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ANGLICAN HIGH SCHOOL **PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2025**

S4

HISTORY

2174/02

Paper 2: Developments in the post-World War II world:

The Cold War and decolonization in Southeast Asia, 1940s - 1991

27 August 2025

Secondary 4

1 hour 50 minutes

Additional Materials: 5 sheets of writing paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your index number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.

Do not use paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

Section A

Answer **all parts** of Question 1.

Section B

Answer **two** questions.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

Hand in the Question Paper, Section A and Section B separately.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

Section A		30 marks
Section B Qn. No: () Qn. No: ()		20 marks
TOTAL:		50 marks

Parent's Name:	
Parent's Signature:	
Date:	

This document consists of 6 printed pages.

[Turn over

Section A (Source-Based Case Study)

Question 1 is **compulsory** for all candidates

Study the background information and all the sources carefully and then answer **all** the questions.

You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources you are told to use. In answering the questions you should use your knowledge of the topic to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

1 (a) Study Source A.

What can you learn from this source about the Cold War? Explain your answer. [5]

(b) Study Source B.

Why was this cartoon published? Explain your answer. [5]

(c) Study Source C.

How useful is Source C as evidence about the start of the Cold War? Explain your answer. [6]

(d) Study Sources D and E.

After reading Source D, does it make Source E surprising? Explain your answer. [6]

(e) Study **all** the sources.

“The Cold War was caused by American actions.” How far do these sources support this view? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer. [8]

The Outbreak of the Cold War

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Read this carefully. It may help you answer some of the questions.

The Cold War spanned four decades and defined worldwide political alignments. Western hostility towards the USSR existed at its founding, as the Soviets sought to spread Communism worldwide. However, up till 1945 the USA and USSR were still largely cooperating as allies. As Europe transitioned to a postwar era, relations between them began to deteriorate. By 1949, the whole of Europe was clearly divided into two blocs, each led by a superpower.

Some have blamed the Cold War on the personalities of the leaders involved, noting that there was a change in US leadership in April 1945 following Roosevelt's death. Others point to the difference in ideologies which had generated tension long before World War II. The release of previously secret documents after the end of the Cold War continues to provide new perspectives on this topic.

Were American actions after World War II the main reason for the conflict?

Source A: *Adapted from an American historian's account of Truman's first meeting on 23 April 1945 with Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister.*

Truman's top advisers were split. Some warned him that Poland was a sensitive issue of Russian security. Others insisted that this was the time to draw the line.

At the meeting, Truman told Molotov that the Soviets were not carrying out their agreements on Poland.

Molotov said, "We are."

Truman explained to him in very tough language exactly why they were not.

Molotov said, "I have never been talked to like that in my life!"

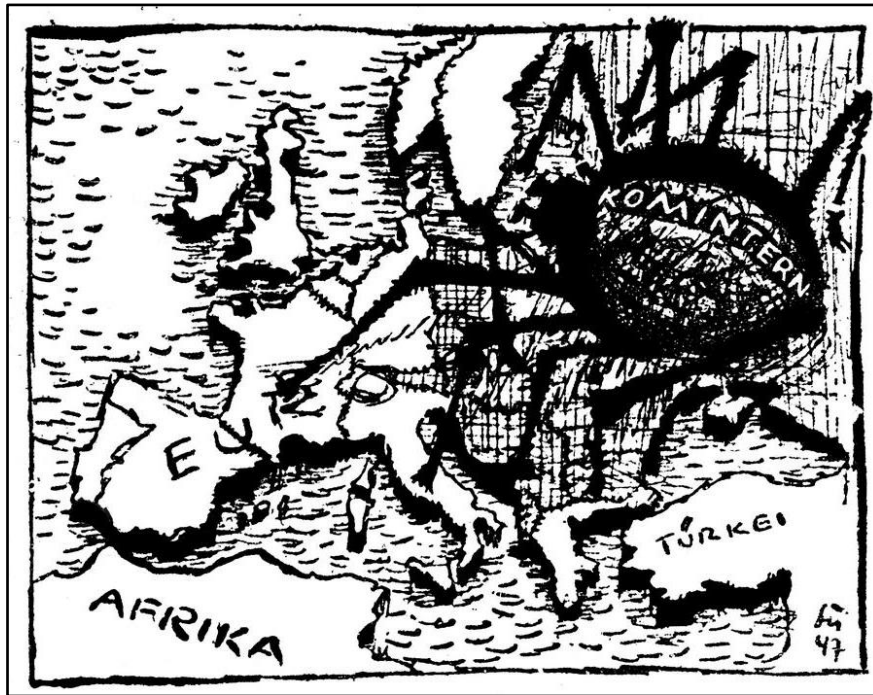
Truman said, "Carry out your agreements and you won't be talked to like that."

