



GCSE MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

HISTORY

COMPONENT 1: NON-BRITISH STUDY IN DEPTH

**1F. THE VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST
OF THE AMERICAS, 1492–1522**

C100UF0-1

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

COMPONENT 1: NON-BRITISH STUDY IN DEPTH

1F. THE VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST OF THE AMERICAS, 1492–1522

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

Instructions for examiners of GCSE History when applying the mark scheme

Positive marking

It should be remembered that learners are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the learner writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

GCSE History mark schemes are presented in a common format as shown below:

This section indicates the assessment objective(s) targeted in the question.

Mark allocation:	AO1(b)	AO2	AO3 (a)	AO4
5	3		2	

Question: e.g. **Use Source A and your own knowledge to describe the main features of Aztec civilization.** [5]

This is the question and its mark tariff.

Band descriptors and mark allocations

In this question three fifths of the marks are awarded for understanding of the historical context. Two fifths of the marks are awarded for source analysis.

	AO1(b) 3 marks		AO3(a) 2 marks	
BAND 2	Demonstrates detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	2-3	Accurate analysis of the source set within its historical context.	2
BAND 1	Demonstrates some understanding of the key feature in the question.	1	Source is analysed through description of its content only.	1

This section contains the band descriptors which explain the principles that must be applied when marking each question. The examiner must apply this when applying the marking scheme to the response. The descriptor for the band provides a description of the performance level for that band. The band descriptor is aligned with the Assessment Objective(s) targeted in the question.

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- *the source shows that Cortes considered the Aztec practice of ritual sacrifice to be a horrid abominable custom;*
- *it states that in order to please their idols, the Aztecs sacrifice girls, boys and adults; he states that this custom ought to be punished and that it had been seen in no other part by the Spanish;*
- *the source shows the attitude of the Spanish towards the custom and partly explains their determination to end it;*
- *the ritual of sacrifice was an important feature of Aztec civilisation; the interaction between the Aztecs and their gods were determined by their calendars; thousands were sacrificed each year, especially at the main temple in Tenochtitlan;*
- *many sacrificial victims were prisoners of war, many of whom had been captured in the so-called 'Flower Wars', with enemies of the Aztecs;*
- *there were however, many other features of Aztec civilisation; for example, the payment of tribute from other tribes was an important way for the Aztecs to maintain their empire; tribute would take the form of a variety of goods that were demanded by the Aztecs; this would serve the dual purpose of weakening the Aztecs' enemies and maintaining a sense of fear in the subjugated peoples;*
- *some feature of Aztec civilisation were reflected in Tenochtitlan; Aztec society comprised different classes and there was a level of sophistication in the cities with markets and drainage system, as well as systems of education.*

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor for the band provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a learner's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two stage process.

Banded mark schemes Stage 1 – Deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the learner's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the learner's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the learner's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark learners down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

Banded mark schemes Stage 2 – Deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a learner's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided.

Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is contains nothing of any significance to the mark scheme, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

Question 1

Mark allocation:	AO1 (b)	AO2	AO3 (a)	AO4
5	3		2	

Question: **Use Source A and your own knowledge to describe the main features of Aztec civilization.** [5]

Band descriptors and mark allocations

	AO1(b) 3 marks		AO3(a) 2 marks	
BAND 2	Demonstrates detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	2-3	Accurate analysis of the source set within its historical context.	2
BAND 1	Demonstrates some understanding of the key feature in the question.	1	Source is analysed through reference to its content only.	1

