

**A-level**  
**HISTORY**  
**7042/2T**

Component 2T The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the  
Soviet Empire, 1953–2000

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**Mark scheme**

June 2019

Version: 1.0 Final

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

## Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

### Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, i.e. if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

### Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

## Component 2T The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953–2000

### Section A

- 01** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying life in the Soviet satellite states in the years 1956 to 1961. **[30 marks]**

*Target: AO2*

*Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.*

### Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25-30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19-24**
- L3:** Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13-18**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7-12**
- L1:** The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1-6**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

## Indicative content

**Note:** This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.

**Source A:** in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

### Provenance, tone and emphasis

- it is a report intended for private consumption, making the source valuable
- the US has a special interest in the satellite states due to the Cold War; spy activity would ensure the US was aware of details of life in the satellite states but the source must be used with caution since it comes from an 'outside' origin and is written by those hostile to Communism
- the tone is imbued with a western bias – 'exploitation', 'outraged', 'past errors' – but it appears to offer a rational appraisal and, although bleak at the beginning, is more positive at the end. This could be intended to justify US non-interventionism in the eastern bloc.

### Content and argument

- everyday life is difficult due to workplace conditions; students may refer to workers' strikes in Poland in 1956, which were born out of terrible working conditions
- there is a lack of personal freedom; students may refer to the Kremlin controlling all media within each state, including attempts to block foreign radio stations; students may also mention that foreign travel was heavily restricted
- there is a worsening standard of living in the satellite states; students may comment that living standards differed in each satellite state and that they were much higher in East Germany than elsewhere; students may also refer to the widespread resentment of the nomenklatura
- there is unrest due to religious beliefs and the continuance of nationalism; students will likely refer to the Kremlin's attempts at Sovietisation and the growth of nationalism in satellite states, such as Poland under Gomulka and Hungary under Nagy
- things are perhaps changing for the better – that there is now less oppression, more freedoms and more opportunity for local people to involve themselves in the running of the state; students may refer to how some individuals did enjoy more rights and liberties, but only within the framework or obedience to the state.

**Source B: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:**

**Provenance, tone and emphasis**

- the statute of the FDJ would have been patriotic and pro-Soviet/anti-Western
- the purpose of the statute was to recruit, to promote togetherness, and at the height of the Cold War to promote anti-Western feeling
- the positive tone, notably the peace-seeking ways of the GDR and its search for a happy, united Germany.

**Content and argument**

- the FDJ became a vehicle for educating young people in the principle of the State
- although membership was voluntary, it became essential for anyone who wanted to advance themselves economically, politically or socially
- in 1961, Khrushchev ordered the erection of the Berlin Wall which instead of cementing ties with West Germany, which is the message in the source, cut ties and made the chance for a united Germany much less likely
- standards of healthcare were high across the satellite states and education was free
- both the FDJ and GDR have strong democratic values and advocate peace. Students may refer to how the political setup in the GDR mirrored that of the Soviet Union and that Ulbricht was party leader for over 20 years. Students may also refer to the response to the uprising in 1953 and the erection of the Berlin Wall to further challenge the concept that the FDJ/GDR was peace loving/democratic.

**Source C: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:**

**Provenance, tone and emphasis**

- the speech was public and has a clear agenda; there was an obvious effort on the part of the CPSU to try to convince that all was well within the empire after a difficult few months – n.b. the erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, just 2 months prior to this speech
- the speech is perhaps intended to impress internationally – in 1961, Khrushchev was about to lead the USSR into an international crisis in Cuba
- the tone is positive and upbeat – in support, students may refer to lines such as 'under socialism, the satellite states flourish' and 'they are all united in a single family'.

**Content and argument**

- the satellite states each had a wide range of state-controlled organisations, e.g. trade unions, sports clubs and youth organisations. However, in most cases the party had direct control. In other cases, then the party ensured sufficient control
- there were extensive cultural opportunities in the satellite states for those willing to toe the party line
- there was social equality. However, across the satellite states there was large-scale resentment that the nomenklatura were able to access a wider range of higher quality goods than the rest of the population. There were other social issues – a high degree of conformity expected and enforced, which created conflicts between religious affiliations and Party requirements within the satellite states
- there was much prosperity in the satellite states – however, in truth there was significant economic difficulty across this period – the Virgin Lands Scheme failed and generally, throughout the satellite states, work was boring and poorly paid. There were food shortages and due to the focus being on quantity, poor quality goods were produced. Housing was cramped and of limited quality

- transport links had developed significantly – students may refer to the irony of this in that freedom of movement was heavily restricted across the USSR, particularly foreign travel.

