



A-level HISTORY 7042/2G

Component 2G The Birth of the USA, 1760–1801

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



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

Copyright information

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Copyright © 2025 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Supporting Marking Guidance

A separate Supporting Marking Guidance document has been created for use in this series and any future series.

It has been written by the senior examining team. It applies to all A-level History options. The purpose of the guidance is to clarify key aspects of the mark scheme and further ensure consistency of approach across all options. The guidance does not reflect a change in the standard applied, but clarification and amplification of the standard. We hope that the guidance document will aid you in your understanding of how the standard should be applied and deepen your understanding of how the key aspects of the mark scheme work. The Supporting Marking Guidance should always be used in conjunction with the mark scheme, and any relevant examiner standardising and teacher training material.

Examiners can find the Supporting Marking Guidance on the associate extranet.

Teachers can find the Supporting Marking Guidance alongside the current mark scheme on Centre Services on results day. It will also be published with any future assessment materials on the public website.

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** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the causes of the American Revolution.

[30 marks]

Target: AO2

Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25–30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19–24**
- L3:** Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13–18**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7–12**
- L1:** The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. 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 deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.

Source A: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- from an American, Benjamin Franklin, who worked in London for several colonies, a man privy (through his role as a colonial agent) to events in America and Britain. This gives a first-hand insight into the feelings of many colonists
- the date is of value as it reflects the tenuous situation in the colonies following the Tea Act in May 1773. As a colonial agent, Franklin was involved in negotiations to restore relations between Britain and America
- the source was published in British newspapers in September 1773. This is valuable because in September he prophesied a colonial reaction, which is reflected in the Boston Tea Party in December 1773, which may have influenced his decision to republish the article in the Pennsylvania Gazette in December 1773
- the tone is direct, demonstrating a clear message that if Britain failed to stop punitive actions, it risked causing a revolution (reaffirming the one-sidedness of the author).

Content and argument

- the overall argument is for 'British gentlemen' to be 'wary' as they risk losing the colonies. This is valuable in reflecting the strong feeling held by many colonists about the 'severe laws' and denial of their 'rights' such as the Tea Act 1773 which Americans regarded as attempts by parliament to tax them without consent and destroy the independence of their colonial assemblies
- further argument claims the colonists have 'peaceably submitted' and 'patiently borne their complaints'. The one-sided nature limits the value of the source, as the colonists had not 'borne' their complaints, as there had been economic resistance, political condemnation, and incendiary anti-British propaganda
- the reference to the British using 'bullets to suppress', 'punish' and deny them of their 'liberty' has some validity from an American perspective yet shows the one-sided nature of the author. The increasing size and strength of the colonies corroborate the reference that the colonies were a force to be wary of (by the 1770s, the colonies had a strong economy and a population of 2.5 million). Also, previous colonial resistance had successfully forced the British to repeal legislation
- the warning to the British that America would revolt and 'break free' is unsurprising given the earlier American responses against the British. This is valuable for studying the causes of the revolution, as his role as a colonial agent for several colonies provided him with an insight into colonial feelings towards the British.

Source B: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- from Thomas Paine who arrived in America in 1774 and quickly became involved in radical politics. This is both valuable and a limitation. It is of value as Paine, as a new arrival in America was able to observe the backlash to the Coercive Acts in 1774. But, it also limits the value as he was influenced by radicalism affirmed by the one-sided nature of the author
- it was published in January 1776. This is valuable. Common Sense had widespread influence on independence across the colonies selling over 120 000 copies between January and July 1776
- its forceful, straightforward prose appealed to ordinary colonists, shown by the popularity of Common Sense
- the reassuring tone is valuable, as it helped convince Americans to break free from British rule. The tone and reminders of the 'precariousness' of their situation (supported by the outbreak of hostilities 1776) helped persuade colonists that an American revolution was the only solution.

Content and argument

- the overall argument is that reconciliation with Britain would be a dreadful mistake. This is valuable in its directness. However, his exaggerated comments about the 'eternal tyranny' of British rule limits the value
- further argument claims that colonists should remember the 'precariousness' of their situation. This is valuable, as fighting at Lexington and Concord in April 1775 and the failure of the Olive Branch Petition in July 1775 ended the prospect of any reconciliation with Britain
- the reference to the strength of colonies and unity of the colonies to succeed is valuable. Paine recognised that unity was key to the colonies gaining independence, unless they regarded themselves as Americans, not colonies, they were unlikely to achieve independence for America
- the warning a revolution would be costly and the suggestion to make use of the land to pay for the debt of waging war is valuable in providing colonists with a solution to cover the cost, which helped push colonies to support an American revolution.

