

GCSE
History
8145/1B/X

Report on the examination

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1B/A Conflict and tension - First World War, 1894–1918

Question 1

Students who answered this question effectively demonstrated the ability to access the source and identify specific aspects that supported the Allies. Students identified the French and British forces or described Germany and the Kaiser as defeated, frightened, and humiliated. Those who performed more successfully then provided explanations using knowledge linked to the source, such as events from the Battle of the Marne or the failure of the Schlieffen Plan. This approach was awarded at Level 2. Students also reached Level 2 by commenting on the source's purpose, presenting ideas about boosting Allied morale or humiliating Germany. This could be attempted at Level 2 without specific knowledge of the Battle of the Marne.

Question 2

This question witnessed the majority of students applying appropriate skills to the two sources, although provenance proved more accessible to students than the knowledge required for these sources. At higher levels, more students analysed the sources using provenance or a combination of content and provenance than in previous years.

Answers at Level 1 received reward when they contained a generalised evaluation of provenance and a basic understanding of either source. Students described and inferred from the cartoon but sometimes copied portions of the written source or the attribution. Students, often rewarded at Level 2, progressed beyond identification of features by simply explaining, for example, ANZAC troops, the Turks holding the higher ground, the weather conditions, assistance to Russia, and general points about the initial attack. For Level 2 provenance, students identified that Source C was a diary written by someone who fought in Gallipoli or led men during the campaign, and that Source B was propaganda designed to raise morale.

Students extended this general contextual knowledge with more specific information to earn at least Level 3 marks. This might involve explaining the purpose of the campaign, the impact of the campaign, and specific details about casualties and troops. Students frequently referenced poor advice about the number of soldiers required and the number sent to fight, or specific details about the landings, conditions, and consequences. To evaluate the provenance of Source B, students built upon Level 2 understanding and explained that the cartoon concealed the truth from the civilian population or justified the importance of this campaign in the war. With Source C, students recognised that the motive was authentic and remained uninfluenced by propaganda or created for a wider audience.

Question 3

Students generally demonstrated some understanding of the impact of Russia's withdrawal in 1917. Some responses were excessively narrative about why Russia joined in 1914 or the events occurring within Russia in 1917, neither of which was relevant. There was also some

confusion regarding chronology, with students suggesting that Russia's withdrawal triggered America's entry into the war.

Level 1 answers tended to display basic knowledge, such as Germany was no longer fighting on two fronts, but students frequently progressed beyond this to reach Level 2 by explaining a simple impact of these benefits. For example, they noted that Germany now outnumbered the Allies on the Western Front, which placed pressure on Britain and France, or discussed the new resources Germany now possessed. Students demonstrated comprehensive knowledge of the Brest-Litovsk treaty.

Students who addressed the question's focus on the impact caused by Russia's withdrawal, for example, Germany launching the Spring Offensive (Ludendorff Offensive) while maintaining the advantage of additional soldiers, achieved higher levels. Unfortunately, students then often narrated the failure of the Offensive and the entry of the USA, which did not contribute to the answer's focus. Strong answers commented on the impact on both warring sides or on the impact on Germany's military and home front.

Question 4

Students deployed extensive knowledge relating to potential causes of the First World War, but some students were confused by the question's wording and did not reference the stated factor. Answers at Level 2 were characterised by insufficient explanation of how potential causes led to war. A common weakness in responses was that students tended to claim that the potential cause created tension or humiliation without explaining how it caused war, even though this required minimal additional development. This remains a recurring weakness with this type of causation question.

Level 1 responses provided descriptions such as the Kaiser wanting power, wanting land, or desiring a larger army, or outlined other causes such as the Alliances or the Assassination. Level 2 answers explained the foreign policy linked to Morocco or the naval race but often presented this as narrative. Other responses commonly seen at this level explained potential causes such as the Alliance System, imperialism, nationalism, the arms races, the Balkans and Moroccan Crises, and the assassination. Students frequently structured their answers to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of at least one of these potential causes, and often more. However, students appeared to sacrifice the opportunity to develop reasoning for the start of the First World War by attempting to cover too many other potential causes superficially rather than focusing on the question.