## Section B

**02** 'There was no improvement in the lives of ordinary people in the USSR under Brezhnev.'

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*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.*

## Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16-20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6-10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

## **Indicative content**

**Note:** This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

**Arguments/factors suggesting that there was no improvement in the lives of ordinary people in the USSR under Brezhnev might include:**

- Soviet society remained unequal – at the bottom were the Kolhozniiks, the collective farm workers who endured low wages and few amenities
- life in the Kolzhoo was difficult – village streets were unpaved, village schools provided only a basic education and health care services were limited
- there were still unexpected food shortages due to the command economy and production not being geared to meeting market demand
- the state-run shops did not provide a full range of consumer products. A black market flourished, supplying the goods that the state-run shops did not. Most ordinary people could not afford these highly priced goods
- cities, such as Moscow and Leningrad, had a wide range of opportunities for ordinary people and the best supply of consumer products and food – however, resident permits for these ‘closed cities’ were very difficult to obtain for those outside the elite.

**Arguments/factors challenging the view that there was no improvement in the lives of ordinary people in the USSR under Brezhnev might include:**

- unemployment was rare, job security was high and living standards increased with higher wages; many urban workers benefited from free high quality education and healthcare
- luxuries such as radios, refrigerators and telephones were common and TVs and cars were much more available than previously – by 1970, there were a million private cars on the USSR’s roads
- production in the light industries that made consumer goods were boosted in the Five Year Plans of the Brezhnev era, particularly the Tenth. Today’s Russians regularly vote Brezhnev as the best leader of the 20th century and remember his era as a golden age of material satisfaction
- ordinary people grew their own vegetables and were able to sell products from their private plots on the Kolkhoz
- Soviet citizens were permitted to stock up on items when they did come into shops in preparation for future shortages.

Whilst life for the Kolkhozniiks did not improve greatly under Brezhnev, life did improve for urban workers. Stalin’s coercion and Khrushchev’s failed campaigns were replaced with Brezhnev’s consumerism, which arguably resulted in relative comfort and security for the urban workers for the first time in Soviet history.

**03** How successful was Gorbachev as leader of the USSR in the years 1985 to 1988? **[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*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.*

### Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16-20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6-10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

**Indicative content**

**Note:** This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

**Arguments/factors suggesting that Gorbachev was successful as leader of the USSR in the years 1985 to 1988 might include:**

- on paper, Gorbachev made some good appointments forming a strong power base – he appointed on merit and so his key appointees were competent, notably Yakovlev, Ryzhkov and Shevardnadze
- for Gorbachev's reforms to succeed he needed new people with fresh ideas – he ensured that half the members of the Politburo and Secretariat and the Central Committee were new
- the war in Afghanistan was militarily and economically costly – Gorbachev's decision to withdraw prevented further losses and freed up monies to be invested in domestic reform
- Gorbachev aimed to improve relations with the West and he formed a strong personal relationship with President Reagan. At Geneva, 1985, both agreed to work closely and forge strong relations
- Gorbachev organised summit meetings to prevent nuclear war. He achieved various successes – at Reykjavik in 1986, both Gorbachev and Reagan agreed to scale back intermediate ballistic weapons; at Washington in 1987 and at Moscow in 1988, the INF (Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces) Treaty was achieved, which banned mid-range Soviet and US missiles.

**Arguments/factors challenging the view that Gorbachev was successful as leader of the USSR in the years 1985 to 1988 might include:**

- there were too many new appointments – these appointees tended to be far less experienced than those they replaced. His unusual decision to appoint upon merit rather than patronage was a mistake – some of his key appointees became fierce opponents of Khrushchev, i.e. Ligachev and notably Yeltsin who became an outspoken critic of Gorbachev
- not all was smooth running at the summit meetings – very limited progress was made at Geneva in terms of limiting arms productions and a stalemate was reached in 1896 at Reykjavik over SDI. Also, at Moscow in 1988, talks were stalled due to Reagan raising the issue of Soviet human rights abuses
- whilst the Brezhnev Doctrine was applauded in the West, it was not within Russia. The satellite states took advantage of Gorbachev's promise to refrain from using force to instil order. Gorbachev's belief that the satellite states would willingly stay in the socialist commonwealth given the option, was viewed as naïve by many
- Gorbachev's response to the Chernobyl Disaster in April 1986 was unconvincing. His commitment to Glasnost proved shaky
- Gorbachev's economic restructuring ran into serious problems, notably the law on Joint Enterprises, Jan 1987 and the law on State Enterprise, June 1987. His reforms clashed with the planned economy, made it difficult for foreign businesses to operate in the USSR and encouraged corruption.

