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# GCSE

# HISTORY

8145/1B/A/B/C/D/E Wider World Depth Studies  
Report on the Examination

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8145  
June 2022

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Version: 1.0

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## **Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World**

### **Section B: Wider World Depth Studies**

#### **BA Conflict and Tension: The First World War, 1894–1918**

##### **Question 1**

In this question students were able to deploy valid knowledge about the Kaiser's foreign policy allowing them to demonstrate a good understanding. Valid inferences from the material in the source allowed students to construct reasoned arguments which explained the source's critical nature.

Many students used the symbolism within the source to demonstrate criticism of the Kaiser. This was principally through a focus on either the apparent desire to rule or control the world illustrated by the 'Dream' aspect of the source and the Kaiser's subsequent failure, the 'Reality'. Such answers which relied on a simple analysis of the source were rewarded at level 1. Many answers made use of specific contextual knowledge of the Kaiser's foreign policy such as references to Weltpolitik and were rewarded at level 2. Some also used events from the First World War as specific context. Many students also used the provenance to point out why it was critical of the Kaiser.

##### **Question 2**

This question saw the majority of students applying appropriate skills to two sources, though, of the 2 sources, Source B tended to be favoured in terms of the weight of analysis which was supplied. Most students analysed the sources using a combination of content and provenance but with the former more prevalent in higher level answers. Although unusual as a total answer, some students' answers contained comment about the Alliance System or detail of why the United States entered the war, which was often done in a way that was not relevant to the question. Students would thus make better use of their time in explaining the positive contribution that the sources could make in relation to the focus of the question.

Answers at level 1 contained a generalised evaluation of provenance and/or a basic understanding of either source. Some students identified the different portrayal of the strength of Germany and the USA in source B and/or appreciated what was said in Source C. Many students reached level 2 by giving some context in Source B by explaining in general terms why the USA was powerful, such as fresh to the war or the size of their military, or why Germany was weak, largely via comments on the effects of the war or the blockade. In Source C students went beyond general paraphrasing of the source to explain the context of the source, often offering general references to previous or future battles. Students extended this type of general contextual knowledge with more specific information to earn at least level 3 marks. For Source B this was largely via detailed explanations of the size of the USA's contribution to the war effort, the consequences of the naval blockade on Germany and the Ludendorff offensive as an attempt to end the war before the USA made a contribution. With regard to Source C, students often used details of the Hundred Days to demonstrate the importance of Foch's influence. To evaluate the provenance of Source B students frequently developed the potential motives for publishing the poster, mainly as a morale booster. With regard to Source C, students focused on Lloyd George's

status or his motive for making the statement. There were some excellent level 4 answers which combined a high level of historical context and analysis of provenance which referred to both sources, and came to an appropriate judgement.

Some students did however concentrate to some extent on what the sources did not show.

### Question 3

Overall, students demonstrated an awareness of the alliances that existed in the lead up to the First World War, though not always within the framework of the Alliance System, and/or how conflict spread across Europe. Some students however concentrated on why the alliances were formed and how the alliances created tension but did not actually focus on the breakout and spread of conflict. This resulted in some very comprehensive explanations of the formation of the alliances that were anchored in level 2 because the spread of conflict in 1914 was not directly or fully considered.

Level 1 answers tended to display a basic knowledge of the alliances, naming them or their members or showing an awareness of the function of an alliance. But many students went beyond this to reach level 2 by explaining the pressures leading to the alliances such as Germany's fear of encirclement and Russia's desire to protect fellow Slavs. Rather than going on to explain how conflict spread in 1914, many students restricted their answers to the tensions which arose between the nations. Alternatively, some students concentrated on Sarajevo and the outbreak of war with little, if any, explanation of the various alliances.

Students who were able to tie the nature of the alliances to the initial outbreak of war and its subsequent spread successfully advanced to at least level 3. This was frequently done by considering how Austria-Hungary's reaction to the assassination in Sarajevo triggered a chain reaction pulling alliance members into conflict. Some students attained level 4 by giving an extensive explanation of how the Triple Entente and Triple Alliance became fully involved, while others made use of the Treaty of London to explain Britain's entry into the war. There was also evidence of students identifying a central theme such as a small conflict expanding as alliances dragged other countries into the conflict.

### Question 4

Many students were able to deploy some very extensive knowledge relating to the conduct of the war on the Western Front up to the end of 1917. It was, however, not always clear that students appreciated the nature of stalemate and the need to deploy their knowledge to this aspect. Consequently, there were often very extensive explanations of leadership failures, trench warfare, weather implications or other strands which were not applied to the stalemate. Such answers tended to be anchored at level 2.

Other students presented answers with material outside the scope of the question. An example of this was a detailed explanation of the Gallipoli campaign, for which no credit could be given.

Level 1 responses tended to give general points of identification of potential reasons for the stalemate such as trenches were dug, the weather was bad or technology faulty. Level 2 answers would explain one or more of the failures of Haig's tactics, the nature of trench warfare, the attempts to use/develop technology, attrition, the influence of weather or details of major battles.

Sometimes students covered many of these aspects in detail, perhaps sacrificing the opportunity to develop a reason for the continued stalemate.

Level 3 responses explained with evidence and understanding how possible causes failed to achieve a breakthrough or strengthened the stalemate. In terms of leadership, this often built on the failure of tactics by showing how the new type of warfare meant that generals did not have the experience to adopt a new approach. For trench warfare, successful students demonstrated how their nature made it difficult not simply to advance but to make a breakthrough. Other students explained how, for much of the war, technological advances were countered by other technological advances which prevented the potential for a decisive outcome.

There were some impressive level 4 answers in which judgements were made using the overlapping nature of many of the potential causes to show how they contributed to and reinforced each other. For example, the experience of generals did not allow them to effectively fight a decisive battle given the nature of trench warfare. Others compared potential long term influences such as the balance of power on the Western Front arising from the failure of the Schlieffen Plan with shorter term aspects such as technology failures to decisively alter that balance of power.

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**BB Conflict and tension: The inter-war years, 1918–1939****Question 1**

This question proved straightforward and accessible. The source allowed students to show their understanding. Students were able to use their knowledge of the protagonists and made sensible inferences from the content to show why the source was critical of the League of Nations. Answers that relied on the source were rewarded at level 1. Answers that drew on contextual knowledge of the figures and the events of the Manchurian Crisis in 1933 were able to access level 2. Few students made use of the provenance, which is another route to level 2. Effective use of the source's provenance was seen in answers that were able to explain how the cartoon reflected the views of those in Britain who believed the League was weak because it had failed to stand up to Japan in 1933. Some students were able to give the context of the 'face-saving' kit by referring to the Lytton report.

**Question 2**

This question saw the majority of students coping well with the demands of two sources and demonstrated sound and appropriate source evaluation skills. Most students attempted analysis of the sources using content and provenance. Some students continue to write about what the sources omitted about the policy of appeasement. Whilst the question permits students to discuss the limitations of the sources, those limitations have to be relevant and valid for the source. For example it would be wrong to criticise Source B, a statement concerning the Munich Agreement in 1938, for not mentioning earlier instances of appeasement such as the Remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936. Students who have considerable knowledge about the focus of the question, the policy of appeasement, often take the opportunity, in the examination, to dismiss, out of hand, sources which do not mention something they know about. Students would be better advised to explore the positive contribution that a source could make to an understanding of the specific focus of the question in their answers.

At level 1 credit was awarded for basic understanding of either source. Students writing at this level found Source C far more accessible than B and were able to achieve marks by simple references to the message of the cartoon. There were some weaker answers which were characterised by a description of the content of both sources or unfocused and confused factual knowledge about the Munich Conference and Agreement.

Students' answers at level 2 included more contextual knowledge of the reasons for appeasement and Hitler's aims. However, it was common at level 2 to see students copying out parts of Source B and they frequently used the term 'reliable' in their answers, which was a misreading of the question and restricted the value of the response. There is still a tendency to allege that a source is biased without offering any substantiation for such a claim.

When answers reached level 3 it was usually because they included an evaluation of both sources and made explicit reference to utility. Detailed knowledge of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as well as the Munich Agreement was used to contextualise both sources and draw a conclusion about their utility as they show two contrasting attitudes towards the policy of appeasement. The best answers identified Chamberlain's reasons for speaking positively about appeasement, because he wanted to reassure his audience that the threat of war had receded, and concluded that he was motivated by personal interest as he was responsible for the policy. Developed

knowledge about the Munich Conference, when made relevant to the question about the policy of appeasement, secured level 3.

Students at this level found Source C more accessible and there was thoughtful evaluation of the provenance and content of the cartoon. Many students correctly identified that the purpose of the cartoon was to criticise the Munich Agreement for being merely a short-term solution to the problem of Hitler's foreign policy aims. Students showed ample detailed knowledge about the motives and long term outcome of Hitler's foreign policy and good evaluation of the provenance of the source, which originated from the USA. When answers reached level 3 it was often because they maintained an explicit focus on utility of the sources.

In level 4 answers there was evidence of complex level thinking that considered the sources as a pair and concluded, for example, that they provided an historian with a dual perspective on contemporary views about appeasement. Some students showed perception in suggesting that Source B was a domestic justification of the Munich Agreement whereas Source C was a critique of the policy from abroad by an isolationist country.

### **Question 3**

This question was done well by the majority of students. There was widespread evidence of general knowledge and understanding about the League of Nations in the 1920s and most students could identify some simple contributions made to international peace. Insecure factual knowledge and understanding were evident when students discussed events that occurred beyond the 1920s, such as the Manchurian Crisis, and diplomacy that occurred outside the League, such as the Locarno Treaties.

Level 1 answers focused mainly on a narrative of events with details about the Aaland Islands. At level 2 there was specific reference to the outcome of the issues in Upper Silesia, Bulgaria or Corfu.

Students who proceeded to the higher levels usually did so by addressing the specific requirements of the question. They tended to focus on an understanding of the second order concepts (AO2) to explain the consequences with specific regard to the 1920s and peace keeping. The most frequent response was to argue that the League of Nations made a variety of contributions to a varied degree of success. This was related explicitly to the status of the countries involved in the dispute and the ability of the more powerful countries to secure the most favourable outcome.

To access level 4 students must give two explicitly explained turning points. Better technique and clearer organisation of their knowledge would have helped some students achieve higher marks.

### **Question 4**

Very good knowledge was displayed in answers to this question and students were quick to address the stated factor and offer alternatives factors as counter argument. The extent to which students developed their answers on any given factor determined whether or not their answer was rewarded beyond level 2. A common weakness when students had insecure knowledge about the terms of the Treaty of Versailles was to try to make an argument based on the reasons why Germans voted for Hitler in the early 1930s.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general identification of the areas of lost territory. Level 2 answers included more specific relevant knowledge of other terms such as the military terms or the 'Diktat'. Most students could explain why these terms were hated.

At level 3 developed answers were characterised by a clearer structure and they directly addressed all factors with good explanation of why they were hated. These explanations usually concentrated on the affront to national pride as a strong military power and the injustice of the war guilt clause only being applied to Germany. The strongest answers at this level were effective because there was a clear line of argument that developed the reasons for hatred of the terms, such as the separation of German nationals from the homeland in contravention of the principle of self-determination or the expansion of other European powers' empires by the acquisition of Germany's colonies. It was clear to examiners that for an answer to be secure in level 3 it must be supported with specific factual detail. However, many good two-sided answers remained in level 3 because they failed to make any judgement or simply gave a summary conclusion.

Students reached level 4 by demonstrating complex thinking. This could be shown, for example, by giving a relational judgement on the factors discussed in the essay. In this question there were many examples of this as students were able to explain the overlapping and linked nature of the of the reasons why Germany hated the Treaty of Versailles. Some students offered a hierarchy of judgement with sustained reasoning. Students are encouraged to present sustained discussion in their answers and a definitive judgement in their conclusions.

With regard to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar the vast majority of students were awarded 3 marks for the standard of their historical communication.



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## BC Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972

### Question 1

This question proved straightforward and accessible. The visual source allowed students to show their understanding. Students were able to use their knowledge of the Korean War and Sino-Soviet relations and made sensible inferences from the content to show why the source was critical of Stalin and of the relationship between Mao and Stalin. Many answers that relied on description of the source and simple analysis were rewarded at level 1. Answers that drew on specific contextual knowledge about the key figures, the contributions of USSR and China to the ‘proxy’ war in Korea, or the Treaty of Friendship in 1950 to explain the image were able to access level 2. Many students made use of the provenance to infer this was American propaganda especially as the USA/UN were key players in the Korean War, so the source was necessarily anti-Stalin. Others used the date to explain the purpose of the source and account for the timing of its publication.