Source C: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- from Samuel Adams a key agitator in the Sons of Liberty. He helped coordinate resistance to the Stamp Act in 1765, formed the Committees of Correspondence in 1772, and helped plan the Boston Tea Party in 1773. This is valuable as Adams and the Sons of Liberty were key drivers in opposition to British rule. However, the author's role as a rebel leader limits the value of the source
- the date 1 August 1776 is valuable. Adams' address to the State House of Philadelphia was important to gain support for the revolution, as Pennsylvania was one of five colonies that did not agree
- the purpose of the source was his appeal to the State House of Philadelphia to support the American revolution. The emphasis exaggerates to convince the delegates to support the American revolution, limiting its value
- the graphic tone paints a picture for the audience of the atrocities they have suffered at the hands of the British. However, phrases such as 'drench their hands in our blood' limits the value by affirming the one-sided nature of the source.

Content and argument

- the overall argument shows the 'respect' once held for the English and the misery they have suffered. This is valuable in showing that British loyalty was still important to many colonists, and to convince his audience to support a revolution, he must remind them of the British actions in order to diminish their allegiance to Britain
- further claims of 'blood', 'dead bodies' and a 'pleading' mother for her children although contextually valuable, its value is limited by the exaggeration of British actions to make the British appear worse than they were to convince members to support the American Revolution
- the comparison of the peaceful, industrious America, with the 'blood and misery' is valuable in showing the contrast from 1774 to 1775/76 and the outbreak of hostilities. However, the claim that the English are inhumane and inflicted so much distress is one-sided, as, at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, British casualties far exceeded American
- the reference to the 'large armies', 'military skill', the 'stockpile' of weapons, and 'foreign nations' who would support them and 'crown' their success in gaining independence is valuable. By 1776, Congress had taken charge of waging war, issued states with quotas to raise a Continental army, and voted to issue \$2 million to finance the war, showing colonial support for an American revolution.

Section B

- 0 2** 'Britain successfully overcame the challenges it faced in North America in the years 1760 to 1763.'

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**

Arguments supporting the view that Britain successfully overcame the challenges it faced in North America in the years 1760 to 1763 might include:

- Britain removed the French threat from North America for good. The combined forces of 25 000 British troops and payment for 25 000 colonists to fight the French turned the tide of the war, allowing the British to defeat France
- the capture of Canada enabled negotiations for the Treaty of Paris 1763, which increased the size and strength of its North American colonies
- the suppression of Pontiac's rebellion in May 1763 ended the Native American challenge in North America
- the Proclamation of 1763, controlled westward expansion and minimised challenges between white settlers and Native Americans.

Arguments challenging the view that Britain successfully overcame the challenges it faced in North America in the years 1760 to 1763 might include:

- anti-smuggling measures, such as the requirement for colonial customs officials to live in America and moving revenue cases from colonial courts to a vice-admiralty court in Halifax, Nova Scotia, engendered a colonial belief that Britain was threatening the colonial legal system
- Britain's change in policy from salutary neglect to a strong imperial authority resulted in American suspicions of a British intent to destroy American liberties
- the post-war economic depression caused deflation, which threatened some Americans with financial ruin
- duties to raise revenue such as the Sugar Act and increase in enumerated commodities (introduced to help reduce Britain's national debt, which had almost doubled by 1763) unleashed a political argument that Britain had no right in taxing Americans who were unrepresented in parliament; accordingly, many Americans became suspicious of Britain for conspiring to undermine colonial freedoms.

Students should be able to identify and evaluate several challenges that Britain faced and overcame in North America, looking at a range of areas, including the removal of Native American and French threats. Some may differentiate between the challenges Britain overcame and the fallout of the war, resulting in a change in British policy towards North America that subsequently created more challenges for Britain to face and overcome. Answers that focus largely on 1763, or have an imbalance, should be awarded on merit, for the depth and detail of information and judgement for the question. Reward any well-argued essay that provides a judgement.

- 0 3** 'American victory in the War of Independence was due to the mistakes of the British in the years 1776 to 1783.'