Truman walked out of the room, saw a staff member and said, "I just showed him who was boss... Do you think I did right?"

Later, Truman found out about Roosevelt and Stalin's agreement and backed down. The USA recognised the Soviet-dominated government of Poland. But by then, the relationship between the two powers had soured.

[Turn over

Source B: *A cartoon published on 10 October 1947 by a Western newspaper, with the caption "Comintern: It's spinning a new web over Europe."*



*Comintern: An organisation created by the USSR in 1919 to spread Communism worldwide. It was replaced in September 1947 by Cominform.

Source C: *From the memoirs of Marshal Georgii Zhukov, the top military commander of the USSR, on the Potsdam Conference (July-August 1945). His book was published in 1971.*

After one of the meetings, Truman informed Stalin that the United States now possessed a bomb of exceptional power, without naming it the atomic bomb. However, Stalin pretended that he saw nothing special in this. Many in the West thus assumed that Stalin had failed to understand the significance of what he had heard. In fact, right after this meeting Stalin told Molotov about the conversation. Molotov reacted almost immediately. "Let them. We'll get our scientists to speed things up." I realised that they were talking about research on the atomic bomb.

It was clear that the US intended to use the atomic weapon to achieve its imperialist goals from a position of strength in the Cold War. This was amply corroborated when, without any military need whatsoever, the Americans dropped atomic bombs on the peaceful and densely populated cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Source D: *An extract from a speech given by Andrei Zhdanov, a top Soviet leader, at the founding of the Cominform in September 1947.*

The "Marshall Plan" is a scheme to create a bloc of states bound by obligations to the United States, and to grant American loans to European countries as compensation for their loss of economic and political independence.

Moreover, the cornerstone of the "Marshall Plan" is the restoration of industrial areas of Western Germany by American businesses, bringing under American control the major sources of coal and iron in Europe.

The need for mutual coordination between individual Communist parties has become particularly urgent. We have the special task of leading the resistance to America's plan for the enthrallment of Europe, and of boldly denouncing all supporters of American imperialism in their own countries. Communists must be the leaders in the struggle against the new American expansionist plans for the enslavement of Europe.

Source E: *An extract from a book about the Cold War by former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, published in 2000.*

The former allies rushed headlong into the Cold War. Each side bears its share of responsibility for this. Which side bears the greater responsibility is a question that has not yet been answered by objective historians in a convincing way.

The flaw in Soviet foreign policy consisted in the fact that all its energy came from an ideological source. A hard core of ideological constructs ultimately determined the behaviour of the USSR and nourished an atmosphere of confrontation toward the West, which was of course also partly a response to the no less confrontational policy pursued by the West toward the Soviet Union. In thinking about these problems at length, I have come to the conclusion that the policy pursued by both sides was dictated by mutual fear and was ideologically driven.

Source F: *An extract from a book by the historian John Lewis Gaddis, published in 1998 after he was able to access confidential Soviet government archives.*

We now realise how much Stalin imposed his ideas upon his country: this was a dictator whose subordinates scrutinised his every comment or gesture, and attempted to implement policies on the basis of them. The result was that every level of the government became obsessed with looking for suspected enemies. He was the ultimate narcissist who thought only about his own security.