Level 3 responses explained with evidence, understanding, and focus how possible causes led to war. Students explained the Kaiser's contribution to the outbreak of war, how he sought military solutions after being rebuffed at conferences, the support offered to Austria-Hungary, and the build-up of arms and navy demonstrating preparation for conflict. This approach was also commonly seen in relation to the Assassination linked with the Alliance System causing other countries to join a localised war. Other points that were developed or linked included the arms race, which created stockpiles of weapons that populations were eager to use. Other valid points that appeared frequently in students' answers were that Britain and France felt that Germany had to be stopped sooner rather than later, and that Austria was seeking an

excuse to remove Serbia. Those who wrote focused paragraphs at Level 3 without including the Kaiser's foreign policy remained at Level 2.

Some impressive Level 4 answers presented judgements using the overlapping nature of numerous potential causes to demonstrate how they contributed to and reinforced each other. For example, Germany's support gave Austria confidence to declare war on Serbia in a Europe filled with tensions created by the Kaiser's foreign policy, such as in Morocco or the naval race. Other students utilised long and short-term comparisons to demonstrate complex judgements. Narrative or summary judgements remained common and added little value.

Regarding Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar, the vast majority of students received three marks for the standard of their historical communication.

1B/B 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 events and the outcome of the Dolfuss Affair to make sensible inferences about why the source was critical of Hitler. There was widespread understanding of the image and symbolism in the cartoon which was mocking Hitler by showing him as a chef being defied by a young child. Answers that relied on the source were rewarded at Level 1. Most students mentioned the word 'critical' in their answer, but frequently this was just re-writing the question to start the answer and not explicitly addressing the question.

Answers that drew on specific contextual knowledge of the reaction by Dolfuss to Hitler's first attempt at Anschluss 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 British cartoon might have been criticising Hitler for trying to break the Treaty of Versailles by uniting Germany and Austria. Some students were able to give a context for the cartoon by referring to Hitler's foreign policy aims and motives for attempting Anschluss in 1934.

Question 2

This question saw most students coping well with the demands of two sources and demonstrating sound and appropriate source evaluation skills. All students attempted an evaluation of the sources using content but far fewer attempted to evaluate the provenance. Most students were able to explain ways in which the sources had value in relation to the enquiry point. It was pleasing to note that instances of answers that based their evaluations of source limitations or omissions, were extremely rare.

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 contextualising the image of the cartoon and explaining the content of the speech. Students' answers at Level 2 included more specific contextual knowledge about peace-making in 1919 and included accurate details which linked the cartoon figures in Source B to the differing aims of the Big Three. However, it was common at Level 2 to see students copying out parts of Source C which restricted the value of the response.

When answers reached Level 3 it was usually because they included an evaluation of both sources and made explicit reference to utility. Students used detailed knowledge of the aims of the peacemakers and the reaction in Germany to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles to contextualise both sources and draw a conclusion about their utility. Students were able to use their contextual knowledge to account for the differing agendas of the Big Three and explain why Wilson seemed preoccupied with the book about the League of Nations whereas Britain and France were focused on holding Germany to account. The best answers also took note of the publication dates and concluded that the shortcomings of peace-making were identified from the beginning of the process.

Students at this level used contextual knowledge of Source C to give developed explanations about Germany's reaction to the Diktat and the War Guilt clause. There was secure knowledge of the topic and a clear focus on utility based on source content. The provenance was not widely used for developed evaluation of the source's utility. Students could have made use of the details given in the attribution to analyse how the source could be useful to an historian. An argument could be made that Source C has value and utility because of the senior political status of the speaker. Source C shows an historian that the views of the German government were openly critical of the peacemakers and that the Treaty of Versailles lacked credibility from its inception.

