

GCE



Revised GCE  
**History**

Teacher Guidance

AS Unit 1:  
Guidance for Teaching Question 2(b)

For first teaching from September 2016  
For first award of AS Level in Summer 2017  
For first award of A Level in Summer 2018





## Guidance for Teaching AS Unit 1 Question 2(b)

Students' understanding of interpretations is assessed in AS Unit 1 through Assessment Objective A03:

*A03: analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.*

When studying interpretations, students should develop an appreciation:

- that interpretations are constructed historical accounts of the past;
- that interpretations are based on evidence from the past;
- that different interpretations are valid, even though they may generate discussion and debate; and
- that the evidence for one interpretation may be better than for another.

### Examination preparation

In the revised AS Unit 1 Question 2(b), students will be presented with two extracts. These extracts will be different interpretations of an aspect of the period of study from the writings of historians and will be labelled Interpretation A and Interpretation B.

### Unpacking question 2(b)

Students are required to:

- analyse and evaluate two different interpretations on the same topic area;
- identify the two different interpretations presented in the introduction to their answer, stating which they consider to be more convincing;
- provide key points of evidence (from the extracts) used by each historian to support their interpretation;
- evaluate how convincing the evidence is to support/challenge both interpretations using relevant contextual knowledge. Students should elaborate on the evidence in the extracts to support their arguments about which interpretation they find more convincing – students should not introduce any new information which is not linked to the evidence in the extract; and
- make an informed judgement on which of the two different interpretations is “more convincing”. Students must clearly explain why they reached the judgement that one interpretation is more convincing than the other.

### Remind students:

- to take time to make a detailed plan;
- to construct a clear line of argument - keep focused on the interpretations offered and how convincing they find them;
- to clearly distinguish between the two interpretations students may wish to use the name of the historians in their answer. For example, McDonough puts forward the view that ..... Alternatively, they may wish to distinguish between interpretations, for example, Interpretation A supports the view that .....; on the other hand Interpretation B.....;
- there is no right answer to this question.

### **Students are not required to:**

- include the views of other historians or other schools of thought;
- include other historical evidence not linked to the extracts; and
- look at the limitations of the interpretations in terms of utility or reliability.

### **Organisation and structure of answers**

There is no prescribed way to structure/organise a response to Question 2(b). For example, students may take each interpretation in turn, analyse each point of evidence and use their own contextual knowledge of the period to challenge or support the interpretation. Regardless of the approach taken by students to answer this question, it is important that time is set aside to plan their answer to ensure that they have constructed a clear line of argument. In addition, responses which focus on one interpretation only, or focus on one interpretation in detail at the expense of the other, or simply paraphrase or juxtapose points from the interpretations with little or no attempt at analysis and evaluation are unlikely to access the higher mark bands.

While there is no preferred structure, it is important that the answer reads well and that there is an introduction and a conclusion. In the introduction, students should clearly set out the two different interpretations and their judgement as to which interpretation they find more convincing. In the conclusion, students should restate their judgement as to which interpretation they find more convincing. It is not acceptable for a student to argue that both interpretations are equally convincing or equally unconvincing.

### **Below are some words and phrases which students may find helpful when answering Question 2(b)**

#### **Comparing and contrasting different interpretations**

Interpretation A puts forward the view .....; this is in contrast to the view in Interpretation B .....

While Interpretation A emphasises ....., Interpretation B plays down .....

Interpretation A suggests that ..... ; however, Interpretation B presents a different view .....

Interpretation A challenges/supports the view put forward in Interpretation B that .....

Interpretation B takes an opposite stance in comparison to Interpretation A by claiming that .....

#### **Connecting words**

While	Whereas
Moreover	As well as
Furthermore	However
Above all	For instance
For example	

#### **Drawing conclusions**

I agree with .....

It is for these reasons that I find Interpretation A more convincing than Interpretation B.

While I partially agree with ..... view, the interpretation offered by ..... is more convincing as it .....

## Introductory Activities: Analysing and Evaluating Historical Interpretations

### Activity 1 Play “Convince”

Group work

A3 sheets, coloured markers

Enlarge extracts and stick onto A3 sheets

Display task question on board – for example: *Using both interpretations, and your understanding of the historical context, which of these different interpretations of the reasons for the Nazis’ rise to power from 1930 to 30 January 1933 do you find more convincing?*

Divide class into different groups (for example: two groups could be given Interpretation 1 and two groups could be given Interpretation 2)

### Step 1: Unpacking interpretations

Considering the evidence

Read each extract carefully. Using different colours highlight:

- the interpretation (what’s the ‘view?’); and
- the supporting evidence (how does the historian ‘back up’ up his or her view?)

Around the outside of the extract

- Drawing on contextual knowledge, record key points which can be used to support the historian’s interpretation of the issue/event (what else do we know about what is written?)

Each group with the same extract ‘pair up’ and ‘compare’ findings. Discuss and present a joint group ‘view’ supporting the interpretation.

Both groups present their group ‘view’ to the rest of the class.

### Step 2: Making a judgement

Based on the evidence presented by each group: class votes on which group offered the more convincing argument in support of their interpretation. Ask students to reflect on how strongly the case was made for the particular interpretation by each group and how convincing they find the historian’s interpretation.

As an extension activity, students could complete an exemplar exam question based on the extracts used in the activity.

**Activity 2 Paired/individual work**

Provide students with copies of two extracts containing two different interpretations of an historical issue/event/development. Students read extracts carefully and complete the three templates to exemplify the various steps required in the process of evaluating interpretations.

**Interpretation 1**

Topic	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
	Overall Interpretation 1	Supporting evidence offered in Interpretation 1	Own contextual knowledge to support Interpretation 1	Own contextual knowledge to challenge Interpretation 1
Reasons for the Nazis' rise to power from January 1930 to January 1933				
<p><b>Step 5</b>  <b>Judgement: Interpretation 1: convincing or not convincing?</b>                      (view + evidence in the interpretation + own contextual knowledge of the period will inform how convincing .... )</p>				

**Interpretation 2**

Topic	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
	Overall Interpretation 2	Supporting evidence offered in Interpretation 2	Own contextual knowledge to support Interpretation 2	Own contextual knowledge to challenge Interpretation 2
Reasons for the Nazis' rise to power from January 1930 to January 1933				
<p><b>Step 5</b>  <b>Judgement: Interpretation 2: convincing or not convincing?</b>                      (view + evidence in the interpretation + own contextual knowledge of the period will inform how convincing .... )</p>				

**Conclusion**

<p><b>Overall conclusion as to which interpretation is the “more convincing”</b>                      (verdict + a short justification for judgement)</p> <p>On balance, it is my view that ..... offers the more convincing interpretation for why the Nazis' rose to power in comparison to ..... this is because</p>
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*This page should be enlarged to A3 to allow for the recording of information.*



