

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

HISTORY A

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in History A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y318/01 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper Y318/01 series overview	4
Section A overview	5
Question 1	5
Section B overview	13
Question 2*	13
Question 3*	18
Question 4*	23

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 responses 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 [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper Y318/01 series overview

Y318 is one of twenty one units for Paper 3 of the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of at least one hundred years through an interpretation question on a named in-depth topic and through two essays.

The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates are required to use contextual knowledge to test the views of two historians about one of the three named in-depth topics or an aspect of one. The question does not require them to comment on the style of writing or the provenance of the interpretation.

In Section B candidates are required to answer two essay questions from a choice of three.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question - were able to use contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretation through evaluative words - were able to consider the strengths and/or limitations of both interpretations using contextual knowledge - covered the whole period in a balanced way - adopted a thematic approach - made links and comparisons between aspects of the topic - explained the links and comparisons - supported their arguments with precise and relevant examples - reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question.	- showed a limited understanding of one or both of the interpretations - did not go beyond a basic explanation of the interpretation - did not link contextual knowledge directly to the Interpretation and therefore did not evaluate the interpretation - adopted a chronological rather than thematic approach - did not make links or comparisons, even if events from different parts of the period were discussed in the same paragraph - did not cover the whole period - did not focus on the precise wording of the question - did not use specific and relevant evidence - made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

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Section A overview

There is one compulsory question in this section. This question requires candidates to explain the view of each interpretation in relation to the question and then evaluate the interpretation by the application of contextual knowledge. Responses should show an understanding of the wider debate connected to the issue.

Section A in Paper Y318 is focused on the weaknesses of the Provisional Government, with Passage A suggesting that weaknesses were rooted in its unelected status and the loss of credibility due to failed reforms, while Passage B focused on the impact of military failures and the strength of radical political views.

Question 1

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages.

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the weaknesses of the Provisional Government. [30]

Many candidates answered this question well, showing sound knowledge and understanding of the issues related to the rule of the Provisional Government and the wider historiographical debate about this period. Some candidates recognised that Passage A can be used to support the view that the Provisional Government was 'doomed from the start', while Passage B resonates more with the alternative view that the Provisional Government was not doomed from the start, failing instead due to external pressures. While acknowledgement of this traditional debate was often helpful, allowing candidates to show their understanding of different interpretations, it sometimes prevented candidates from focusing fully on the specific arguments within each passage.

The strongest answers identified specific arguments within each passage and supported or challenged these using additional contextual knowledge. For example, many candidates supported the view in Passage A that 'the provisional government lacked support' with knowledge of how it was formed from the last Duma and included many landed elites that were not representative of the population. This point could also be made to support elements of Passage B. Candidates were also able to use their knowledge about land seizures to support the view that 'reforms failed'.

Similarly, candidates made valid points in support of Passage B, which suggest that reforms were more successful, by their knowledge of reforms such as freedom of the press and the removal of the secret police. Successful candidates also demonstrated knowledge that the Kornilov Affair weakened the government because it led them to arm the Bolsheviks, or provided detail about the political, economic, and social problems caused by the war (picking up on the passage's claim that 'war was the most divisive issue'). The very best answers selected multiple points from each passage and clearly evaluated them using additional knowledge, before evaluating which passage they found most convincing.

Weaker answers showed a lack of specific knowledge about this period. Although many candidates could identify and explain the general arguments presented in each passage, the explanation was vague and not supported with any specific, detailed knowledge. On occasion, candidates relied on knowledge that was less relevant, such as events earlier in the war, pre-1917, or following the October Revolution. This knowledge could not be credited where it was not specifically linked to an argument in the passages.

Assessment for learning



Phrases such as 'this is convincing because...' or 'this is valid when considering...' are excellent for signposting where a candidate is evaluating the passage. They must be paired with specific and relevant knowledge to be credited as valid evaluation.

