of candidates were confused and offered organisations outside of the relevant time period, mentioning events often from the civil rights movements from the 1950s. However, many candidates were able to correctly identify the relevant organisations.

Key learning point

Commonly, candidates could identify an organisation but were unable to develop this to a second mark as the example they provided was vague. Candidates should be advised to identify specific actions of an organisation, such as the intention of the NAACP to 'gain legislation to ban lynching'.

Exemplar 3

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | The NAACP tried to improve the lives of African Americans in the 1920s by trying to have laws put into place to end lynching and segregation. |
|---|---|

This response shows a concise but effective way of gaining full marks. The candidate identifies the organisation and specifically identifies their actions, utilising effective key words. 2 marks out of 2.

Question 6

6 Explain **two** reasons for the success of the American economy in the 1920s.

[10]

Similarly to Question 2, candidates were required to draw a link between factors of the American economy in the 1920s and the contribution they made to the successful economic period that emerged. Many candidates were able to reach Level 5 by identifying, explaining and developing two separate factors and the impact these had on the American economy.

This was a question that brought out a range of interesting responses from candidates who were clearly well informed about a range of factors across the period. Those who reached the higher levels were often able to refer to Republican policies, the assembly line, the impact of World War One, emergent consumerism and the impact of the stock market.

Some responses from candidates were descriptive and were unable to develop the impact of this factor on the American economy. Typically, these responses would refer to factors such as increased disposable income or consumer purchasing, but not how this could be invested or the impact on the wider economic picture.

Lower level responses often focused on social change, such as the changing role of women, without relating these descriptions to the economy.

Question 7 (a)

7 (a) Study **Source A**.

What is the cartoonist's message?

[5]

This source was well understood by candidates, who were commonly able to identify Uncle Sam as representative of the USA and the cloud representative of Herbert Hoover's impact on the USA. Many candidates therefore were able to reach Level 3 by explaining this cartoonist's message. Most candidates who reached Level 3 were able to focus on the cartoonist's direct criticism of Hoover and his attempts to deliver prosperity. Many candidates used contextual knowledge to support this analysis, with reference to Hoover's claims that 'prosperity is just around the corner' or that he would put 'a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage'.

Some candidates were able to correctly identify the message of the source but only able to support this with content from the source. These students were limited to Level 2. A small number of candidates were only able to identify surface features without considering the message. These responses were awarded Level 1.

A small, but not insignificant, number of candidates mistakenly identified the character on the floor as FDR and related the source to the New Deal, which was yet to occur. However, most students could correctly contextualise the source as before FDR's election.

Question 7 (b)

(b) Study **Source B**.

Explain how this source is useful to a historian studying the New Deal.

[5]

This question was answered well by some candidates who were able to make complex inferences from the source and outline their understanding of the utility of the source in reference to its provenance, content or context of the time. Commonly, these candidates were able to draw parallels between the American Liberty League members who wrote the source and the criticisms of the New Deal that came from the Republican Party and American political right. Many candidates were able to explain that the source was useful in outlining this view, that the New Deal was against American ideals. Some candidates were able to use wider context of critics of the New Deal to compare with the point of view put forward by the source.

Some candidates were able to make unsupported but accurate inferences, which limited them to Level 2 but showed a good understanding of the source content. A smaller number of candidates were unable to accurately infer from the source and focused on source content or did not develop their responses to viably discuss utility. These candidates were limited to Level 1.

Question 8*

8* 'Racial tensions in the USA reduced as a result of the Second World War.'

How far do you agree?

[18]

Question 8 focuses on AO1 and 2 and requires candidates to use their historical knowledge and understanding to write an extended answer (an essay) in response to a statement prompt. The essay should include at least three explained examples covering both sides of the argument which then offers potential for the highest mark band.

This question saw a wide variety of responses. Most candidates were able to identify a range of factors that impacted on racial tensions emerging from the Second World War. Many candidates were able to develop some or all of these into explained factors, which allowed them to access Levels 3 to 5 of the mark scheme. The best responses accurately examined numerous factors for both sides of the argument.

Commonly candidates analysed government attempts to reduce segregation in the armed forces and the workplace during the war by Executive Orders. This was well understood and many candidates could accurately identify the numbers and descriptions of these Executive Orders. Furthermore, candidates understood a wide range of examples, such as the Packard strikes and other examples of racial discrimination that carried on during and after the war. The best responses were able to supplement the arguments put forward with a conclusion that compared the two sides of the argument. These responses were given 17-18 marks.

Some responses were unable to effectively explain factors but were given a mark within Level 2 as they were able to provide multiple accurate identifications of events and factors applying to the question. These responses commonly focused on the above examples and the continued existence of segregation in US society after the war and the existence of the KKK. A small number of responses showed a generalised understanding of the topic but were unable to develop a specific identification that was tied to the period. These responses were given a mark within Level 1.

Misconception



In this question, it was common for candidates to refer to examples and events outside the period. It was clear that many candidates were familiar with the later civil rights struggles. Some candidates did not develop their responses because they were focused on events from the 1950s or beyond. These could not be directly linked to the Second World War.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

Access to Scripts

For the June 2023 series, Exams Officers will be able to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts' for all of our General Qualifications including Entry Level, GCSE and AS/A Level. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is the question builder platform for a range of our GCSE, A Level, Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals qualifications. [Find out more](#).

ExamBuilder is **free for all OCR centres** with an Interchange account and gives you unlimited users per centre. We need an [Interchange](#) username to validate the identity of your centre's first user account for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals.

[Find out more](#).

Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on
01223 553998

Alternatively, you can email us on
support@ocr.org.uk

For more information visit

 **ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder**

 **ocr.org.uk**

 **facebook.com/ocrexams**

 **twitter.com/ocrexams**

 **instagram.com/ocrexaminations**

 **linkedin.com/company/ocr**

 **youtube.com/ocrexams**

We really value your feedback

Click to send us an autogenerated email about this resource. Add comments if you want to. Let us know how we can improve this resource or what else you need. Your email address will not be used or shared for any marketing purposes.



I like this



I dislike this

Please note – web links are correct at date of publication but other websites may change over time. If you have any problems with a link you may want to navigate to that organisation's website for a direct search.



OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored. © OCR 2023 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

OCR operates academic and vocational qualifications regulated by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA as listed in their qualifications registers including A Levels, GCSEs, Cambridge Technicals and Cambridge Nationals.

OCR provides resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These resources do not represent any particular teaching method we expect you to use. We update our resources regularly and aim to make sure content is accurate but please check the OCR website so that you have the most up to date version. OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in these resources.

Though we make every effort to check our resources, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, so it is important that you always use information in the latest specification. We indicate any specification changes within the document itself, change the version number and provide a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource, please [contact us](#).

You can copy and distribute this resource freely if you keep the OCR logo and this small print intact and you acknowledge OCR as the originator of the resource.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: N/A

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR or are thinking about switching, you can request more information using our [Expression of Interest form](#).

Please [get in touch](#) if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support you in delivering our qualifications.