



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2011**

**A2 History 2041**

**HIS3K**

**Unit 3K**

**Triumph and Collapse:**

**Russia and the USSR, 1941–1991**

**Final**

***Mark Scheme***

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available to download from the AQA Website: [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

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## Generic Introduction for A2

The A2 History specification is based on the assessment objectives laid down in QCA's GCE History subject criteria and published in the AQA specification booklet. These cover the skills, knowledge and understanding which are expected of A Level candidates. Most questions address more than one objective since a good historian must be able to combine a range of skills and knowledge. Consequently, the marking scheme which follows is a 'levels of response' scheme and assesses candidates' historical skills in the context of their knowledge and understanding of History.

The levels of response are a graduated recognition of how candidates have demonstrated their abilities in the Assessment Objectives. Candidates who predominantly address AO1(a) by writing narrative or description will perform at Level 1 or low Level 2 if some comment is included. Candidates who provide more explanation – (AO1(b), supported by the relevant selection of material, AO1(a)) – will perform at Level 2 or low Level 3 depending on their synoptic understanding and linkage of ideas. Candidates who provide explanation with evaluation, judgement and an awareness of historical interpretations will be addressing all 3 AOs (AO1(a); AO1(b); AO2(b)) and will have access to the higher mark ranges.

To obtain an award of Level 3 or higher, candidates will need to address the synoptic requirements of A Level. The open-ended essay questions set are, by nature, synoptic and encourage a range of argument. Differentiation between performance at Levels 3, 4, and 5 therefore depends on how a candidate's knowledge and understanding are combined and used to support an argument and the how that argument is communicated.

The mark scheme emphasises features which measure the extent to which a candidate has begun to *'think like a historian'* and show higher order skills. As indicated in the level criteria, candidates will show their historical understanding by:

- The way the requirements of the question are interpreted
- The quality of the arguments and the range/depth/type of material used in support
- The presentation of the answer (including the level of communication skills)
- The awareness and use of differing historical interpretations
- The degree of independent judgement and conceptual understanding shown

It is expected that A2 candidates will perform to the highest level possible for them and the requirements for Level 5, which demands the highest level of expertise have therefore been made deliberately challenging in order to identify the most able candidates.

**CRITERIA FOR MARKING GCE HISTORY:****A2 EXAMINATION PAPERS****General Guidance for Examiners (to accompany Level Descriptors)**

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**Deciding on a level and the award of marks within a level**

It is of vital importance that examiners familiarise themselves with the generic mark scheme and apply it consistently, as directed by the Principal Examiner, in order to facilitate comparability across options.

The indicative mark scheme for each paper is designed to illustrate some of the material that candidates might refer to (knowledge) and some of the approaches and ideas they might develop (skills). It is not, however, prescriptive and should only be used to exemplify the generic mark scheme.

When applying the generic mark scheme, examiners will constantly need to exercise judgement to decide which level fits an answer best. Few essays will display all the characteristics of a level, so deciding the most appropriate will always be the first task.

Each level has a range of marks and for an essay which has a strong correlation with the level descriptors the middle mark should be given. However, when an answer has some of the characteristics of the level above or below, or seems stronger or weaker on comparison with many other candidates' responses to the same question, the mark will need to be adjusted up or down.

When deciding on the mark within a level, the following criteria should be considered *in relation to the level descriptors*. Candidates should never be doubly penalised. If a candidate with poor communication skills has been placed in Level 2, he or she should not be moved to the bottom of the level on the basis of the poor quality of written communication. On the other hand, a candidate with similarly poor skills, whose work otherwise matched the criteria for Level 4 should be adjusted downwards within the level.