Exemplar 1

11	Passage A, in relation to the weakness of the Provisional Government, argues that they failed to win over popular support via the people, making their political position precarious and susceptible to radical opposition. In contrast, passage B puts greater emphasis on the role of Kerensky, arguing he was initially a popular politician, yet the weakness in terms of the how the Provisional Government dealt with the war and Kornilov affair, was the main reason issue which led to, with the weaknesses contributing to their loss of power and influence. This essay will argue that whilst the loss of popular support throughout their tenure was a convincing explanation for the weakness of the Provisional Government, it was ultimately their handling of the war and Kornilov affair with Kerensky, which exemplified their weakness the most. • Firstly Passage A is convincing as an explanation of the weakness of the Provisional Government, suggesting their main "weakness" was that it had not been "elected by the people", thereby suggesting it lacked legitimacy and appeal to the wider populace. This is convincing as the Provisional Government was formed on the 2nd March 1917 to deal with the crisis until a Constituent Assembly was formed. It was led by Prince Lvov and represented the interests of industrialists, right wing intellectuals, middle class and intellectuals, formed by more wealthy individuals of the 19th Century from the liberals, Octobrists and Constitutional monarchists. This is convincing as an explanation for their weakness, as
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the Provisional Government was ~~the~~ responsible for decision making and formulating policy, yet their needs and ideologies did not specifically support the interests of the wider population, in comparison to the ~~Soviet~~ Petrograd Soviet formed in February the 24th, with interests of soldiers and workers emphasised, thus making it concerning a source in revealing a structural problem with the nature of governance which remained throughout its rule, emphasising weakness in ruling with stability. Furthermore, Passage A is concerning, when it suggests it failed to effectively deal with the "scarcity" and increase in "worker militancy", including the problem of land "redistribution" to the peasants, suggesting it was weak as it could not deal with problems faced in society in practice. This is concerning, as there were 568 factories shut down 5 months into their tenure, leading to 100,000 jobs lost, suggesting they were weak in going to support workers' working rights. Moreover, ~~the~~ grain price reached 100% in August, ~~factory committees~~ a weakness in dealing with inflation and factory committees were starting to be ~~formed~~ formed (especially in Petrograd where they reached 80%). This ~~is~~ is concerning ~~as~~ as an explanation for the weakness of the Provisional Government, as they failed to deal with fundamental internal issues, leading to discontent and workers taking advantage of the inability for more control seen with the Factory Committees. Moreover, the fact there were 237 cases of land seizures in the summer of 1917 (with baby riots in October, and 77% of army captured due to peasant disturbances ~~was~~) is concerning when the passage talks about issues of "land redistribution of peasants", as it suggests

Their inability and incompetence extended to rural areas; where 80% of the population were peasants, and they stalled this issue until the Constituent Assembly was formed, suggesting weaknesses in negotiating such fundamental problems, not only urban but rural, which prevented a governance of stability and popular acceptance. However, the source is not ~~convincing~~ fully convincing to suggest ~~the~~ ^{showing} ~~main~~ ^{as a} weaknesses lack of "legitimacy" was a fundamental issue as the Petrograd Soviet did agree to support them ~~and~~ with groundbreaking 8 point reforms introduced in March with their cooperation, and the Petrograd Soviet was supported by the people. Thus, whilst Passage A is convincing in terms of revealing the nature and significance of popular discontent and failure to deal with such issues showing weaknesses, it is less convincing in suggesting illegitimacy was as much of a fundamental problem, due to initial support of the Petrograd Soviet.

