CAMBRIDGE
International Education

# Cambridge International AS & A Level

**HISTORY** **9489/33**

Paper 3 Interpretations question **May/June 2025**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 40

**Published**

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.



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## Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

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## Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

## Annotations

| Annotation | Meaning |
|---|---|
| ID | Valid point identified |
| EXP | Explanation (an explained valid point) |
|  | Detail/evidence is used to support the point |
|  | Balanced – considers the other view |
|  | Unclear |
| AN | Analysis |
| ^ | Unsupported assertion |
| K | Knowledge |
| EVAL | Evaluation |
| NAR | Lengthy narrative that is not answering the question |
|  | Use with other annotations to show extended issues or narrative |
|  | Factual error |
| JU | Judgement |
| NAQ | Not answering the question |
| sim | Similarity identified |
| diff | Difference identified |
| L0 | Level 0 |

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| Annotation | Meaning |
|---|---|
| L1 | Level 1 |
| L2 | Level 2 |
| L3 | Level 3 |
| L4 | Level 4 |
| L5 | Level 5 |
| L6 | Level 5 |

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**General levels of response**

Process for awarding marks:

- Markers review the answer against the AO4 marking criteria, and award a mark according to these criteria.
- Generally, the subsequent mark awarded for AO1 will be the same level. In exceptional cases, markers could award marks in different levels for the two AOs. This is because the ability to recall, select and deploy relevant historical material will be central to any effective analysis and evaluation of the interpretation.
- Responses that focus on contextual knowledge without reference to the interpretation cannot be rewarded.

Underlining is used in this mark scheme to indicate the main interpretation of the extracts.

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| AO4 | **Analyse and evaluate how aspects of the past have been interpreted and represented.** | **Marks** |
|---|---|---|
| Level 6 | • Responses use the extract in a detailed and accurate manner and demonstrate a complete understanding of the interpretation and of the approach(es) used by the historian in reaching this interpretation.<br>• These responses explain all elements of the historian's interpretation. | **18–20** |
| Level 5 | • Responses use the extract in a detailed and accurate manner and demonstrate a sound understanding of the interpretation and of the approach(es) used by the historian in reaching this interpretation.<br>• These responses engage with elements of the historian's interpretation, but without explaining it as a whole – they are consistent and accurate, but not complete and may cover less important sub-messages. | **15–17** |
| Level 4 | • Responses use the extract, but only demonstrate partial understanding of the interpretation and approach(es) of the historian.<br>• These answers identify elements of the historian's interpretation, but without adequately explaining them, typically explaining other less important message(s) as equally or more important. | **12–14** |
| Level 3 | • Responses demonstrate understanding that the extract contains interpretations, but those explained are only sub-messages.<br>• Responses may use a part of the extract to argue for an interpretation that is not supported by the whole of the extract, or may refer to multiple interpretations, often a different one in each paragraph. | **9–11** |
| Level 2 | • Responses summarise the main points in the extract.<br>• Responses focus on what the extract says, but explanations of the extract as an interpretation lack validity. | **5–8** |
| Level 1 | • Responses include references to some aspects of the extract.<br>• Responses may include fragments of material that are relevant to the historian's interpretation. | **1–4** |
| Level 0 | No creditable content. | **0** |

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| AO1 | **Recall, select and deploy historical knowledge appropriately and effectively.** | **Marks** |
|---|---|---|
| Level 6 | Demonstrates detailed and accurate historical knowledge that is entirely relevant. | **18–20** |
| Level 5 | Demonstrates detailed and mostly accurate historical knowledge that is mainly relevant. | **15–17** |
| Level 4 | Demonstrates mostly relevant and accurate knowledge. | **12–14** |
| Level 3 | Demonstrates generally accurate and relevant knowledge. | **9–11** |
| Level 2 | Demonstrates some accurate and relevant knowledge. | **5–8** |
| Level 1 | Demonstrates limited knowledge. | **1–4** |
| Level 0 | Demonstrates no relevant historical knowledge. | **0** |

