

Marking Schemes

This document was prepared for markers' reference. It should not be regarded as a set of model answers. Candidates and teachers who were not involved in the marking process are advised to interpret its content with care.

PAPER 1 (DATA-BASED QUESTIONS)

1. (a)(i) **Describe one change in Japan's diplomacy in the period of 1910s-30s** [1 marks]
- Change:
e.g. - From concerted / cooperative / knee-down to aggressive / hostile
- (a)(ii) **Explain one reason for the change in Japan's diplomacy you described in (a)(i)** [3 marks]
- L1** Unclear explanation, ineffective use of own knowledge. [max. 1]
- L2** Clear explanation, effective use of own knowledge. [max. 3]
- Reason:
e.g. - The end of the party politics era / militarists took over control of the government.
- (b) **Identify one threat to Japan's political system in the 1910s-30s** [3 marks]
- L1** Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Source. [max. 1]
- L2** Clear explanation, effective use of the Source. [max. 3]
- Threat:
e.g. - Huge influence of militarists / lack of constraint on the militarists.
- Clues:
e.g. - 'The lack of jurisdiction over military affairs on the part of the Cabinet is emphasized by the long-standing rule that only generals and admirals can hold the portfolios of war and marine.'
- 'permits the army and navy to do several astonishing things...'
- (c) **Whether 'Japan's party government was weak in dealing with both internal and external problems during 1918-32.'** [8 marks]
- L1** Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Sources and own knowledge. [max. 2]
- L2** Clear explanation, effective use of the Sources *or* own knowledge only. [max. 4]
- L3** Logical and comprehensive explanation, effective use of the Sources *and* own knowledge. [max. 8]

Weak in dealing with internal problems:

- e.g. - The cabinets that do not support militarists' expansion would be wrecked. (Source B)
- Failed to deal with the financial crisis, including the aftermath caused by the Great Kanto Earthquake, the 1927 Bank Crisis and 1929 Great Depression. (own knowledge)
- Frequent change of cabinet caused the inconsistent policy. (own knowledge)

Good in dealing with internal problems:

- e.g. - Able to preserve the Emperor's status and constitutional monarchy in Japan, like Peace Preservation Law. (own knowledge)

Weak in dealing with external problems:

- e.g. - Failed to raise the Asian status in the world, as the racial equality proposal failed in the Paris Peace Conference, and the US implemented a discriminatory Immigration Act in 1924. (Source A)
- Failed to get equal status with the US and UK in the Washington Naval Treaty. (Source A)
- Diplomatic setback in London Naval Conference (own knowledge)
- Forced to return Shandong's right to China in the Washington Conference. (own knowledge)
- Great Depression was an external economic problem for Japan. (own knowledge)

Good in dealing with external problems:

- e.g. - Being a permanent member of the League of Nations Council. (own knowledge)

2. (a) **Identify one characteristic of economic reform** **[3 marks]**

L1 Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Source. *[max. 1]*

L2 Clear explanation, effective use of the Source. *[max. 3]*

Characteristic:

- e.g. - Allow some people in some regions to get rich first.
- Allowed regional difference.
- More emphasis on developing the eastern or coastal part of China.
- More emphasis on the development of Southeast China.

Clue:

- e.g. - All open coastal zones are in the East / coastal area.
- Special economic zones, like Shenzhen and Zhuhai, are located Southeast part of China.

(b) **How useful is Source D in understanding China's relations with other countries in the 1980-90s?** **[4 marks]**

L1 Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Source *or* own knowledge. *[max. 2]*

L2 Clear explanation, effective use of the Source *and* own knowledge. *[max. 4]*

Usefulness (covered by Source B):

- e.g. - China improved / developed friendly relations with ASEAN / Southeast Asian countries.

Limitation (own knowledge):

- e.g. - Improved relations with the US, Western countries and Japan.
- Continuing dispute on the problem of Daiyu Island with Japan.
- Gorbachev visited China in 1989.

