



GCSE HISTORY

8145/1B A/B/C/D/E
Report on the Examination

8145
June 2023

Version: 1.0

Further copies of this Report are available from aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2023 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.
AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

1BA Conflict and tension – First World War, 1894–1918

Question 1

Students who answered this question well were able to pick out specific aspects of the source and link them to how it showed that Germany was a defeated country. Many students knew about Foch and described how he was negotiating the Armistice; students who performed better were then able to explain how Foch, being Supreme Commander of the Allied forces, was able to defeat Germany during the Hundred Days and ultimately force them to sign the Armistice. This was awarded at Level 2. References to the train carriage and reasons for surrender were minimal. A significant number of students confused the Armistice with the Treaty of Versailles which was not credited.

Many students were able to make Level 1 inference comments from the source about the German soldier's uniform or the staging of the two men, students often identified that Germany were shocked, angry and that the Armistice was being forced upon them.

Question 2

This question saw the majority of students applying appropriate skills to the two sources, though Source B tended to be favoured in terms of the amount of analysis which was supplied and knowledge of the Lusitania was sometimes applied to both sources. Most students analysed the sources using a combination of content and provenance but with the former more prevalent in higher level answers. As with previous years, Level 3 provenance was often lacking which made it impossible for students to reach Level 4.

Answers at Level 1 were rewarded if they contained a generalised evaluation of provenance and/or a basic understanding of either source. Many students, often rewarded at level 2, went beyond identification of features by simply explaining, for example, the blockade, unrestricted submarine warfare or a summary of the sinking of the Lusitania although there was some confusion over the chronology of events from some students.

Students extended this type of general contextual knowledge with more specific information to earn at least Level 3 marks. This might have been via detailed explanations such as the impact of the blockade, the counter measures, other areas of the war at sea such as Jutland or the sinking of the Lusitania and its impact. To evaluate the provenance of Source B, students alighted on the "expert" nature of the leader of the German navy but few went further to develop why he might be making the request. With source C, students recognised the motive of the source using the ascription and then identified how the source achieved that. Few students then made the link with this date and America preparing to join the war.

In a minority of answers, knowledge of events such as the Battle of Jutland were added as an afterthought and not linked to the sources or the question which made it difficult to credit.

Question 3

In general, it was clear that students had a good understanding of the impact of the USA joining the war. Most answers revealed an understanding of the resources America bought and the impact that had. Possibly linked to the previous question, some students wasted time by focusing on reasons why America joined before covering the impact of joining.

Level 1 answers tended to display a basic knowledge, sometimes a list, of benefits that the USA brought to help the Allies but many students went beyond this to reach Level 2 by explaining a simple impact of these benefits such as increased morale leading to defeat of Germany.

Students who were able to address the question's focus of the impact caused by America's entry successfully advanced to at least Level 3 with developed knowledge of the role that the USA played in defeating Germany. This was frequently done, for example, by considering the impact on Germany who launched the Spring Offensive before the USA arrived, and the impact on the Allies in the counter offensive which led to defeat. Unusually for this question, a number of students only gave one impact/paragraph limiting them to Level 3 even if done well.

Question 4

Many students were able to deploy some very extensive knowledge relating to both the Assassination of Franz Ferdinand and other, alternative causes which contributed to the outbreak of the First World War. Answers at level 2 were characterised by a lack explanation of how alternative causes actually led to war. In other words, it was a common weakness of answers that many students tended to settle for claiming that the cause created tension or humiliation without going on to say how it caused war, even though this actually required little extra development on their part.

Level 1 responses tended to give a description of the Assassination taking place. Level 2 answers would explain the July crisis as a consequence but often as a narrative. Other commonly seen answers at this level explained the alternative causes, such as, the Alliance System, Imperialism, Nationalism, the arms races, the Kaiser's policies and aims, the Balkans and Moroccan Crises. Many students structured their answers so that they demonstrated a good knowledge of at least one of these alternative causes and frequently more. However, it was often the case that students seemed to sacrifice the opportunity for developing a reason for the start of the First World War by trying to cover too many other causes superficially and not focusing on the stated factor in the question.