Answers were placed in Level 4 when there was evidence of developed understanding of the provenance and content of both sources. Good use of the provenance occurred when answers showed a consideration of the motive behind each source and identified them as critical of peace-making for different reasons. Complex evaluation occurred when the sources were considered as a pair and were recognised as illustrating the lack of support for the outcome of peace-making in 1919 amongst the victorious Allies as well as within the defeated Germany.

Question 3

This question was done well by the majority of students. There was widespread evidence of good knowledge and understanding about how the League of Nations responded to events in Manchuria in 1931. Most students were able to present a structured and relevant account, but a large proportion of answers had a misdirected focus on the wider issue of the structural weaknesses of the League of Nations.

Level 1 answers gave basic statements that were relevant to the question whereas Level 2 responses had more specific references to the timeline of events relating to the causes and events of Japan's invasion of Manchuria. Students who proceeded to the higher levels did so

by addressing the specific requirements of the question and presenting a developed analysis of the causes of the League's failure to help Manchuria. They tended to focus on an understanding of the second order concepts and explained the ineffectiveness of Lord Lytton's report and the absence of any effective economic sanctions against Japan. Stronger responses usually made a second developed point by explaining Japan's role in the League's failure by the refusal to uphold the Covenant and rejection of the moral condemnation. To access Level 4 students must give two developed 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 the answers to this question and students were quick to address the stated factor and offer alternative factors as counter arguments. The extent to which students developed their comments on any given factor determined whether their answer was rewarded beyond Level 2. A common weakness when students had insecure knowledge about the stated factor in relation to the outbreak of the Second World War, was to try to make an argument based entirely on the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany in the 1920s being the reason for Hitler's rise to power. Answers that relied solely on details about the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Weimar Germany or the failure of the League of Nations were rarely credited beyond Level 2.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general definition of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement and assertions about why it failed to prevent the outbreak of war. Level 2 answers included more specific relevant knowledge of the policy of appeasement, the Sudetenland Crisis and the Munich Conference. Most students could identify at least one other factor such as the Nazi-Soviet Pact and explain how the invasion of Poland led to the declaration of war by Britain and France.

At Level 3 developed answers were characterised by a clearer structure and they directly addressed the question with good explanations of how several factors combined over the short and long term to result in the outbreak of the Second World War. The strongest answers at this level were effective because there was a clear line of argument that discussed the policy of appeasement alongside other factors such as Hitler's foreign policy aims, the League of Nations and Stalin's reaction to events in Europe. When students linked this knowledge to the role it played in leading to war, they achieved Level 3. Students often provided accurate factual detail but did not relate it to the enquiry point. It was clear to examiners that for an answer to be secure in Level 3 it must be supported with specific factual detail. However, some good two-sided answers remained in Level 3 because rather than making a complex judgement, they 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 compare the impact of the different factors such as the significance of either Chamberlain's, Hitler's, or Stalin's actions in relation to the outbreak of the Second World War. Some students offered a hierarchy of judgement with substantiated reasoning. Good conclusions were often based on attributing responsibility to the different leaders or alternatively, to the harshness of the

terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Some answers showed a good awareness of change over time and argued that the outbreak of war in 1939 could be attributed to the decisions made by the peacemakers in 1919. The best answers included reasoning that was sustained throughout the body of the essay with each factor being evaluated directly in terms of the question. Students are encouraged to present substantiated discussion in their answers and reasoned 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.

1B/C Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972

Question 1

Almost all students found Source A very accessible and easily identified why the source showed support for the friendship between China and the USSR. At Level 1 Students typically offered simple observations based on the visual aspects of Source A, such as noting that the figures were smiling or standing together, flags intertwining, smiling crowds etc.