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**

Arguments supporting the view that American victory in the War of Independence was due to the mistakes of the British in the years 1776 to 1783 might include:

- the British failed to utilise their naval dominance – the failure to establish a successful blockade was a significant mistake and contributed to the defeat of the British in the war
- they reduced the military strength in the colonies to concentrate on protecting its empire from France and Spain (military resources fell from 65% in 1778 to 29% by 1781) giving the Americans an advantage in the war
- the British use of Hessian troops and native Americans antagonized neutrals and loyalists leading to anti-British propaganda which swayed public opinion against Britain in the colonies
- British military leaders lacked drive and missed many opportunities to destroy Washington's army in 1776/77, allowing Washington time to rebuild the Continental army
- the British government failed to recover from Cornwallis's surrender in Yorktown in 1781. The British government lacked the impetus to continue fighting and resolved to seek peace to end the war, handing victory and independence to the Americans.

Arguments challenging the view that American victory in the War of Independence was due to the mistakes of the British in the years 1776 to 1783 might include:

- French and Spanish financial support and the influx of 10 000 troops enabled Congress to supply its Continental army and boost colonial morale
- American foreign diplomacy adeptly used European rivals to their advantage, as the entry of France and Spain made the war in America a sideshow for Britain (1778 France entered the war, followed by Spain in April 1779) resulting in Britain reducing the British army in America
- American victories and Washington's leadership: his attack on Trenton in 1776 showed efficiency and daring, Saratoga 1777 was instrumental in Britain passing the Conciliatory Proposition and appointment of a peace commission, and the transformation of the Continental army from an ill-disciplined rabble to a fighting force, secured American victory at Yorktown in October 1781
- the extension of the war to a world war bolstered America's international position and skilfully embroiled Britain's rivals in the war undermining the British blockade of America: the Netherlands, the League of Armed Neutrality – Russia, Sweden, and Denmark in 1780, and Prussia, Portugal, and Austria in 1781
- American heroes boosted the morale and resolve of the Americans to keep fighting for a moral cause. For example, Adams ensured all thirteen colonies fought together, foreign diplomacy by Jay Franklin and Adams and Washington's leadership.

Students are likely to argue that the mistakes of the British and the tenacity of the Americans were both highly important in the American victory in the War of Independence. They should, however, be aware of other 'important' factors. The extension of the war, which from 1778 for Britain became a world war, rather than just an American war, as well as factors in their own right. Reward any well-argued response showing differentiation between factors and a supported overall judgement.

0 4 To what extent did Alexander Hamilton strengthen the USA in the 1790s?

[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**

Arguments supporting the view that Alexander Hamilton strengthened the USA in the 1790s might include:

- Hamilton's doctrine of implied Constitutional powers helped create a strong national government and gave the federal government the powers to raise revenue and pay off debts, which had been one of the major weaknesses in the 1780s
- Hamilton restored public credit and opened avenues for foreign capital to flow into the USA, increasing its prosperity and securing future stability (in 1790 the USA had a colossal debt, almost no revenue or means for collecting money)
- the precedent of federal excise tax in the second public credit report in December 1790 helped increase the value of government bonds and cover the nation's debts, enabling the federal government to borrow money and strengthen USA's prestige both at home and abroad
- the Bank of the United States opened in 1791, which provided economic credibility to the USA and secured its economic development
- Hamilton, as a member of Washington's cabinet and the first Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, was key to making the new nation united and strong.

Arguments challenging the view that Alexander Hamilton strengthened the USA in the 1790s might include:

- Hamilton's principles were averse to liberty and weakened state powers which threatened the unity of the USA. For instance, he wanted a strong central government, a national bank, and a strong military. This caused political divisions in the federal government and the rise of political parties
- geographical divisions: many Southern states objected to paying war debts because many of them had paid and felt his measures gave federal power at the expense of the states
- political repercussions: Madison voiced the views of Virginian planters, that he threatened the Constitution and state powers
- his role in the Whiskey Insurrection in 1794 conjured up fears among Republicans of a standing army and a military dictatorship which diluted the strength and unity of the USA in the 1790s
- inflation because of Hamilton's treasury policies in the 1790s decreased revenue from national taxes and placed high tariffs on foreign trade, weakening the US economy.

Students may argue that there were both positive and negative effects because of Alexander Hamilton in the 1790s. His position allowed him to increase the powers of the federal government and restore confidence and credibility, strengthening the USA both at home and abroad. But, his principles created political and geographical divisions and the rise of political parties in the 1790s. A developed answer is likely to evaluate Hamilton at least partly according to these factors, as well as comparing the impact of Hamilton on the USA at home and abroad.