Level 3 responses explained with evidence, understanding and focus of how possible causes led to war. It was common to see this done in relation to the Assassination linked with the Alliance System causing other countries to join a localised war. Other points which were developed or linked included the arms race which created stockpiles of weapons that populations were keen to use. Some students ably explained at Level 3 the contribution to the outbreak of war of the Kaiser who sought military solutions after being rebuffed at conferences, and Russia which was ready for war following her Bosnia back down. Other valid points that were frequently seen in students' answers were that Britain and France felt that Germany had to be stopped sooner rather than later, Austria was looking for an excuse to remove Serbia or that the Schlieffen Plan gave Germany the confidence to wage war and led to Britain becoming involved.

There were some impressive Level 4 answers in which judgements were made using the overlapping nature of many of the alternative causes to show how they contributed to and reinforced each other. For example, the Triple Alliance gave Austria confidence to declare war on Serbia, Balkan tensions gave Austria a reason to want Serbia destroyed but also fostered the Sarajevo assassination which was used as an excuse for war. Other students made use of long and short term comparisons to demonstrate complex judgements.

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

1BB Conflict and tension – the inter-war years, 1918–1939

Question 1

This question proved very straightforward and highly accessible. The source allowed students to show their knowledge of the Locarno Treaties and their understanding of the contemporary source. Students were able to make valid inferences from the content to show why the source was supportive of the Locarno Treaties. Answers that relied on explaining the image in the source were rewarded at Level 1. Answers that drew on contextual knowledge of the agreements made at Locarno were able to access Level 2. Few students made use of the provenance which is another route to Level 2. Students used the source effectively to infer that the cartoon was suggesting that the Locarno Treaties had brought a peaceful future to Europe. Stronger answers explained that this had been achieved by countries working together and reaching an agreement about the German borders created by the Treaty of Versailles.

Question 2

This question saw most 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. Only a few students wrote extensively about what the sources omitted about the League of Nations. Whilst the question permits students to discuss the limitations of the sources, those limitations have to be relevant and realistic for the source. For example, it would be wrong to criticise Source B – a pamphlet written in 1919 – for not referring to the later history of the League of Nations. Some students who have considerable knowledge about the focus of the question – the League of Nations – all too 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 give more consideration to the date of sources as they make their evaluation comments.

At Level 1 credit was awarded for basic understanding of either source. Students writing at this level found both sources accessible and were able to achieve marks by basic references to the content in relation to the League of Nations. These weaker answers were characterised by a description of the content of both sources or unfocused and confused factual knowledge about the Manchurian Crisis.

Students' answers at Level 2 included more contextual knowledge of the successes and failure of the League of Nations during the 1920s and 1930s. However, it was common to see students copying out parts of the sources.

When answers reached Level 3 it was usually because they included an evaluation of both sources and made explicit reference to utility. Knowledge of the League's agencies and contributions to peace in the 1920s was used to contextualise and evaluate Source B. Students recognised the utility of the provenance and commented on Smuts' value as an informed and credible author given his personal experience of the war and contribution to the peace keeping efforts that occurred after the First World War.

Students at this level used knowledge of the Manchurian Crisis to contextualise Source C. Students were able to draw a conclusion about its utility as a criticism of the League's weakness in the face of a serious challenge to its Covenant by a permanent member of the Council. The best answers identified the reasons surrounding the weaknesses of the League including the self-interest of Britain and France, the absence of its own army and the fact that the USA was not a member. These answers also related their knowledge to the question to make a developed

evaluation of the provenance and commented that the purpose of the cartoon was an American judgement on why the League of nations was ineffective. When answers reached Level 3 it was often because they used developed knowledge about the history of the League of Nation and 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 long-term perspective on the lifetime of the League of Nations. Some students showed perception in suggesting that Source B provided evidence of the aims and ideals from the time of the League's creation whereas Source C reflected how opinions had changed based on how the League had performed over time.

Question 3

This question drew a wide range of responses from students. There was widespread evidence of general knowledge and understanding about the problems facing the peacemakers in 1919. Most students could identify some simple examples of the different aims of the Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson. Insecure factual knowledge and understanding was evident when students discussed problems faced by Germany in 1919 and beyond.

Level 1 answers focused mainly one or other of the peacemakers. At Level 2 there was specific reference to the difference between at least two of the peacemakers' objectives. The most frequently mentioned were France's desire to weaken Germany permanently, in contrast to Great Britain's desire to preserve Germany as a trading partner.