Many answers drew on the symbolism of the image and made links to their contextual knowledge about the relationship between China and the USSR, such as naming the Treaty of Friendship or noting the shared ideology after 1949. Such answers were awarded in Level 2. Some students evaluated the provenance of the source, considering the motivation for promoting the communist alliance in 1950.

Students should be reminded that this question could be answered in around five minutes and one page was more than ample for a full mark response.

Question 2

This question was approached effectively by most students who found substantial material for analysis in the sources, particularly Source B. Students showed a good grasp of the competitive nature of the Space Race and that propaganda was a key feature of the period. Overall, students tended to base their evaluation on the content of the sources although there were more students than in previous years who successfully evaluated the provenance of the sources.

Students awarded at Level 1 paraphrased or described the sources in relation to the question, with little or no evaluation. Comments were basic and limited to surface-level interpretations or basic inferences such as the Americans did not get a satellite in space first or the USSR thought they had won in the Space Race.

Students who linked relevant knowledge to the sources were awarded at Level 2. For example, those who showed some understanding of the importance of satellites in the

context of the Cold War or who understood the link between the Space Race and the Arms Race. Likewise, students who named some relevant features of the Arms Race or Space Race and linked it to an aspect of the source(s) were placed at Level 2. An example for Source B was the naming of Sputnik or Explorer. Examples for Source C included mentioning that the Soviets had the first man in space. Simple points at this level about the provenance of B included undeveloped explanations about Eisenhower's intention to calm the American public or 'play down' Soviet successes. For source C, students often suggested that the Soviets wanted to show other Communist countries how successful they were, or to show the success of Communism as an ideology through the Space Race.

Level 3 was mostly achieved through the students evaluating the content of the sources. Large numbers of students developed their explanations by showing a detailed understanding of why the launching of Sputnik was so threatening to the US with clear links to fears about ICBMs and espionage. Others discussed the US space programme in some detail. For Source C, many students developed their answers by using examples of Soviet successes in the Space Race, making specific references to Uri Gagarin, Valentina Tereshkova, and Laika.

Developed evaluation of provenance was more common than in previous years. The most successful responses had a sharp focus on purpose and audience in context, explaining for example, that Eisenhower aimed to reassure the public and defend his government's record on investment in the space programme by underplaying Soviet achievements. Evaluation of the provenance of C was usually based around the portrayal of Communist society in the poster. Many students argued that the Space Race was used by the Soviet leadership to inspire continued loyalty and obedience to Communism as a collective endeavour. The source attributions were effective signposts to students into an evaluation of provenance.

Question 3

Almost every student had relevant knowledge about the division of Germany and this question enabled students to easily show what they knew and understood. The majority were awarded Level 2 and above. Students who made general references to Germany being divided or Germany being a reason for rivalry were awarded in Level 1.

Large numbers of students described in some detail the decisions at Yalta and Potsdam which led to the division of Germany, the position and division of Berlin, the Berlin Blockade and Airlift. These answers were descriptive in nature, using phrases such as 'and then' or 'later' to link together parts of their response. These answers were awarded in Level 2 because they did not address the second part of the question - how Superpower relations were affected by the division of Berlin.

Answers awarded in Level 3 were characterised by explicit reference to the declining relationship between the Superpowers as a consequence of the division of Germany. There were several possible ways to approach this analysis. A common approach was to explain how the creation of Bizonia and Trizonia plus the introduction of the Deutschmark led to a decline in Superpower relations resulting in the Berlin Blockade.

Two developed points were needed for level 4 which showed a clear sense of cause and consequence. Many students developed a second point about the Airlift as an additional source of tension, others developed a point about the creation of NATO as a direct result of events in post-war Germany. Stronger responses explained how these events marked a shift from cooperation to confrontation. Some also noted how the division of Germany became symbolic of the Cold War itself.

Some students included points about the Berlin Wall which were not relevant to this specific question and were, at best, awarded Level 1 if they referred to the post war division of Germany.

