

# Specimen Paper Answers

## Paper 4

# Cambridge International AS & A Level History 9489

For examination in 2021, 2022 and 2023



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## Introduction

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The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level History 9489 and to show examples of very good answers.

This booklet contains answers to Specimen Paper, Questions 2, 8 and 9, which has been marked by a Cambridge examiner. Each answer is accompanied by a brief commentary explaining its strengths and weaknesses. These examiner comments indicate where why marks were awarded and how answers could be improved.

These answers should be considered in conjunction with the Specimen Paper and Mark Scheme.

The Specimen Paper and Mark Scheme are available to download from School Support Hub  
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**9489 History 2021 Specimen Paper 04**

**9489 History 2021 Specimen Paper Mark Scheme 04**

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## Assessment overview

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### Paper 4 – Depth Study

Written paper, 1 hour 45 minutes, 60 marks

Candidates answer two questions on their chosen depth study.

Externally assessed

30% of the A Level

### Assessment objectives

#### **AO1**

Recall, select and deploy historical knowledge appropriately and effectively.

#### **AO3**

Demonstrate an understanding of the past through explanation, analysis and a substantiated judgement of key concepts: causation, consequence, continuity, change and significance within an historical context, the relationship between key features and characteristics of the periods studied.

## Question 2

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### Depth Study 1: European history in the interwar years, 1919–41

- 2 Evaluate the reasons why Stalin was able to establish his dictatorship in Russia. [30]

#### Specimen answer

When assessing how Stalin was able to establish total control over Russia by 1934 it is necessary to establish clear criteria. Events connected to Lenin's death, Stalin's changing ideology, removing opposition figures and the role of propaganda will all be examined, as will the impact of the economic policies. Having examined each factor an overall assessment will be made to how they interacted to bring about his dictatorship. The Soviet Union was already an authoritarian regime prior to Stalin's seizure of power, but Stalin was to take this control to the level of a personal dictatorship.

Stalin was building power even before the death of Lenin in 1924. His appointment as General Secretary of the Communist Party meant he could take control over the membership. This allowed Stalin to start putting people in key roles, people who owed their jobs to him and would be loyal. Stalin's supporters came to dominate the Central Committee of the Communist Party. At the same time he was not seen as a threat or future leader. This is where the idea of the grey blur started, Stalin was a bureaucrat, not a dynamic and charismatic potential future leader. Stalin's planning for a takeover of power and the fact that others underestimated him are vital ingredients in his dictatorship.

The death of Lenin led to a power vacuum. Stalin was able to suppress Lenin's Testament helped by Zinoviev and Kamenev. They were convinced that they were criticised in it so self-interest played a part in helping Stalin. This document might have been fatal to Stalin's chances as it recommended he be removed as General Secretary. Instead Stalin could cleverly portray himself as the most loyal Leninist and natural successor by organising the funeral, giving the eulogy and founding the Lenin Institute. Crucially Stalin also misled Trotsky on the date of the funeral so he missed it and therefore appeared in a negative light.

Stalin had a clear goal in mind – total power and his managing of events show he was good at judging the impact of gestures and actions. He knew how to use people's worries and concerns to gain their assistance such as those who helped him hide the Testament. It also shows that his rivals for power underestimated him. They did not stop him from playing a central role at the funeral or made sure Trotsky got there in time. Stalin was good at

### Specimen answer, continued

attracting support. He published his ideology of “Socialism in One Country”, which proposed that the Soviet Union must concentrate on consolidating Communism in the Soviet Union and was in stark contrast to Trotsky’s World or Permanent Revolution. People preferred this because they were tired of conflict. So, whilst we can’t know for sure, it is possible Stalin used his political judgement to pick a policy he knew would bring him success rather than something he really believed. In this he shows his political ability to be flexible to what is popular, to attract support naturally.

Stalin’s use of ideology was also shown to be flexible when he was consolidating his lead of the Party. Working with Zinoviev and Kamenev he followed a policy of a state run economy but then switched his support to Bukharin and the New Economic Policy, isolating Zinoviev and Kamenev and then ditching Bukharin once he felt strong enough to remove the Right of the Communist Party. Throughout the 1920s Stalin was building up his own powerbase by isolating the Left and then the Right of the Communist Party.