Passage B, in contrast, is more significant as an explanation of the weaknesses of the Provisional Government, revealing more fundamental problems and weaknesses in terms of the war, loss of support of Kornilov and radicalisation of the Bolsheviks (owing due to their weaknesses). For instance, it suggests the Russian military offensive was a "fatal blow" to the "authority" of the Provisional Government. This is convincing, as during the offensive Russia lost 200km of territory and 100,000 casualties, despite Kerensky's decision to send an offensive, which suggests weaknesses, as the Provisional Government's decision directly led to

		disastrous effects for the country in being such a torn and divided role to their position of supporting an offensive war (exemplified by the letter of Milyukov to fight to the "last drop of blood"). This point is further highlighted in terms of the schism which emerged with the Petrograd Soviet who supported a defensive war, suggesting the war led to social and political and internal issues, deteriorating its authority and cohesiveness. This makes it more convincing than Passage A, as the weakness of the Provisional Government, in being continually involved in such a war, were there were 86.5k desertions in the Summer and large economic cost) directly is directly linked to the economic crisis and land grabs which emerged leading to such popular opposition, and it was Kerensky himself who started the offensive, making the source convincing in linking the weakness of the Provisional Government to the role of Kerensky. It is also convincing in linking the war to loss of authority, as a direct effect was the July Days of the 3rd and 6th July 1917, where there were 70k workers and soldiers marching to the Tauride Palace and 100k total demonstrators, suggesting the Provisional Government was weak in managing policies relating to war leading to popular demonstration and upheaval. Passage B is also convincing as an explanation for the weakness of the Provisional Government, by suggesting the Kerensky's Kornilov affair "weakened the government by triggering a process of radicalisation". This is convincing reason, as Kornilov as Kerensky appointed Kornilov as Commander in Chief of the armed forces but he wanted to mutiny (and) in Petrograd. When Kerensky refused, Kornilov was prepared to march on Petrograd with his "Savage Division" and from
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		25-30th August, leading the Kerensky to call on the help of the Bolsheviks, arming them with rifles en masse, with workers disrupting the lines of transportation (and reinforcing the Red Guard with 35k there). This was significant and highly significant in exemplifying the weakness of the Provisional Government as the Bolsheviks were now considered the true guardians of the country and revolution, whilst Kerensky's actions placed him as an inept and weaker leader to the Provisional Government in contrast. This same B is winning increasing backing from the workers to revolution, as by September the Bolsheviks won a majority in Petrograd, Moscow and Kiev and had 100k members in October compared to 23k in February, suggesting the weaknesses of the Provisional Government, meant people turned to more radical political groups who looked to represent their interests better. It also meant the Bolsheviks were able to seize power with ease on the 25th October with 8000 troops without opposition from the populace. Thus, Passage B is more convincing than Passage A, as it shows highlights the weakness of the Provisional Government's handling of the war, which is linked to sound evidence by Passage A and reveals the faults of Kerensky in the Kornilov affair leading to the redistribution of the Bolshevik Party, something Passage A omits, which significantly is significant in demonstrating their weakness as it is to mention they were susceptible to be overthrown from power.
		To conclude, Passage A emphasises out more emphasis on the lack of legitimacy and popular support of the Provisional Government as in the explaining their weakness,

		whereas passage B put more emphasis on the role of
		Westerners, using the harmful actions and subsequent rule of
		the Bolshevik Party due to their weakness. whilst both
		passages allude to losing power support to the end of the
		Provisional government's tenure, passage B ultimately more
		convincing in showing how explaining weakness, and especially
		explaining how Provisional government handled major crisis's with
		failure, whilst passage A highlights problems which were a
		byproduct of lines from passage B, and was not convincing in
		putting as much emphasis on lack of legitimacy at the start of its role.

This response shows consistently detailed; relevant knowledge being used to evaluate several arguments from each passage. Evaluation is clear throughout the answer, and the candidate also considers why some arguments or interpretations are more convincing, relative to points made in the other passage. This response is clearly of Level 6 standard due to the consistent, detailed approach.

Section B overview

Candidates are required to answer two questions from a choice of three. To do well on Section B candidates need to make connections and links across the whole period of their study. They should explain similarities and differences between the events they are discussing to show an awareness of continuity and change across the whole period, unless instructed otherwise. The comparisons may be made across the period within the topic or between regions, depending on the topic. It is also important that the comparisons are explained - what is similar or different between the periods or regions.