### Question 2

This question saw the majority of students coping well with the demands of two sources and demonstrating sound and appropriate source evaluation skills. Most students attempted analysis of the sources using content; far fewer used the provenance. There were many strong responses showing detailed knowledge of the Berlin Blockade (and Airlift) and its wider Cold War context, and how each source fitted in chronologically. However, examiners saw many answers achieving lower marks because they lacked any discussion of provenance, or what was attempted was weak and generic. An important part of the historian’s work in the assessment of the utility of sources is to evaluate provenance. On the evidence of this year’s answers, provenance would benefit from more prominence in the teaching of the source work to students.

At level 1 credit was awarded for a basic understanding of either source. Students writing at this level found Source C more accessible and were able to achieve marks by simple references to the Blockade of Berlin by road and rail and (potentially) by air as shown in the source. Weaker answers were characterised by a description and or paraphrase of the content of both sources and general factual knowledge which was not specifically relevant to the question.

Answers at Level 2 included more contextual knowledge of the Berlin Blockade (and Airlift). However, it was common at Level 2 to see students paraphrasing parts of Source B but also referencing the Four Powers, the economy of Germany, and the (false) concerns of the USSR regarding the health of Berlin. Source C proved more accessible than Source B; this was primarily because it was visual. Source C required inference and students were able to achieve marks by simple references to the Berlin Airlift as an Allied response to the Blockade, and the failure of the USSR to stop it. Some common errors included mention of the Berlin Wall and references to the situation in the 1960s. At level 2 provenance was rewarded when students went beyond the basic allegation that the Source was biased, supported by simply copying parts of the attribution and without offering any further argument for such a claim. Some simple points at level 2 which were frequently seen were that they were both written at the time of the Blockade, that one was a Russian viewpoint and the other was a British/American viewpoint, and that each was bound to say what it said, without any real further qualification.

When answers reached level 3 it was usually because they included an evaluation of the content and context of both sources and made explicit reference to utility. The contextual analysis of

Source B included some sensible knowledge of the Yalta/Potsdam agreements re Germany/Berlin, the Marshall Plan, the merging of the Western zones, and the creation of a common currency as precursors to the Blockade (and details of it), with particular/specific cross reference to the source. In Source C contextual knowledge focused on the nature of the Blockade and particularly details of the Berlin Airlift and its role in the ending of the Blockade. Focus on the wider context of Stalin's ineffectiveness in stopping it and the broader context of the Cold War was also evident. Similarly, developed evaluations of the motives for the publication of the sources were less regularly seen and often, when combined with a developed point about the content of Sources B and C, led to a mark at level 4. The better answers in relation to Source B referred to the 'official' nature of the letter and that consequently it reads as both a threat and a Russian explanation of why the Blockade was necessary to its presumed audience. Provenance was more usually evaluated in relation to Source C, where students focused on the author as a cartoonist, his nationality, the country of publication and Britain's role in the Airlift. Many pointed out the mocking nature of the cartoon, with level 3 given for these who pointed out how it mocked by referencing the 'futile' net, and the 'No Go Joe' title.

There was evidence of complex level thinking in answers that considered the sources as a pair and concluded, for example, that they provided an historian with a perspective of the causes of the Blockade from one side and the consequences/ending from the other. Some students showed perception in recognising that these sources personified the wider East-West divide in the 1940s.

### Question 3

This question was done well by the majority of students. There was widespread evidence of general knowledge and understanding of the events in Hungary in 1956. Most students could identify some simple consequences for the levels of international tension. There was the anticipated merging/confusion of Hungary with Czechoslovakia in personnel, events and outcomes in the lower mark ranges.

Level 1 answers focused mainly on a description of the Hungarian Rising, often in general terms. Answers which moved to a narrative of the changing outcomes of the events in Hungary and why this happened usually took the responses into the level 2 mark range depending on the detail or explanation. The majority of answers at level 2 had specific, relevant knowledge but this tended to be a narrative or an implied cause/consequence. Answers at level 2 focused, often well, on the events in Hungary rather than the wider implications of these events.

Students who proceeded to the higher levels did so by addressing the specific requirements of the question. They tended to focus on an understanding of the second order concepts (AO2) to explain the affects with specific regard to the Cold War. The most successful responses were able to identify distinct issues that were affected by the events in Hungary both in the long and short term. Popular aspects which featured in answers at levels 3 and 4 included the shorter-term consequences for Hungary, making references to 200,000 refugees fleeing to Austria, the death of Nagy, the restoration of the old order, and the broken 'promises' of de-Stalinisation. Further or alternative reward was gained by a recognition of the role of the UN with reference to Suez, the Soviet sphere of Influence (especially the Warsaw Pact), the veto and a desire not to escalate tension further.

Examiners were impressed at the top level with students who demonstrated complex thinking by expanding their answers to consider the wider context of 'containment' and the moves towards 'peaceful coexistence'.

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## Question 4

Some very good knowledge was displayed in answers to this question and students were quick to offer alternatives to the stated factor. The extent to which students developed their answers in relation to the stated factor determined whether or not their answer was rewarded beyond level 2. Many students had secure knowledge about the U2 Crisis, although many detailed the events rather than the ensuing crisis specifically. There were few arguments based on events outside the dates of the question.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general identification of a reason for the tension, though most seemed to have some idea of the U2 Crisis. These frequently referred to the events in non-specific terms. Level 2 answers included some specific relevant knowledge of the causes or outcome of the U2 Crisis. Most students could give a simple explanation of how this crisis threatened to bring about a breakdown in international relations. Other examples of level 2 answers were simple outlines of Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the building of the Berlin Wall and the developing Space/Arms Race, and, less often, the Prague Spring. Most references to the Vietnam War, whilst valid and often detailed, could only be rewarded at level 2 as this knowledge was not relevantly related to the specific focus of the question.

It was clear to examiners that for an answer to be secure in level 3 it must be supported with specific factual detail. Level 3 developed answers were characterised by a clear paragraphed structure which directly addressed the stated factor and others, with a detailed explanation of at least one of them. These explanations usually concentrated on the background, events and consequences of the U2 Crisis with specific reference to the damage caused to relations by the abandonment of the Paris Peace Conference. The strongest answers at this level were effective because there was a clear line of argument that included other factors in depth such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, Nuclear Arms race, the Space race, the Berlin Wall 1961, and, less frequently, the Prague Spring. Whilst students seemed to find it easy to make an argument about how the Cuban Missile Crisis caused tension between the superpowers, there was a lot of information about the arms and the space race that was not made relevant. Equally, the Berlin Wall was described rather than explained, with only explicit reference to the Checkpoint Charlie incident or the impact of JFK visit achieving level 3. Furthermore, many knowledgeable and well understood, relevant answers remained in level 3 because they failed to make any judgement or they simply gave a summary conclusion.

Students reached level 4 by demonstrating complex thinking. In this question there were many examples of this as students were able to explain the relative significance of the different factors both within the paragraphs and as a conclusion. For example, students argued that the U2 Crisis got in the way of peaceful coexistence and escalated tension further into the 1960s, whereas the Cuban Missile Crisis, in contrast, was not the most significant factor because it led to the Hot Line and Partial Test Ban Treaty. Many level 4 answers were able to link several episodes together, such as the outcomes of the U2 Crisis, the Paris Summit, and Berlin Crisis, contributing to the Cuban Missile Crisis. There was clear evidence of complex thinking regarding the extent of tension viewed over the whole of the decade of the 1960s in relation to specific events and hotspots.

With regard to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar the vast majority of students were awarded 3 marks for the standard of their historical communication.

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## **BD Conflict and tension in Asia, 1950–1975**

### **Question 1**

Most students found this question accessible and were able to use their knowledge of the events at Kent State University to make sensible inferences from the content to show why the source was critical of these events. Answers that relied on simple analysis of the source were rewarded at level 1. There were frequent comments on the facial expressions of the National Guard and the figure representing America, with some referring to this as a depiction of ‘Uncle Sam’. Many correctly recognised the disappointed look on the face of the latter, though not all were able to develop their analysis by explaining the reason for the figure’s downcast demeanour. Almost all were able to link the ‘smoking gun’ to the shooting of the students. A minority did not understand how the National Guard differed from the Ohio State Police or the US Army. Answers that drew on specific contextual knowledge about the peaceful anti-war protesters who were then met with an armed response from the National Guard were able to access level 2. Some perceptive answers at level 2 recognised the sarcasm within the caption as the National Guard attempted to justify their excessive use of force against unarmed students.

### **Question 2**

This question saw the majority of students coping well with the demands of two sources, applying sound and appropriate source evaluation skills. Most students attempted analysis of the sources with a focus on their content rather than the provenance. It was good to see considerably fewer students writing about what the sources omitted and rare to see the sources being dismissed because they did not mention something they knew about. Whilst the question permits students to discuss the limitations of the sources, those limitations have to be relevant to the question. In this case, the question was about the Korean War. It is always better to advise students to explore the positive contribution that a source could make to an understanding of the specific focus of the question.

At level 1 credit was awarded for basic understanding of the sources. This was usually done with a focus on the content of the source rather than its provenance. Answers recognised basic features of the sources, such as Stalin’s willingness to help North Korea with their invasion of the South and the UN’s desire to stop the Communist invasion. With regards to provenance, there were noticeably fewer answers with simple accusations of ‘bias’ or assertions about ‘reliability’. Students’ answers at level 2 included more contextual knowledge of the extent of the USSR’s and USA’s involvement in the Korean War, with reference to the supply of Soviet planes and pilots, Stalin’s previous reluctance to agree to the North’s invasion of the South and the desire of the US to contain Communism. Many students commented on the provenance of Source B, though few were able to explain the significance of its confidential nature.

When answers reached level 3 it was usually because they included an evaluation of the content of both sources, maintained an explicit focus on the utility of the sources and linked all their observations to the question. Developed understanding of the content of Source B involved explaining how Soviet planes and pilots were disguised to avoid the USA becoming aware of their participation or the changed circumstances which led to Stalin’s belief that the timing was right in early 1950 to approve Kim Il Sung’s invasion of South Korea. There were many answers that displayed good knowledge of the steps taken by the UN after their resolution. Other responses explained why the USSR boycotted the Security Council and was unable to use its veto to prevent

the UN approving military intervention in support of South Korea. Many students correctly identified Source C as propaganda but, at level 3, they needed to suggest some purpose for its publication such as the US government's desire to elicit the support of the American people for their involvement in the Korean War.

There was evidence of complex level thinking in answers that considered the sources as a pair and were able to develop evaluation of both content and provenance across the two sources.

### **Question 3**

This question was done well by many students, although there were instances where it was not attempted. Many students were able to detail the problems faced by Vietnam and its people, whilst others focused on the impact on US soldiers and their reputation. A significant number of students did not focus on the demands of the question, as they gave knowledgeable accounts of how the war ended instead of problems caused by the end of the war.

Level 1 answers focused mainly on identifying problems in Vietnam, such as the large number of deaths suffered by the Vietnamese people, or made basic comments on the financial costs. Most students were able to access level 2 with simple knowledge or through a narrative response which lacked the required explanation to access level 3. In many cases, despite the lack of development, there was an impressive array of knowledge shown on how various parties involved in Vietnam were affected.

Students who proceeded to the higher levels did so by addressing the specific requirements of the question. They tended to focus on an understanding of the second order concepts (AO2) to explain the consequences with specific regard to problems caused by the end of the war. The problems most frequently mentioned related to the effects of chemical warfare and blanket bombing campaigns and many attained level 3 with explanations of the long term consequences on the health of existing and future generations of the Vietnamese people and, to some extent, on how returning US soldiers were treated.

Examiners were impressed at the top level, with students who demonstrated complex thinking by considering how the problems impacted on the reputation of the US government both domestically and internationally. Examiners noticed some perceptive observations on the long-term damage to Vietnam's economic recovery and the subsequent diplomatic isolation brought about by President Ford blocking their entry to the UN.

### **Question 4**

Some very good knowledge was displayed in the answers to this question and students were quick to offer alternatives to the stated factor. The extent to which students developed their answers in relation to the stated factor determined whether or not their answer was rewarded beyond level 2. A common weakness was that, when students had insecure knowledge about the reasons for the escalation of the conflict, they wrote about the factors which led to the USA's initial involvement.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general identification of the factors which led to escalation. Examiners also noted a minority of answers that confused elements of the war in Vietnam with the war in Korea and others which failed to show an understanding of the stated factor. Level 2 answers usually included more specific relevant knowledge about the Gulf of Tonkin

incident involving the USS Maddox and President Johnson's desire that Congress approve the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Most students could give a simple explanation of how this escalated the conflict in Vietnam. Some answers remained in level 2 as they focused on other factors outside the specified timeframe, such as Dien Bien Phu or Operation Linebacker.

It was clear to examiners that for an answer to be secure in Level 3 it must be supported with specific factual detail. Level 3 developed answers were characterised by a clear structure which directly addressed the stated factor and other factors with a detailed explanation linked to escalation of the conflict. These explanations usually concentrated on Kennedy's support for the Strategic Hamlets Programme, the failed leadership of Diem, the Vietcong's successful use of guerrilla tactics and the failure of the US to adapt their strategy to the conditions they faced in Vietnam. The strongest answers at this level were characterised by a clear line of argument that explained how other factors in depth escalated the conflict. However, many good two-sided answers remained in level 3 because they failed to make any judgement or simply gave a summary conclusion.

Students reached level 4 by demonstrating complex thinking. In this question there were examples of this as students were able to explain the relative significance of the different factors. For example, students often concluded in their judgements that the Gulf of Tonkin incident was crucial in bringing about the war's escalation because it ultimately led to the extensive bombing campaign of Operation Rolling Thunder. Furthermore, some answers judged the failure of US military power, which neither defeated the guerrilla tactics of the Vietcong nor destroyed the Ho Chi Minh Trail, as influential in the escalation of the conflict.

With regard to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar the majority of students were awarded 3 marks for the standard of their historical communication.

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**BE Conflict and tension in the Gulf and Afghanistan, 1990–2009****Question 1**

This question proved straightforward and accessible to most students, who were able to show their understanding and the full range of marks was awarded. Students were able to use their knowledge of Bush's response to the 9/11 attacks and how, despite his 'Mission Accomplished' speech, he left his successor as US President, Barack Obama, with much still to resolve in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Students were able to make sensible inferences from the content to show why the source was critical of President Bush. Answers that relied on simple analysis and description of the source were rewarded at level 1. Answers that drew on specific contextual knowledge about the events of 9/11, President Bush's response, his 'Mission Accomplished' speech and the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan when Barack Obama took over the presidency in 2009 to explain the source were able to access level 2. Some students were able to use the provenance and date of the source to explain its purpose and account for the timing of its publication.

**Question 2**

This question allowed many students to show an ability to cope with the demands of evaluating two sources, and to demonstrate sound and appropriate skills in doing so. Most students attempted to analyse the sources using content and provenance but, nevertheless, responses sometimes lacked sustained focus on the question. The analysis was often presented in isolation and not always linked to either utility or the focus of the question. Some students discussed the reliability of the sources rather than their utility and some students evaluated their utility by what the sources omitted. It was noticeable that many students seemed to follow a pattern in their answers, writing a paragraph on what each source could be used for by an historian, followed by a second paragraph saying what each source did not tell you and therefore why they were not useful. This question does allow students to discuss any limitations of the sources, but those limitations must be relevant to, and address, the focus of the question, which in this case was the impact of the 9/11 attacks. Some students introduced knowledge, which although sound and accurate, was not relevant to the question.

At level 1 credit was rewarded for basic understanding of either source. Descriptive responses were very common, as were simple inferences, particularly from Source B where many students used the ways the USA and terrorism were depicted to make simple inferences. A common one was how the difference in size in Source B showed America's strength, or how in Source C the US had the support of Britain. Answers that included more contextual knowledge of the 9/11 attacks and the US response or provided a simple evaluation of the provenance of one or both sources, were rewarded at level 2. Common responses included how Source B suggested the USA was more powerful and could easily defeat terrorism, or that Source C showed how Tony Blair supported the USA as a close ally. Many students attempted to use the provenance of the sources to help answer the question, but often at a simple level. For example, Source B was useful because it was produced at the time and would show the immediate response of the USA to the attacks, or Source C was useful because, although a British source, it showed how America's allies gave their support. At level 2 it was quite common to discuss the reliability of the sources rather than their utility. It is still common to see sources being dismissed as being biased with no explanation or substantiation for this claim.

When answers reached level 3, it was often because they included an evaluation of the provenance of both sources and made explicit reference to how this affected their utility. For example, recognising and understanding that the purpose of Source B was to appeal to the patriotism of the American people and to gain their support for whatever action was taken, and the purpose of Source C was to show how there was a worldwide reaction to the attacks with specific examples given. Strong responses also saw students use their own knowledge to assess the content of the sources. There was evidence in some responses of more complex thinking where both sources were considered together, rather than separately and in isolation, concluding that their inter-relationship and different perspectives would give an historian a much deeper and more balanced understanding of the impacts of, and reactions to, the 9/11 attacks.

### Question 3

There was some evidence of general knowledge and understanding about the treatment Saddam Hussein meted out to the Kurds and Shia Muslims and about the problems this treatment created in the Gulf. There was also evidence of a lack of specific knowledge about both the treatment and effects, which consequently were expressed in general terms. Some students could identify simple consequences such as the increase in deaths and physical hardships such as starvation and malnutrition.

Level 1 answers tended to focus on narrative descriptions of Saddam's actions, often sound and accurate, but failed to focus on the consequences of those actions. Knowledge of his use of chemical weapons against the Kurds and Shia was widespread and good, detailed descriptions of their use, particularly the incident at Halabja in 1988, were given. Such responses, however, remained at level 1 because they did not describe and explain the effects it had on creating problems in the Gulf. Many answers which reached level 2 did make this simple link between actions and effects, for example the harsh treatment led to mass migration of Kurds and Shia to neighbouring countries such as Iran and Turkey.

Students who reached the higher levels did so because of a more sustained addressing of the requirements of the question. They were able to focus on an understanding of the second order concepts (AO2) to explain the consequences with specific regard to the effects on the Gulf as a whole, and on the wider world, rather than the narrower focus on the effects on just the Kurds and Shia themselves. The most frequent response was to explain how the treatment of the Kurds and Shia led to the international condemnation of Iraq and direct intervention with the imposition of No-Fly Zones and the 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War.

### Question 4

Some good accurate knowledge of the causes and events of the Iran-Iraq War was shown in answers to this question. Many students were able to discuss the stated factor in detail and many were able to offer at least one, and sometimes more, alternatives to the stated factor. The extent to which students developed their answers in relation to the stated factor determined whether their answer was rewarded beyond level 2. Answers which remained at level 1 or 2 did so because, although the knowledge presented was often detailed and accurate, it was not used to explain why that contributed to the rise in tension in the Gulf in 1990. Instead, a narrative description was given. Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a description of events, or a simple list of possible causes of the war, or more commonly, an acceptance of the stated factor being the main cause, with little or no reference to alternative reasons. Better answers rewarded at level 2 sometimes



dealt with an alternative reason with understanding of the contribution made to the rise in tension by this reason and the contribution of the stated factor. Alternative reasons included Hussein's continued presence as leader of Iraq and his potential threat to other Gulf states.

Answers reaching level 3 did so by using specific factual detail to support their responses. They had a clear structure to them and directly addressed the stated factor and other factors with detailed explanations of how each contributed to the increase in tension in the Gulf in 1990. One common feature of many responses was interpreting tension in the Gulf in 1990 as solely Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. These responses dealt solely with different reasons for the invasion, such as Saddam's desire for hegemony in the Gulf, his desire for Kuwait to cancel his large debt to them, his belief that Kuwait was a former province of Iraq and his concern over Kuwait's over-production of oil quotas and slant drilling. Many of these responses attributed all reasons for the invasion of Kuwait to the Iran-Iraq War, thus restricting them to level 2. Answers which dealt solely with the invasion of Kuwait, but which recognised that not all causes stemmed from the Iran-Iraq War but were the result of other factors, were able to reach the higher levels. Some good answers remained at level 3 as they did not make any judgement or simply gave a summary conclusion, usually agreeing with the question statement while recognising and acknowledging the existence of other factors.

Level 4 was reached by students who extended level 3 explanations of the stated and alternative factors by assessing and explaining the relative significance of the different factors before making an informed judgement. One way some students were able to reach level 4 was by demonstrating an understanding of how the different factors interacted and how they were interrelated.

Regarding Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar most students were awarded 2 or 3 marks for the standard of their historical communication.

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

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