Criteria for deciding marks within a level:

- Depth and precision in the use of factual information
- Depth and originality in the development of an argument
- The extent of the synoptic links
- The quality of written communication (grammar, spelling, punctuation and legibility; an appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of ideas, including the use of specialist vocabulary)
- The way the answer is brought together in the conclusion

June 2011

## A2 Unit 3: The State and the People: Change and Continuity

### HIS3K: Triumph and Collapse: Russia and the USSR, 1941–1991

#### Question 1

- 01** 'The USSR remained politically and socially stable in the years 1964 to 1982 despite the policies of the Brezhnev regime.'  
Assess the validity of this view. (45 marks)

*Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)*

#### Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**
- L2:** Answers will show some understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be primarily descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain explicit comment but show limited relevant factual support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Historical debate may be described rather than used to illustrate an argument and any synoptic links will be undeveloped. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-15**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, which may, however, lack depth. There will be some synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included although these may not be highly developed. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will be clearly expressed and show reasonable organisation in the presentation of material. **16-25**
- L4:** Answers will show a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be mostly analytical in approach and will show some ability to link ideas/arguments and information and offer some judgement. Answers will show an understanding of different ways of interpreting material and may refer to historical debate. Answers will be well-organised and display good skills of written communication. **26-37**
- L5:** Answers will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide-ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing answer with a high level of synopticity. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and a mature historical understanding, informed by a well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate, will be displayed. Answers will be well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**

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**Indicative content**

**Note: This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.**

Candidates will need to identify the elements of political and social stability in these years and explain these in relation to any positive aspects of Brezhnev's policies and balance this against any negative aspects.

Candidates may refer to some of the following material in support of the argument that the Brezhnev regime actually promoted political and social stability:

- Brezhnev ruled largely by consensus, with relatively few changes in important Party personnel, as evidenced by the increasing age of the Politburo, and Brezhnev was promoted after Khrushchev precisely because he represented stability
- almost anything that smacked of radicalism, such as Kosygin's proposals for modest economic reform, were sidelined
- policies such as the Brezhnev Constitution were designed partly to emphasise the image of not just progress but the maturity and stability of the system
- although dissident activity increased in this period, it was not against the regime per se, remained very limited and was not supported by many citizens
- the various Nationalities within the USSR appeared to be relatively compliant and stable
- there were a number of social advances, suggesting stability: better living conditions. educational advances; improvements in housing.

Nevertheless, there are a number of other factors to suggest that the apparent stability which existed was not due to the Brezhnev regime, and in fact the regime's policies or lack of them disguised political and social weaknesses:

- although there was stability on the surface, there was increasing apathy or cynicism amongst many people about 'the system', evidenced by factors such as 'careerism' in the Party or many reluctant to join the Party at all
- there were adverse social trends with longer-term implications: especially the growth in alcoholism and a decline in life expectancy and a decline in the Russian birth-rate.

Candidates may well argue that although there was considerable stability on the surface, the worrying trends developed because:

- the regime largely ignored problems, storing up trouble for the future: pent-up nationalism, 'anti-social trends' such as disaffected youth, problems with drugs etc., which were simply not acknowledged
- it could be argued that the apparent stability was not due to Brezhnev's regime, but was basically a continuation of a stability already evident in society under Khrushchev for at least most of the time
- any apparent stability was likely to be threatened eventually by worrying signs in the economy – again, something not seriously tackled by the regime; plus other major events such as the invasion of Afghanistan
- although Brezhnev's position was not seriously under threat, there was no clear indication about the succession, which could be seen as potentially destabilising.

In conclusion, candidates may argue that in many ways this was a period of stability, which may have been partly due to Brezhnev, who was far more predictable than Khrushchev – but it was also partly due to a stability which had already existed to a large extent before Brezhnev, whose policies did not so much promote stability but rather papered over the cracks, which would come back to haunt Russia after his death.

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**Question 2**

- 02** 'Gorbachev's reluctance to commit himself fully to radical reform caused the break-up of the USSR.'

Assess the validity of this view.

(45 marks)

*Target: AO1 (a), AO1 (b), AO2 (b)*

**Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2**

Nothing written worthy of credit.

