Pearson

Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2026

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

Paper 4: International Study with Historical Interpretations

Option 1C: The World Divided: Superpower relations, 1943-90

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2026
Question Paper Log Number P79259A
Publication Code WHI04_1C_2606_MS
All the material in this publication is copyright
© Pearson

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: **AO1 (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.

AO3 (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**	• 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**	• 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**	• 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**	• 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**	• 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: AO1 (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**	• 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**	• 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**	• 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**	• 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**	• 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. • The answer is well organised. The argument is logical and coherent throughout and is communicated with clarity and precision.

Section A: Indicative content

Option 1C: The World Divided: Superpower relations, 1943-90

Question	Indicative content
1	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. 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. Candidates should use their understanding of issues of interpretation to reach a reasoned conclusion concerning the view that the Cold War developed at the end of the Second World War due to the economic rivalry of the USA and the USSR. In considering the extracts, the points made by the authors should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: Extract 1 • The Cold War developed as a result of a competition between the Soviet economic ideas of state centralism and the American economic ideas of market capitalism • The Soviets looked to create an economic sphere of influence that would be a rival to capitalism in western Europe and would prevent the attraction of the Marshall Plan to eastern Europe • The USA wanted to establish an economic sphere of influence that included transforming West Germany industrially and creating an integrated economy across the Atlantic • The defeat of Japan meant that the US was in a position to dominate the economy of East Asia and address the threat of the Soviet Union in East Asia as well as Europe. Extract 2 • Tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union began to grow over future spheres of influence, particularly over Eastern Europe, after the Yalta meeting of February 1945 • The actions of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe were dominated by fears for its national security. There was no particular emphasis on economic control. • The US found it difficult to accept Soviet control over Eastern Europe but for geopolitical and ideological reasons rather than economic concern. • Both the US and the USSR were suspicious of each other's intentions for key geopolitical reasons, e.g. the US were worried by events in Poland and the USSR was suspicious of the US over atomic weapons and Japan. Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to support the view that the Cold War developed at the end of the Second World War due to the economic rivalry of the USA and the USSR. Relevant points may include: • The leadership of both the USA and the USSR believed that the fundamental economic principles by which their countries were governed – capitalism and communism – would eventually win out over the other • After the War, the Soviet Union first encouraged eastern European states to follow centralised economic policies and later practically forced them, e.g. East Germany. Comecon was established in 1949 • The Soviet Union felt particularly threatened by the US deployment of Marshall Aid, which was open to all European countries. After initially accepting Marshall Aid, Czechoslovakia was threatened into withdrawing

Question	Indicative content
	• In both Europe and Asia, the US looked to counter the attractiveness of left-wing promises of wealth redistribution with a consumer market driven by the strength of the US economy coming out of the World War. Candidates should relate their own knowledge to the material in the extracts to counter or modify the view that the Cold War developed at the end of the Second World War due to the economic rivalry of the USA and the USSR. Relevant points may include: • The physical and psychological devastation wreaked on the USSR by the World War meant that its major preoccupation in the aftermath was to secure its borders rather than expand its economic influence • Poland was of particular geopolitical influence to the Soviet Union, as its border was a security threat. Stalin intervened in Polish post-war politics in order to ensure against future invasion • The US purposefully kept the Soviets out of the Manhattan Project to develop atomic weapons and by doing so it was able to gain a massive geopolitical advantage when the war with Japan was ended by A-bombing • The USA, having fought both in Europe and Asia, was determined to establish its political ideological dominance in the face of potential communist expansionism from both the USSR and, from 1949, China.