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| Question | Answer | Marks |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **The origins of the First World War**<br><br>**Interpretation/Approach**<br><br>The main interpretation blames Balkan problems because (i) the Great Powers were unable to resolve them, which produced increased tensions, and (ii) the impacts of Balkan nationalism actually brought conflict in 1912–14. Showing complete understanding of the interpretation will involve discussion of both these aspects. The historian argues that developments in the Balkans brought about a state of affairs where the assassination of Franz Ferdinand could cause a general European war to break out. No nation or individual is blamed for this; instead, the causal factor is simply uncontrollable nationalism.<br><br>Glossary: Early post-WW1 interpretations tended to blame Germany, but quickly a reaction against this occurred, with a variety of interpretations blaming other nations. This may be termed revisionism. The turning point in the historiography was Fischer's work of the early 1960s which went back to blaming Germany – sometimes known as anti-revisionism. Since then, there has been a vast variety of interpretations, looking at the importance of culture, individuals, contingent factors etc, with no clear consensus, though most historians would still place a significant burden of responsibility on Germany. | **40** |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | **The Holocaust**<br><br>**Interpretation/Approach**<br><br>The main interpretation blames (i) the circumstances of war for producing ad hoc responses to the Jewish issue, and (ii) the cumulative impact of fanatical Nazis seeking to win Hitler's approval by radicalising anti-Jewish policy. Showing complete understanding of the interpretation will involve discussion of both these aspects. The historian is explicit that there was no prior intention for genocide. Exodus of the Jewish population was the plan until war prevented it. Although the importance of anti-Semitism in creating a climate in which genocide could occur is acknowledged, the mechanism for the Holocaust was provided by a process of cumulative radicalisation, brought about by the actions of Nazi functionaries seeking approval and advancement.<br><br>The repudiation of the idea of prior intent means that this cannot be labelled intentionalist. The approach has elements both of functionalism and structuralism, and either label on its own will be L5 if properly supported. The best conclusion is a synthesis of the two, which could reach L6 (though arguing for elements of BOTH, yet not labelling it synthesis, could still be L6).<br><br>Glossary: Candidates may use some/all of the following terms: *Intentionalism* – interpretations which assume that Hitler/the Nazis planned to exterminate the Jews from the start. *Structuralism* – interpretations which argue that it was the nature of the Nazi state that produced genocide. There was no coherent plan but the chaotic competition for Hitler's approval between different elements of the leadership produced a situation in which genocide could occur. *Functionalism* sees the Holocaust as an unplanned, ad hoc response to wartime developments in Eastern Europe, when Germany conquered areas with large Jewish populations. Candidates may also refer to *synthesis* interpretations, i.e. interpretations which show characteristics of more than one of the above. What counts is how appropriate the use of this kind of terminology is in relation to the extract, and how effectively the extract can be used to support it. | **40** |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | **The origins and development of the Cold War**<br><br>**Interpretation/Approach**<br><br>The main interpretation blames Truman for (i) the change in US policy in early 1946, and (ii) the new consensus to 'get tough' it brought about in US policymaking circles. Showing complete understanding of the interpretation will involve discussion of both these aspects. The historian states that this change is not easy to explain and does not offer an explanation. There is no explicit blame placed on Truman for adopting the policy of containment, but the focus on US policymaking, and the allocation to Truman of responsibility for the change, can be seen as revisionist. There is not enough material on the USSR to justify seeing it as being blamed.<br><br>Revisionist is the only acceptable label in L5/L6 and MUST be focused on Truman. General answers on US being blamed (i.e. not clearly on Truman) will be L4. Post-revisionist can only get to L4 if blame on TRUMAN (not US) is properly explained. Blame on the USSR/Stalin will be L3 at best.<br><br>Glossary: *Traditional/Orthodox* interpretations of the Cold War were generally produced early after WW2. They blame the Soviet Union and Stalin's expansionism for the Cold War. *Revisionist* historians challenged this view and shifted more of the focus onto the United States, generally through an economic approach which stressed the alleged aim of the US to establish its economic dominance over Europe. *Post-revisionists* moved towards a more balanced view in which elements of blame were attached to both sides. Since the opening of the Soviet archives post-1990 there has been a shift to attributing prime responsibility to Stalin – a *post-post-revisionist* stance which often seems very close to the traditional view, but which often places great importance on ideology. What counts is how appropriate the use of this kind of terminology is in relation to the extract, and how effectively the extract can be used to support it. | **40** |

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