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- the source shows that Cortes considered the Aztec practice of ritual sacrifice to be a horrid abominable custom;
- it states that in order to please their idols, the Aztecs sacrificed girls, boys and adults; he states that this custom ought to be punished and that it had been seen in no other part by the Spanish;
- the source shows the attitude of the Spanish towards the custom and partly explains their determination to end it;
- the ritual of sacrifice was an important feature of Aztec civilisation; the interaction between the Aztecs and their gods were determined by their calendars; thousands were sacrificed each year, especially at the main temple in Tenochtitlan;
- many sacrificial victims were prisoners of war, many of whom had been captured in the so-called 'Flower Wars', with enemies of the Aztecs;
- there were however, many other features of Aztec civilisation; for example, the payment of tribute from other tribes was an important way for the Aztecs to maintain their empire; tribute would take the form of a variety of goods that were demanded by the Aztecs; this would serve the dual purpose of weakening the Aztecs' enemies and maintaining a sense of fear in the subjugated peoples;
- some features of Aztec civilisation were reflected in Tenochtitlan; Aztec society comprised different classes and there was a level of sophistication in the city with markets and drainage systems, as well as systems of education.

Question 2

Mark allocation:	AO1 (b)	AO2	AO3 (a+b)	AO4
8	4		4	

Question: **What was the purpose of Source B?** [8]

Band descriptors and mark allocations

	AO1(b) 4 marks		AO3 (a+b) 4 marks	
BAND 3	Demonstrates very detailed understanding of the historical context.	3-4	The purpose of the source is fully analysed and evaluated. A substantiated judgement regarding purpose is reached.	3-4
BAND 2	Demonstrates some understanding of the historical context.	2	The purpose of the source is partially analysed and evaluated. A judgement regarding purpose is reached.	2
BAND 1	Demonstrates only basic understanding of the historical context.	1	Answer mainly describes or paraphrases the source material with little analysis or evaluation.	1

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- the source is a depiction from an Aztec codex of the sixteenth century, compiled partly on the basis of native accounts;
- the purpose of the source is to depict events at the Massacre at the Festival of Toxcatl, that took place at the Great Temple;
- the source's purpose is clearly to depict the violence of the Spanish actions; it depicts Spanish troops in armour, with swords and spears, attacking native Aztecs, some of whom appear to be priests;
- the violence of the Spanish actions are further shown in the source by the graphic scenes of severed limbs depicted, as well as decapitation;
- the purpose of the source is to condemn the ruthless actions of the Spanish, who under Cortes' lieutenant, Pedro de Alvarado, launched an unprovoked attack on the festival's participants;
- the purpose of the source may have been to account for the subsequent response of the Aztecs to these events, which resulted in the death of Montezuma and the expulsion of the Spanish in the Night of Sorrows;
- the fact that it was compiled by a Dominican Friar, possibly suggests that the purpose was to depict a particular version of events to future generations.

Question 3

<i>Mark allocation:</i>	<i>AO1 (b)</i>	<i>AO2</i>	<i>AO3</i>	<i>AO4 (a-d)</i>
10	4			6

Question: **Do the interpretations support the view that Aztec religion was replaced by Christianity?** [10]

Band descriptors and mark allocations

	AO1(b) 4 marks		AO4 (a–d) 6 marks	
BAND 4	Demonstrates very detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	4	Fully analyses and evaluates how and why the interpretations differ, demonstrating awareness of the wider historical debate. Analysis of the content, authorship and audience is undertaken to provide a well substantiated judgement about the extent of support provided for the view, set within the appropriate historical context.	5-6
BAND 3	Demonstrates detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	3	Analyses and evaluates the differences between the interpretations showing some awareness of the wider historical debate. Analysis of the content, authorship and audience is undertaken to reach a supported judgement on the set question within the appropriate historical context.	3-4
BAND 2	Demonstrates some understanding of the key feature in the question.	2	Analyses and evaluates the different interpretations, making appropriate reference to the content and authorship of the extracts but little awareness of the wider historical debate. A judgement on the question is reached, set within the appropriate historical context.	2
BAND 1	Generalised answer displaying limited understanding of the key feature in the question.	1	Makes simple comments about the interpretations with little analysis and evaluation; little or no judgement is reached.	1