Question 4

This question was answered effectively by most students. It was evident that centres were preparing students effectively for the structural expectations of question 4 as the overwhelming majority explained the Cuban Missile Crisis and one or more alternative events in the 1960s.

Level 1 was awarded to students showing a basic understanding of event(s) in the 1960s such as the fact that missiles on Cuba posed a threat to the USA or that a US spy plane was shot down over the USSR and the Soviets did not like it.

Responses were awarded in Level 2 if they included relevant knowledge of events in the 1960s. Some answers were very impressive in the level of information recalled about a number of events including the Cuban Missile Crisis, U2 Crisis, Prague Spring, Berlin Wall etc. Such answers did not include explanations about how each event increased tension between the Superpowers and were therefore limited to Level 2. For example, many students offered very detailed descriptions of the U2 crisis but did not explain the consequences beyond stating that the Paris Peace Conference did not go ahead. Students who only addressed the Cuban Missile Crisis were awarded in Level 2. Less common but also awarded in Level 2, were responses which explained the impact on Superpower relations of a range of events in the 1960s but lacked factual knowledge of the events themselves. Students should address the named event plus one other in detail with explicit reference to the whole question, rather than including descriptions of a large range of events.

Responses awarded marks at Level 3 had a clear focus on developing tensions between the Superpowers and included a discussion of the Cuban Missile Crisis and one or more alternative events which led to increasing tension. Most students had good knowledge of the Cuban Missile Crisis and discussed escalating tensions in relation to the naval blockade, DEFCON levels and even the Soviet submarine. Many included an evaluation of short-term tension followed by measures to stabilise relations. The most popular alternative event was the U2 crisis where students confidently explained escalating tensions in terms of the end of the 'Thaw' and the lost opportunity to discuss issues around Berlin, Cuba, and arms limitation. Other students explained how the Prague Spring entrenched the Soviet grip on Communist countries or explored tensions caused by the Berlin Wall by explaining Kennedy's reaction or the standoff at Checkpoint Charlie in terms of Superpower tensions.

Some students opted to include the Vietnam War or Space Race/Arms Race. It was unusual for such explanations to go beyond descriptions of events or developments.

Students reaching Level 4 demonstrated complex thinking by way of a substantiated judgment. This could be accomplished in the main body of the writing or, more commonly in a well-argued conclusion. Excellent responses weighed the severity of the Cuban Missile Crisis e.g. proximity to nuclear war against other factors such as the Berlin Wall, Brezhnev Doctrine, and U2 spy plane incident. The best answers offered a clear sophisticated judgement, often arguing that the Cuban Missile Crisis was the most dramatic moment, but there were other long-term structural tensions which remained high throughout the decade. Many argued strongly for the U2 Crisis as the main factor due to lost opportunities to de-escalate tensions which led to subsequent events.

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

1B/D Conflict and tension in Asia, 1950–1975

Question 1

This question proved straightforward and accessible. Students demonstrated the ability to use their knowledge of President Nixon to make sensible inferences about why the source supported his policies. Answers that relied on simple analysis of the source received awards at Level 1. There was widespread understanding of how the facial expressions of President Nixon and Premier Zhou Enlai showed that both leaders were happy the visit had taken place. Many also interpreted the handshake as a sign of Nixon's welcome and that it signalled some sort of agreement between the two countries. Some commented on the symbolism of the red carpet, though not all could support their analysis with contextual knowledge of Nixon's desire to improve relations with China. A minority thought that the source was linked to the containment of Communism.

Answers that drew on specific contextual knowledge about Nixon's aims to withdraw America from the Vietnam War, or his request that China pressurise North Vietnam to make a deal to end the war, could access Level 2. Few students made use of the provenance which provided another route to Level 2. Effective use of the source's provenance appeared in answers that could explain how the TV Guide was encouraging Americans to watch the TV coverage of Nixon's visit to China by putting this image on the front page.

Question 2

This question saw many students successfully managing the demands of two sources, applying sound and appropriate source evaluation skills. All students attempted an evaluation of the sources with a focus on their content, but far fewer attempted to evaluate the provenance. Most students could explain ways in which the sources had value in relation to

the enquiry point. Whilst the question permits students to discuss the limitations of the sources, those limitations must be relevant to the question. 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 either source. Students writing at this level found both sources accessible and achieved marks by showing what the content of the government report told us about the spread of Communism in Asia and by contextualising the image of the cartoon.

Students' answers at Level 2 included more historical understanding about American policies aimed at stopping the spread of Communism and how these had achieved some success in preventing South Korea from becoming Communist. Others focused on American aid to help the French fight the Vietminh. There were some students at Level 2 who largely paraphrased Source B, which restricted the value of the response. Most students recognised that the cartoon in Source C was a visual representation of Eisenhower's Domino Theory. Many students commented on the secret nature of Source B, though few offered a comment on the provenance of Source C. Some students thought that Source C was intended for an American audience. It was rare to see a response which noted that Source B was written during the battle of Dien Bien Phu and Source C drawn after the Geneva Agreement, and how this difference could contribute to utility.

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 their observations to American attitudes to Communism and their actions to stop its spread in Asia. Developed understanding of the content of Source B involved discussions that whilst America had helped the French with \$3 billion of military aid and sent military advisers, they took no direct action during the battle of Dien Bien Phu. Students explained that the French loss to the Vietminh, followed by the Geneva Agreement in 1954, led the USA to supply military aid to support South Vietnam. Other responses developed the content of Source C with detailed knowledge of how Communism had spread to both China and North Korea and why Vietnam was in danger of becoming fully Communist.

There was secure knowledge of the topic and a clear focus on utility based on source content. The provenance was not widely used for developed evaluation of the source's utility. Students could have made use of the details given in the attribution to analyse how the sources could be useful to an historian. An argument could be made that Source B has value and utility because it was a secret government report to the President, which was not intended for publication. It was likely to be an accurate reflection of American fears and plans to stop the spread of Communism in Asia. Source C shows an historian how another democratic country and an American ally viewed the spread of Communism. A possible motive could be that it was intended as propaganda to motivate Australians to take the Communist threat seriously and support their government in its alliance with the USA.

Question 3

This question was completed well by many students. There was widespread evidence of good knowledge and understanding of the events of the Korean War. Not all students focused sufficiently on the demands of the question, as they gave detailed accounts of the course of the war without explaining how the war ended in military stalemate.

Level 1 answers noted that North Korea invaded South Korea but was then pushed back by UN forces. Most students could 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 on the early successes of the North Korean army and how these were reversed following the intervention of UN forces. Some students chose to focus on describing the stalemate rather than explaining how it came about. There were some who thought that military stalemate was a planned outcome.

Students who proceeded to the higher levels did so by addressing the specific requirements of the question and presenting a developed analysis of the causes of military stalemate. Many who reached Level 3 used their background knowledge to explain how both sides were evenly matched in terms of military equipment, which meant it was difficult for one side to overpower the other. Some students explained that it was a proxy war between Cold War superpowers which had the potential to become a nuclear war, and how Truman was determined to avoid the use of a nuclear weapon to secure a decisive victory. To access Level 4, students must provide two explicitly explained points. Clearer organisation of their knowledge and better technique would have helped some students achieve higher marks.

Question 4

Very good knowledge was displayed in the answers to this question, and students were quick to address the stated factor and then offer alternative factors. The extent to which students developed their explanations on any given factor determined whether their answer received rewards beyond Level 2.

Level 1 responses tended to be limited to a general comment that the Tet Offensive took place during an agreed ceasefire and assertions as to how this led to American failure to win the war. Level 2 answers included more specific relevant knowledge about the simultaneous attacks on over a hundred towns, cities, and US military bases. There was detailed knowledge about the temporary capture of the US embassy in Saigon and the destruction of Hue. Many knew that the Tet Offensive was a tactical change by the Vietcong and understood their long-term planning. Not all students could explain why the Tet Offensive had an impact on American failure to win the war.

At Level 3, developed answers were characterised by a clear structure which directly addressed the question, with good explanations of why America failed to win the war. Explanations of the Tet Offensive discussed how the media coverage shocked the American public who began to question why America was involved in a war they did not seem able to win, only months after they had been told that America was close to victory. A range of other factors received consideration, with a particular emphasis on the effectiveness of Vietcong tactics and their ability to reduce American morale, and the ineffective US tactics. The impact

of the terrain and US failure to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Vietnamese peasants were also explored. The contribution of media coverage of the war and especially the exposure of the My Lai massacre often appeared as important other factors. The strongest answers at this level proved effective because there was a clear line of argument that explained how factors led to American failure to win the war, and this received support with specific factual knowledge. However, some 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 could explain the relative significance of the different factors. For example, students sometimes concluded in their judgements that the Tet Offensive was not the most important factor as failures in US strategy and weaponry had more impact, whilst recognising that the Tet Offensive was a turning point that indirectly led to failure because of the impact it had on popular support for the war. Furthermore, some answers judged that the physical environment contributed more to American failure. The dense jungle aided the effectiveness of guerilla warfare and gave the Americans an immediate disadvantage because their technology and military hardware were not suited to the terrain in which they were fighting.

Regarding Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar, most students received three marks for the standard of their historical communication.

1B/E Conflict and tension in the Gulf and Afghanistan, 1990–2009

Question 1

Students responded well to the cartoon source. Only a small number of students failed to attempt this question. The source provided multiple routes for inference, including Bin Laden travelling with Death, Death working for Bin Laden, and Death accompanying Bin Laden wherever he travelled. These basic observations were assessed at Level 1. More sophisticated Level 2 understanding emerged from recognition that this was a British cartoon published in 2004, following the attack on a British Consulate. This contextual awareness developed into the understanding that many British citizens felt they would be targeted next.

Given the cartoon date of 2004, a few students established the connection to the 7/7 London bombings that occurred one year later. Students who demonstrated stronger responses were able to connect their contextual knowledge to the cartoon by referencing 9/11 and various subsequent attacks in Indonesia, Morocco, Thailand, Yemen, and Kenya. When these connections were properly linked to the source content, responses achieved Level 2 marks.

Question 2

Both sources proved highly accessible to students, and only a very small number of students did not attempt the question. Source B presented a newspaper extract reporting George Bush's first visit to ground zero, including details of Bush's response to the assembled crowd. The source provided substantial evidence to suggest that Bush, as both President and politician, was manipulating the crowd, the situation, the prevailing emotion, and the growing patriotism following 9/11. Student success in analysing this circumstance determined their reward for understanding and evaluating the provenance involved. Simple inference achieved Level 1, whilst some exploration of the purpose behind Bush's actions, such as seeking American public support, such as, 'He's trying to get the American people's support,' resulted in Level 2 assessment. Level 3 required comprehensive exposition of Bush's actions and their purpose, for example, 'Bush is playing the emotion in the crowd to encourage the public to support him in his retaliation, which became the War on Terror.' Students could strengthen their responses by connecting contextual knowledge, acknowledging the 9/11 events and more pertinently Bush's subsequent actions including the "Axis of Evil" speech and the invasion of Afghanistan. Level 3 assessment of the content required a fuller substantiation with a range of knowledge. Specific knowledge alone did not guarantee Level 3 assessment; it required developed explanation and analysis.

Students demonstrated less success with Source B. Responses frequently contained paraphrasing of the text rather than analytical inference, and many students failed to extend their analysis to include even basic contextual knowledge. Students would benefit from practising connections between brief written source extracts and broader historical knowledge. This approach would improve their ability to make appropriate selections and develop analytical skills.

Source C generated stronger responses, with few students failing to attempt commentary on this source. This success likely reflected the greater accessibility of pictorial sources to students. The source originated from a European newspaper and presented satirical content. At Level 1, many students successfully made inferences and observations about Bush's failure, as represented by his inability to hit the target on the dartboard symbolising terror. Level 2 responses included discussion of the satirical nature of the source and recognition of its critical perspective. Although more students achieved success with Source C than Source B, Source B received more Level 3 provenance marks than Source C. Source C required students to explain why a European newspaper might adopt such a critical stance towards Bush and to identify the publication's intended message: calling for the end of the War on Terror and avoiding being involved any further either in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Contextual knowledge could encompass examples of how the War on Terror failed in Afghanistan or Iraq. Students made points that explored the insurgency, ineffective governments, and the context of the cartoon's 2009 publication when the War on Terror appeared to have achieved little yet caused considerable suffering. The distinction between Level 2 and Level 3 assessment depended upon the specificity of knowledge combined with how effectively students linked their knowledge to the source and explained their analytical conclusions.

Question 3

The question explicitly required students to explain how "the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 led to an international crisis". The question provided multiple avenues for exploration, including the rapid involvement of the United States, other Arab countries, and the United Nations in developing Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Level 1 answers showed basic observations, whilst Level 2 responses included greater contextual knowledge regarding the invasion events and the development of the international crisis. Some students chose to analyse why Iraq invaded Kuwait, but this approach was not relevant to the question requirements. Many students developed an understanding of the events but failed to connect their analysis to the question focus. This limitation restricted them to Level 2 assessment despite some demonstrating substantial knowledge and understanding.

Level 3 achievement required students to address the question directly by explaining how, 'this led to an international crisis because...' and analysing the resulting impact. Level 4 students showed more than one way in which the invasion led to an international crisis, substantiated by appropriate knowledge. One significant problem students encountered was confusion between the two Iraq conflicts due to an insecure grasp of knowledge and chronology, leading to discussions of consequences extending well beyond the 1990s. This chronological confusion limited the marks students could achieve.

Question 4

Question 4 examined the consequences of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The primary difficulty to achieving a successful response appeared to be students' preference for exploring the reasons for invasion rather than its results. This approach significantly impacted the marks they achieved. Every effort was made by examiners to credit any form of invasion 'results,' but students must address the actual question rather than their preferred alternative. Some lower-ability students struggled to construct arguments around the removal of Saddam Hussein.

Level 1 responses typically demonstrated basic knowledge or simple statements, such as 'No weapons of mass destruction were found' or elementary descriptions of Saddam's fate, for example 'He was found in a hole and executed.' Level 2 responses explored various themes in narrative form. Students described the invasion and subsequent downfall of Saddam Hussein, problems with the transitional government, sectarian violence and civil war between Sunni and Shia Muslims, problems with quality of life for Iraqis, and the failure to locate weapons of mass destruction and subsequent reputational damage to United States and United Kingdom governments. Sometimes students explored these ideas but lacked sufficient detailed knowledge for their paragraphs to be considered fully developed.

Level 3 required two or more developed and substantiated consequences. Students achieved greatest success when they argued that Saddam's removal was positive by evidencing the harm Saddam had inflicted upon different sections of Iraqi society. The justification that this action liberated these populations proved very effective and provided stronger foundation for examining more negative consequences.

Level 4 required developed and substantiated consequences, plus a conclusion providing weighted judgement. Students considered how factors interconnected and which might have had greater impact upon the Iraqi people, government, and coalition forces. Furthermore, some students argued that one factor influenced another. The extent to which students incorporated each consequence into their weighted argument determined their marks within Level 4. The most effective essays featured students stating their arguments within the opening paragraph and consistently maintaining this line of reasoning throughout the essay.

Regarding Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar, most students received three 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.