When he gained unchallenged power he adopted the policies of Collectivisation and the Five-Year Plans. After 1929 his economic policies were a means to establish a modern and powerful economy but also a means of control over the Soviet people. Collectivisation was a method of engaging in class war, with the removal of Kulaks, but also a way to bring the peasantry under the control, whom he felt were not loyal to him. The Five-Year plans were a means of establishing huge targets and savage industrial discipline on the workers. His economic ideology was to improve the status of the Russia and crush opposition at the same time.

Opposition to Stalin did exist and had to be removed. He used divisions in the Communist Party and he played his rivals off against one another, removing them in turn. They were all to be assassinated or removed from the Communist Party and put on trial in the infamous Show Trials of the 1930s. Kirov was to openly challenge Stalin at the Party Congress of 1934, showing that opposition was still possible, however shortly after he was murdered. Stalin was implicated, and this followed by a period of “Great Terror” which stopped any further opposition.

The NKVD was to play a key role. The 1930s saw the construction of the gulags and implementation of the Yezhovschina to terrorise the general public into submission and blind obedience. It was very clear the NKVD served Stalin, who regularly supervised the lists of those to be executed. In addition, the Russian Orthodox Church was suppressed as it was seen as a possible source of opposition to the regime.

**Specimen answer, continued**

*The use of terror and brutality were vital in achieving a dictatorship and Stalin was not frightened to use it. Whether Stalin controlled all the terror or whether it was a product of the chaotic nature of the Soviet state and the ambitions of the NKVD is unclear but the terror played the key role in establishing a dictatorship. Both the power and paranoia are shown in the purges of the Armed Forces, a body that was loyal to Stalin and yet he did not trust them so the fact he could and did purge his military shows that a dictatorship had been established.*

*In conjunction with ideology and terror, the role of propaganda must not be underestimated. The state controlled all the media outlets. Stalin presented himself as the son of a peasant and close to the workers. A cult of personality was created with official publications, films and statues all proclaiming the vital role and power of Stalin. He was credited with all the successes of the Soviet state and the failures blamed on others. The use of imagery, to create his image as Father of the Nation be it posters, paintings, the Moscow Metro or numerous statues all added to the Stalin Cult. He also increasingly exercised control over education. Hence the young could be indoctrinated via the Komsomol.*

*Stalin succeeded in establishing a dictatorship, arguably by 1934, the combination of his ruthlessness, clever planning, shifting ideology and the divisions within the opposition were all integral components in his rise to total power. It was the combination of these factors combined with a determination to have total control that made the establishment of his dictatorship possible.*



## Examiner comments

This is a Level 5 response. The examiner assesses essays using two assessment objectives.

**AO1** is the ability to recall, select and deploy historical knowledge appropriately and effectively. In a Level 5 response candidates will demonstrate a high level of relevant detail which is carefully selected, is fully focused on supporting the argument, is wide ranging and is consistently precise and accurate

In this response, there is clearly wide-ranging material and it is always deployed in support of the argument present about the establishing of a dictatorship by Stalin. The answer is multi-causal, and the knowledge used is thus from a clear range of factors and over the whole time period.

**AO2** is the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the past through explanation, analysis and a substantiated judgement of key concepts: causation, consequence, continuity, change and significance within an historical context, the relationship between the key features and characteristics of the periods studied. In a Level 5 response the candidates must establish valid criteria for assessing the question, be consistently analytical of the key features of the period, provide a focused, balanced argument with a sustained line of reasoning throughout and finally to reach a clear and sustained judgement.

In this response the candidate clearly establishes at the outset the criteria that they will examine, then they do so clearly throughout the essays followed by a sustained and supported conclusion giving a clear judgement. The answer is very good quality as it avoids narrative and focuses on analysis with clear factual support.

## Common mistakes

- Giving a narrative account of the Great Terror.
- Too narrow a focus on dictatorship.
- Over concentration on the Power Struggle of the 1920s.
- Lack of clear analytical focus on the question throughout the answer.
- Lack of a clearly argued and supported conclusion that logically follows for the arguments made in the answer.

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## Question 8

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### Depth Study 2: The history of the USA, 1944–92

8 'Public opinion lost the USA the Vietnam War.' Evaluate this claim.

