

# (8145) GCSE History Supporting Marking Guidance

Paper 2 Section A Thematic Studies (8145/2A/A/B/C)

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## Introduction

As part of their training this summer, all examiners were given the following guidance document along with the question papers, mark scheme and standardisation materials for the particular component they were marking for AQA. It was written by the senior examining team. The purpose of the guidance was to clarify key aspects of the mark scheme and further ensure consistency of approach across the components. Examiners were instructed that the guidance should be read alongside the question paper, mark scheme and standardising materials and that the guidance did not reflect a change in the standard applied.

We hope that this guidance can now aid you in your understanding of how the standard was applied and deepen your understanding of how the key aspects of the mark scheme work. Similar guidance is available on eAQA Secure Key Material for the Period Studies, Wider World Depth Studies and British Depth Studies.

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### **Question 1 ‘How useful is Source A to an historian studying X?’**

*Analyse sources contemporary to the period (AO3a)*

*Evaluate sources and make substantiated judgements (AO3b)*

#### **Levels 1 & 2**

At Levels 1 & 2 (and 3) responses may be based on either the provenance **or** the content of the Source.

At **Level 1** answers are likely to identify basic features of the Source, either the content or provenance and may provide some description, or show understanding, of them. At Level 1 answers may include knowledge that is related to the enquiry topic specified in the question.

At **Level 2** the usefulness of the source for the enquiry topic specified in the question will be implicit or mentioned through following the format of the question i.e. ‘it is useful because...’. Some simple knowledge or understanding will be shown at that is relevant to the enquiry topic specified in the question. Answers offering a simple inference based on either the provenance or the content should be rewarded at level 2, however the connection between the usefulness of the Source and X is likely to be implicit. At Level 2 this means that a point (P) will have been made and supported by **either** Evidence **or** some further expansion of the point **only**. The understanding in the answer remains implicit because the connections between the point and the evidence (E) are not made explicit through an explanation (E) that is relevant to the Question.

**Level 3 & 4** At **Level 3**, with reference to either the content **or** the provenance, answers will show developed knowledge and reasoning about the utility of the Source in the context of a Thematic study. The knowledge and reasoning will be related explicitly to the specific enquiry topic specified in the question. Reasoning may be developed in that it is supported by factual knowledge and understanding. A developed level of reasoning is shown in an answer that makes an accurate and relevant point (P) about the source, supporting it with explanation (E), and factual knowledge or support/evidence (E). This level of reasoning in an answer may be accomplished briefly.

Answers will readily display knowledge and understanding about the content of the source at Level 3. However answers are frequently less perceptive about the provenance of a Source. Examiners need to be aware of some of the ways in which answers may gain merit for a consideration of provenance. Many answers will be seen that approach the provenance of the Source from the point of view of its purpose or audience. This is not the only way in which a source can be evaluated for utility with regard to its provenance. Examiners should be on the lookout for answers about provenance that consider the time when the source was created and the historical context of that time. Other answers will be seen that consider the circumstances and experience of the author/artist to know about the situation or events that the Source purports to portray.

At **Level 4** responses will reference **both** the content and the provenance at level 3; that is to say with regard to both the content and the provenance of the Source, the answer will display developed knowledge and reasoning that is related explicitly to the enquiry topic specified in the question.

An answer at the upper Level 4 of the mark scheme will show complex thinking by providing a substantiated judgement. This judgement may be about either the content or provenance and should consider the utility of the source in the broader historical context of a Thematic study. An upper Level 4 ‘judgement’ will be substantiated by historical knowledge and understanding which is referenced to the interests of the historian/ the tail of the question.

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The question as it is posed, 'how useful...' allows for evaluation. Answers that explain the **limitations**, weaknesses, or deficiencies of the Sources are valid. However these answers have to be strictly relevant to the enquiry point in the question. The enquiry point is often the 'tail' of the question. Answers that contain discussion of the 'limitations' of the Sources have to be contextually and chronologically valid in their argument and in relation to that enquiry point. The majority of answers that argue about the usefulness of the Sources based upon its omissions are usually weak or misguided. This is often seen as a list of events that the sources do not mention. It is obvious that it would not be good assessment practice if the paper included sources that were not useful for the particular line of enquiry suggested in the question. Nevertheless a number of answers detail the limitations of the sources and provide, often anachronistically, a list of aspects of the topic that the Sources omit. It is difficult to identify and argue relevantly in context about the limitations of the Sources in the short time available in the exam. Especially when there is more obvious value and utility in the Sources that may be easily discussed. Suffice to say that full marks on this question are easily accessible without any mention of limitations.

### **Question 2 Explain the significance of X**

*Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:6)  
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:2)*

#### **Levels 1 & 2**

The Significance of an event, issue, feature or person is more than its Importance. However at **Level 1** significance is likely to be implicit and often presented by students as synonymous with importance. At Level 1 responses provide information that is relevant to the topic.