**0**

- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**
- L2:** Answers will show some understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be primarily descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain explicit comment but show limited relevant factual support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Historical debate may be described rather than used to illustrate an argument and any synoptic links will be undeveloped. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-15**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, which may, however, lack depth. There will be some synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included although these may not be highly developed. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will be clearly expressed and show reasonable organisation in the presentation of material. **16-25**
- L4:** Answers will show a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be mostly analytical in approach and will show some ability to link ideas/arguments and information and offer some judgement. Answers will show an understanding of different ways of interpreting material and may refer to historical debate. Answers will be well-organised and display good skills of written communication. **26-37**
- L5:** Answers will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide-ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing answer with a high level of synopticity. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and a mature historical understanding, informed by a well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate, will be displayed. Answers will be well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**
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**Indicative content**

**Note: This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.**

Candidates will need to identify Gorbachev's policies and explain how they were less than innovative or far-reaching than sometimes appeared at the time and explain why Gorbachev was a somewhat reluctant reformer.

Candidates may refer to some of the following material in support of the argument that Gorbachev was reluctant to commit to major reform and why this rendered the break-up likely:

- Gorbachev left it a long time to reform the Party or the political system, because he still had faith in that system
- Perestroika was full of flaws and Gorbachev was opposed to a root and branch free-market approach to the economy
- Gorbachev completely failed to appreciate the growing mood of separatism in the Republics and was reluctant to address these issues
- Gorbachev always seemed to be bringing up the rear, bringing in particular reforms too late, upsetting both radicals and conservatives in the process.

Nevertheless, there are a number of other factors to consider:

- the break-up of the USSR was not inevitable because of Gorbachev alone – it could be argued that it was *already* inevitable; or, alternatively, that if Gorbachev had not reformed at all, the USSR might have lingered on for much longer
- major issues such as a negative growth rate in the economy had arisen even before Gorbachev was in power
- other factors became important in the break-up, such as opposition between Gorbachev and Yeltsin
- many factors such as Nationalist feeling did not originate with Gorbachev – they had been brewing for some time.

Candidates may argue that whilst failure to carry out radical reform made the problems of the USSR even more acute, it could equally be argued that it was Gorbachev's policies, even if not particularly radical, which pushed the country along to dissolution, as evidenced for example by his behaviour after the coup.

In conclusion, candidates may argue that whilst the dissolution of the USSR was not inevitable, and was not entirely Gorbachev's responsibility, his policies did unwittingly increase the chances of dissolution, e.g. his behaviour after the coup, his blinkered attitude towards the Baltic States.

Answers which focus strongly on 'other factors' and give insufficient attention to 'Gorbachev's reluctance' are unlikely to score above Level 3.

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**Question 3**

- 03** 'Agriculture was always the fundamental weakness of the Soviet economy.'  
Assess the validity of this view of the Soviet economy in the years between 1945 and Brezhnev's death in 1982. (45 marks)

*Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)*

**Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2**

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**
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**Indicative content**

**Note: This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.**

Candidates will need to identify and explain the weaknesses in agriculture and balance these against other factors which weakened the economy. They may also challenge the actual assertions within the question.

Candidates may refer to some of the following material in support of the argument that agriculture was a major weakness:

- agriculture had been badly hit during the war and was slow to recover even to pre-war levels
- agriculture was starved of efficient labour and remained for most of this period without adequate resources or incentives
- attempted reforms such as Virgin Lands, irrigation schemes, more incentives for peasants, rarely had any sustained impact
- agriculture in many respects remained backward both economically and socially.

Nevertheless, there are a number of other factors to consider:

- the economy suffered from many other weaknesses such as the inflexibility of planning, obsolescence, poor productivity and so on – factors which affected industry as much as agriculture
- there is evidence of some improvement in farming and the lives of peasants throughout this period, although the impact should not be exaggerated.

In conclusion, candidates may or may not argue that agriculture was the most fundamental factor in the weakness of the economy, although they are likely to recognise its undoubted weaknesses which remained a serious problem throughout this period.

Answers which largely ignore at least one of the three main phases – Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev – are unlikely to merit above Level 3. Answers which ignore agriculture and focus too much on ‘other weaknesses’ are unlikely to merit above Level 2.

**Converting marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

**UMS conversion calculator:** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)