[30]

#### Specimen answer

*This question suggests the USA lost the Vietnam War because of the key role of public opinion. It is undoubtedly true that public opinion had an important role in Vietnam, USA and internationally should be considered as well as in the USA. Any war is lost by a wide range of factors and it is also necessary to look at the aims of the USA, the military tactics of both the USA and the Vietcong, the domestic situation in the USA in the later 1960s and early 1970s and the changing international scenario. All these factors had a role to play in the eventual defeat of the USA.*

*Following the policy of containment, the USA supported the corrupt regime of President Diem and under President Johnson saw a marked escalation of military involvement following the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1965. The US Congress had in effect written the President a blank cheque to pursue the war as he saw fit. The fact that war was never declared by Congress was later to lead to many complaints of an illegal war. It was an embarrassing defeat for the USA and tarnished the USA's international reputation.*

*The war became increasingly unpopular as it escalated. The introduction of the Selective Service Act, the Draft, meant many young men were forced to serve against their will. Soldiers were more likely to be from lower socio-economic classes as the wealthier were able to dodge the draft and with an over representation of Black Americans, this military service was seen as unfair and discriminatory. Many also felt that money that could have been used for improving the lives of Americans was being diverted by President Johnson to fight an unnecessary war. Regular tax increases to pay for the war were also very unpopular and as the war progressed people increasingly knew people who had been killed or injured in the war meaning they had another reason to feel their money was being wasted. Anti-war protests erupted across university campuses and the Kent State killings of 1970 were a crisis point for President Nixon. Burning draft cards became a recognised form of protest and included famous people, such as Muhammad Ali. This was an illegal act and over 9000 men were prosecuted.*

### Specimen answer, continued

In the late 1960s The media played a key role in turning public opinion against the war by highlighting events such as the Tet Offensive in 1968, the use of carpet bombing, Napalm and Agent Orange and ultimately convinced US public opinion that the war was being lost. Photos of women and children being killed or maimed, and it got worse by the massacres at My Lai in 1968 which did not help the situation as the USA looked like heartless murderers for no gain. Combined with an increasing death toll public opinion turned against the war leaving the politicians no choice but to seek to end the war, 'with honour', as promised by Nixon.

In Vietnam the excesses of the US troops also resulted in local opposition to the war and to international opposition to the USA's role and tactics. Condemnation came from both East and West, where unsurprisingly China and the Russia criticised the USA's policies but even the United Kingdom refused to support the USA militarily. This was all to add pressure to the movement to withdraw from Vietnam as soon as possible. The war in Vietnam was also lost militarily, a direct cause of the poor public perception of the war. The Vietcong used different tactics that they were hard to fight against. The North Vietnamese used the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the USA was unable to destroy it. Carpet Bombing in Operation Rolling Thunder and the use of Napalm and Agent Orange all failed to destroy the Vietcong and at the same time led to massive civilian casualties. These methods proved impossible to fight against, particularly for an army trained in conventional warfare and confident that their technology would win for them. That the Vietcong were supplied by China and the Russia, enabling them to survive the bombing and other US tactics, didn't help the situation.

The US military was itself unsure about the war and soldiers began to turn against it in organisations such as "Vietnam Veterans Against the War". They argued forcefully that what the USA was doing was immoral and that military discipline was breaking down with drug taking, torture and needless deaths. The inability to cope with unknown terrain, an almost invisible enemy and the infiltration of the South by the Vietcong led the military leadership to expand the war to the bombing of Laos and Cambodia and ever more extreme tactics in Vietnam itself. These desperate methods were a clear sign that the USA was losing and also helps to explain the link between military failure and poor public opinion. In addition, public opinion turned on the US soldiers themselves, reducing military morale. Over 500,000 men deserted and the increasing view that they were dying in vain and in an immoral war grew.

The election of President Nixon in 1968 and that President Johnson did not stand for re-election illustrated the unpopularity of the war. The Democratic Convention in Chicago had

### Specimen answer, continued

*been disrupted by anti-war protests and students had chanted, "Hey, Hey, LBJ! How many kids did you kill today?" Nixon's promise to end the war "with honour" and to Vietnamise the war was an admission that the war had been lost. In addition, Nixon wanted to open relations with China to isolate the USSR and needed to end the Vietnam War the demands of foreign policy played a role, not just public opinion.*

*The Vietnam War was lost by the USA on many fronts. Public opinion, at home and abroad, had a key role but it was linked to military defeat with the inability of the USA to crush the Vietcong as well as diplomatic pressure and accusations of illegality. By the 1970s the USA was questioning itself and why they had to follow a policy of containment at such financial and human cost. By 1968 US public opinion was no longer supportive of the war, nor was international public opinion as the tactics became increasingly desperate and extreme the moral condemnation and outright public opposition domestically and internationally and in Vietnam itself could not be avoided. When soldiers who fought in Vietnam were condemning it, it is very difficult to see how the USA could have won.*

### Examiner comments

This is a Level 5 response. The examiner assesses essays using two Assessment Objectives.