At **Level 2**, one aspect of significance will be explained in a simple or straightforward way. The significance may be relevant to the time and may be related to what preceded the event/topic. The significance may be indicated possibly by the reaction and recognition at the time or the extent of the change that occurred as a result of the event, issue, feature or person's actions. The significance may also be made relevant to the time after the topic. This might be through a consideration of the longer term impact of the event etc. or the influence that it still has today.

It is possible for an answer at level 2 to identify two significances but that the explanation of both aspects of significance is still simple, that is to say, implicitly linked to the question but not explained. The answer may remain as identified significance or significances which are partially supported by knowledge or relevant explanation. At Level 2 this means that a point (P) will have been made and supported by **either** Evidence **or** some further expansion of the point **only**. The understanding in the answer remains implicit because the connections between the point and the evidence are not made explicit through an explanation that is relevant to the Question. If this is the case then Level 2 marks are appropriate.

An answer with **only one** developed point will be rewarded at the top of Level 2. However the answer may contain additional knowledge and understanding relating to the events, issues, features or people identified in the Question. If the Additional material is assessed as Basic then the answer will remain in Level 2, if it is Simple then it should be considered for Level 3.

#### **Level 3 & 4**

At **Level 3** students will provide **two** explanations of Significance and show developed reasoning in the response. That reasoning again may be developed in that it is supported by factual knowledge

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and understanding. A developed level of reasoning is shown in an answer that makes an accurate and relevant point (P), supporting it with explanation (E), and factual knowledge/evidence (E). This level of reasoning in an answer may be accomplished briefly. However, at Level 3, one Significance may be developed and the other given only a slight reference. At Levels 3 & 4 two aspects of Significance will be addressed but there may be an **imbalance** between the amounts of material provided for each Significance. The quality of the explanation or support will determine the mark within the level.

At **level 4** the explanation will be complex in the argument or reasoning about significance. For example it may appreciate that there can be a relationship between aspects of the Significance or that the Significance of an event etc. will change over time in much the same way that interpretations of History change over time. An understanding of significance may be complex in appreciating that different people, in different places or with different backgrounds may view the significance of an event differently. The Significance of an event etc. may change in the light of subsequent events et cetera.

### **Question 3 Compare X with Y. In what ways were they similar?**

*Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:4)  
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:4)*

The Specification views this Second Order Concept (SOC) of Similarity and Difference as two separate concepts.

#### **Levels 1 & 2**

Usually at **Level 1** students identify or assert that there is a similarity between the 2 events, issues, features or people identified in the question. Sometimes it is implicit that the answer relates to Similarity. Responses at Level 1 may include relevant knowledge but the point of similarity is implicit. Some answers show relevant knowledge in relation to either or both events, issue, features or people identified in the question but this knowledge may be presented as related to differences. This knowledge should be rewarded at level 1.

At **Level 2** a Similarity will be identified and explained in a simple or straightforward way. There may be additional knowledge and understanding related to the events, issue, features or people identified in the question but may lack a clear identification of or connection to another similarity. At Level 2 this means that a similarity will have been identified and supported by **either** Evidence **or** some further expansion of the point **only**. The understanding in the answer remains implicit because the connections between the Similarity and the evidence are not made explicit through an explanation that is relevant to the Question. This will result in the answer being rewarded at Level 2. An answer with **only** one developed point will be rewarded at the top of Level 2. However the answer may contain additional knowledge and understanding relating to the events, issues, features or people identified in the Question. If the Additional material is assessed as Basic then the answer will remain in Level 2, if it is Simple then it should be considered for Level 3.

#### **Level 3 & 4**

A **Level 3** will identify and explain **two** Similarities and show developed reasoning for each. This level of reasoning in an answer may be accomplished briefly. However at Levels 3 & 4 although 2 similarities are required, there may be an **imbalance** between the amounts of knowledge or reasoning used in the argument for each Similarity. The quality of the explanation or support will determine the mark within the level.

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Reasoning may be developed in that it is supported by factual knowledge and understanding. A developed level of reasoning is shown in an answer that makes an accurate and relevant point (P) about a similarity, supporting it with explanation (E), and factual knowledge or support/evidence (E). This level of reasoning in an answer may be accomplished briefly.

At **level 4** the explanation can be complex in that it appreciates that there may be a broader historical context or an abstract, substantive concept related to the similarity.

#### **Question 4 Has X (factor) been the main factor in Y?**

*Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:8)  
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:8)*

This question format is familiar from previous Specifications though in this context it refers to Thematic study. There is a clear indication in the question that ‘the **main** factor’ requires an evaluation for the higher Levels of the mark scheme. The factors e.g. war, religion, chance, government, communication, science and technology, or the role of the individual, draw on an understanding of the relevant Second Order Concepts.

