

# AS LEVEL **HISTORY**

7041/2R The Cold War c1945 - 1963  
Report on the Examination

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## General

In general, the knowledge and understanding displayed across all questions were pleasing. It is clear to see that students have been prepared well to analyse the sources for 01 and to formulate a substantiated judgement for the essay responses. Students are able to compare the sources effectively and make comments on provenance, content and value. Questions 02 and 03 were equally popular, and many students had a range of specific detail to provide for their arguments.

## Question 01

For the compulsory source question, students were asked to assess the value of two sources in relation to US involvement in the Korean War. The best responses were able to assess each source separately and then come to a substantiated conclusion about their value in relation to US involvement.

For Source A, most students were able to identify the Soviet aspect of this editorial and how this may influence their comments about the reasons for US involvement. They were also able to substantiate these comments with specific knowledge about US involvement via the United Nations, commenting on the fact that the USSR was boycotting the UN at the time. This helped students to come to a conclusion that the source was focusing on the USA as warmongers and imperialists, rather than trying to protect and defend South Korea.

Similarly, most students were able to comment on Source B and suggest that because it was a speech from Truman, there will be a certain amount of justification from him in regards to US involvement in Korea. They were able to align this with knowledge about the involvement of US troops in Korea via approval from the UN.

The weaker responses on this question were not able to relate US intentions in Korea to the sources, and made generalist comments about the sources being biased or one-sided and therefore not valuable. Students should focus more on the value of the sources despite bias – for example, suggesting that even though it is from a Soviet Pravda editorial, there can still be value found in its comments. Furthermore, some students did not make effective comparisons between the two sources to suggest which was more valuable.

There were a number of responses that failed to assess the value of the sources in direct relation to the issue in the question – either focusing on whether the information in the sources was accurate or not, or commenting on more general issues regarding the Korean War, rather than US involvement.

## Question 02

This question asked students to evaluate whether the USA and USSR had ‘fundamental differences’ at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. It is clear that students had a range of specific knowledge in relation to these conferences and were able to communicate this well.

Most students were able to identify the issues discussed at each conference and how the superpowers may have had 'fundamental' differences – those discussing the concept of fundamental differences were able to make stronger judgements rather than simply describing agreements made at both conferences. The more analytical responses grouped issues together under themes such as Germany, Poland, liberated Europe, ideologies etc. The weaker responses went through a narrative of different agreements made at each conference and made generalised comments on whether the superpowers agreed or disagreed. Some more narrative responses went beyond the timeframe of the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences and discussed issues with Germany in 1949, when the question should remain focused on the two conferences.

Some students were able to provide a higher-level analysis by discussing the root of the differences between the superpowers being ideological – and how this permeated every single agreement made regarding Poland, Germany, Europe etc. It was important for students to see the Conferences as a display of differences between the two powers, but recognising that they did agree on some fundamental issues.

### **Question 03**

Question 03 was quite popular and was focused on whether the space race was the main reason for increased tensions in the period 1954-61. It is clear there was a wide range of knowledge on the space race and other factors such as the arms race, the Berlin Crisis and the period of peaceful coexistence in general.

The more analytical responses were able to focus on the space race as the given factor and explain how competition from the space race led to increased competition over arms and the deterioration of relations in other areas. Many responses had a wide range of specific detail and made links between different factors – eg the space race leading to suspicion which infiltrated into events such as the U2 Incident.

The weaker answers either did not have much knowledge on the space race itself, did not focus on the space race as a factor or provided a narrative of issues surrounding the space race and therefore did not answer the question fully. Some responses did go before/beyond the given timeframe which meant a lot of time was spent analysing events that were not relevant – such as the Cuban Missile Crisis or the Korean War/McCarthyism. The lower-level answers were able to provide knowledge on some of the relevant issues but were unable to suggest how they led to increased tensions. Furthermore, some responses focused on the extent of peaceful coexistence in this period which was not the precise question – as they tended to focus on US and USSR commitment to peaceful coexistence, not reasons why tensions increased.

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

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