**AO1** is the ability to recall, select and deploy historical knowledge appropriately and effectively. In a Level 5 response candidates will demonstrate a high level of relevant detail which is carefully selected, is fully focused on supporting the argument, is wide ranging and is consistently precise and accurate.

In this response there is clearly wide-ranging material and it is always deployed in support of the argument presented to explain the loss of the Vietnam War by the USA. The answer is multi-causal, and the knowledge used is thus from a clear range of factors and over the whole time period. Each factor presented is supported by in-depth factual knowledge.

**AO2** is the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the past through explanation, analysis and a substantiated judgement of key concepts: causation, consequence, continuity, change and significance within an historical context, the relationship between the key features and characteristics of the periods studied. In a Level 5 response the candidate must establish valid criteria for assessing the question, be consistently analytical of the key features of the period, provide a focused, balanced argument with a sustained line of reasoning throughout and finally to reach a clear and sustained judgement.

In this response the candidate clearly establishes at the outset the criteria that they will examine and then does so clearly throughout the essay and then there is a sustained and supported conclusion giving a clear judgement. The answer is very good quality as it avoids narrative and focuses on the need for analysis with clear factual support and brings together the various factors already explained in the essay to a summative judgement. It also illustrates how the factors were intertwined, for example that military failure led to poor public opinion about the war.

### Common mistakes

- Over concentration on public opinion, to the exclusion of other factors.
- Only looking at US public opinion and ignoring global public opinion.
- Giving an overly narrative account of the failure of the USA to win the Vietnam War.
- Not arguing a clear and supported case throughout the essay.
- Not having a logical and reasoned conclusion which addresses public opinion but evaluating it in relation to other factors too.

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## Question 9

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### Depth Study 3: International history, 1945–92

- 9 'Ronald Reagan was more responsible than Mikhail Gorbachev for ending the Cold War.' Discuss this view. [30]

#### Specimen answer

*This question invites a comparison between the roles of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in ending the Cold War. The question suggests either Reagan or Gorbachev but I will argue both were vital in ending the Cold War, in 1989. Indeed, it can also be argued that Margaret Thatcher and George Bush were also key players and the interaction between them was to prove important as they each played differing roles over the period 1980 to 1989.*

*Ronald Reagan was elected as President of the United States in November 1980 and was seen as a Cold War warrior. The Russia, under Brezhnev, had invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and a new period of tension had arisen between the Russia and the West. Reagan rejected the policy of détente that had been followed by President Carter and launched a Second Cold War. He was determined to win this Cold War and famously announced the Russia as the "Evil Empire" and urged General Secretary Gorbachev to "tear down that Wall" on his visit to Berlin. In the period 1981–85 Reagan massively increased defence spending and launched his infamous Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), known as Star Wars. This appeared to cancel the threat of a Soviet nuclear strike on mainland United States and at the same time the USA was committed to supporting the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan and anti-communist forces in Nicaragua, Angola and Cambodia. Reagan even went so far as to say that he thought a nuclear war could be winnable. This was, in retrospect, rhetoric, but it scared the leaders in the Kremlin. It was clear that the Reagan Administration intended to outspend the Russia. In 1983, following the shooting down of the Korean Airlines Flight 007, Reagan adopted an aggressive attitude and accused the Soviets of crimes against humanity. Operation Able Archer in 1983, exposed the very real tensions between the Warsaw Pact countries and NATO and both sides having reached a peak of military readiness had to back down. The West had simulated a nuclear strike on the Eastern Bloc and only spies working on both sides managed to avert nuclear war. From 1981–85 the end of the Cold War was not in sight, whilst Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko occupied the post of General Secretary. Both the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games were boycotted by the West and East in very public displays of disapproval of the alternative regimes. It was in this period that Reagan was determined to force the Russia to spend massively on military projects that it could not sustain.*

### Specimen answer, continued

However, this overtly aggressive approach was to reap rewards and ultimately success. It was the coming to power of Mikhail Gorbachev and the Reagan's ability to change policy that ultimately helped result in the end of the Cold War.

In 1985 Gorbachev was appointed General Secretary. Relations between the Russia and the West were at an all-time low. Gorbachev was a reformer and he quickly realised that it was no longer possible for the Russia to continue its traditional course. He was horrified to discover the true extent of economic chaos and knew he had to reduce arms spending, knowing he could never hope to compete with the economic spending power of the USA. He introduced economic reform in the form of Perestroika and encouraged more open dialogue by the policy of Glasnost. The latter was to lead to open criticism of the whole communist system and a demand for multi-party elections. He also realised that if communism was to survive it needed to reform and although he was ultimately unsuccessful in this aim, it did play a key role in ending the Cold War.

It was immediately apparent that a new approach was to be followed by the Kremlin. Having met with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, she told Reagan that "we can do business together" and her key role was convincing her ideological and personal friend to meet with and engage with Gorbachev. Initially, Reagan was wary, but over time they were to form a close bond. The key meeting at Geneva in November 1985, although not producing concrete results, opened the dialogue between Reagan and Gorbachev and in retrospect began the process of ending the Cold War. This meeting was followed by meetings in Reykjavik and then in 1987 the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty that limited both sides' intermediate nuclear weapons and was to see nuclear weapons being removed from East Germany. Crucially, Gorbachev cancelled the Brezhnev Doctrine when the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the Cold War, was brought down in November 1989, Gorbachev did not send in Warsaw Pact troops, in stark contrast to his predecessors. This was a monumental decision resulting in the Eastern European satellite states breaking free from Soviet control by the end of 1989. This served to massively reduce tensions with the West.

Both Reagan and Gorbachev had key roles to play in ending the Cold War. Reagan began as the hard-line anti-communist and although he never stopped decrying communism, he also hated the idea of nuclear weapons and wanted to make the world safer. His harsh stance showed Gorbachev that the Russia had to reform its approach and equally he deserves immense credit for trying to modernise the Russia and, in the face of opposition, being

### Specimen answer, continued

*prepared to negotiate arms limitation treaties and ultimately signing the treaty that ended the Cold War in 1989 with President Bush. George Bush was to say that “peace through strength” had worked and he carefully handled the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany so as to not humiliate Gorbachev. Global pressure from the USA had made a significant impact on Soviet policy and they withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, a democratic government was elected in Nicaragua and Cuban troops withdrew from Angola. Reagan was without doubt instrumental in bringing about the end of the Cold War but arguably he could not have done it alone and needed the cooperation of a new style of Soviet leader who was prepared to reform his own country and forge better working relations with the West. For this he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. There is still debate about Gorbachev. He was either the man who helped bring world peace or the man who weakened and ultimately destroyed the Russia. What is beyond debate is that he and Reagan as a team brought about the end of the Cold War.*

### Examiner comments

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**AO1** is the ability to recall, select and deploy historical knowledge appropriately and effectively. In a Level 5 response candidates will demonstrate a high level of relevant detail which is carefully selected, is fully focused on supporting the argument, is wide ranging and is consistently precise and accurate.

In this response there is clearly wide-ranging material and it looks at both Reagan and Gorbachev and their actions. The knowledge used is from a clear range of factors, over the whole time period and each factor presented is supported by in-depth factual knowledge.

**AO2** is the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the past through explanation, analysis and a substantiated judgement of key concepts: causation, consequence, continuity, change and significance within an historical context, the relationship between the key features and characteristics of the periods studied. In a Level 5 response the candidate must establish valid criteria for assessing the question, be consistently analytical of the key features of the period, provide a focused, balanced argument with a sustained line of reasoning throughout and finally to reach a clear and sustained judgement.

In this response the candidate clearly establishes at the outset the criteria that they will examine and then does so clearly throughout the essay and then there is a sustained and supported conclusion giving a clear judgement. The answer points out that the choice is not Reagan or Gorbachev in their opinion but explains how both had a key role to play. The answer is very good quality as it avoids narrative and focuses on the need for analysis with clear factual support and brings together the various factors already explained in the essay to a summative judgement. It also illustrates how the factors were interlinked, for example the hard-line policies of Reagan may have led to Gorbachev’s desire for reform, but also how Gorbachev’s reforms allowed Reagan to improve relations with the Russia.



## Common mistakes

- Writing a narrative account of Reagan and the Cold War.
- Not writing a balanced answer that looks at and evaluates the contribution of both Reagan and Gorbachev.
- Not analysing the motives of both Reagan and Gorbachev.
- Not explaining why both Reagan and Gorbachev changed their previous policies after 1985.
- Not explaining that the end of the Cold War involved both Reagan and Gorbachev.
- Not writing a reasoned conclusion that answers the question posed, with nuance and factual support.

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