The strongest answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

Question 2*

2* 'Communist leaders in the period from 1917 to 1964 were more willing to accept political change than were the Tsars in the period from 1855 to 1917.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This question required candidates to focus on political change, related to the nature of government. Most candidates chose to focus on themes such as government structure, local government, ideology, or repression, and explained the changes (or lack of change) made by rulers within those themes. This was a valid and often successful approach. Explanations of economic or social changes could not be credited as relevant.

Some candidates struggled to reach the higher levels as they either did not take a thematic approach to this question, preferring to focus on one leader in each paragraph, or did not cover the full period, describing change/continuity during the rule of only two or three leaders.

To reach the higher levels of the mark scheme, candidates needed to compare the extent of change made by the Communist leaders and the Tsars, clearly explaining similarities or differences in their willingness to accept political change. This creates the synthesis we are looking for in the essay questions. Weaker candidates described changes made by each ruler, without clearly explaining comparisons.

Assessment for learning



Comparisons must be explained in order to show developed synthesis. Phrases such as 'similarly' or 'in contrast' are useful, but must be supported if candidates are to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme

Exemplar 2

2 This essay will argue the Communists were rightly more willing to accept political change in terms of structure of governance, ideology and level of repression used for political governance. Whilst the Tsar's resisted radical change, the Communists were more flexible and willing to accept change for political governance.

Firstly, in terms of structure of governance the Communists were more willing to accept political change. For instance, under Alexander II, reforms were made with creating the Zemstvo in 1864 elected council and Landtag Munkas. However, these changes were limited to the towns and nobility dominated 70% of the seats ~~and~~ and all government organs were only answerable to the Tsar, meaning the status quo did not change as political power rested in the hands of the nobility and higher echelons of society. In contrast, under Lenin political representation widened significantly with the creation of the soviets, with elections which occurred from local, district and provincial level, ~~whereby~~ the level whereby the amount of people who could gain political experience, with the vote given to all, ~~workers~~ minus labor proprietors, old Tsarist members, landlords, clergy etc, suggesting they were more willing to accept political change in line with Communist ideology which derives power from the people not God. ~~As~~ Compared to Alexander III, where only 1% of population were given a vote from the 1820 and 1822 elections, the changes of the Communists to involve the population ~~was~~ was more profound and longer lasting, even seen with how wide the party membership increased from 6.2 - 11 million.

Q2	2	Whilst this may seem surprising in practice, it allowed more in society to engage politically, than the Tsarist who wanted to secure autocracy and this were more reluctant to make changes to the nature of governance when considering participation. Moreover, when considering level of repression used for political control the community leaders were more willing to accept change. For instance, under Alexander III 10k members of people's will were arrested and 5 executed with the construction of Shlisselburg Fortress prison to hold such prisoners. regulating regulating repression with Alexander III did not change in his rule to maintain the firm control on power and autocracy during his tenure. with This repression was was notable under Nicholas II as well who following the 1905 revolution executed 15k and deported 45k when confronted with opposition and
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introducing censorship during the First World War, taking more continuity in the way political opposition dealt with the Tsars. In contrast the Communists were more flexible and tried different radical approaches in repression, under Khrushchev for instance, there were 135 libraries with 800 million books, allowing for proliferation of literature ~~on~~ not to the scale of the Tsars. Moreover, gulag prisoners were reduced from 5.3 million to 11,000 in 1960, a change in how political opposition is dealt and leniency in the context of the Cold War, where Khrushchev presented Communism in a more positive and favourable light to the extentions under Nicholas II and Alexander III to preserve authority, whilst, this extensionist action as well with 99% during the Bolshevik terror executed, demonstrated that the Communists were more willing to change on a greater scale in level of repression used and how this is used against opposition, whereas the Tsars this was categorised in terms of continuity.

