

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

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**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y223/01 Summer 2024 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper Y223/01 series overview

Y223 is one of 24 units in Paper 2 for the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 years through a short answer essay question and a traditional essay question. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short answer essay and a traditional essay. Candidates have to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short-answer essay question, candidates need to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels candidates need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

On this paper there was a fairly even split between the number of candidates completing both questions.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short answer essay</li> <li>reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important</li> <li>linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question</li> <li>discussed at least two issues in depth when answering the essay question</li> <li>comparatively evaluated their chosen factors in the essays</li> <li>provided accurate and relevant supporting detail to the question set, not just the topic</li> <li>reach a supported judgement about the issue in the question</li> <li>made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way</li> <li>produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion; or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response</li> <li>were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question</li> <li>showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay</li> <li>were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material</li> <li>did not focus on the precise wording of the question</li> <li>made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.</li> </ul>

## Question 1 (a) (i) and (ii)

1

(a) Which of the following was more responsible for the 'new Cold War' in the period from 1979 to 1984?

(i) The USSR

(ii) The USA

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

Many candidates had a very good understanding of the issues in this question. Most candidates were able to write in reasonable detail, focusing on relevant factors including the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and their reneging of the Helsinki Accords. The most successful responses noted their withdrawal from the 1984 Olympics or their repression of Solidarity in Poland. However, weaker responses wrote generally on the 'new Cold War' or included details from before the given dates in the question.

In dealing with US actions most candidates were able to discuss the role of the USA in supporting Afghanistan in their war against the Soviets as well as Reagan's more combative approach to diplomacy and his SDI programme. The most successful responses were also able to discuss their withdrawal from the Moscow Olympics as well as the failure to ratify SALT II.

### Assessment for learning



Candidates should ensure that they include information from within the dates stated in the question.

## Question 1 (b)\*

(b)\* 'Plans for post-war Europe were the main cause of tensions and difficulties at the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

This was reasonably well answered by most candidates. Focused responses were able to look at the plans for post-war Europe at the 3 conferences by examining reparations and the division of Germany, the future of Poland and Soviet ambitions in Eastern Europe. The best responses were able to pinpoint these factors to specific conferences. Weaker responses tended to include detail from beyond the scope of the question by examining events such as the Berlin airlift.

In countering the premise of the question many candidates were able to write at length on other factors, including the delay in opening a second front in Europe, changing personalities with the arrival of Truman at Potsdam, Stalin's concerns at Potsdam regarding the development of atomic weapons and a longer-term ideological difference between capitalism and communism. The best responses to this question were able to reach a substantiated judgement on the main reasons for tensions at the conferences.

## Exemplar 1

1	6	<p>There has long been debates by historians about the main cause of tensions and difficulties at the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam conference. Some agree with the statement saying plans for post-war Europe were the main cause whereas others cite different reasons such as ideological and personal differences or strategic differences during the war. <del>This is</del> It can be said though that plans for post-war Europe were the main cause so the statement can be largely agreed with.</p> <p>Firstly, plans for post-war Europe was a large driver of tensions. This is because the USSR, and the UK and the USA had different aims for post war Europe. The UK and USA wanted free and fair elections across Europe whereas Stalin wanted to use the Eastern European nations as a buffer state to protect against any future invasion from Europe. This led to tensions at Yalta in February 1945 as Stalin was reluctant to agree to free and fair elections making <del>the</del> it difficult for the allies to come to an agreement. Furthermore, Stalin wanted to keep <del>some</del> the Polish territory he had taken in 1939 but the allies were reluctant to let him especially Churchill who wanted to defend the Poles as that is what had started world war Two. This also created tensions although it was agreed the USSR could take land from Poland and it would get land from Germany. This seems to show post-war plans were a major cause of difficulties at Yalta as although there was an agreement, neither side got exactly what they wanted <del>making</del> creating tension as both</p>
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sides were wary of the other's intentions with these aims. This can also be seen at Potsdam in July 1945 where Stalin's demand of <sup>large</sup> reparations from Germany caused great difficulty as the UK and USA did not want this as they wanted Germany to remain economically strong so they didn't have to prop it up themselves which would be costly. An agreement was reached however as <sup>the</sup> USSR got 10% of ~~the~~ reparations from the UK's and USA's German zones. In this ~~traty~~ conference it was confirmed Stalin would have a sphere of influence over Eastern Europe which also caused tension as the allies worried the free and fair elections in these countries would be threatened creating suspicion and making the conference more difficult. ~~Overat~~ as they didn't know Stalin's ~~int~~ plans. Overall, plans for post-war Europe seem a main cause of tensions as both sides disagreed and neither got fully what they wanted making the conferences more difficult so the statement can be largely agreed with.

Another cause of tensions is ideological <sup>differences</sup> and personal <sup>relationships</sup> ~~differences~~. At Yalta and Tehran this was less of a problem as the allies were focussed on the war and the ~~to~~ ideological differences of Capitalism and Communism ~~and~~ Capitalism had little effect. However at Potsdam this wasn't the case as the anti-communist Truman was now President not the more sympathetic Roosevelt. This made proceedings much more difficult especially as After the new Prime Minister of UK ~~just~~ went along with Truman. Truman was wary of Stalin

and greatly disliked him partly due to Communism and its beliefs of the state over the individual <sup>which was</sup> ~~and Communism~~ fundamentally different to Truman's capitalist beliefs but also because Truman saw Stalin as a threat to democracy. ~~and~~ At Potsdam tensions increased as Truman was arrogant and lectured to Stalin less as the USA had the atomic bomb and Germany was defeated so Stalin was no longer needed so Truman ~~made~~ tried to make less concessions making the conference more difficult than the others with more disagreements as Truman wouldn't back down like Roosevelt would. This seems to suggest personal differences was a main cause of tensions and difficulties as Truman disliked Stalin and was less likely to concede to him making the conference harder. However, personal relationships also decreased tension. This can be seen as Roosevelt had a good relationship with Stalin referring to him as Uncle Joe. ~~but~~ this means he managed to get Stalin to agree to the UN at Yalta which he had been reluctant to do. This seems to ~~know~~ make the view that ideological <sup>differences</sup> and personal <sup>relationships</sup> ~~differences~~ seem less valid as here they clearly decreased tensions and difficulties making the conference easier. This means it may be said that although <sup>ideological differences and</sup> personal <sup>relationships</sup> ~~differences~~ was ~~the~~ a main cause of tensions it can't be the main one as it tensions decreased due to it it didn't <sup>consistently</sup> ~~always~~ raise tensions like plans for Europe so the argument can be largely agreed with.



A final cause of tensions and difficulties is strategic differences. This can be seen at the Tehran conference in 1943 whereas strategic differences helped largely raise tensions. This ~~can be seen in~~ is because during the conference Stalin wanted the UK and USA to invade Europe and create a second front to take pressure off the Soviet Union. Up until this point in the war Stalin felt the USSR had ~~unfairly~~ contributed much more as they had fought many more German soldiers than the allies had in northern Europe <sup>Asia</sup> and had suffered millions of losses both civilian and military personnel. This meant Stalin was determined to get a second front to make the war easier but the UK and USA were reluctant to agree with this as they were fighting Japan in Asia and claimed they were not yet ready. This means although the allies did eventually agree to a second front it did not happen till <sup>July</sup> 1944 much later than Stalin wanted. This created difficulties as not only was Stalin angry about the reluctance for the second front he afterward viewed his allies with more suspicion as they took so long to make the second front which may help understand later tensions about security. However this strategic difference was only at Tehran and after this it wasn't a cause of tension at the conferences as plans for Europe took over as the main cause and as the war was nearing its end there was little need for more

strategic talk. Therefore it can be said although strategic differences was the main cause at Tehran it wasn't at the other two so it's not the main cause so the statement may still be largely agreed with.

In conclusion post-war plans for Europe seems like the main cause of tension. It caused tension at all three (at Tehran there was also disagreements about the Polish border) but the other two potential causes did not with personal relationships even lessening tensions and difficulties at Yalta. Although <sup>ideological</sup> ~~personal~~ differences and personal did raise tensions at Potsdam it was mainly disagreements over Germany and Eastern Europe which was the main cause here as the allies were reluctant to see the USSR control much of Europe. Overall then the ~~statement~~ with personal and ideological only adding to this not causing the difficulties. Overall, then it can be said post-war plans for Europe was the main cause of tension at ~~Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam~~ the wartime conferences so the statement can be largely agreed with.

This exemplar shows a very good response that deals with a range of issues before arriving at a judgement in the conclusion. Interim judgements and comparative evaluation of the chosen factors would be needed for Level 6. This response was placed at the top of Level 5.

## Question 2 (a) (i) and (ii)

**2**  
**(a)** Which of the following was the greater cause of tension in Europe in the period from 1946 to 1955?

- (i)** Atomic weapons
- (ii)** Conflicts over Germany

Explain your answer with reference to both **(i)** and **(ii)**.

**[10]**

This was handled relatively well by the majority of candidates. In dealing with atomic weapons the most successful responses looked at the implications of the use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the development of atomic weapons by the Soviet Union. The development of hydrogen bombs was also included by many candidates. Weaker responses wrote more generally about each factor or included information from outside the scope of the question. Details about the Berlin Wall fell into this category.

In tackling conflicts over Germany, most candidates could talk about the division of Germany and the various conflicts between the occupying powers. Most dealt well with the development of Bizonia and Trizonia and the accompanying reforms to currency as increasing tensions as well as the subsequent problems caused by the Berlin blockade. The best responses were also able to demonstrate the more permanent tensions caused by the development of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

### Misconception



Some candidates confused the Berlin blockade and airlift with the construction of the Berlin Wall.

## Exemplar 2

02	a)	Conflicts over Germany were by far the greater cause of tensions in Europe for 1946-55.
		Conflicts over Germany during this time are largely characterised by the 1946-1948 Berlin Blockade and subsequent airlift. This had been caused by the progressing formation of a separate West German/West Berlin State, ignoring the Stalin's pleas for a reunified Germany, demonstrated in formation of Bizonia (to protect Britain's economic weakness). The cause of the blockade was the West's currency reform, that did not inform Stalin of. The response of Stalin is what increased tensions so dramatically, as he blockaded all land entry points to Berlin from the West to try force the West to abandon separate West German policy. This forced a potential war as demonstrated a new

		policy of forceful negotiation. The West responded with an airlift of supplies, that by the end was providing 40 8000 tonnes of supplies every day. Tensions are demonstrated as showed how conflict could arise over Germany due to neither side being prepared to agree to the others wants of Germany. This caused the West to increase progression of a West German State with establishment of the FRG, causing Stalin to establish GDR*. Tensions within Germany at this time were heightened by US propaganda, as US not ready to involve itself in East but did promote anti Soviet radio and messages, such as with East German uprising 1953 and the Soviet army putting it down. Helped to have Adenauer re-elected in West Germany. There were also fears over the events of Korea occurring within Germany, due to the Ulbricht support for the North. These tensions occurred throughout this period and it is obvious Germany was the focal point of both sides at this time.
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While atomic weapons also had a dramatic effect on causing tensions at this time, however not as significant as conflict over Germany. As the USA had atomic weapons first there were ~~in~~ issues over their use, the USA had decided to give UN the power of them, as knew the USSR were catching up with independent programme after discovery of espionage in USA and Canada. The control over these was ~~so~~ a cause for tension as was left up to the UN, with problems as the USSR wanted

\*and after the failure of the Stalin note for <sup>West recognition, which began</sup> the acceleration of socialism in Europe.

to have veto powers for using atomic weapons, which was opposed before the USSR demanded the destruction of all atomic weapons. There was limited agreement over that action would be taken, causing tension. While the establishment of NATO in 1949 provided a military alliance that had possession of nuclear weapons, this increased the dramatic ~~so~~ scale of potential conflict as more countries were provided with their backing up. NATO reinforcement dramatically increased as well after USSR gained atomic weapons in 1949, this can be seen in the European Defence Community (EDC) and in the Spafford compromise. Europe was a new ground and the threat of USA in using atomic weapons in Korea caused fear for what could happen in Europe.

		The conflicts over Germany were <del>there</del> a greater
		cause of tensions at this time due to it being the
		first time the two sides had engaged in brinkmanship
		to say force decision. While atomic weapons were more
		MAD mutually assured destruction, and despite their
		threat would likely not be used as both sides were
		armed. Both <del>trans</del>

This exemplar shows a good response which deals with both factors in good detail and was placed in Level 5.

## Question 2 (b)\*

(b)\* 'The reunification of Germany was the most significant event in bringing about the end of the Cold War during the period from 1984 to 1995.'

How far do you agree?

[20]

This question elicited the full range of responses and was well handled by many candidates. Most candidates were able to write in detail on how the collapse of the Berlin Wall demonstrated the diminishing influence of Soviet influence in Germany. They were also able to discuss the Soviet response to reunification. Only the strongest responses were able to discuss the reunification treaty and its terms, or indeed the implications of Germany joining NATO. Those that did less-well tended to include detail from beyond the scope of the question, in particular in terms of discussing events from the 1950s and 60s, which were not required by this question. In addition, some candidates wrote generally about the reunification of Germany but without showing how it brought about the end of the Cold War. Candidates should bear in mind the exact wording of the question here.

Most candidates were well-versed in the counter-arguments and wrote at length on the impact of Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika both in the Soviet Union but also in its satellite states. The Soviet Union's economic problems caused by Afghanistan and military expenditure in the 1980s were also noted. The best responses were able to link these ideas to independence movements such as the Velvet Revolution or the role of Solidarity in Poland.

## Assessment for learning



Candidates should ensure that they focus clearly on the exact wording of the question and demonstrate how the reunification of Germany brought about the end of the Cold War.



## Exemplar 3

		<p>The reunification of Germany is still an important factor in bringing about the end of the cold war, this is seen by it being a largely symbolic end to the cold war as Germany had been a conflicting problem between east and west since the 1940's. It was finally <del>so</del> reunified after mass public opinion demanded the FRG and GDR to merge again, this can be seen in the thousands of people crossing borders throughout this time. The sides united with the 2+4=1 treaty signifying an end to a main source of continuing the cold war, this is because of its impact throughout and it finally being solved demonstrated that the cold war has ended. However this is not one of the most significant events, as the problem of Germany had not been apparent since 1961 with the building of the wall after 199,000 people left East Berlin for west in 1960. This <del>so</del> pushed many of the problems with Germany to the side and allowed a period of détente through the 1960's and 70's, as there was no more disagreement over Germany. Also it was more public opinion than either side choosing to reunify, demonstrating</p>
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There was limited approval until it was agreed that USSR would get western loans and that Germany would join NATO that they agreed on reunifying. Demonstrating soviet economy had much to do with them agreeing. This factor is minimal in its change at the time but added as a symbol for end.

Whereas the most important factor, which ties into reunifying Germany was the USSR and its loss of world power and declining economy. This is the most important factor as it had the most to do with inability to continue the cold war, as well as bringing about the fall of the USSR. The USSR had lost its mass world power status after invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and following tension in Soviet sphere. While the economy was the most impacting factor, as was stagnating, often the Soviet economy could not keep up with the rest of the world, mostly due to its lack of progression and failure to invest in technology as feared would lead to a promotion of capitalism. The Soviet economy was 1/3 of the US GDP, demonstrating being able to keep up in a costly arms race and the missile gap was extending. This was also hampered by an oil crisis <sup>so</sup> and the USSR began to ~~look~~ look for a peaceful end as the cold war would cause the USSR to end sooner if not decline tensions. This is demonstrated in the Soviets engagement in summits with the US, at Geneva 1985 (beginning of ~~talks~~ <sup>talks</sup>), then Washington 1987 (sign INF treaty, make arms reductions) and finally at Malta 1989 where both



Sides (Gorbachev and the Bush) recognised the end of the cold war. This is the most significant factor as caused the USSR to look to ending the cold war as could no longer engage in any matter of competition with the west.

While another significant factor is the USSR leadership of Gorbachev who took a new approach not seen by Soviet leaders beforehand, this was in aim of preserving the USSR because of tensions ~~and~~ in satellite states, seen in Polish Solidarity crisis since 1980, where Solidarity membership reached 8 million, as well as the stagnating Soviet economy. This was demonstrated in his policies of Glasnost (policy of openness) and Perestroika. Glasnost ended the Brezhnev doctrine, ended censorship as well as instituting more democratic system (need 50% of vote to stay in power). However ~~lead to~~ impacted end of the cold war as promoted that countries could censorship ending ~~that~~ uncovered Chernobyl, Soviet corruption and events in Afghanistan causing negative Soviet feeling in a more free and less restricted structure (freedom of speech). While Perestroika aimed to modernise the failing economy, this was needed for the USSR to stay, but its eventual failure lead to the fall of the USSR. These policies and new style of leadership demonstrate a new USSR, one potentially more ready to engage with the West. However failure and promotion of Yeltsin lead to the end of the USSR and cold war in the way it did, it should be argued that succeeding likely would of ended the cold war

		but potentially not as soon as it did.
		Overall it is clear that the reunification was not the most significant event to bring about the end of the cold war, instead more standing as a symbol for it due to Germany not having been a continuing problem in recent years. While it is instead obvious how the decline of the USSR brought about a need to secure a calm benefiting end to the cold war, they could not keep up in. Alongside the new leadership and failure of policies that meant the USSR could not survive and end to the cold war was inevitable by the late 1980's.

This exemplar shows a response which makes both interim and full judgements in order to produce a well-balanced Level 6 response to the question.

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