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 (AO2:4) to explain the problems with specific regard to all three peacemakers. At this level students gave developed explanations of the different objectives including France's experience of invasion and physical devastation versus Wilson's idealist vision for post war Europe and Britain's maritime and imperial ambitions. The most frequent response was to argue that these objectives were inherently incompatible and that the difficulties of trying to find compromises were compounded by the pressure to reach decisions quickly. The strongest answers included in their accounts the way in which the Treaty was received by the home nations of the peacemakers. These answers explained how a subsequent problem was the universal dissatisfaction with the terms of the peace treaty.

To access Level 4 students must give two explicitly explained 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 alternative 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 stated factor was to try to make an argument based on the terms of German disarmament imposed by the Treaty of Versailles being the main cause of tension in Europe before the Second World War.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general identification of the nature of German rearmament. Level 2 answers included more specific relevant knowledge of details such as conscription or the creation of the 'Luftwaffe'. Most students could identify at least one other factor

such as the policy of appeasement or the Nazi Soviet Pact and explain how they contributed to tension in Europe.

At Level 3 developed answers were characterised by a clearer structure and they directly addressed all factors with good explanation of how they contributed to increased tension. These explanations usually concentrated on the cumulative effect of Hitler's actions going unchallenged. The strongest answers at this level were effective because there was a clear line of argument that developed the reasons why Great Britain and France followed a policy of appeasement with regard to Hitler's actions in Europe as well as towards Mussolini's actions in Abyssinia. The details of the Munich Conference and the unforeseen consequence of the Nazi-Soviet Pact were well explained and related to 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. 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 reasons why tension increased. Some students offered a hierarchy of judgement with substantiated reasoning based on the chronology of the factors they discussed. Some students argued that rearmament was the factor that prompted all subsequent causes of tension. However, other students maintained that because the invasion of Poland in 1939 triggered the declaration of war, the Nazi Soviet Pact was therefore the main cause of tension in Europe. Students are encouraged to present substantiated 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.

1BC Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972

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 Marshall Plan and Comecon and made sensible inferences to show why the source was critical of the USSR such as suggesting the workers were treated as enslaved people. Many answers that relied on description of the source and simple analysis were rewarded at Level 1. Answers that drew on relevant, specific contextual knowledge about, for example, the Marshall Plan, Comecon or Cominform to explain the image were able to access Level 2. Some students made use of the date to explain the purpose of the source to promote US foreign policy during a period of tension around the Berlin Blockade.

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, far fewer used the provenance. There were many strong responses showing detailed knowledge of the launch of Sputnik and other features of the Space Race. However, examiners saw many answers achieving only an upper level 3 mark because the answer lacked any discussion of provenance or what was attempted, was weak or 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 both sources accessible and were able to achieve marks by basic references to the USA being confused or communists being confident. Weaker answers were characterised by long descriptions of the features of B and/or C or generic points about provenance. A minority of students misunderstood B due to an assumption that American cartoons always support American policies. Answers at Level 2 included more contextual knowledge of the Space Race such as the American Moon landings or simple knowledge about other Soviet successes in the Space Race. At level 2 provenance was rewarded when students went beyond the basic allegation that the Source was biased, substantiated by simple comments about, for example, Mao's status as an ally of Stalin or that source B showed a critical attitude towards US progress in the Space Race.

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. Contextual knowledge of Soviet successes in the early part of the Space Race or the acceleration of the America space programme were used effectively to evaluate either source. Students were more confident in their knowledge of Soviet achievements in general and many made specific mention of Laika, Gagarin and Tereshkova. Specific knowledge of the US programme was less common except for the Apollo 11 mission. Some students effectively linked their knowledge of the Arms Race to explain the importance of Sputnik in the wider Cold War context.

Developed evaluations of the motives for the publication of the sources were less regularly seen. The provenance of C was evaluated most successfully with students often using specific knowledge of the Treaty of Friendship to support their evaluation of Mao's motives. Some also developed points about the audience of the speech and the location of the conference to explain the overwhelmingly supportive tone and bold claims made in Mao's speech. An evaluation of the provenance of B was rare to see. Those students who did so effectively focussed on the criticism of US policy, the fears,

and frustrations of the public leading to pressure on the government to increase funding or change strategy.

Most commonly, students awarded at level 4 evaluated the provenance of C in combination with developed evaluation of the content of B.

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 an insight into the early years of the space race which were dominated by Soviet successes. Many students considered that the sources showed that, despite cold war allegiances, there was a shared belief that the USA was caught off guard by the launch of Sputnik. This humiliation provided an impetus for the Americans to begin a more ambitious space programme eventually leading to the Moon landings.