Section B: Indicative content

Option 1C: The World Divided: Superpower relations, 1943-90

Question	Indicative content
2	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. Candidates are expected to reach a judgement on whether developments in nuclear warfare capability were responsible more for deterring confrontation than for causing tension between the superpowers in the years 1953-64. Arguments and evidence that developments in nuclear warfare capability were responsible more for deterring confrontation than for causing tension between the superpowers in the years 1953-64 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • The sheer scale and pace of developments were instrumental in moves towards using diplomacy to lessen tensions and 'nuclear' escalation, e.g. the Geneva Summit (1955), plans for suspension of testing (1958) • Decisions made by US and Soviet leaders reflected their awareness that they were living in 'the shadow of the bomb', e.g. Soviet withdrawal of nuclear expertise from China, final outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis • Knowledge of the impact of developments in nuclear warfare acted as a direct deterrent to confrontation, e.g. the US response to the Hungarian uprising in 1956 • Soviet awareness of the reality of the massive US superiority in nuclear weaponry underpinned Khrushchev's policy of peaceful co-existence and reduced the possibility of a Russian offensive during these years • The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) ultimately highlighted the realities of the arms race of the previous decade and led to measures to prevent future confrontation, e.g. the 'hot-line', the Test Ban Treaty (1963) • Although developments in nuclear warfare capability encouraged brinkmanship, e.g. Berlin (1961), at no point did a Cold War incident between the two powers develop into a 'hot war'. Arguments and evidence that developments in nuclear warfare capability were responsible more for causing tension than for deterring confrontation between the superpowers in the years 1953-64should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • The Soviet development of a hydrogen bomb, in the same year as Stalin's death, created uncertainty in US-Soviet relations and sparked an intense period of activity in the nuclear arms race • The development of new delivery systems, such as the ICBM (1957) and SLBM (1959–60), increased the ability of both sides to target nuclear weapons directly against each other, so heightening tensions • The Soviet use of space technology related to nuclear warfare capability, e.g. Sputnik (1957), increased tensions at the end of the 1950s • The U2 incident, and the resultant failure of the Paris summit of 1960, occurred against a backdrop of US intelligence efforts to ascertain Soviet nuclear and military capabilities amid fears of a 'missile gap' • Nuclear warfare developments encouraged 'brinkmanship' over Cold War 'hotspots', e.g. the US threatened the use of nuclear weapons over Berlin (1961), the deployment of nuclear missiles on Cuba by the Soviets. Other relevant material must be credited.

Question	Indicative content
3	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. Candidates are expected to reach a judgement on whether it was the USA that was most responsible for the renewed Cold War confrontation with the USSR in the years 1979-85. Arguments and evidence that the USA that was responsible for the renewed Cold War confrontation with the USSR in the years 1979-85 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • As a result of significant events in the Gulf region in 1979, the Carter Doctrine (January 1980) was designed to reflect US strength in relation to the USSR, e.g. withdrawal from SALT II, Moscow Olympic boycott • The election of US president Reagan (1980) heralded a more sustained adversarial relationship between the two superpowers after years of détente; Reagan's rhetoric promised an anti-communist foreign policy • The US deliberately provoked the Soviet Union with its military policies, e.g. increased military spending, the SDI initiative. In 1983, a simulated NATO exercise (Able Archer) almost provoked a nuclear war • The US strengthened its relationship with its Western allies, e.g. with the Thatcher government in Britain, and provoked military tensions, e.g. the agreement to base nuclear missiles in Britain • The Reagan Doctrine effectively brought the underlying confrontations of the 1970's 'wars by proxy' out into the open, e.g. supplying military aid (Nicaragua) and political support (Philippines) to anti-communists Arguments and evidence that the USA was not responsible for the renewed Cold War confrontation with the USSR in the years 1979-85 should be analysed and evaluated. Relevant points may include: • The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the catalyst for the renewed confrontation and the continuing military action brought increasing tensions between the USSR and the USA in the Gulf region • Domestic political instability within the leadership of the USSR was marked by a return to the political inflexibility and determination to show the strengths of communism in its foreign policy • Signs of political unrest in its Eastern European satellite states, particularly in Poland, encouraged the leadership of the USSR to exhibit a more confrontational rhetoric • The Soviets provoked tensions in Europe considerably by deploying a new range of battlefield nuclear weapons • The downing of a Korean civilian airlines flight, with a US politician on board, in 1983 provoked an intensification of tension between the two superpowers • Reagan's presidency was less confrontational than had been expected and in 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev gained power in the USSR, he seemed open to diplomacy with the newly appointed Soviet leader • The years 1979-85 saw a period of international tensions, such as economic challenges, political instability in the Gulf regions and nationalism, that laid the foundations for renewed confrontation. Other relevant material must be credited.