



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2026

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level in
History (WHI04/1B)

Paper 4: International Study with Historical
Interpretations

Option 1B: The World in Crisis, 1879–1945

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Generic Level Descriptors for Paper 4

Section A

Targets: A01 (5 marks): Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

A03 (20 marks): Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates only limited comprehension of the extracts, selecting some material relevant to the debate.• Some accurate and relevant knowledge is included and presented as information, rather than being linked with the extracts.• Judgement on the view is assertive, with little supporting evidence.
2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates some understanding and attempts analysis of the extracts by describing some points within them that are relevant to the debate.• Mostly accurate knowledge is included, but lacks range or depth. It is added to information from the extracts, but mainly to expand on matters of detail or to note some aspects which are not included.• A judgement on the view is given with limited support, but the criteria for judgement are left implicit.
3	9–14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates understanding and some analysis of the extracts by selecting and explaining some key points of interpretation they contain and indicating differences.• Knowledge of some issues related to the debate is included to link to, or expand, some views given in the extracts.• Attempts are made to establish criteria for judgement and discussion of the extracts is attempted. A judgement is given, although with limited substantiation, and is related to some key points of view in the extracts.
4	15–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates understanding of the extracts, analysing the issues of interpretation raised within them and by a comparison of them.• Sufficient knowledge is deployed to explore most of the relevant aspects of the debate, although treatment of some aspects may lack depth. Integrates issues raised by extracts with those from own knowledge.• Valid criteria by which the view can be judged are established and applied and the evidence provided in the extracts discussed in the process of coming to a substantiated overall judgement, although treatment of the extracts may be uneven. Demonstrates understanding that the issues are matters of interpretation.
5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interprets the extracts with confidence and discrimination, analysing the issues raised and demonstrating understanding of the basis of arguments offered by both authors.• Sufficient knowledge is precisely selected and deployed to explore fully the matter under debate. Integrates issues raised by extracts with those from own knowledge when discussing the presented evidence and differing arguments.• A sustained evaluative argument is presented, applying valid criteria and reaching fully substantiated judgements on the views given in both extracts and demonstrating understanding of the nature of historical debate.

Section B

Target: A01 (25 marks): Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple or generalised statements are made about the topic. Some accurate and relevant knowledge is included, but it lacks range and depth and does not directly address the question. The overall judgement is missing or asserted. There is little, if any, evidence of attempts to structure the answer, and the answer overall lacks coherence and precision.
2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is some analysis of some key features of the period relevant to the question, but descriptive passages are included that are not clearly shown to relate to the focus of the question. Mostly accurate and relevant knowledge is included, but lacks range or depth and has only implicit links to the demands and conceptual focus of the question. An overall judgement is given but with limited support and the criteria for judgement are left implicit. The answer shows some attempts at organisation, but most of the answer is lacking in coherence, clarity and precision.
3	9–14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is some analysis of, and attempt to explain links between, the relevant key features of the period and the question, although some mainly descriptive passages may be included. Mostly accurate and relevant knowledge is included to demonstrate some understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question, but material lacks range or depth. Attempts are made to establish criteria for judgement and to relate the overall judgement to them, although with weak substantiation. The answer shows some organisation. The general trend of the argument is clear, but parts of it lack logic, coherence or precision.
4	15–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key issues relevant to the question are explored by an analysis of the relationships between key features of the period. Sufficient knowledge is deployed to demonstrate understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question and to meet most of its demands. Valid criteria by which the question can be judged are established and applied in the process of coming to a judgement. Although some of the evaluations may be only partly substantiated, the overall judgement is supported. The answer is generally well organised. The argument is logical and is communicated with clarity, although in a few places it may lack coherence or precision.
5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key issues relevant to the question are explored by a sustained analysis and discussion of the relationships between key features of the period. Sufficient knowledge is precisely selected and deployed to demonstrate understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question, and to respond fully to its demands. Valid criteria by which the question can be judged are established and applied and their relative significance evaluated in the process of reaching and substantiating the overall judgement.

Section A: Indicative content

Option 1B: The World in Crisis, 1879-1945

Question	Indicative content
1	<p>Answers will be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited.</p> <p>Candidates are expected to use the extracts and their own knowledge to consider the views presented in the extracts. Reference to the works of named historians is not expected, but candidates may consider historians' viewpoints in framing their argument.</p> <p>Candidates should use their understanding of issues of interpretation to reach a reasoned conclusion concerning the view that the July crisis resulted in the outbreak of war in 1914 because of the impact of previous crises in the years 1905-13.</p> <p>In considering the extracts, the points made by the authors should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include:</p> <p>Extract 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In explaining the outbreak of war in 1914, the July Crisis cannot be viewed in isolation from the events of previous crises. Decisions made during previous crises limited the choices available in July 1914• As a result of events in 1909, 1912 and 1913, Russia, France and Germany felt that they had to support, respectively, Serbia, Russia and Austria-Hungary in the future• British success in mediating the crisis of 1913 encouraged its actions in the aftermath of the assassination in 1914• By 1914, the flexible diplomacy that had been seen in the First Moroccan Crisis (1905) had given way to fixed alliances and great power self-confidence. <p>Extract 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was the specific act of assassinating the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the subsequent reaction from Austria-Hungary that led to the July crisis and the outbreak of war• Despite there being international tension in the summer of 1914 after the assassination in Sarajevo, general war was not inevitable• Austro-Hungarian actions drove the July crisis; Austria-Hungary secretly gained the promise of support from Germany for retaliation against Serbia for the assassination and presented Serbia with a very harsh ultimatum• It was Austria that manipulated the events subsequent to the assassination in Sarajevo deliberately to start a war. <p>Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to support the view that the July crisis resulted in the outbreak of war in 1914 because of the impact of previous crises in the years 1905-13. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International rivalries in the years 1905-13, and the resultant emergence of the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente agreements, meant that there was potential for a chain reaction of support that would lead to war• Russia had humiliatingly let down Serbia in 1909 but, by July 1914, Russia was rearming rapidly and its alignment with France and Britain meant that it was in a position to back Serbia• Despite an alliance with Austria-Hungary, Germany had failed to support it fully during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and this was instrumental in persuading German leaders to issue the 'blank cheque' in 1914• Britain's delayed response to the unfolding events was determined by its perception of the degree to which diplomacy, e.g. Treaty of London (1913), had prevented previous crises evolving into a wider war.