Each level in the mark scheme contains 4 marks; examiners should consider the level divided into two bands with an initial judgement made as to the band at the entry level. Superior performance within the level may improve the mark within the band or between the bands.

**Levels 1 & 2** Answers which show relevant knowledge about the Thematic study may be rewarded at **Level 1**. It is likely in answers at level 1 that the knowledge and understanding deployed will have an implicit relevance to the factor or another factor(s) stated in the question and through them to the relevant SOC in relation to the particular strand of the Thematic content or idea (Y).

However answers at **level 2** should explicitly provide knowledge and understanding of the factor stated in the question, or another factor, and relate it to the ‘tail’ of the question or the particular strand of the Thematic content (Y). At both Levels 1 and 2 the mark within the level will be determined by the quality of the explanation or factual support (AO1) provided.

There are a few answers that will be seen which only mention a factor or list briefly stated factors relating to the Thematic study e.g. Health, Power, or Migration. These should be rewarded at Level 1.

At **Level 2** answers that deal explicitly with only one factor – it may be the factor given in the question – will be rewarded to a maximum of Level 2. It is expected that an answer at level 2 should explicitly address knowledge and understanding to support a point or argument about a factor, which may be the one given in the question, in relation to the ‘tail’ of the question (Y). Such an answer may be given marks depending upon the knowledge and understanding provided to support it. In addition there may be answers at Level 2 which include other knowledge related to the ‘tail’ or particular strand of the Thematic content (Y) which may not be clearly associated with another factor or related to the relevant SOC; this on its own would qualify for reward within Level 1 or in addition to an explicitly considered factor at level 2.

At Level 2 Simple reasoning means that a point (P) will have been made and supported by **either** Evidence **or** some further expansion of the point **only**. The understanding in the answer remains largely implicit because the connections between the point and the evidence (E) are not made

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completely explicit through an explanation (E) that is relevant to the Question. This will be exemplified by the relevant standardising examples.

**Levels 3 & 4** At Levels 3 & 4 the answer will address the factor stated in the question along with **another** factor(s). The factor will be considered in relation to the ‘tail’ of the question (Y). That means that the question relates a factor to a particular strand of the Thematic content or idea.

In order to do justice to the unique nature of a Thematic study rather than a Period or Depth study, at Levels 3 & 4 it is necessary to see examples of accurate knowledge from at least 3 of the 4 Parts of the Specification. This requirement may be satisfied easily by knowledge shown across the whole answer to this question.

There should be another factor related to the Thematic study as well as that which is provided in the question. Although there may be an imbalance between the amounts of contextual knowledge and understanding provided for each factor, the factors will be explicitly related to the particular strand of the Thematic content (Y) and draw upon the relevant SOC. Reasoning may be developed in that it is supported by factual knowledge and understanding. A developed level of reasoning is shown in an answer that makes an accurate and relevant point (P) about a similarity, supporting it with explanation (E), and factual knowledge or support/evidence (E). This level of reasoning in an answer may be accomplished briefly. The quality of the explanation or support will determine the mark within the level. At **Level 3** answers may well begin to form a judgement about the relative merits or influence of a factor but this may be to suggest that one factor is of greater merit.

The **Level 4** of the mark scheme requires complex thinking that leads to a substantiated judgement. That means that a judgement is and should be substantiated or sustained by reasoning or factual knowledge and understanding. In other words this is not merely stating a preference; a ‘judgement’ at Level 4 will require 1 or 2 sentences in which reasoning is provided and knowledge is shown for the judgement. Judgements may occur throughout an answer or be seen in the concluding paragraph. However, as with other questions, it is frequently a characteristic of Level 4 and perfectly acceptable that the answer may in the judgement appreciate the validity of several different factors related to the topic. The answers may make a separate judgement that displays complex thinking about the impact of each particular factor that is carefully reasoned and sustained. It is common though to see responses that consider together the impact or influence or interaction of particular factors in relation to the particular strand of the Thematic content and draw upon the relevant SOC. In this way the response addresses the ‘main’ qualifier of the question. Examiners need to be looking for and keen to reward all responses at Level 4 that show complex reasoning even though the preference for one factor above others is only slightly indicated.

### **Spelling, punctuation and grammar.**

The likelihood is that students entered for GCSE History will have demonstrated at some point at least an intermediate performance in spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is important to consider the quality of historical communication shown by the answer. If the historical communication is good then it should be possible to assess the value of the historical knowledge, understanding, and skills displayed in the response. It is possible for students to communicate well an historical answer that they believe to be accurate and relevant but its historical value could be assessed as of low or no merit. It is possible for students to gain high marks for SPaG in an answer that shows little or no historical merit. It is unlikely that an answer will provide sufficient evidence to assess historical communication at Upper Intermediate (3) or High performance (4) in less than a paragraph of writing.