Whilst Gorbachev's key appointees helped his cause in the short-term, they did not in the long run. Many became disloyal and stood in open opposition to him. He aimed for détente and certainly achieved better relations with the West and he significantly reduced the production of nuclear arms in the US and USSR. His domestic reform seemed to lack foresight and ran into difficulty due to the preservation of key elements of the Soviet system. This, alongside the introduction of market economics and democratic politics, caused problems and ultimately failure.

- 04** 'The problems in Romania and Bulgaria in the years 1980 to 1989 were mainly caused by a lack of political reform.'

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*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.*

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- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

## Indicative content

**Note:** This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

**Arguments/factors suggesting that the problems in Romania and Bulgaria in the years 1980 to 1989 were mainly caused by a lack of political reform might include:**

- there was frustration at Zhirkov's superficial adoption of Gorbachev's reforms. Promises to deliver Glasnost on Perestroika were not realised in Bulgaria; the fact that Zhirkov promised to share power, but did so only with his son, caused resentment across Bulgaria. Zhirkov promised Glasnost but enacted patronage
- Zhirkov was the longest-serving leader of any of the Soviet satellite states – he was First Secretary of Bulgaria 1954 until 1989. Elements of stagnation had crept in – there was a need for change. The Party began to criticise Zhirkov in the 1980s – they felt there was a need for the old leader to be replaced with somebody able to take Bulgaria forward
- the intelligentsia in Bulgaria were Russian speakers with access to a range of media from the USSR – it proved impossible for Zhirkov to hide the truth, that political reform in Bulgaria was lagging far behind what was happening in the USSR
- whilst open dissent in Romania was rarely seen in these years, the unparalleled levels of violence seen in Romania in 1989 was a clear reaction to many years of repressive rule under Ceausescu. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, tight censorship, propaganda, intimidation and blackmail created an atmosphere of terror in which the people dared not oppose Ceausescu's regime
- as Romania remained isolationist, it grew out of step with reforms in the USSR and other satellite states, causing western support for Romania to dwindle.

**Arguments/factors challenging the view that the problems in Romania and Bulgaria in the years 1980 to 1989 were mainly caused by a lack of political reform might include:**

- Zhirkov's treatment of ethnic Turks proved unpopular. He sought to make them take on a Bulgarian identity and he did so through force and mass expulsion. The Democratic League for the Defence of Human Rights formed in opposition; the expulsion of 300,000 Bulgarian Turks had an adverse impact on the economy – Bulgarian Turks were amongst the most productive of Bulgaria's citizens
- there were concerns over environment issues which led to the creation of the pressure group Ecoglasnost. There were particular concerns about Soviet-design nuclear reactors post-Chernobyl and chemical plants next to the Danube River which polluted nearby Ruse
- the rise in Soviet oil prices in the 1980s caused significant economic problems for Bulgaria – Zhirkov was no longer able to resell Soviet oil at a huge profit; Zhirkov had to depend on foreign loans due to the economic downturn in the 1980s – debt increased to over \$10 billion by 1989 and the country found itself in economic crisis
- Ceausescu banned abortion which proved extremely unpopular. The result of which was a rapid increase in illegal abortion services and the abandonment of thousands of children in orphanages, many of which were unfit for young children
- Ceausescu's response to the depletion of Romanian oil supplies was ineffective – the decision to cut imports and increase exports caused serious poverty and food rationing.

A lack of political reform did create problems in both Romania and Bulgaria, particularly because what remained in both satellite states lagged behind what existed elsewhere in the USSR. However, a range of other factors contributed to the problems, notably unpopular policies towards ethnic minorities and on abortion, a reluctance to deal with environmental issues, and perhaps most importantly – ineffective

economic policy. The despairing situation that many Romanians and Bulgarians found themselves in, led to further demand for political change.