Question 3

This question drew a wide range of responses from students. Many students found it difficult to focus all their knowledge on the specific timeframe of the question – the end of the 1960s. Some shared knowledge of events much earlier in the decade or later in the twentieth century and outside the history covered in the Specification. Sadly, this could not be rewarded.

Level 1 answers mainly featured a description of Détente in general terms such as the identification of SALT and general reference to meetings, agreements, talks and visits. The majority of answers at Level 2 included further knowledge of the features of Detents but often considered them in isolation without explicit explanation of cause and consequence. For example, many students mentioned the end of the war in Vietnam as a feature of the period but few went beyond the simple assertion that the end of the proxy war eased tension.

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 the easing of tension between East and West. Popular aspects which featured in answers at level 3 and 4 included the Sino-Soviet split leading to improved relations with the USA such as Ping-Pong diplomacy, economic pressures experienced by the USA and USSR leading to arms limitations talks. Many students had comprehensive knowledge of the terms of the SALT I agreement.

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 their answer was rewarded beyond Level 2. Many students had secure knowledge about alternative sources of tension such as the building of the Berlin Wall, U2 and Cuban Missile Crises although many detailed the events rather than focussing on the resulting tension. A minority of students confused events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 with events in Hungary in 1956. Additionally, in many cases a mention was made of Hungary or Nagy within an otherwise effective answer.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general identification of a reason for the tension. These frequently referred to events in non-specific terms. Level 2 answers often included some specific relevant knowledge of the events in Czechoslovakia, usually in terms of Dubcek's reforms and the soviet response. Many students found it hard to go beyond simple statements about how the events impacted East West tension. Other examples of Level 2 answers were simple outlines of the U2 Crisis, the building of the Berlin Wall, events in Cuba and the developing Space/Arms Race. Some

students wrote at considerable length about events in the 60s but remained at level 2 because they did not address the central focus of the question related to increased tension. Alternatively, students employed stock phrases about causing tension which did not show developed understanding. 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. Too many students dismissed events in Czechoslovakia as not important before giving very detailed explanations of alternative sources of tension. Such answers were awarded level 2.

For an answer to be secure in Level 3 it must be supported with specific factual detail and explicitly address the extent to which each event was a source of increased tension between East and West after 1960. 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. Explanations of the stated reason were often less well developed at this level and students were more confident about alternative causes of tension in the 1960s. Unbalanced answers were placed at the lower part of the level. Attempts to explain how the Arms and Space Race contributed were less successful because information was not made relevant. Students wrote in terms of the competition to possess more powerful weapons or more advanced space technology but they did not explain how this amounted to increased tension between East and West. Furthermore, many knowledgeable and well understood, relevant 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 many examples of this as students were able to explain the relative significance of the different factors. For example, some students chose to argue that events in Czechoslovakia only led to increasing tension within the Soviet sphere of influence rather than between East and West. In fact, the Brezhnev Doctrine was a cause of the Sino-Soviet split which opened the door to Détente. Whereas the U2 Crisis led to an escalation of East West tension due to the resulting lost opportunity at the Paris Peace Conference to negotiate the difficult issues around Berlin and contributed to the breakdown of peaceful co-existence. 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.

1BD Conflict and tension in Asia, 1950–1975

Question 1

Most students found this question accessible and were able to use their knowledge of the Korean War to make inferences from the content to show why the source opposed American involvement.

Answers that relied on simple analysis of the source were rewarded at Level 1. There were frequent comments on the facial expressions of the woman and child in the photographic part of the source and many linked these to a desire for their husband/father to leave Korea and return home. The vast majority of students recognised that the picture and text aimed to make American soldiers feel guilty or remorseful for killing innocent Korean civilians, though not all were able to support their analysis with contextual knowledge of American involvement in the events of the Korean War. A minority thought that this source was aimed at Americans living in the United States, rather than American soldiers fighting in Korea.

Answers that drew on specific contextual knowledge about the high percentage of US soldiers within UN forces or how American involvement was impeding North Korea's progress were able to access Level 2. Some perceptive answers at Level 2 recognised the propaganda purpose of the source and its attempt to empathise with the plight of the US soldiers in order to encourage them to return home.

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 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 specifically about the Tet Offensive. 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 the North Vietnamese belief that the Tet Offensive was a victory and the damage which was caused to the American Headquarters. With regards to provenance, there were 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 initial success of the North Vietnamese attack. There were references to US forces being taken by surprise, to the capture of the US Embassy in Saigon and images of the Tet Offensive being seen in American homes because of the high percentage of Americans who owned televisions. Many students commented on the provenance of Source B, though few were able to explain the significance of its context as part of an American television documentary reflecting on the Cold War.

When answers reached Level 3 it was usually because they included an evaluation of the content of both sources, maintained an explicit focus on utility of the sources and linked all their observations to the Tet Offensive rather than the Vietnam War as a whole. Developed understanding of the content of Source B involved explaining how the Tet Offensive was a well-planned, large scale attack during the ceasefire agreed for the Tet holiday and a move away from the Vietcong's usual guerrilla warfare

tactics. There were many answers that displayed good knowledge of the US army's recapture of their Embassy after only a few hours, the destruction of Hue and the numbers of soldiers involved from both sides. Other responses linked the extensive media coverage and Cronkite's evaluation of the attack, with the loss of public support and President Johnson's decision not to seek re-election. Many students understood that Source C opposed claims by the US military that the war was going well. Some were able to give a developed evaluation of C's provenance by explaining how the critical nature of American newspapers illustrated the growth of opposition after the Tet Offensive, as many more Americans questioned why they were involved in a costly war which they seemed incapable of winning.

Question 3

This question drew a wide range of responses from students, although some did not attempt a response. Many students were able to detail the conflict which arose within South Vietnam and between the two sides because neither were satisfied with the terms of the Geneva Agreement, whilst others focused on how the terms led to increased international involvement in Vietnam. Not all students focused sufficiently on the demands of the question, as they gave reasons for further conflict without linking these to the terms of the Geneva Agreement; such answers remained at Level 1.

Level 1 answers focused mainly on the division of Vietnam and showed some awareness that the two leaders had opposing beliefs. 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 about why the South Vietnamese were dissatisfied with Diem's government and how this opposition was shown.

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 causes of further conflict with regard to specific terms of the Geneva Agreement. The explanations most frequently related to how different groups in South Vietnamese opposed Diem's corrupt rule and his disregard for the terms of the Geneva Agreement. Many attained Level 3 by explaining how this opposition, together with Ho Chi Minh's support for the NLF, eventually led to civil war breaking out.

Examiners were impressed, at the top level, with students who demonstrated complex thinking by considering how the terms of the Geneva Agreement led to increased international involvement because of America's policy of containment and their willingness to support Diem's government to stop Ho Chi Minh taking over South Vietnam. Examiners noticed some perceptive observations on the different ways in which America provided support and the subsequent withdrawal of support for Diem's regime, along with increased financial and military aid under President Kennedy.

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. The shooting of students during the anti-war protest at Kent State University was widely known, though some answers did not provide more details of the events beyond this basic outline.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general identification of the factors which led to public opinion turning against the Vietnam War. Level 2 answers usually included more specific relevant knowledge about the events at Kent State University involving the Mayor's appeal for help and the deployment of a contingent of the Ohio National Guard. There was detailed knowledge about how events unfolded and some were aware of the subsequent large scale student protests which closed universities across the country. Not all students were able to explain why the events at Kent State turned public opinion against the Vietnam War.

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 why public opinion turned against the war. These explanations usually concentrated on the impact of wide spread media coverage which brought graphic images into American homes and the shock and horror when the full story of My Lai was uncovered, as well as the effects of both the human and financial cost. The strongest answers at this level were effective because there was a clear line of argument that explained how other factors in depth turned public opinion against the war. 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 sometimes concluded in their judgements that the events at Kent State University were not the most important factor because earlier factors had more impact, whilst recognising the contribution which these events had because they brought the anti-war protest movement to a wider audience and hardened public opinion against the government. Furthermore, some answers judged that the disillusionment and distrust following the Tet Offensive was influential in turning public opinion against the Vietnam War. Not only had Tet shown the strength of the enemy but it had also highlighted that statements from both politicians and the military that victory was close could not be believed.

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

1BE 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 Saddam Hussein's reactions to the United Nations Resolutions. Students were able to make sensible inferences from the content to show why the source was critical of the United Nations. Answers that relied on simple analysis, inference and description of the source were rewarded at Level 1. Some of these relied on simple description of the source and others added simple inferences such as Saddam Hussein seems unfazed and unaffected by the Resolutions being thrown at him. Answers that drew on specific contextual knowledge such as the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, the subsequent United Nations Resolutions and Saddam Hussein's ignoring them 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 differing sources, and to demonstrate some sound and appropriate skills in doing so. Most students attempted to analyse the sources using content and provenance but nevertheless responses which sometimes lacked sustained focus on the question tended to be mostly at Level 1. 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. It was also noticeable that there were fewer students assessing utility by what the sources omitted. This question does allow students to discuss any limitations of the sources, but those limitations must be relevant to, and address, the 'tail' of the question, which in this case was the Gulf War 1990-1991. 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. Some students introduced knowledge, which although sound and accurate, was not relevant to the question. The analysis of Source B tended to be better than that of Source C, and there was a strong dependency on describing the sources, with basic or simple inferences.

At Level 1 credit was rewarded for basic understanding of either source. Descriptive responses were very common particularly from Source B where many students used the ways the USA and Saddam Hussein were depicted to make simple inferences, such as Saddam Hussein posed a danger to the USA who feared their dependency on Gulf oil was under threat. A common one was how the difference in size between the 'spider' and the USA's car suggested that this threat was real, or how in Source C the US had the support of Britain.

Answers that included more contextual knowledge of the 1990-1991 Gulf War and reactions to it 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 worried about the threat to their oil supply from Saudi Arabia posed by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, or that Source C showed how Margaret Thatcher and Britain supported the USA as a close ally, while other Arab states such as Jordan, made excuses for Iraq's actions. Some 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 invasion, or Source C was useful because although a British source, it showed how America's allies gave their support, or that it showed the differing reactions to the invasion from Western and Middle East countries. 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 sometimes because they included an evaluation of the provenance of both sources and made explicit reference to how this affected their utility, although it was more common to rely on evaluation of the content of the sources. For example, recognising and understanding that the purpose of Source B was to warn the American people of the danger Saddam Hussein posed and to gain their support for whatever action was taken, and the purpose of Source C was to show how there were differing worldwide reactions 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 1990-1991 Gulf War.

Question 3

There was evidence of some good general knowledge and understanding about the problems faced by Karzai and the Coalition following the invasion of Afghanistan. There was a tendency to deal with the problems of Karzai separately from those of the Coalition, rather than recognising that some of these problems were shared. An exception to this was the recognition the resurgence of the Taliban posed to both Karzai and the Coalition. There was also evidence of a lack of specific knowledge about the problems, their causes and effects, which consequently were expressed in general terms. Some students could identify simple consequences such as the increase in casualties as a result of the Taliban's guerrilla tactics, or the lack of control Karzai had over the whole of Afghanistan due in part to his corruption and his dependence on support from the USA to keep him in power.

Level 1 answers tended to focus on narrative descriptions of the problems, often sound and accurate but which failed to focus on the causes and consequences of those problems. Knowledge of the resurgence of the Taliban and their use of guerrilla tactics, Karzai's corruption and the hostility shown to him as the USA's 'puppet' was common. Such responses however, remained at Level 1 because they did not describe and explain the effect they had on creating problems for Karzai and the Coalition. Many answers which reached Level 2 did make this simple link between actions and effects, for example the opposition to US involvement in Afghanistan led to Karzai's increasing unpopularity and to numerous assassination attempts made on him.

Students who reached the higher levels did so because of a more sustained focus on the requirements of the question. They were able to show an understanding of the second order concepts (AO2) to explain the consequences with specific regard to the effects on Karzai and the Coalition, recognising commonly shared problems, and others specific to one or the other. The most frequent response was to explain how the resurgence of the Taliban caused different problems for Karzai and the Coalition.

One noticeable feature of this question in 2023 has been present in past papers, but was more marked, namely the relatively high number of students who did not attempt to answer it.

Question 4

Some good accurate knowledge of the reasons for the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was shown in answers to this question, particularly relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction. 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 invasion of Iraq in 2003. 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 decision to invade Iraq in 2003 by this reason, and the contribution of the stated factor. Alternative reasons included Hussein's continued presence as leader of Iraq and the desire to remove him, and the fear over losing the Gulf oil supply by the USA and UK.

Answers reaching Level 3 did so by using specific factual detail to support their response. 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 decision to invade Iraq in 2003. 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.