Question	Indicative content
	<p>Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to counter or modify the view that the July crisis resulted in the outbreak of war in 1914 because of the impact of previous crises in the years 1905-13. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The July crisis was unlike any of the other crises in that it involved the assassination of the heir to the throne of a Great Power and so it was singularly significant to the high politics of European international affairs • The leaders of Austria-Hungary were determined to find a reason to go to war with Serbia. The assassination was a perfect <i>casus belli</i> and it was the actions of Austria-Hungary in 1914 that drew other powers into the war • None of the previous disputes in the years 1905-13 had resulted in a wider European war and there was no reason in 1914 to believe that the situation was any different • Alliances and rivalries that had emerged in the years 1905-13 were beginning to change by the summer of 1914, e.g. greater co-operation between Germany and Britain, the Triple Alliance could not rely on Italy.

Section B: Indicative content

Option 1B: The World in Crisis, 1879-1945

Question	Indicative content
2	<p>Answers will be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant.</p> <p>Candidates are expected to reach a judgement on whether the foreign policy of Mussolini was significantly different from the foreign policy of Hitler.</p> <p>Arguments and evidence that the foreign policy of Mussolini was significantly different from the foreign policy of Hitler should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mussolini was more willing to develop a friendly diplomatic relationship with Britain and France e.g. the Stresa Front. Britain and France were Italy's 'Versailles allies' whereas they were Hitler's 'Versailles enemies'• Mussolini wished to present himself as an international statesman in his foreign policy ambitions, e.g. the Munich Conference, whereas Hitler was focused on furthering German interests• Mussolini desired an overseas colonial empire, e.g. Abyssinia, while Hitler was more focused on the contiguous expansion of Germany• Mussolini was not supportive of the Nazi-Soviet Pact brokered by Hitler with the Soviet Union in 1939• In September 1939, Mussolini was not willing to go to war with Britain and France. Italy did not enter the war in Europe until June 1940. <p>Arguments and evidence that the foreign policy of Mussolini was similar to the foreign policy of Hitler should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both based their respective foreign policies on nationalist ideals, e.g. Mussolini wished to make Italy 'great and respected', Hitler's policy of <i>Lebensraum</i>• Both followed expansionist policies based on <i>irredenta</i>, e.g. Mussolini's desire to recreate '<i>mare nostrum</i>', Hitler's desire to regain German-speaking areas of Europe• Both conducted their foreign policy in the context of dissatisfaction with the Versailles settlement, e.g. Italy being made to feel inferior by the 'Big Three', German humiliation• Both withdrew from the League of Nations. Hitler withdrew Germany in 1933, and Mussolini withdrew Italy in 1937• Both supported the Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War• Both policies were purposely anti-communist, e.g. joining together to sign the Anti-Comintern Pact (with Japan, 1937) and the Pact of Steel (1939). <p>Other relevant material must be credited.</p>

Question	Indicative content
3	<p>Answers will be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the generic mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all the material which is indicated as relevant.</p> <p>Candidates are expected to reach a judgement on whether the victory of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe (1943-45) was mainly due to the strengths of the Soviet regime and its people.</p> <p>Arguments and evidence that the victory of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe (1943-45) was mainly due to the strengths of the Soviet regime and its people should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dictatorial leadership of Stalin maintained complete control of the war effort. Stalin's decisions were often ruthless but he was also willing to listen to military advice • The Soviets deployed a policy of total war that governed all aspects of Soviet life and was focused universally on the aim of winning the war against Germany • Soviet military and strategic planning proved decisive, e.g. the Soviets were better equipped to fight a winter war, the use of deception was successful at the Battle of Kursk, the westward advance in 1945 • The Soviet people were completely determined to defeat Germany and willing to make significant sacrifices, e.g. the siege of Leningrad, in the face of Hitler's clear prejudices towards Slavic peoples • The Soviet war economy outperformed the German war economy, particularly after February 1943, with the production of Soviet tanks being vital to the war effort • Soviet war production was maintained by the mass migration of people and industries away from the vulnerable western regions of the Soviet Union eastwards. <p>Arguments and evidence that the victory of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe (1943-45) was mainly as a result of other factors should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany overstretched itself in the war in Eastern Europe, e.g. the decision to capture Moscow, a lack of preparedness for winter warfare and the impact of the failure to capture the southern oilfields • Tactical and planning mistakes resulted in the early German advances in Eastern Europe being undermined, e.g. deployment of troops during the siege of Stalingrad, failure to respond to accurate intelligence • Hitler's actions undermined the campaign in Eastern Europe. Hitler was unwilling to listen to the advice of his generals, e.g. at Kursk, and took personal control of the German High Command despite lacking expertise • The Soviet Union was devastated by the intensity of the war and was forced to rely on US and British aid in order to continue to survive, e.g. Lend Lease, food supplies, such as Spam, and military transport • The Germans were weakened by being forced to divert resources away from Eastern Europe as a result of Allied campaigns elsewhere in Europe, e.g. the intensive bombing of Germany, the Italian and D-Day offensives. <p>Other relevant material must be credited.</p>