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# A-level HISTORY 7042/1H

Component 1H Tsarist and Communist Russia, 1855–1964

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Mark scheme

June 2024

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.

**Section A**

- 0 1** Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to social change in Communist Russia in the years 1917 to 1941.

**[30 marks]***Target: AO3*

*Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.*

**Generic Mark Scheme**

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of the interpretations put forward in all three extracts and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to analyse and evaluate the interpretations given in the extracts. Evaluation of the arguments will be well-supported and convincing. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25–30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of the interpretations given in all three extracts and combines this with knowledge of the historical context to analyse and evaluate the interpretations given in the extracts. The evaluation of the arguments will be mostly well-supported, and convincing, but may have minor limitations of depth and breadth. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19–24**
- L3:** Provides some supported comment on the interpretations given in all three extracts and comments on the strength of these arguments in relation to their historical context. There is some analysis and evaluation but there may be an imbalance in the degree and depth of comments offered on the strength of the arguments. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13–18**
- L2:** Provides some accurate comment on the interpretations given in at least two of the extracts, with reference to the historical context. The answer may contain some analysis, but there is little, if any, evaluation. Some of the comments on the strength of the arguments may contain some generalisation, inaccuracy or irrelevance. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7–12**
- L1:** **Either** shows an accurate understanding of the interpretation given in one extract only **or** addresses two/three extracts, but in a generalist way, showing limited accurate understanding of the arguments they contain, although there may be some general awareness of the historical context. Any comments on the strength of the arguments are likely to be generalist and contain some inaccuracy and/or irrelevance. 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 assess the extent to which the interpretations are convincing by drawing on contextual knowledge to corroborate and challenge the interpretation/arguments/views.

**In their identification of the argument in Extract A, students may refer to the following:**

- the overall argument is that 1917–29 saw relative social freedom, but thereafter society changed for the worse and personal freedom disappeared
- peasants and townsfolk suffered from the changes; life was particularly hard in towns because of the poor living and working conditions there
- political obligations and the intrusion of the Party meant there was no informal social life. This meant a loss of individuality
- people lived in fear of the secret police, and were expected to spy on their neighbours and became more distanced and careful as a result.

**In their assessment of the extent to which the arguments are convincing, students may refer to the following:**

- as suggested, the 1917 revolution brought a number of ‘social freedoms’ such as measures to ‘liberate’ women and open up education; the negative changes from 1929 can be directly linked to Stalin’s rise to power and his new economic programmes which sacrificed individuality for the greater good of the state; in challenging the view of the extract, it might be pointed out that such changes had already been foreshadowed in the Civil War years, 1918–21
- the extract alludes to the embittered peasants, harshly hit by collectivisation, which communised their living and working conditions; however, the extract exaggerates the ‘good times under Lenin’, given the experience of peasants under War Communism
- the extract argues that town workers suffered under harsh labour laws (eg penalties for absenteeism) and poor living conditions; it mentions state disinterest reflecting the way labour was treated as pawns in the push for industrialisation; however, some workers did well out of the changes and the fact that women worked and the state provided nurseries could be seen as a positive development rather than a negative one
- the extract suggests that political obligations and the ubiquity of the secret police helped destroy personal freedom and encouraged people to keep their distance and avoid talking too much; the threat of arrest, torture and the gulag was certainly used to bring social conformity; however, some refused to compromise, and others (particularly the youth) were enthused by the creation of a new state.

**In their identification of the argument in Extract B, students may refer to the following:**

- the overall argument is that Communism brought a good deal of impressive – ie positive – social change
- the abandonment of the more extreme early social experimentation in the early 1930s brought greater stability and society made further constructive progress as a result of industrialisation
- social progress meant more jobs for men and women, greater welfare provision, including the improvement of health services and more educational opportunities
- in 1936, greater democratisation demonstrated how far society had advanced: both male and female citizens were given the vote (and a secret ballot) together with a guarantee of civil liberties.

**In their assessment of the extent to which the arguments are convincing, students may refer to the following:**

- the extract argues that society changed as 'bourgeois' attitudes were attacked and education was expanded; these moves began in the 1920s when Lenin promoted campaigns against the 'burzhui', although he retained bourgeois specialists; furthermore, although Lenin expanded educational provision, Stalin abandoned the quota system for working-class children to receive secondary education in 1935
- the extract argues that the ending of extreme social experimentation was a positive move bringing stability: although the 'League of the Godless' (attacking churches and traditions) was destabilising, from 1918 state policies were equally so – the Orthodox Church lost its protected status and religion was no longer taught in schools; the so-called 'comrades' courts' – also seen as social improvement here – replaced an outdated legal system for civil and criminal cases, but they did not necessarily bring fairer justice
- a case is made that industrialisation was 'a blessing' for society: the five-year plans, new work opportunities and collectivisation produced massive social change and ultimately raised incomes – but for many living and working in harsh conditions, this was no blessing; women benefited to some extent but measures to liberate them were reversed from 1936 making this example of positive change less convincing
- the extract praises the expansion in welfare provision; factory women could make use of state crèches and laundries and workers could eat cheaply in canteens, but such facilities were more widely available in the towns than the countryside; there was still widespread poverty and health services more easily accessed by the more privileged
- the claim that citizens received greater political freedom –which actually came from Stalin and is not commented on by the extract's author – is unconvincing; in reality the Soviet State was a one-party state and democracy came only in the form of choosing between candidates from the same party; civil rights, eg freedom of speech, barely existed compared with legal rights in the West.

**In their identification of the argument in Extract C, students may refer to the following:**

- the overall argument is that in the years 1917 to 1941, the old tsarist elite was destroyed and a new Soviet one replaced it
- Lenin began the process of destroying the old elite but it was left to Stalin to complete the destruction of the capitalist class
- a new hierarchical society emerged as certain groups demonstrated their loyalty, capacity for work and usefulness to the Party and state
- the new social elite were awarded material privileges which set them apart from ordinary citizens.

**In their assessment of the extent to which the arguments are convincing, students may refer to the following:**

- Lenin abolished titles and actively encouraged class warfare confirming the argument here; he encouraged workers to seize upper class property and homes in the face of which many nobles fled abroad or fought against the Bolsheviks and were destroyed in the civil war; however, Stalin's destruction of Nepmen and kulaks was the destruction of a class created by Lenin and was undertaken more for economic than ideological reasons as suggested in the extract
- the new society was certainly different from the Marxist ideals of the revolution which were based on egalitarianism and the abolition of class ranks; the needs of industrialisation and an expanding state bureaucracy (already foreshadowed by Leninist centralisation) meant rewarding those the state and party relied on, eg Stalin's patronage of Party 'apparatchiks' and the promotion of workers to managerial status to act as go-betweens (and scapegoats) in the drive for growth
- as the extract argues, a new working-class elite was formed: the Party responded to labour problems by introducing wage differentials and incentives, and encouraging more intense effort by creating 'shock brigades' for big projects; they also promoted the Stakhanovite movement; however, there was

a limit to how high a worker could rise – and that was even more true of women; the extent of social mobility can certainly be questioned – for the masses it was not an option

- the privileged status given to army officers and police officials in parts reflects the insecurity within the Soviet state which had to rely on repression and tough measures to carry out its measures; police officials included the NKVD; these elites were not necessarily permanent nor safe though – many disappeared during the purges
- the rewarding of individuals with better housing, cars, luxury goods and special stores is a reflection of the general impoverishment of Soviet society in this period, when standards of living were low, certainly in comparison with the West and quality goods almost unobtainable; these material gains set the elites apart but they caused resentment and the desperation to retain privileges once received bred anxiety; it is fair to say that a new, but much less stable, hierarchy had replaced the old.

**Section B**

**0 2** 'In the years 1855 to 1881, the Russian economy remained weak and underdeveloped.'

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 supporting the view that in the years 1855 to 1881, the Russian economy remained weak and underdeveloped might include:**

- Russia's economy was primarily agricultural; economic development was limited by the country's size and climate; transport systems were limited (and affected by the weather); reserves of raw materials could not be mined efficiently all year round; harvests were unpredictable and there was recurrent famine; growth rates were low compared with western Europe
- to 1861 Russia had an economically inefficient serf economy; insufficient wealth was generated to develop a strong domestic market; even after 1861 traditional agricultural practices persisted: most peasants were barely self-sufficient and farmed small, often scattered plots; internal passports prevented the evolution of a mobile labour force
- industry was based on small workshop production; peasants engaged in cottage industries and sold surpluses, but the exchange of goods was largely by barter limiting the development of a money-based economy; there was some heavy industry; particularly mining which was state-owned, but it was inefficiently run and largely directed towards armaments
- Russia had few wage-earners or entrepreneurs to drive change: peasants and townsfolk were heavily taxed through the poll tax, growing indirect taxation and peasants' redemption dues post-1861; this kept the domestic market small; there was virtually no entrepreneurial middle class to invest in and boost industry; there was a lack of technical skills as the mass of labourers and townsfolk were uneducated
- there was a lack of capital: pre-1861: the income of the land-owning elites had fallen with a fall in the price of wheat in European markets; this prevented capital accumulation; post-1861, interest on debts, mortgages and entrenched anti-business attitudes limited both the numbers of former land-owners ready to invest in economic enterprises and the capital of those that did.

**Arguments challenging the view that in the years 1855 to 1881, the Russian economy remained weak and underdeveloped might include:**

- there were signs of economic growth and development: even under serfdom some peasants had begun engaging in paid work in towns and post-1861 there was more movement from the mir to growing industrial cities; some peasants provided temporary labour, others with no land moved to become a permanent factory labour force; more wage-earners also increased internal demand
- kulaks responded to the opportunities afforded by emancipation, amassing land, marketing crops and accumulating capital; Russia was already Europe's main exporter of agricultural produce pre-1861 and thereafter there was an increase in agricultural production and the export of grain
- by 1855 Russia had a developed textile, iron and silver industry, but in the next decades industry diversified; oil extraction began at Baku, the iron fields of Krivoi Rog were more intensely mined and ironworks developed in Donetsk; the economy grew c 5% a year 1861–1881; a reduction of import duties, 1869, (although reintroduced 1878) helped boost trade and stimulate growth
- reforms helped in provision of capital for industrial growth: credit facilities and banking were extended with a state bank 1860, municipal banks, 1862, savings bank 1869; Reutern offered government subsidies to private entrepreneurs and increased government support to industry, particularly, cotton and mining; reforms regulated joint-stock companies to make investments safer; Reutern encouraged foreign investment with guaranteed annual dividends and sought foreign loans (and technical expertise)
- government sponsorship led to a marked extension in the railway network; this boosted the fuel, metallurgy and engineering industries and helped in the distribution of raw materials and the marketing of goods; the railways strengthened Russia's infrastructure.

Students may agree that the Russian economy remained weak and underdeveloped in these years, considering the signs of improvement as too small to have promoted any ‘take-off’ into strong economic growth. They may emphasise the limitations of the emancipation edict, the entrenched attitude of the aristocracy and the oppressive taxation system as holding the economy back. Alternatively, students may argue that the ending of serfdom, the increasing availability of capital, the expansion of the railway network and the diversification of industry were key factors in strengthening the economy in this period. The state played an increasingly active role in promoting industry and it could be argued that by 1881 the foundations for the economic transformation of Russia in the 1890s had been firmly laid. Reward any argument that is well-supported and provides a convincing judgement.

**0 3** How successful was Nicholas II in maintaining tsarist autocracy in Russia in the years 1894 to 1914?

**[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 supporting the view that Nicholas II was successful in maintaining tsarist autocracy in Russia in the years 1894 to 1914 might include:**

- Nicholas II ruled in an autocratic manner: he issued edicts and appointed and dismissed ministers; in 1894 he told the zemstva that broader government was a 'senseless dream'; despite the cosmetic changes of 1905 he maintained his divine appointment and never swerved from this approach; he successfully upheld the Okhrana and imposed strict censorship in support of autocracy
- Nicholas II successfully upheld the autocracy by commanding military support: despite minor incidents (eg the Potemkin mutiny), the military remained loyal throughout and troops were used to quell student and worker protests, eg Lena goldfields 1912; mounted Cossacks put down industrial disturbances, eg Bloody Sunday; martial law was also invoked to deal with extreme disorder and the Black Hundreds defended autocracy; the Tsar's control of the armed forces and military expenditure, as well as his right to declare war and peace was confirmed after the troubles of 1905
- Nicholas II successfully upheld autocracy by weakening political opposition through arrests, imprisonment, exile and army drafts; he survived the political terrorism of the SRs; played on the disunity of radicals and middle-class liberals to retain the upper hand in 1905; refused to concede any legislation that did not emanate from his own government
- there was no real devolution of political power in the 1905 'revolution' despite the establishment of a State Duma; the fundamental laws confirmed the Tsar's right to veto legislation, rule by decree in emergencies or when the Duma was not in session and dissolve the Duma; the Tsar could overturn verdicts and sentences given in a court of law and his power over ministers was confirmed
- from 1905 to 1914 the bureaucracy, Church, military and police continued to function unaltered; the Dumas were bent to the Tsar's will; the first was dissolved when it became confrontational and the Vyborg rump broken up by force; elections to the second Duma were manipulated and emergency powers used when it was not in session; the franchise was altered before the third Duma which was twice suspended to force through legislation by emergency provisions; the fourth was demoralised and largely ignored; this was autocratic rule.