Here was the difficulty. Western democracies sought security that would reject violence: security was to be a collective good, not a benefit denied to some in order to provide it to others. Stalin saw things very differently: security came only by eliminating potential challengers. World politics was an extension of Soviet politics, which was in turn an extension of Stalin's personal environment, in which achieving security for one meant depriving everyone else of it. This made conflict unavoidable.

Section B: Essays

Answer **two** questions.

- 2 "Germany was defeated by 1945 because of ineffective leadership." How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

- 3 "US intervention in Korea in 1950 was due to the need to stop the spread of Communism." How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

- 4 "The French defeat in the First Indochina War was due to the strength of the Viet Minh." How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

- End of Paper –

Copyright Acknowledgements:

Source A: https://www.johndclare.net/cold_war5_LaFeber.htm

Source B: https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/cartoon_on_the_dangers_of_soviet_expansionism_in_europe_10_october_1947-en806ea2cf-2a74-4034-b9ea-cd3bc7c0e84c.html

Source C: <https://www.dannen.com/decision/potsdam.html>

Source D: <https://educ.jmu.edu/~vannorwc/assets/ghist%20102-150/pages/readings/zhdanovspeech.html>

Source E: Gorbachev, Mikhail. *On My Country and the World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Source F: <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/first/g/gaddis-war.html?mobile-app=true&theme=false>

Anglican High School
Sec 4 Preliminary Examination 2025
Core History Paper 2 (2174/02)
Suggested Answers
Section A: Source Based Case Study

1a. Study Source A. What can you learn from this source about the Cold War? Explain your answer. [5]

Level	Descriptor	Marks
L1	Misinterpretation of sources	1
L2	Sub-message Truman was very rude and unwise as a President	2
L3	Main message I can learn that <u>the Cold War was caused by Truman's inexperience and rash personality.</u> He met Molotov when he was only 11 days into his job as President. Despite being warned "that Poland was a sensitive issue of Russian security", he listened to other advisors and used "very tough language" which deeply offended Molotov. Truman then boasted about giving him a "straight punch to the jaw" but at the same time is insecure and asks "Do you think I did right?". Later he is forced to back down but by then "the relationship between the two powers had soured", meaning that they were less of Allies and increasingly rivals. The historian clearly believes that the conflict could have been avoided if Truman had made better decisions.	3-4
L4	L3 + context Eg. According to my contextual knowledge, when Truman was Vice President, Roosevelt did not involve him in foreign policy matters. He lacked Roosevelt's personal relationship with Stalin and wanted to appear strong and challenge the Soviets. As such he was ill-prepared to handle to diplomacy at the end of WW2. For the Soviets, Poland had been an invasion route twice for Germany and therefore a friendly government there was not negotiable, but Truman did not recognise this. Subsequently the Potsdam Conference was known for much friction between the superpowers and the tensions escalated from that point, leading to a full-blown Cold War.	5

1b. Study Source B. Why was the cartoon published? Explain your answer. [5]

Level	Descriptor	Marks
L1	Lifting from source	1
L2	Sub-message Eg. The USSR was very threatening to Europe	2
L3	Main message OR Outcome	3

	Eg. The cartoon was published to convince people in the West that the Soviet Union's actions caused the Cold War (Message) Eg. The cartoon was published so that Western audiences would support efforts to contain Communism. (Outcome)	
L4	Main message AND Outcome Eg. Eg. The cartoon was published to convince people in the West that the Soviet Union's actions caused the Cold War, so that Western audiences would support efforts to contain Communism. The cartoon portrays the Comintern as a giant, repulsive spider spinning a spiderweb stretching from the USSR to Eastern Europe. Its legs are reaching into Western Europe. The fact that the cartoon deliberately uses the old name of the Cominform (Comintern) highlights the fact that the USSR is carrying out its long-held goals of spreading communism worldwide. The caption "spinning a new web" hints at renewed aggressiveness by the Soviets. Hence the cartoon accuses the Soviets of actively trying to take over Europe and causing tensions with the West.	4
L5	L4 + Context E.g. Source B was published with regards to the formation of Cominform in September 1947 and the "salami tactics" used by the Soviets since 1945 to establish pro-Soviet governments in Eastern Europe after WW2. Using underhanded means like smear tactics, assassinations and interference with elections, a "web" of Soviet control was spun over this area. Cominform was created to control these nations from Moscow, and Germans in the democratic zone feared that the communists would continue to expand their influence westward. Hence this cartoon was drawn to warn of the looming danger.	5

- 1c. Study Source C** How useful is Source C as evidence about the start of the Cold War? Explain your answer. **[6]**

Level	Descriptor	Marks
L1	Useful / Not useful, based on provenance unsupported	1
L2	Useful / Not useful, based on content Eg. Source C is useful as evidence as it shows that the Cold War was caused by the US using its atomic monopoly to intimidate the USSR. Zhukov says "It was clear that the US intended to use the atomic weapon to achieve its Imperialist goals from a position of strength in the Cold War." This is illustrated in the vague way Truman informed Stalin about the bomb, with the implied motivation of scaring him. The Soviets also viewed the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a demonstration of power to the USSR, "without any military need whatsoever". This means that the USSR was forced to accelerate its nuclear program for self-defence. The resulting arms race and mutual fear of total destruction caused the Cold War.	2-3

L3	L2 + Useful / Not useful, based on cross-referencing of content to other sources/CK Eg. Source C is reliable and useful as it is supported by Source A. Source A shows that Truman chose a posture of confrontation, ignoring advisors who told him to take Soviet perspectives into consideration. He boasted about giving Molotov a verbal “straight punch to the jaw”, showing his harsh attitude and desire for superiority. This matches his behavior in Source C where he obviously uses news about the atomic bomb to intimidate Stalin. OR Source C is reliable and useful as it is supported by my Contextual Knowledge. Truman was new to his role and to Stalin. He was initially was keen to secure Stalin’s support in the war against Japan. However, when he heard of the successful test during the Potsdam Conference, he used it to intimidate Stalin. Since Stalin already knew of it from his spies, he accelerated his own nuclear program which was in progress. Thus Truman’s actions created the start of mutual hostility that led to the Cold War.	4-5
L4	L2 + Not useful, based on critical analysis Eg. Source C is not reliable and thus not useful as evidence because it was a memoir written while the Cold War was still ongoing in 1971. Thus Zhukov would have to uphold Soviet viewpoints or face censorship. He would also want to justify Soviet involvement in the Cold War, portraying it as a heroic struggle against American threats. His bias can be seen in how he accuses the US of sacrificing two Japanese cities purely to intimidate the USSR, when in fact there were serious reasons why it was needed to force a surrender and limit casualties.	6

- 1d. Study Sources D and E.** After reading Source D, does it make Source E surprising? Explain your answer **[6]**

Level	Descriptor	Marks
L1	Surprised / Not surprised, based on lifting	1
L2	Surprised / Not Surprised, based on content Eg. Source D makes me surprised about Source E as they differ in terms of who was to blame for the Cold War. D strongly blames the USA for wanting to take away the “economic and political independence” of Europe and put “under American control the major sources of coal and iron in Europe”, stirring the communists to “be the leaders in the struggle against the new American expansionist plans”. E blames both sides for starting the Cold War due to “mutual fear” and that “each side bears its share of responsibility” for ideological confrontation. Hence Gorbachev sees them as equally responsible, as they provoked each other into a cycle of reaction and escalating hostility.	2-3

	OR Eg. Source D does not make me surprised about Source E as both sources state that it was communist ideology which motivated the USSR to oppose the US. D states that Communists everywhere must take on “the special task of leading the resistance” to America. E blames the “hard core of ideological constructs” that created a “flaw in Soviet foreign policy” and “nourished an atmosphere of confrontation toward the West”.	
L3	L2 + Surprised / Not surprised, based on cross-reference to CK OR Both sides of L2 Eg. Source D makes me surprised about Source E as Source E is challenged by Source F. Source F states that based on the latest historical research, the Soviet Union was really to blame based on Stalin’s paranoia, which “made conflict unavoidable” with Western democracies who believed in a society where all could feel safe. On the other hand, E states that both sides were equally to blame, and that “Which side bears the greater responsibility is a question that has not yet been answered by objective historians in a convincing way”.	4
L4	L2 + Not Surprised – Context of the 2 sources Eg. Source D does not surprise me about Source E due to the context of each source. Source D was spoken in September 1947, in response to the Marshall Plan. It was natural for the Soviet Union to feel threatened as they lacked America’s financial resources to do the same in Europe. Hence Zhdanov would strike an aggressive tone calling for Communist unity against “American imperialism”. Source E was published in 2000, after the fall of the Soviet Union. Even though Gorbachev was an ex-Soviet leader, he could afford be candid at this point and blame both sides since he need not defend the USSR’s point of view. He also had the benefit of hindsight and personally saw the flaws in Communism which led to its long-term stagnation.	5-6

1(e) Study all the sources.

"The Cold War was caused by American actions." How far do these sources support this view? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer. **[8]**

Level	Descriptor	Marks
L1	Writes about the hypothesis, no valid source use.	1
L2	Yes OR No, supported by valid source use. <i>Award 2 marks for one Yes or No supported by valid source use, and an additional mark for each subsequent valid source use up to a maximum of 4 marks.</i> Yes Eg. Source A supports the view because it showed that Truman's inexperience and rash decisions caused unnecessary tension between the wartime allies. He ignored warnings that "Poland was a sensitive issue of Russian security" and used "very tough language" to accuse Molotov to his face of breaking agreements. He was ignorant of Roosevelt's agreements with the Soviets and had to back down later. However, the "relationship between the two powers had soured" by then. The source implies that the Soviets were shocked by his attitude and would have not retaliated if Truman had been more diplomatic and aware of foreign relations. Eg. Source C supports the view as it shows that Truman's knowledge of the successful bomb test caused him to sabotage wartime unity at the Potsdam Conference and becoming more hostile to the Soviets. He tried to hint about the bomb to Stalin, hoping to intimidate him. However, this merely spurred the Soviets to "speed things up" and push for atomic parity. This arms race created the mutual fear of destruction leading to the Cold War. Eg. Source D supports the view as it says that the American Marshall Plan was a plot to build a new 'Empire' in Europe, thus requiring all Communists to unite in response. It blames the USA for wanting to take away the "economic and political independence" of Europe and put "under American control the major sources of coal and iron in Europe". Thus the financial might of the US caused Communist movements to feel threatened, igniting an ideological struggle across the continent and beyond. No Eg. Source B does not support the view as it blames Communist expansionism for the war, symbolised by a giant spider spinning a spiderweb stretching from the USSR to Eastern Europe. Its legs are reaching into Western Europe. This means that Soviet "salami tactics" have succeeded in grabbing Eastern Europe, and that they sought expansion into Western democracies. The deliberate reference to the old name of the Cominform (Comintern) highlights the fact that the USSR is carrying out its long-held goals of spreading Communism worldwide. This would force the West to defend itself by seeking to contain Communism, sparking Cold War tension.	2-4

	Eg. Source E does not support the view because it states that both sides were equally to blame, due to “mutual fear” and that “each side bears its share of responsibility” for ideological confrontation. It also notes that the “hard core of ideological constructs” in the USSR created a “flaw in Soviet foreign policy” and “nourished an atmosphere of confrontation toward the West”, which generated a Western response and hence the Cold War. Eg. Source F does not support the view as it states that the Soviet Union was influenced by Stalin’s paranoia and thus inevitably clashed with the US, since he did not trust anyone, let alone a foreign power. Gaddis saw Stalin as “the ultimate narcissist who thought only about his own security”. This “made conflict unavoidable” with Western democracies who believed in a society where all could feel safe. As such the Cold War erupted as Stalin never thought peaceful coexistence was a possibility and acted in a way which provoked the West to respond.	
L3	Yes AND No, supported by valid source use <i>Award 5 marks for one Yes and No supported by valid source use, and an additional mark for each subsequent valid source use up to a maximum of 7 marks.</i> <i>For L2 and L3, award a bonus of up to two marks (ie +1/+1) for use of contextual knowledge to question a source in relation to its reliability, sufficiency etc. The total marks must not exceed 8.</i>	5-8

Anglican High School
Sec 4 Preliminary Examinations 2024
Core History (2174/02)
Suggested Answer scheme
Section B: Essays [20m]

2	"Germany was defeated by 1945 because of ineffective leadership." How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.	[10]
L1	Identifies/Describes ineffective leadership or how other reasons led to the defeat of Germany.	1-3
L2	Explains why the ineffective leadership led to the defeat of German or other reasons which led to the defeat of Germany.	4-5
	I agree with this statement that ineffective Leadership contributed Significantly to Germany's Defeat because Germany made several critical errors in its war against the Allies due to an inefficient command structure and Hitler's direct interference in military decisions. Germany's defeat was significantly influenced by Adolf Hitler's critical strategic errors, particularly his direct interference in military decisions at Stalingrad and his unforced declaration of war on the USA. In the Battle of Stalingrad, Hitler overruled German military commanders who advocated for withdrawal, despite the city holding no strategic importance. His insistence on capturing the city led to a massive defeat and the loss of a large German field army, a blow from which Germany was unable to recover, thus granting the advantage to the Soviet Army. <u>This decision meant that Germany had lost the advantage on the Eastern Front, leading to a series of massive Soviet victories, leading to Germany having to retreat from the Eastern Front. This eventually led to the invasion of Germany by the Allies on both Eastern and Western Fronts, by 1945, Germany had been overrun and was unable to continue fighting, leading to its surrender.</u>	
L3	Explains why the ineffective leadership led to the defeat of German or other reasons which led to the defeat of Germany.	6-8
	I disagree with this statement as USA's Overwhelming Resources and Military Strategies was the main reason for the defeat of Germany. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the USA mobilized its industry to support the war effort, becoming the "Arsenal of Democracy" capable of outproducing both Japan and Germany single-handedly. From 1942 onwards, the United States supplied the Allies with food, raw materials, industrial equipment, weapons and ammunition, ships and aircraft. This enabled the Allies to replace their losses easily as compared to Germany and allowed them to outnumber the Germans. This allowed the Allies to wear the Germans down with their superior industrial capacity to the point where Germany could no longer continue fighting as it lacked the equipment and resources to do so, ultimately leading to Germany's unconditional surrender Award an additional 2 marks (to a maximum of 10 marks) for a balanced conclusion based on an explicit consideration of the relative importance of different reasons. The total marks to be awarded for the response will be based on marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks: i.e. L3/6+2; L3/7+2; L3/8+2).	

3	"US intervention in Korea in 1950 was due to the need to stop the spread of Communism." How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.	[10]
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L1	Identifies/Describes the need to stop the spread of communism or how other reasons led to US intervention in Korea.	1-3
L2	Explains why the need to stop the spread of communism or other reasons led to US intervention in Korea.	4-5
	I agree that US intervention in Korean in 1950 was due to the need to stop the spread of Communism. The fall of China to Communism in 1949 generated immense political pressure on the Truman administration, as the Republican Party criticized them for being weak in combating the spread of communism. This outcry directly led to a significant review of US foreign policy, culminating in the highly influential NSC-68 document. NSC-68 marked a crucial turning point, committing the United States to a more confrontational stance against any perceived Communist threat, advocating for the use of military force to halt its expansion. Consequently, when North Korea openly invaded South Korea in June 1950, the Truman administration felt compelled to intervene, lacking any political justification to withhold support. Failure to act decisively would have been widely interpreted as encouraging further Communist aggression through armed conflict, thereby undermining the newly US influence in Asia and risking a wider domino effect across Asia.	
L3	Explains why the need to stop the spread of communism and other reasons led to US intervention in Korea.	6-8
	I disagree as the USA intervened in Korea in 1950 to uphold its power. As the dominant power in Asia, particularly following its post-war influence in Japan, the United States viewed North Korea's invasion of South Korea which was clearly supported by Soviet weapons and advisors, as a direct and undeniable challenge to its global power and prestige. Given that the USA and European countries had just signed the NATO agreement, it was thus necessary for a strong response to aggression. As a result, this aggressive act necessitated a resolute response from the Truman administration to uphold its standing as a superpower. Failure to act would have severely undermined America's credibility on the international stage and could have been perceived as a weakness, signaling to other nations that the USA was unwilling or unable to protect its allies against armed aggression, thus jeopardizing its influence and position throughout Asia and beyond. Award an additional 2 marks (to a maximum of 10 marks) for a balanced conclusion based on an explicit consideration of the relative importance of different reasons. The total marks to be awarded for the response will be based on marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks: i.e. L3/6+2; L3/7+2; L3/8+2).	

3	"The French defeat in the First Indochina War was due to the strength of the Viet Minh." How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.	[10]
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L1	Identifies/Describes the strength of the Viet Minh or how other reasons led to the French defeat in the First Indochina War.	1-3
L2	Explains why the strength of the Viet Minh or other reasons led to the French defeat in the First Indochina War.	4-5
	I agree that the strength of the Viet Minh's effective military tactics contributed to the French defeat in the First Indochina War. By mid-1946, the Viet Minh had developed into a strong army of approximately 100,000 troops, led by General Vo Nguyen Giap. They initially avoided direct battle with superior French forces and waged guerrilla warfare, causing a steady stream of French casualties. As their forces grew stronger, they adopted more aggressive tactics, eventually launching general offensives to retake cities from the French. They learned and adapted tactics from the Soviets, Chinese communists, and the French Resistance. Viet Minh agents also assassinated Vietnamese administrators working for the French and set off bombs. This continuous pressure progressively lowered French morale and forced the French to adopt brutal tactics, such as bombing and burning suspected villages or summary executions, which inadvertently helped the Viet Minh build up their support base among the rural population while the French lost it. The Viet Minh were able to stave off defeat and create time and space to build up an effective fighting force to take on the French. This allowed them to gain momentum and wore the French down resulting in the French realization that the war was unwinnable leading to the French defeat in the First Indochina War.	
L3	Explains why the strength of the Viet Minh or other reasons led to the French defeat in the First Indochina War.	6-8
	I disagree with the statement as ineffective French strategies and their failure to secure or maintain local popular support significantly undermined their war effort. By 1948, the war had reached a stalemate, with the French controlling major cities but struggling to assert control over the rural regions, which were largely under communist influence. French forces became increasingly frustrated and ruthless, resorting to brutal tactics such as bombing and burning villages suspected of harboring Viet Minh, summary executions, and massacres, like the one at Gio Linh in Central Vietnam. Despite increasing American economic and material support, the French were unable to decisively defeat the Viet Minh, even in open warfare, by 1951. The human cost was also unsustainable, with French officers killed outnumbering newly trained officers in 1952. These brutal tactics led to a significant loss of local support for the French. This alienation of the population ironically helped the Viet Minh in building their support base. The French's inability to inflict a decisive defeat on the Viet Minh, even when they were weaker, allowed the Viet Minh valuable time to build up their strength. The heavy casualties and lack of clear progress led to a growing loss of support for the war in France itself, increasing domestic pressure to end the conflict. As a result, the French realised that the war was unsustainable and decided to end the war. Award an additional 2 marks (to a maximum of 10 marks) for a balanced conclusion based on an explicit consideration of the relative importance of different reasons. The total marks to be awarded for the response will be based on marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks: i.e. L3/6+2; L3/7+2; L3/8+2).	