(c) **Discuss the significance of Reform and Opening Up for China's modernisation in the late 20th century in economic and diplomatic aspects** **[8 marks]**

L1 Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Sources and own knowledge. *[max. 2]*

L2 Clear explanation, effective use of the Sources *or* own knowledge only. *[max. 4]*

L3 Logical and comprehensive explanation, effective use of the Sources *and* own knowledge. *[max. 8]*

Economic aspect:

- e.g. - Opened some regions for foreign companies to enter, boosted China's economy/more cooperation with other countries. (Source C)
- Improving agricultural production with Household Responsibility System. (own knowledge)
- The rapid development of industry, commerce and trade with the economic reform measures like township village enterprise, unified purchase and marketing system. (own knowledge)

Diplomatic aspect:

- e.g. - Improved relations with Asean countries (Source D)
- Participation in international organisations e.g. IMF, World Bank and Asia Development Bank (own knowledge)
- Improved relations with the west (own knowledge)

3. (a) **Conclude one principle upheld in US diplomatic policy** [3 marks]

L1 Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Source. [max. 1]

L2 Clear explanation, effective use of the Source. [max. 3]

Principle:

e.g. - Non-intervention / isolationist.

Clues and explanation:

e.g. - 'First concern of the United States must be its own peace and security', avoid being drawn into wars, avoid alliance.

(b) **Was the cartoonist optimistic about the appeasement policy?** [4 marks]

L1 Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Source. [max. 2]

L2 Clear explanation, effective use of the Source. [max. 4]

e.g. - Not optimistic.

Clues:

e.g. - 'Hoping Each Drink Will Quiet Him, But It Only Seems to Make Him Worse.'

- The bartender that represented Britain was giving the bottle labelled 'Czechoslovakia' to Hitler. Yet, it didn't seem enough to Hitler and he was still holding a gun. Together with the empty bottles, which symbolises what Hitler had already acquired, it implied that the appeasement policy would not be able to stop Hitler's ambitions.

* Given the content of the Source, candidates in general will not hold an optimistic view. However, marks will be awarded to answers that hold the opposite views and are presented logically.

(c) **Whether the appeasement policy was a rational response to the international context in the 1930s.** [8 marks]

L1 Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Sources and own knowledge. [max. 2]

L2 Clear explanation, effective use of the Sources *or* own knowledge only. [max. 4]

L3 Logical and comprehensive explanation, effective use of the Sources *and* own knowledge. [max. 8]

Rational:

- e.g. - US adoption of isolationist policy (Source E)
- Depressed economic environment under Great Depression (own knowledge)
- Failure of League of Nations in keeping peace (own knowledge)
- Aggressions of Japan, Italy, Germany to be countered at the same time (own knowledge)
- Spread of communism in the eastern Europe by USSR (own knowledge)
- Post WW1 war-fear (own knowledge)

Irrational:

- e.g. - Was not able to stop Hitler's ambitions. (Source F)
 - Continuous aggressions of Japan and Italy (Own knowledge)
 - Sacrificed the interest of Czechoslovakia (Own knowledge)
 - Weakened credibility of peacekeepers (Own knowledge)
- * The judgment of 'rational' should base in accordance with the situation.
- * Candidate shall affirm the extent by comparison and judgement.

4. (a) **What was the change of attitude of the USSR towards international atomic cooperation over time?** [4 marks]

L1 Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Source. [max. 2]

L2 Clear explanation, effective use of the Source. [max. 4]

Attitude:

e.g. - From negative, disproving and isolative since 1930s to positive, cooperative and accommodating in 1950s.

Clues for the original attitude:

e.g. - Isolated herself and disproved communication between Soviet scientists and other scientists.
- 'Meetings with foreign scientists had been rare since the early 1930s.'

Clues for the change in attitude:

e.g. - Participated in the IAEA conference and upheld the principle of allowing technological knowledge exchange.
- Believed that 'personal contacts and visits to universities and research institutes abroad would provide new knowledge and the stimulus for new research.'
- Believed that IAEA would provide opportunities for acquiring scientific-technical information in the field of atomic energy and for establishing contacts with scientists and engineers in other countries.

