

GCSE (9–1)

Examiners' report

**HISTORY A
(EXPLAINING THE
MODERN WORLD)**

J410

For first teaching in 2016

J410/14 Summer 2022 series

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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 answers 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 OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

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Paper 14 series overview

Paper 14 focuses on International Relations in the years 1918 to 1975. The questions focus on candidates' historical knowledge and understanding and their ability to develop an explanation of the causes or consequences of key events. However, the main focus is on historical interpretations, specifically how historians have interpreted and re-interpreted two highly significant issues in this period: Appeasement 1937-39 and the Origins of the Cold War.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly set out the line of their argument at the beginning of their response to Question 2 • concentrated on using two (or at most three) interpretations effectively in support of their responses to Questions 3 and 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spent excessive amounts of time on a narrative account for Question 2 rather than addressing the question • did not make clear the main arguments in Interpretations A or B which they thought were valid or controversial • described how some historical interpretations emerged rather than why these interpretations agreed or disagreed with Interpretations A or B.

Question 1

International Relations: the changing international order 1918–c.1975

- 1 Outline the events, between 1936 and 1939, that resulted in the outbreak of the Second World War. [5]

This factual recall question proved to be relatively straightforward for the majority of candidates. Very few candidates did not reach Level 2 (2-3 marks), usually outlining two or more events of relevance in the 1930s which could be considered background reasons for the outbreak of war. They outlined events such as the Manchurian Crisis or the Remilitarisation of the Rhineland but did not develop any kind of outline which connected these events to the outbreak of war.

Many responses did do this development, commenting, for example, on how the Rhineland crisis alarmed Britain and France, leading to British rearmament and increasing tension. Such responses reached Level 3 (4-5 marks). Many other responses reached Level 3 by outlining Hitler's betrayal of the Munich Agreement by invading Czechoslovakia and the Nazi-Soviet Pact. These points of focus generally made it easier to address the issue of the outbreak of war.

Question 2

- 2 Explain why the USA failed to win the Vietnam War between 1965 and 1975. [10]

This question was generally handled well. Most candidates had a thorough knowledge of the military campaigns, the tactics of both sides and the gradual loss of support for the war in the USA. Many candidates successfully described all three of these features of the war and as a result were able to reach Level 3 (5-6 marks). The primary difference between Level 3 and Level 4 (7-8 marks) was the ability to explain how those events led to the failure of the USA's campaign in Vietnam; descriptions of US tactics such as search and destroy raids, napalm etc were valid to Level 3. However, to reach Level 4 candidates needed to point out the impact of these tactics, for example the negative effect of these tactics on South Vietnamese peasants who supported the Communists as a result. Similarly, description of the negative sentiment in the USA against the war reached Level 3, while to reach Level 4 candidates needed to explain that ant-war sentiment put pressure of governments, particularly Nixon, to withdraw from the war.

Exemplar 1

		USA to win. Moreover, media circulated images of an American actions in Vietnam (such as Napalm and the My
		Lai Massacre (1968) resulted in
		people in the USA protesting. As the
		government didn't have to the
		support of its people it undermined
		the si their "democratic" fight, forcing
		them to withdraw and therefore not
		win.

Exemplar 1 shows how a candidate could reach Level 4. The response points out that media coverage of My Lai and napalm turned many Americans against the war (with two developed examples reaching Level 5).

Question 3

3 Study Interpretation A.

Do you think this interpretation is a fair comment on the causes of the Cold War? Use your knowledge and other interpretations of the early stages of the Cold War (before 1950) to support your answer. [25]

(✍) Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology [5]

There is no doubt that this is a very challenging question and so it was very pleasing to see how well-prepared the majority of candidates were for it and how well they tackled it. To answer this question well, candidates need to make clear that they understand the main argument(s) in Interpretation A. This is essential if they are to make a valid argument about whether or not the interpretation is fair.

Some candidates did not do this. The most common errors were to attempt to write a narrative of all of the different interpretations of the origins of the Cold War. Such responses did not reach above Level 2 (6-10 marks). Another common error was to focus solely on why particular interpretations developed at particular times. This was not usually relevant and was similarly marked at Level 2.

Effective responses usually set out the main argument(s) in Interpretation A in an initial paragraph. It was not essential to do this, but on the whole this was the most effective and clear way of setting up the candidate's response. Having established the view of Interpretation A, candidates then had a platform from which to argue whether or not they considered Interpretation A to be fair and to use other interpretations as evidence to support their arguments. Candidates who invested time in developing this clarity of thought could then reach Level 4 (16-20 marks) if they used one interpretation effectively, or Level 5 (21-25 marks) if they used two or more.

Exemplar 2

3	a	<p>This interpretation is saying that America was aggressively spreading capitalism throughout the world which threatened the USSR and led to the Cold War. This is the US revisionist view which blamed the USA for the Cold War.</p> <p>Many historians would agree with this interpretation as it was published in 1968 and the US revisionist view was from the 1960s - 1970s. William Appleman Williams ^{William Appleman Williams} would agree with this view as they ^{he} believed that the USA caused the Cold War through their aggressive expansion and their determination to dominate trade in Europe and Asia. They believed that the USA used loans and plans such as the Marshall Plan and the</p>
		<p>Truman doctrine to make countries economically dependant on them and to spread capitalism. This is shown in the source as it says 'American foreign policy at the end of the Second World War was to offer loans and investments to as many countries as possible. US Revisionist also</p>

Exemplar 2 is section of a response that shows a very clear understanding of the thrust of the argument of Interpretation A. It should be stressed that it is NOT necessary to try to name the school of thought from which Interpretation A derives and candidates are generally advised not to do so. In the exemplar, the candidate then quickly establishes that Revisionist historians would agree with Interpretation A and the basis of that agreement, for Level 4.

Advice for centres on Question 3

We strongly recommend advising candidates to write an initial paragraph setting out the main argument(s) contained in Interpretation A.

Question 4

4 Study Interpretation B.

Explain why **not** all historians and commentators have agreed with this interpretation of Chamberlain and Appeasement.

Use other interpretations and your knowledge to support your answer.

[10]

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology

[5]

The mark tariff for this question was reduced for this session but the basic requirement to address the question remained. The strengths and weaknesses of responses were very similar to those on Question 4. Responses at Level 1 (1-2 marks) and Level 2 (3-4 marks) tended to be based on assertions or outline narratives of differing interpretations of Appeasement.

However, some candidates went beyond this. At Level 3 candidates correctly identified interpretations which agreed or disagreed but did not explain how or why they (dis)agreed. Alternatively, some responses provided their own critique of Interpretation B based on their contextual knowledge.

The stronger responses, as with Question 3, focused on deploying other interpretations as supporting evidence for a clear argument. Unlike Question 3, there is a strong emphasis on how and/or why different historians might contest Interpretation B. Candidates who explained either how or why for one interpretation could reach Level 4 (7-8 marks). To reach Level 5 candidates could use a range of approaches. The most common were to explain how and why one interpretation disagreed with B, or how two different interpretations agreed or disagreed. Both were valid for Level 5.

Advice for centres on Question 4

We strongly recommend advising candidates to write an initial paragraph setting out the main argument(s) contained in Interpretation B.

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