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- *Interpretation 1 supports the view that Aztec religion was replaced by Christianity;*
- *the extract states that the purpose of the Spanish Crown and Church was to convert the Aztecs into Spanish citizens and therefore Christians;*
- *it asserts that even from 1520, the Spanish were intent on converting the Aztec culture into a European and by extension, a Christian culture;*
- *it states that Aztec temples were destroyed, which was the case for example, with the Templo Mayor and in their place, churches and monasteries were erected;*
- *the interpretation is based on the research undertaken by a specialist in the early civilisation of Mexico, which may have influenced its formation; since publication however, it could be asserted that new evidence may have come to light;*
- *Interpretation 2 does not support the view that Aztec religion was replaced by Christianity;*
- *the interpretation states that the extent to which the Aztec religion was replaced by Christianity has been exaggerated;*
- *it suggests that the Aztecs merely adapted their religion to satisfy the Catholic priests and their Spanish rulers;*
- *it asserts that Christianity did not replace the Aztec religion and that a degree of autonomy remained with the Aztec people;*
- *the interpretation is from a modern expert in the religious beliefs of the region;*
- *the fact that it has been published on an educational website may suggest that the interpretation is aimed at a particular audience, which may have influenced its formation;*
- *answers should be able to reach a judgement about the degree of support for the view that the Aztec religion was replaced by Christianity, based on the content and authorship of the provided interpretations and an understanding of the wider historical debate over the issue.*

Question 4

<i>Mark allocation:</i>	AO1 (b)	AO2	AO3 (a+b)	AO4
11	3		8	

Question: **Which of the sources is more useful to an historian studying the journey of Magellan?** [11]

Band descriptors and mark allocations

	AO1(b) 3 marks			AO3 (a+b) 8 marks	
			BAND 4	The relative usefulness of the source material is fully analysed and evaluated. Analysis of the content and authorship of the source material is undertaken to produce a clear and well substantiated judgement, set within the appropriate historical context.	7-8
BAND 3	Demonstrates detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	3	BAND 3	The usefulness of the source material is analysed and partially evaluated. Analysis of the content and authorship is undertaken to reach a supported judgement, set within the appropriate historical context.	5-6
BAND 2	Demonstrates some understanding of the key feature in the question.	2	BAND 2	Answer begins to analyse and evaluate the usefulness of the source material. Limited analysis of the content and authorship is undertaken, resulting in an unsubstantiated judgement.	3-4
BAND 1	Demonstrates limited understanding of the key feature in the question.	1	BAND 1	Copies or paraphrases the source material with little or no analysis and evaluation undertaken.	1-2

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- *both sources are of varying usefulness to an historian studying the journey of Magellan;*
- *Source C is useful as it is an extract from an account of the death of Magellan, written by his assistant, who was an eyewitness to the events;*
- *the source is useful as it recounts the event leading to Magellan's death; it states that the natives recognized Magellan and as such, focused their efforts upon him; it depicts Magellan in an heroic light; stating that he stood firm for over an hour against the attack;*
- *it is useful as it shows the loss that was felt by those on the expedition, at his death;*
- *the usefulness of the source may be affected by the subjectivity of the author and his desire to portray Magellan in a certain light, possibly exaggerating aspects of the account;*
- *Source D is useful as it depicts a slightly less detailed, but more overall picture of the same events; it is useful as it is also from a member of Magellan's expedition, but not from one as senior as in Source C; it suggests that Magellan may have been foolish in engaging in battle against such a large native force;*
- *its usefulness may also be affected by the rather subjective tone of the extract, which may have been prone to exaggeration; as such it may not be an entirely accurate account of the events that transpired;*
- *neither source is more useful than the other, but answers should be able to reach a judgement about the varying utility of the sources into an investigation into the journey of Magellan.*

Question 5

<i>Mark allocation:</i>	<i>AO1 (b)</i>	<i>AO2</i>	<i>AO3</i>	<i>AO4(a-d)</i>	<i>SPaG</i>
19	4			12	3