(b) **Identify the trend of state participation in UNESCO between 1980 and 2000** [3 marks]

L1 Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Source. [max. 2]

L2 Clear explanation, effective use of the Source. [max. 3]

Trend:

e.g. - An increasing trend.

Clues:

e.g. - Number of members rose from 153 in 1980 to 188 in 2000.

Implication:

e.g. - More and more states were admitted to join and participate in UNESCO, demonstrating an increasing degree of state involvement.

(c) **Whether ‘The ideological factor was a major factor that undermined global social cooperation efforts in the 20th century.’** [8 marks]

L1 Unclear explanation, ineffective use of the Sources and own knowledge. [max. 2]

L2 Clear explanation, effective use of the Sources *or* own knowledge only. [max. 4]

L3 Logical and comprehensive explanation, effective use of the Sources *and* own knowledge. [max. 8]

Ideological factor:

- e.g. - Soviet nuclear scientists were forbidden to interact and exchange knowledge with the west. (Source G)
- Soviet republics were only able to join UNESCO after the end of the cold war (Source H)
- The US and USSR abused veto power in the UN security council during the cold war. (own knowledge)
- Cooperation in science and technology was hindered as exchange was blocked between blocs, e.g. vaccines, space cooperation blocked by fierce competition (own knowledge)

Other factors:

- e.g. - National interest (Clues for ideological factor can be used if framed so) / e.g. US in Kyoto Protocol
- Institutional factors/ the structural weaknesses, e.g. ECOSOC merely acts as an advisory body without decision-making power. (own knowledge)
- Financial factor. E.g. lack fundings, over-reliance on volunteer funds by members
- Divergence between developing countries and developed countries, e.g. in greenhouse gases reduction (own knowledge)
- Physical constraints, e.g. environmental damage already irreversibly caused and thus limited effectiveness despite cooperation/ ageing problem persists, limiting the effect of cooperation on population by UNFPA etc. (own knowledge)

Comparison (“major factor”):

- e.g. - Duration factor existed, e.g. ideological factor ended after cold war but national interest persisted
- Scale of influence of the factor, e.g. ideological factor involved most states into blocs but national interest was merely confined to some individual states
- Despite ideological / national, USSR gradually showed openness to science cooperation with the West (Source G)

Candidates' Performance

Question Choice Pattern

Question Number	Popularity (%)
Paper 1	
1	Compulsory
2	
3	
4	
Paper 2	
1	28
2	42.1
3	42.1
4	45.6
5	36.8
6	0
7	1.8

Paper 1 (Data-based questions)

- Q.1 (a)(i) Performance was fair. Several candidates struggled with properly describing "change" in their answers. Some candidates failed to compare the situation before and after the specified period. Candidates need to clearly articulate the transition from one state to another when discussing diplomatic changes.
- (a)(ii) Performance was unsatisfactory. Many candidates failed to fulfill the requirement to use their own knowledge in answering this sub-question. The question requires candidates to use their own knowledge. The question type is referencing 2025 DSE Q3. Many candidates failed to demonstrate sufficient independent knowledge beyond the provided sources.
- (b) Performance was good. Some students did not elaborate enough on their arguments or explain threats clearly.
- (c) Performance was fair.

Dual question misunderstanding. A significant number of candidates misinterpreted this sub-question as an extent question rather than a dual question. Also, there is a need to adopt a balanced approach when writing about internal and external problems.

Insufficient Explanation and Elaboration. Some candidates lacked sufficient explanation or elaboration in their responses. Common comments included lack of own knowledge, insufficient elaboration, and unclear explanation.

Conceptual and Factual Errors. Several candidates made historical or conceptual mistakes, including: Wrong chronological order (e.g., Great Depression started in the US, not Japan), incorrect dates (e.g., timing of Great Kanto Earthquake, Meiji reform), and misunderstanding concepts (e.g., confusing aggressive policy with non-participation in international affairs)

Overlapping Arguments. Some candidates were noted for having overlapping or repeated arguments in their responses, reducing the effectiveness of their answers.

Q.2 (a) Performance was good. Candidates mixed source clues with their own explanations without clear separation. Candidates are advised to separate source clues from their explanations clearly. Multiple candidates received feedback about weak or insufficient explanations in their responses, particularly in discussing source limitations or providing arguments.

(b) Performance was fair.

Mistake in ASEAN's Geographic Scope. Multiple candidates incorrectly described ASEAN's geographic scope, incorrectly referred to ASEAN as covering Asia-Pacific countries.

Suggested Answer is "Small Extent". It is advised that the stance could be "small extent" rather than other positions. It would be a more appropriate stance since the source cannot fully reflect all historical facts.

Answer Your Stance First. A few of the candidates forgot to clearly state their stance at the beginning of their answer.

Insufficient Own Knowledge / Clues. Many candidates lacked solid historical examples or sufficient explanation in their own knowledge sections to explain the limitations of the source.

(c) Performance was average.

No Stance Required. Many candidates incorrectly took a stance when the question did not require one. A lot of candidates take a stance on this question and modernisation. This indicates many candidates misunderstood the question requirements and unnecessarily argued to some extent or position.

Lack of Linking to the Definition of "Modernisation". Many candidates failed to connect their arguments to the definition of modernisation. This was one of the most prevalent issues across responses.

Handover of Hong Kong Not Related to Reform and Opening Up. Some candidates incorrectly linked the handover of Hong Kong to Reform and Opening Up. It is historically incorrect that these two historical events had any direct causal tie.

Q.3 (a) Performance was good.

"Conclude" Requires Multiple Clues. Many candidates failed to cite multiple clues when answering this sub-question. "Conclude" should be based on multiple clues by citing more than one clue. Candidates need to support their conclusions with more than one piece of evidence from the source.

Imprecise Principle Identification. Students failed to identify the correct or precise principle from the source.

- (b) Performance was good.

Incomplete Source Interpretation. Many Candidates failed to explain the symbolism of the "drinks" in the cartoon. Several candidates omitted discussion of the cartoon's caption.

Separate Clues and Explanation. Candidates were advised to clearly separate their cited clues from their explanations.

Over-interpretation. Some candidates added information not implied in the source (e.g., mentioning France when not shown).

- (c) Performance was average.

Isolationist policy is NOT an appeasement policy. The most frequently occurring comment relates to candidates incorrectly equating isolationist policy with appeasement policy. This conceptual error was one of the most prevalent issues across responses.

Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact Outside Timeframe. Multiple candidates discussed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, which lies outside the required timeframe (up to 1938).

Avoid Mixing Own Knowledge with Source Arguments. Candidates were advised not to mix their own knowledge with arguments derived from sources.

Link Arguments to "Rationality". Many candidates failed to explicitly link their arguments back to the concept of "rationality."

Events Outside the Timeframe of 1938. Candidates discussed events that occurred after 1938, such as the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, the invasion of Poland, and the capture of France through Belgium, which occurred in 1940.

Provide More Concrete Evidence. Multiple candidates were advised to support their arguments with more concrete historical evidence, particularly regarding the Great Depression's impact.

- Q.4 (a) Performance was good.

Misinterpretation of "Harmful". Candidates frequently misinterpret the meaning of "harmful" in the source context. The correct interpretation is that meetings were "too rare and thus harmful to the field," not that meetings themselves were harmful.

"Change" Question Type. Many candidates failed to properly structure their answers for questions with the question word "change". For "change" questions, it is advised to construct your topic sentence in the format of "changed from.... to....".

IAEA Establishment Does Not Mean Soviet Participation. Several candidates incorrectly assumed that the establishment of the IAEA implied Soviet participation.

Attitudes Not Identified / Better Adjectives Needed. Candidates did not clearly identify attitudes or use vague language. They were advised to explain their cited clues and use proper adjectives when describing attitudes. Use more adjectives rather than just using positive and negative.

- (b) Performance was good.

Missing Link to “Trend”. Multiple candidates failed to explicitly link their answers back to the concept of “trend.”

Failed to Capture Whole Source. Candidates were advised that they failed to capture the complete meaning of the source. For example, missing the joining of non-former soviet republics only after the end of cold war.

- (c) Performance was average.

Avoid “Agree to a Certain Extent” as a Stance. Candidates were advised against using an “agree to a certain extent” stance, as this requires both the comparison of factors and the extent at the same time in this particular question type.

Lack of Comparison. Multiple candidates were reminded that a comparison between ideological factors and other factors is required.

Misinterpretation of Sources. Some candidates misinterpreted the sources when constructing their arguments.

Economic Cooperation Does Not Equal to Social Cooperation. Candidates frequently confuse economic cooperation with social cooperation. For example, using the Marshall Plan and ECSC/EFTA as examples of social cooperation.

“Ideology” As a Political Concept. Several candidates were reminded that “ideology” typically refers to political ideologies. Also, the joining of former Soviet states indicates ideological factors hindered cooperation during the Cold War.

Lack of Concrete Examples. Candidates were advised to support their arguments with more concrete examples, particularly for arguments about national interest, economic factors, and other factors.

Avoid Using Own Knowledge to Explain Sources. Candidates were cautioned against bringing in their own knowledge when explaining source-based arguments.

Need to Link Back to “Undermining Cooperation”. Many candidates failed to explicitly connect arguments to the question's focus, “undermining cooperation.”

Paper 2 (Essay-type questions)

- Q.1 Performance was satisfactory. The question requires candidates to provide balanced coverage of both social and economic aspects, as well as the importance of addressing the entire required time period. Many answers were too short or lacking in breadth. It is suggested to provide more sub-arguments and solid examples to enrich the essay. Factual and logical mistakes are commonly found, such as misdating economic developments or misclassifying political events as social. Candidates were reminded that for direct questions, comparison with other factors is unnecessary, and instead, they should discuss which developments were not tightly tied to China if they agree to a large extent.
- Q.2 Performance was fair. The question requires candidates to compare domestic factors with multiple other factors, not just the US factor. Many candidates gave insufficient discussion of non-US factors, such as the

China factor or international circumstances. Candidates are encouraged to discuss both positive and negative developments and to provide more concrete examples and historical evidence. Candidates are reminded to include a sufficient number of arguments and ensure balanced coverage of all relevant aspects.

- Q.3 Performance was average. The question requires candidates to compare the relative importance of patriotism with multiple other factors, ensuring balanced discussion on both sides. Many essays were described as lopsided, focusing on only one other factor or failing to cover the entire required timeframe. Candidates are advised to provide stronger links between patriotism and reforms, use more concrete historical evidence, and avoid discussing events outside the required period.
- Q.4 Performance was good. The question requires candidates to point out more specific features rather than using vague descriptors like “hostile” or “tense.” Many answers lacked sufficient examples, especially for political confrontation, and failed to cover the entire timeframe, including periods of peaceful coexistence. There is also a need for more explicit comparisons and clearer linkage to the question's requirements. Factual mistakes and irrelevant arguments were also found in some answers.
- Q.5 Performance was fair. Many answers failed to address the specific mistakes countries made after WWI that led to WWII, and how these mistakes were addressed after WWII. Candidates are encouraged to elaborate on more perspectives, use more historical facts, and ensure that both the mistakes and the improvements are equally discussed. Candidate shall avoid using events or facts outside the required timeframe and balance the before-and-after parts of the essay.
- Q.6 No candidates attempted this question.
- Q.7 Only a small portion of candidates attempted this question.

Acknowledgements

Material from the following publications has been used in question papers:

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