Finally in terms of ideology, the Communists accepted more change (it changed political structure and justification). For instance under Alexander II, the fundamental laws were enacted, which mirrored those of 1832 under Nicholas, which suggested "supreme autocratic power rests in the ruler of Russia" in Law 5 and promised to uphold it as "firmly and unchangeably" and Alexander III, signifying Nicholas II political governance was rooted in ideological, political continuity than acceptance of change, with these laws giving him legislative power and ~~not~~ over the Duma. In contrast, the Communists, particularly under Lenin and Stalin completely altered this autocratic

power was rooted in religion ~~and~~ through holy monastic
 sanctioned authority, demonstrated by Alexander III increasing
 church schools by a seventh and secularising by 65% as justification
 for political power and ideology. In contrast, the community,
 especially under Lenin and Stalin completely changed the
 ideological justification for political power and overall
 political ideology. Under Lenin, state atheism was enforced
 with his book of what was done in 1904, advocating for
 dictatorship of the proletariat rooted in Marx's labour theory
 of governing in the interests of the workers until they take power
 themselves, supplying ideological justification ~~and~~ and
 general ideology as rooted ~~in~~ in the workers and governing in their
 interests, from Alexander III and Nicholas II, who used religion and
 old ideological tenets such as "fundamental laws" to maintain
 political ideological power, making ~~the~~ many changes voluntarily
 compared to the fundamental ideological shift under the community.
 Moreover, under Stalin, the nature of political ideology due to
 this ideology, claiming old Russia must be "ceaselessly broken"
 and using 40th churches and 25th synagogues and created
 tenet of ideological justification under the new, with the
 community are willing to change, with Stalin adopting this
 to sought his megalomania and cult of personality, a political
 change not noticeable under the Tsars, with Khrushchev ending
 abuse of churches until 1964. Thus, when it comes to ideology,
 the nature and justification for this shifted dramatically under
 the community, who all voluntarily accepted in removing worst
 elements whilst Marxist ideology remained the same from
 1856-1917.

		To conclude, the community were more willing to accept political change in ideological justification, structure of governance and level of repression, with scale of change and flexibility between the leaders being more profound compared to under the Tsars, making larger (political) change most possible under them.
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This response is an extract that demonstrate synthesis that is variable in quality. The candidate does take a thematic approach, with the first paragraph focused on structure of government. At the start of this paragraph, the candidate largely focuses only on Alexander II, explaining changes made during his reign, but with little comparison to any other ruler. The candidate does use the phrase 'in contrast' before moving on to discuss Lenin's rule, but the comparison between Alexander II and Lenin is not explained and so is implicit. However, this response becomes much stronger towards the end of the paragraph, where the candidate brings their argument together, showing better synthesis. Similarly, in the second paragraph, the candidate describes changes to repression under Alexander III, then Nicholas II, then Khrushchev, with implicit comparisons. At the end of the paragraph, the candidate explains the comparison more clearly, again showing better synthesis here.

Level 5 requires 'developed synthesis'. While the first half of each paragraph is more indicative of a Level 4 response with more simple comparisons, the latter half of each paragraph shows that the Level 5 criteria is being met with more sustained comparisons. However, the synthesis shown is not consistent or 'fully developed' enough to reach Level 6. As there is some developed synthesis, supported with generally accurate and detailed knowledge, this is a good example of a high Level 5 answer.

Question 3*

3* 'The Russian people experienced little improvement in their personal, political and religious freedoms throughout the period from 1855 to 1964.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This was the most popular of the three essay questions. Most candidates found success in a thematic approach, with a paragraph focusing on each of the freedoms mentioned in the question – personal, political, and religious. Occasionally, candidates took a different approach, perhaps focusing on living standards or social reforms as their themes. Alternative approaches were acceptable, but only if they covered personal, political, and religious freedoms within the chosen themes. Candidates who used alternative approaches often did not fully focus on the question.

To reach the higher levels of the mark scheme, candidates were required to show synthesis by comparing improvements/lack of improvement across the period, within each paragraph. Many candidates were able to show good knowledge of changes made by individual rulers. However, less successful responses described these changes without explaining comparisons across the period. It was common for candidates to take a chronological approach within each paragraph, describing the change or lack of change under each ruler in turn, but this did not lead to developed synthesis.

Exemplar 3

3	The people of Russia experienced fluctuating levels of personal, political and religious freedoms throughout the Tsarist and communist periods of leadership. In most cases the people's political and religious freedoms were limited and often set to a certain regime. However an increase in freedom occurs the later into the period one moves. To further analyse the true amount of freedom that the people of Russia held, we need to evaluate the changes in freedom as individuals, freedoms in politics and freedom in religious and world news. Personal ^{Political personal} freedoms throughout the period were admittedly limited during the At the strongest points of repression is Stalin, who introduced a communist society where all authority was placed in his hands. His 'Cult of Personality' included extreme levels of propaganda and censorship. Everything published had to be in Stalin's favour. Banners, statues, posters and video media were produced of Stalin to spread his image as the ultimate dictator. Factories had portraits of Stalin on the walls and, although the people had some political freedom, their personal lives were bombarded with Stalinist propaganda. Similarly, Alexander II's assassination by the People's will, Alexander III created a repressive reforms to shut down revolutionary groups and remove access to radicalist resources. Alexander undid most of the liberal reforms his father introduced in order to restore loyalty to the Tsar. He increased censorship on books, news articles, access the university has none of a struggle, and lecturers were forced not to evoke radical thinking. Stalin and Alexander III's means of ^{restriction on} personal freedoms for the people
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of Russia ^{is} evidence of the extremes that the Russian people had to face.

On the other hand, the reforms introduced by Alexander II, which were eventually undone by his son, were arguably attempts to increase people's personal freedoms. For instance, the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, resulted in the majority of peasants moving out of the cramped ~~villages~~ and into more suitable housing with a private plot of land in order to make personal profit to be able to support themselves. Similarly, Khrushchev tried to improve the people's personal lives. He started by focusing on the 'De-Stalinization' of Russian society, as mentioned in the secret speech of 1956, in which Khrushchev stated that unless a man is provided with food on his table and shoes on his feet, 'he will not believe in communism, no matter what you tell him'. Khrushchev had everything of Stalin's cult of personality removed and instead focused on benefiting the people of Russia in daily life. He had barrack housing built for the workers, which resembled blocks of houses with guaranteed privacy. The conditions weren't perfect, however they were arguably the highest quality houses provided for the people of Russia during this period. Khrushchev also introduced the Virgin Lands scheme, where workers from across Russia had access to unworked and unused land ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~serfs~~ in order to grow and sell their produce. Both Alexander and Khrushchev focused on providing opportunity for the Russian people, which acts as an anomaly to the question of ^{the little improvement} personal freedom during this period.

Personal freedoms for the Russian people can be seen in two extreme examples, yet through the period 1855-1966 as a whole, the amount of personal freedoms that the Russian people held was very limited. Religious freedoms for the people of Russia as an overview were rather repressive and limited. During the period of Tsarist rule, religion and beliefs are represented under a phrase coined by Nicholas II; 'Autocracy, Orthodoxy and Nationality'. The Russian people believed that the Tsar was chosen by divine right and appointed by God, and therefore, he was all powerful. Orthodox Christianity was the most commonly accepted religion. During Alexander II's reign, people of other religions such as Judaism and other branches of Christianity were frowned upon and less common overall. Nicholas II introduced the religion of Patriotic or, Nationality. The belief in Russia's superiority was believed to have increased morale of the harvest fields. Ultimately, the Russian people were restricted by religious freedom during the Tsarist period, as 'Autocracy, Orthodoxy and Nationality' was so normalised in the Russian society. When the communist leaders came into power, they strived to move away from Tsarist ideologies to make way for Marxism-Leninism. ~~and so relig.~~ It can be argued that Stalin's 'Cult of Personality' acted as a restriction of religious freedom. Stalin stated during a speech 'In order to make an outlet, you need to smash a few eggs'. This is of course in reference to his repressive nature, and so the 'Cult of Personality' acting as a religion

		during this period emphasises the very little freedom that the people of Russia had to in choosing their own religion that wasn't normal to the state.
		To conclude, the freedoms that the Russian people had heightened and freedom ^{in intensity} increased over the duration of the period.
		The majority of the rulers gave little wiggle room for freedom with politics and religion as well as personal freedoms. However, leaders such as Alexander II, Nicholas and Lenin, to an extent, strived to provide the people with the freedoms that the other leaders did not.
		Overall, the people of Russia faced little improvement in their personal, political and religious freedoms throughout the period from 1855 to 1964.

This response is a very good demonstration of a Level 4 standard response, where the candidate has struggled to explain the comparisons and therefore does not show developed synthesis. There is some good knowledge used, and the answer is mostly focused, with the knowledge being relevant to the question.

The candidate has attempted to compare rulers on a couple of occasions, but overall, changes under each ruler are explained separately and comparisons are implicit. This response also did not fully explore political freedoms and covered most, but not quite all, of the period. Taking into consideration the quality of synthesis, quality of knowledge, and coverage of the period, Level 4 was the best fit for this response.

Question 4*

- 4* 'The October Revolution of 1917 changed Russian society more than any other war or revolution in the period from 1855 to 1964.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This question elicited a wide range of responses from candidates. Many candidates focused on the political, economic, and social impact of wars and revolutions. Others focused on living standards, working conditions, and access to food. Some candidates considered the impact on urban society and the impact on rural society. All these approaches were valid, provided they focused on the impact of wars and revolutions on the people.

The strongest answers compared multiple wars and revolutions within the chosen themes, demonstrating how some conflicts had a greater impact than others. Successful candidates made supported judgements based on whether the changes brought by conflict were long-lasting, or the proportion of the population that were affected. This was, overall, a very open-ended question that enabled some sophisticated comparisons and judgements.

However, there were many notably weaker responses to this question. The question requires candidates to compare the October Revolution of 1917 with other wars and revolutions across the period. Some candidates confused the October Revolution of 1917 with the 1905 Revolution, or the February 1917 Revolution, resulting in weak and confused responses. Other candidates compared the October 1917 Revolution to one or two other conflicts but did not sufficiently cover the period.

Some candidates also struggled to focus on the 'wars and revolutions' aspect of the question, instead showing knowledge of changes made by individual rulers such as Stalin or Khrushchev, but without explaining how these were connected to World War Two or the Cold War. This knowledge could then not always be credited as relevant.

As with the other two essays, the best responses were those that could explain comparisons between wars and revolutions. Answers that described the impact of individual wars and revolutions in turn did not show the developed synthesis required to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Assessment for learning



With 'turning point' questions such as this one, candidates must still cover the period as much as possible. For this question, candidates needed to cover a range of wars/revolutions to reach a substantiated judgement about the period as a whole.

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Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation
- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately
- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators
- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators
- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills
- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from [Teach Cambridge](#). Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find the link to the **Online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **Online courses** from the dropdown.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this [link](#) and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

Which courses are available?

We recommend all teachers complete the module on Online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units
- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units
- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units
- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

How can you get support and feedback?

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the online courses and make them more useful and relevant for you. You can share your views by completing the evaluation form at the end of each course.

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our resources.



Designing and testing in [collaboration with you](#) and your students



Helping young people develop an [ethical view of the world](#)



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) are [part of everything we do](#)

Contact the team at:

☎ 01223 553998

🖥 ocr.org.uk

To stay up to date with all the relevant news about our qualifications, register for email updates at ocr.org.uk/updates

Visit our Online Support Centre at support.ocr.org.uk



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