**Arguments challenging the view that Nicholas II was successful in maintaining tsarist autocracy in Russia in the years 1894 to 1914 might include:**

- Nicholas faced challenges to his autocracy from the beginning of his reign suggesting his autocratic power was weakening: the Zemstva acted independently; student unrest, workers' strikes and peasant discontent were constant; the 'Years of the Red Cockerel', brought near anarchy to parts of the countryside
- organised opposition grew, destabilising the autocracy; the liberals sought reform through the Beseda Symposium, 1899 and increased their pressure with Struve's Union of Liberation, 1904; the radical SDs (with a Marxist agenda), 1898 and militant SRs, 1901 spread subversion and disrupted government; the SRs carried out political assassinations, including Stolypin, 1911
- the granting of a State Duma with power to approve laws meant Russia could no longer be called an autocracy after 1905; Nicholas II also ceded a vote and civic freedoms creating (in theory) a constitutional monarchy; the Duma system and the Tsar's attempt to harness the Dumas in support of tsarist autocracy failed; government effectively broke down
- workers seized the initiative after 1912 with a revival of direct action and strike activity; the autocracy was near to collapse in 1914 and was only saved with an onrush of patriotism when war was declared
- Nicholas undermined the tsarist autocracy by his own inefficiencies and indecisive behaviour: eg he didn't uphold his own ministers, such as Witte, and he failed to provide a firm lead in government; the influence of Rasputin undermined respect for the tsar and faith in autocracy.

Students will need to address the degree to which tsarist autocracy survived the tribulations of the years from 1894 to 1914 and many will argue that under Nicholas II there was only a veneer of autocracy which actually disguised a very different situation. Obviously the interpretation of developments in 1905 is crucial here, but good responses should draw on the full time span and examine the Tsar's powers both in theory and in practice. Reward any well-argued response whatever line is taken.

**0 4** 'The years from 1941 to 1964 were a time of political uncertainty and social hardship for the people of the Soviet Union.'

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

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- 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 supporting the view that the years from 1941 to 1964 were a time of political uncertainty and social hardship for the people of the Soviet Union might include:**

- political uncertainty was acute during the war years as the very survival of the State was at stake; some areas, such as Leningrad felt abandoned and faced an uncertain future; from 1945 Stalin's paranoia and unpredictable outbursts created a different atmosphere of fear, oppression and uncertainty; there were anxieties about the future as Stalin made no provision for his succession
- Stalin left a power vacuum and politically USSR saw unpredictable swings as Khrushchev manoeuvred his way to the top; the formerly-feared Beria was arrested and executed; the war hero Zhukov was dismissed; this political insecurity remained as Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation campaign undermined much that the people had been taught to accept
- social hardship was exceptionally acute during the war years and standards of living remained low, receiving little attention in Stalin's last years and during the leadership struggles; from 1958 there were some reforms but there were limitations to the availability/distribution of consumer goods and their quality was poor; cars were scarce and holidays were largely beyond the reach of ordinary citizens; living in the age of the nuclear bomb, Soviet citizens were anxious for their children's future
- Soviet citizens had to live with many restrictions which added to hardship. Stalin maintained a high level of social-cultural control in the war years; the post-war Zhdanovschina and purges spread apprehension and fear; Khrushchev continued to root out 'dissidents'; the Church (other than during war years) was persecuted; Jews and ethnic minorities were discriminated against and there were limitations on personal freedom, eg restrictions on travel.

**Arguments challenging the view that the years from 1941 to 1964 were a time of political instability and social hardship for the people of the Soviet Union might include:**

- Stalin's position was unassailable, 1941–53; no one dared question him, so people lived under a stable government; Stalin attained god-like status as a war hero and great leader; propaganda taught contentment
- Khrushchev continued the Soviet system with no drastic changes to upset stability; the people benefited from his schemes for decentralisation and greater party democracy and even his resignation was handled without upsetting the stability of the system
- social hardship was ameliorated as living standards began to rise in the post-war years: Stalin's fifth Five-Year Plan saw investment in consumer goods, housing and services; under Khrushchev this went further as consumer goods became more widely available; new housing initiatives, a reduction in hours of work reduced, the expansion of education and an improvement in health provision gave Soviet citizens a more comfortable existence and, in some cases, more optimism
- socially there was a more relaxed atmosphere for most by 1964: Khrushchev's 'thaw' removed the worst excesses of Stalinism; restrictions on travel were eased, greater contact with Western culture was permitted and there was far less oppression and cultural persecution.

It is possible for students to argue that there was political instability and social hardship throughout the years 1941 to 1964. However, it is more likely that answers will challenge these claims or provide a more nuanced summary of the period. Despite a good deal of political instability, the Soviet system remained throughout and, even with the change of leader there was no major disruption to the workings of government which broadened somewhat under Khrushchev. Socially, it could be argued that the hardship of the war years was never as great again and gradually disappeared from 1945, accelerated by Khrushchev's reforms from 1958. The quality of life may be questioned, however. Reward any argument that is well-substantiated and reaches a convincing conclusion.