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# AS LEVEL HISTORY

7041/2N The Russian Revolution and the Rise of Stalin, 1917–1929  
Report on the Examination

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### Question 01

Both sources proved accessible for the vast majority of students, as they focused on a mainstream topic for which students were well-prepared. Stronger answers engaged effectively with both the provenance and content of the sources, often linking the two together. For example, source A has a more ideological focus, which was linked effectively in better responses to the academic background of the author. Source B has a more practical, economic focus which many students linked to Stalin's political and economic priorities around the period of the 'Great Turn' in the late 1920s. The most common conclusion drawn by students was that Source B was the more valuable as it was from the leader in charge of introducing the policy of collectivisation, speaking at the time it was introduced.

Answers in Level 3, often engaged reasonably effectively with both the content and provenance of the sources, however, there was a tendency for many of these answers to deal with the two aspects separately and therefore not draw links between the content and provenance. In addition, comments on provenance at Level 3 were often rather generic and superficial. A common feature of Level 3 answers in relation to content was focusing too much on individual quotes from the sources rather than the overall main argument of each. For example, in Source A some students focused too heavily on the phrase 'bring about a Socialist transformation of the backward countryside', without homing in on the more precise argument of the source regarding the need to eliminate the kulak class.

Level 2 answers, typically, did not focus sufficiently on the specific requirements of the question about the reasons for the policy of rapid collectivisation. Such students were clearly well-prepared for a question on collectivisation but then proceeded to communicate as much of this knowledge as possible in their responses without selecting what was precisely relevant to the sources and the question. As a result, these answers often provided quite a lot of descriptive detail about the implementation of the policy of collectivisation without analysing the arguments of the sources effectively.

### Question 02

This was, by a considerable margin, the more popular of the two essay questions, with around 80% of students choosing to answer this question. The most common approach was to balance the role of Trotsky in October/November 1917 against the role of Lenin and the failings of the Provisional Government. Stronger responses demonstrated a good range and depth of contextual knowledge and drew effective analytical links between the different factors. For example, some students made analytical links between the failings of Kerensky and the Provisional Government around the time of the Kornilov Affair, with the increase in the Bolsheviks' military strength under the leadership of Trotsky. A common analysis made in stronger responses was that Lenin created the political momentum towards the revolution – in both April and October 1917 – but that Trotsky was the one leading the tactical approach on the ground in October/November.

Level 3 answers often covered a similar range of factors but lacked some depth and precision of supporting factual information. For example, some Level 3 answers wrote about the importance of Lenin's return in April, but did not mention any further contributions made by him thereafter. Other responses were limited to Level 3 due to some imprecision of factual knowledge, e.g. around the specific events of the Kornilov Affair or Lenin's role in October.

There were not that many Level 2 responses to this question. Those that were placed in this level tended to lack range and depth of accurate supporting information. Some Level 2 answers only

explained about Trotsky's role, or Lenin's, with weak supporting information and no consideration of any other factors. Other Level 2 responses did refer to two or three relevant factors but had very limited supporting contextual detail.

### **Question 03**

This was a much less popular essay question than 02, however, there were some very good answers to this question. Students defined 'social groups' in a broad manner, all of which were credited. The most common focus, naturally, was on workers and peasants, but students also wrote paragraphs on the bourgeoisie, the army and the Bolshevik party. All of these were credited as valid 'social groups' in relation to the question. Some students extended their answers into the NEP period, but this was not credited as the question ended in March 1921, when the NEP was introduced and the policy had not had the time to have any impact by the end of the period identified in the question.

The strongest responses showed a good understanding of the changing nature of life in Bolshevik Russia in these years, contrasting the immediate gains made by workers and other groups following the revolution with the increasingly difficult conditions during the Civil War period. Effective conclusions to this question often argued that while all social groups encountered harsh conditions across these years, the workers were better off than the peasants by March 1921. Some conclusions argued effectively that the Army was prioritised during the Civil War and therefore, that was the social group that benefited most from Bolshevik rule.

Weaker responses often had a tendency not to cover the whole period of the question. Some responses only dealt with the immediate impact of the revolution and did not get beyond March 1918. Such limited coverage would have restricted the mark awarded to Level 2. Other Level 2 responses demonstrated very limited accurate contextual knowledge, sometimes relying on content from before October 1917 and after 1921 in an ineffective attempt to include some detail.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.