Question: **‘Columbus was not perfect... but there was more good than bad in both the man and in what he did, and much to admire in both.’**
To what extent do you agree with this interpretation? [16+3]

Band descriptors and mark allocations

	AO1(b) 4 marks		AO4 (a-d) 12 marks	
BAND 4	Demonstrates very detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	4	Fully analyses and evaluates how and why interpretations of this issue differ, demonstrating awareness of the wider historical debate over the issue. A well substantiated judgement about the accuracy of the interpretation is reached, set within the context of the historical events studied. The relevance of the authorship of the interpretation is discussed.	10-12
BAND 3	Demonstrates detailed understanding of the key feature in the question.	3	Analyses and evaluates how and why interpretations of this issue differ. A clear judgement is reached, displaying understanding of how and why interpretations of the issue may differ. Appropriate reference is made to the authorship. Some understanding of the wider historical debate over the issue is displayed.	7-9
BAND 2	Demonstrates some understanding of the key feature in the question.	2	Some analysis and evaluation of the interpretation and other interpretations is displayed. A judgement is reached with superficial reference to authorship.	4-6
BAND 1	Demonstrates basic understanding of the key features in the question.	1	Makes limited comments about the interpretation with little analysis and evaluation. Little or no judgement reached.	1-3

Use 0 for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

Indicative content

This content is not prescriptive and candidates are not expected to refer to all the material identified below. Some of the issues to consider are:

- *to some extent this interpretation is accurate; it can be argued that there was much to admire in Columbus and what he did;*
- *the interpretation can be supported by reference to several factors: Columbus had taken over a decade to gain the financial support necessary to undertake his voyage; at a time when the distance across the ocean was unknown, it demonstrates a degree of tenacity and fortitude;*
- *the interpretation can be supported by the fact that in terms of discovering land, Columbus achieved the feat of opening up the Americas to Europe; the establishment of the route to the New World and its confirmed viability was a pivotal moment in establishing an empire for Spain, one that would dominate the region for the next three centuries;*
- *however, in some ways the interpretation may be rather narrow in focus as, despite alluding to negative aspects, they are undeveloped; other historians and commentators may assert that there were a wide range of negative consequences of Columbus' actions, despite him being a product and representative of his age;*
- *candidates may comment upon the fact that his attempts to establish a settlement at Isabela were a failure; he was an ineffective administrator and increasingly failed to maintain discipline among the Spanish settlers; as a result, conflicts with the natives increased;*
- *candidates may comment upon the fact that the increasing problems were accompanied by much worsened treatment of the native populations; the Spanish greed for gold led to conflict with peaceful tribes and eventually Columbus was replaced by Francisco de Bobadilla; the eventual imposition of the repartimiento system was a symptom of the subjugation of the native populations;*
- *answers may comment upon the fact that the interpretation was published on a website devoted to Christopher Columbus and as such would clearly be subjective in nature;*
- *candidates may also comment that the predilections of the website, as revealed in the title of the article, are clearly sympathetic to the interpretation presented; the interpretation would have been further influenced by the prospective audience;*
- *answers should be able to reach a judgement about the interpretation which could agree, disagree or be more balanced, but there should be awareness of how and why it is possible to develop differing interpretations as part of a wider historical debate about the role of Christopher Columbus.*

After awarding a band and a mark for the response, apply the performance descriptors for spelling, punctuation and the accurate use of grammar (SPaG) and specialist terms that follow.

In applying these performance descriptors:

learners may only receive SPaG marks for responses that are in the context of the demands of the question; that is, where learners have made a genuine attempt to answer the question the allocation of SPaG marks should take into account the level of the qualification.

Band	Marks	Performance descriptions
<i>High</i>	3	• Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall • Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate
<i>Intermediate</i>	2	• Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall • Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate
<i>Threshold</i>	1	• Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall • Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate
	0	• The learner writes nothing • The learner's response does not relate to the question • The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning