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**GCSE  
HISTORY  
8145/1B/E**

**Paper 1 Section B/E: Conflict and tension in the Gulf and  
Afghanistan, 1990–2009**

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**Mark scheme**

**June 2025**

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**Version: 1.0 Final**



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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 Examiner.

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.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

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

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## 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, ie 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.

## Step 3 Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in question 04.

	<b>Performance descriptor</b>	<b>Marks awarded</b>
High performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy</li> <li>• Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall</li> <li>• Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate</li> </ul>	4 marks
Intermediate performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy</li> <li>• Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall</li> <li>• Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate</li> </ul>	2–3 marks
Threshold performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy</li> <li>• Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall</li> <li>• Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate</li> </ul>	1 mark
No marks awarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learner writes nothing</li> <li>• The learner's response does not relate to the question</li> <li>• The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning</li> </ul>	0 marks

Question 04 is an extended response question. They give students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

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**Source A** is critical of Osama bin Laden. How do you know?

Explain your answer using **Source A** and your contextual knowledge.

**[4 marks]**

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

**Target** **Analyse sources contemporary to the period (AO3a)**

**Level 2: Developed analysis of source based on content and/or provenance** **3–4**

Students may progress from a simple analysis of the source with extended reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding related to the features of the source.

For example, it reminds British readers that Osama bin Laden was a terrorist and, using the figure of death, suggests he was behind attacks on Western targets such as embassies. Bin Laden's 'list' included attacks on African and Middle Eastern states which were regarded as the West's allies/partners and therefore the enemy of al Qaeda.

**Level 1: Simple analysis of source based on content and/or provenance** **1–2**

Students identify relevant features in the source and support them with simple factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, Osama bin Laden was being blamed for terrorist attacks on targets in countries such as the USA or ones which were friendly to the West.

**Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question** **0**

**0 2** How useful are **Sources B** and **C** to an historian studying President Bush's War on Terror?

Explain your answer using **Sources B** and **C** and your contextual knowledge.

**[12 marks]**

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

**Target** **Analyse sources contemporary to the period (AO3a)**  
**Evaluate sources and make substantiated judgements (AO3b)**

In analysing and evaluating sources, students will draw on their contextual knowledge to question critically the content and provenance of sources (for example, the context of the time in which source was created, place, author's situation, knowledge, beliefs, circumstances, access to information, purpose and audience).

**Level 4: Complex evaluation of both sources with sustained judgement based on content and provenance 10–12**

Students may progress from a developed evaluation of the sources by complex reasoning related to utility on the basis of content and provenance. They may evaluate the relationship between the sources based on analysis of provenance and contextual knowledge.

For example, Source B suggests why Bush launched the War on Terror following the 9/11 attacks – he understood that Americans wanted action against the terrorist 'evil doers', leading to the US led Coalition's attacks on targets in Afghanistan less than a month later.

Source C aims to make fun of Bush and convince people outside America that, nine years later, he had failed because his efforts to destroy terror were based on blind guesswork and were never likely to succeed.

**Level 3: Developed evaluation of sources based on the content and/or provenance 7–9**

Students may progress from a simple evaluation of the sources with extended reasoning related to utility on the basis of content and/or provenance.

For example, Source C was produced to make people in Europe think that the War on Terror had completely failed and makes fun of Bush as the blindfold shows that it never likely to succeed.

Source B is set on the site of the Twin Towers attack and records the moment when Bush was carried along by the crowd to declare that there would be justice for the thousands killed by dealing with those terrorists responsible.

**Level 2: Simple evaluation of source(s) based on content and/or provenance** **4–6**

Students may progress from a basic analysis of the source(s) to simple evaluation of the content and/or provenance.

For example, not only was Bush failing in the War on Terror but also, he was unlikely to succeed as he is shown in Source C wearing a blindfold so will continue to miss the target.

Source B suggests he has popular support in the US for his campaign against terrorists as he is playing to the crowd.

**Level 1: Basic analysis of sources(s)** **1–3**

Answers may show understanding/support for one or both sources, but the case is made by assertion/basic inference.

Students identify basic features which are valid about the sources and related to the enquiry point; for example, in Source C, Bush missed the target – and failed in his War on Terror. In Source B, Bush blames terrorists for what has happened and tells the crowd that they will be punished – this leads to the War on Terror.

**Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question** **0**

**0 3**

Write an account of how Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 led to an international crisis.

**[8 marks]**

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

**Target** **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)**

**Level 4:** **Complex analysis of causation/consequence** **7–8**  
**Answer is presented in a coherent narrative/account that demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question.**

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed narrative of causation/consequence with complex sequencing and reasoning supported by a range of accurate and detailed factual knowledge and understanding which might be related, for example, to an analysis of how/why tension increased at different stages and /or showing understanding about how much each part of the sequence increased tension and led to a crisis.

The international crisis within the coalition was complicated by Iraqi missile attacks on Israel and Saudi Arabia. Bush's Arab allies were cautious about taking offensive action against another Arab state by joining a coalition with the West. In the end they were persuaded because of tensions created by Saddam's ambitions to dominate the Gulf.

**Level 3:** **Developed analysis of causation/consequence** **5–6**  
**Answer is presented in a structured and well-ordered narrative/account that demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question**

Extends Level 2.

Students may progress from a simple narrative of causation/consequence with developed sequencing and reasoning supported by a range of accurate factual knowledge and understanding which might be related, for example to an analysis of how/why tension increased at one stage in the process.

For example, the crisis for the USA was what to do next? Saddam had been a counter to Iran's power, but Bush and Thatcher refused to accept Saddam's blatant aggression and the threat to oil supplies – so the tension escalated in the UN. Neither the West nor Iraq would back down but international agreement was reached on sanctions and military action. Operation Desert Storm was launched after deadlines for withdrawal were missed.

<b>Level 2:</b>	<b>Simple analysis of causation/consequence</b>	<b>3–4</b>
	<b>Answer is presented in a structured account that demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question</b>	

Students may progress from a basic narrative of causation/consequence by showing a simple understanding of sequencing, supporting it with factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, the United Nations met and discussed what to do. Some countries were worried about taking military action and imposing sanctions, particularly from the Arab world, where there were different opinions about Saddam Hussein.

<b>Level 1:</b>	<b>Basic analysis of causation/consequence</b>	<b>1–2</b>
	<b>Answer is presented as general statements which demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question</b>	

Students identify cause(s)/consequence(s) about the events such as some countries knew that something had to be done to help Kuwait so there were talks about how to stop Saddam.

**Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question** **0**

Question 04 requires students to produce an extended response. Students should demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

**0 4**

‘The downfall of Saddam Hussein was the main result of the invasion of Iraq in 2003.’

How far do you agree with this statement?

Explain your answer.

**[16 marks]**

**[SPaG 4 marks]**

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

**Target** **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)**

**Level 4:** **Complex explanation of stated factor and other factor(s) leading to a sustained judgement** **13–16**  
**Answer demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question**  
Answer demonstrates a complex, sustained line of reasoning which has a sharply-focused coherence and logical structure that is fully substantiated, with well-judged relevance.

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed explanation of causation by complex explanation of the relationship between causes supported by detailed factual knowledge and understanding to form a sustained judgement.

For example, although Saddam’s downfall solved one set of problems in the short term, it gave rise to many others in the long term. Coalition forces failed to bring order as civil authority broke down, leading to the Insurgency and widespread sectarian violence. Shia militias fought Sunni and Kurds fought to protect their homes. Global terrorism continued unabated with attacks on US targets. The human cost included a refugee crisis, lack of public services, food shortages – problems made worse by widespread corruption. Iraqis and Americans alike suffered huge casualties. By 2009, Iraq was still a failed state despite the massive human and financial costs. The invasion removed a figurehead but replaced it with deep seated and more serious problems.

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<b>Level 3:</b>	<b>Developed explanation of the stated factor and other factor(s)</b> <b>Answer demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question</b>	<b>9–12</b>
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Answer demonstrates a developed, sustained line of reasoning which has coherence and logical structure; it is well substantiated, and with sustained, explicit relevance.

Extends Level 2.

Answer may suggest that one reason has greater merit.

Students may progress from a simple explanation of causation with developed reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, the end of Saddam had a real impact for the West because it brought a brutal regime, based on the dictates of one man, to an end. It removed many threats - attempts to dominate the Gulf, endangering oil supplies, but also the fear he was developing advanced weaponry. The USA had also identified Iraq as a supporter of terrorism, and this was a significant factor post 9/11. There were also opportunities to end the persecution of sectarian groups within Iraqi society.

<b>Level 2:</b>	<b>Simple explanation of stated factor or other factor(s)</b> <b>Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question</b>	<b>5–8</b>
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Answer demonstrates a simple, sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, structured, substantiated and explicitly relevant.

Answers arguing a preference for one judgement but with only basic explanation of another view will be marked at this level.

Students may progress from a basic explanation of causation by simple reasoning and supporting it with factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, Saddam's downfall ended the threat, based on one man's ambitions, to the Gulf and safeguarded oil supplies to the West.

<b>Level 1: Basic explanation of one or more factors</b>	<b>1–4</b>
<b>Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question</b>	

Answer demonstrates a basic line of reasoning, which is coherent, structured with some substantiation; the relevance might be implicit.

Students recognise and provide a basic explanation of one or more factors.

Students may offer a basic explanation of the stated factor, such as Saddam was captured and was no longer a threat.

Students may offer basic explanations of other factor(s), for example, the invasion did not stop the violence – there was civil war.

**Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question**

**0**

### Spelling, punctuation and grammar

	<b>Performance descriptor</b>	<b>Marks awarded</b>
High performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy</li> <li>Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall</li> <li>Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate</li> </ul>	4 marks
Intermediate performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy</li> <li>Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall</li> </ul>	2–3 marks
Threshold performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate</li> <li>Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy</li> <li>Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall</li> <li>Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate</li> </ul>	1 mark
No marks awarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The learner writes nothing</li> <li>The learner's response does not relate to the question</li> <li>The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning</li> </ul>	0 marks