8020 ENGLISH

IB Diploma Programme History

Giáo trình luyện thi chuyên sâu

Song ngữ Anh–Việt

8020 ENGLISH
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Lời mở đầu · Foreword

Cuốn sách này thuộc bộ giáo trình luyện thi chương trình quốc tế của **8020 English (8020 Education)** — trung tâm luyện thi trọng điểm **IELTS · SAT · AP · IB · A-level · IGCSE** và săn học bổng du học. Toàn bộ nội dung được biên soạn bởi đội ngũ **Giáo sư · Tiến sĩ · Thạc sĩ** tốt nghiệp các trường top đầu thế giới, bám sát khung chương trình chính thức, trình bày đầy đủ lý thuyết, ví dụ mẫu, hình minh hoạ và hệ thống bài tập có lời giải chi tiết.

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Thành tích 8020 English

9.0 IELTS cao nhất	**1570** SAT cao nhất
5/5 AP — điểm tuyệt đối	**90/100** IB Diploma
100% GV $\geq$ 8.0 IELTS / 1500 SAT	**CMU** Tiến sĩ ĐH #1 Hoa Kỳ về CS

> **Đội ngũ tiêu biểu:** Thầy Châu Cát Tường (Academic Head, ThS Western Sydney, top 1% IELTS 8.5) · TS Nguyễn Anh Huy (Carnegie Mellon, cựu kỹ sư Amazon) · TS Nguyễn Phước Trường (Toán, ĐH Klagenfurt) · cùng đội ngũ giảng viên SAT 1500–1600, IELTS 8.0–8.5.

Kết quả học viên — điểm thi thật: IELTS 8.0–9.0 · SAT 1550 / 1570 / 1590 · AP 5/5 (Calculus BC, Microeconomics) · IB 90/100 (Economics) · Duolingo 110 · PTE 90 · TOEFL 120. **Bảng vàng SAT:** Khánh Đăng 1510 · Thảo Nguyên 1520 · Tâm Anh 1530.

"Cuối cùng đã đậu vào trường top như mong muốn." — Phan Thị Thanh Hằng, IELTS Overall 8.5.

Cách dùng sách hiệu quả: mỗi Unit gồm (1) **Lý thuyết trọng tâm** tiếng Anh kèm **giải thích tiếng Việt**; (2) **Ví dụ mẫu** có lời giải; (3) **Hệ thống bài tập** kèm **lời giải chi tiết**. Hãy tự làm bài trước khi xem lời giải để đạt hiệu quả tối đa.

THÀNH TÍCH THỰC TẾ • 8020 ENGLISH

Điểm thi thật · Bằng & bảng điểm thật của giảng viên và học viên 8020 English — **Điểm thật · Thầy thật · Kết quả thật**

ĐỘI NGŨ

ĐỘI NGŨ GIÁO VIÊN TẬN TÂM

**Tối thiểu 8.0 IELTS Overall*

Gv. Nguyễn Nhật Nam
IELTS 8.5 Overall

Gv. Nguyễn Khanh
IELTS 8.0 Overall

Gv. Nguyễn Đan Vy
IELTS 8.0 Overall

Giảng viên 8020 — IELTS 8.5 & 8.0 Overall (British Council · IDP · Cambridge)

KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

THÀNH TÍCH HỌC VIÊN

Bảng điểm thi thật – chất lượng được giám sát nghiêm ngặt. Một số học viên chỉ cần 1–2 khóa để đạt kết quả mong muốn.

Học viên 8020 — IELTS 8.0 Overall (bảng điểm thật)

ĐỘI NGŨ

ĐỘI NGŨ GIÁO VIÊN TẬN TÂM

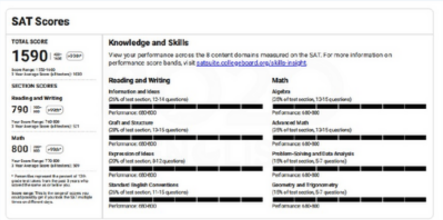
**Tối thiểu 1500 SAT Overall*

8020 ENGLISH

Thầy Quang Minh

Đại học Bách Khoa Hà Nội

SAT 1590 | IELTS 8.0



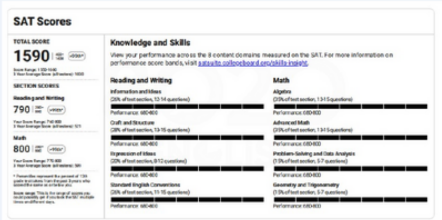
THẾ MẠNH & KINH NGHIỆM

- Học sinh đạt 1450–1560 SAT
- Dạy nhanh band 1400–1550+
- Chiến thuật làm bài & quản lý thời gian

Cô Phương Vy

Đại học Ngoại thương

SAT 1590 | IELTS 8.0



THẾ MẠNH & KINH NGHIỆM

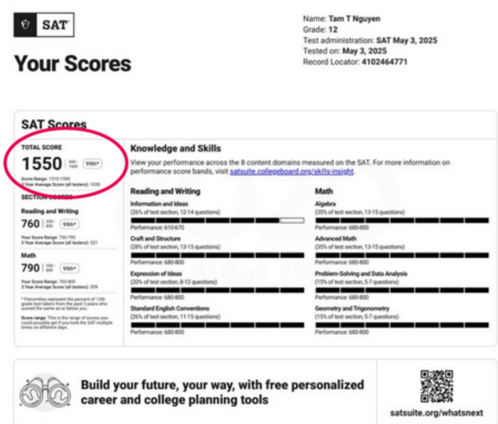
- SAT Verbal Instructor (Springboard, QAS)
- Dạy lớp nhỏ & xây dựng tài liệu riêng
- Chuyên Reading & Writing: Logic – Grammar

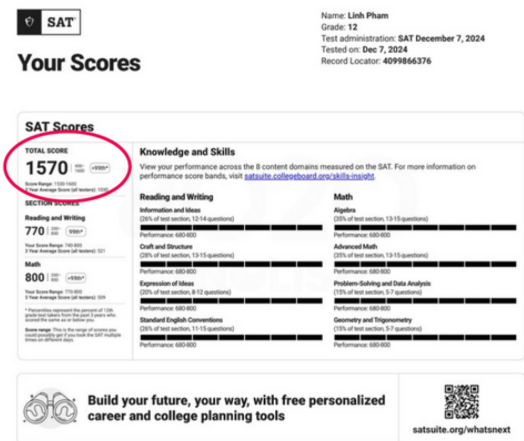
Giảng viên 8020 — SAT 1590 (ĐH Bách Khoa Hà Nội & ĐH Ngoại thương)

KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

TUTOR 1-1 – ĐIỂM SỐ ẤN TƯỢNG

8020 ENGLISH





Học viên 8020 — SAT 1550 & 1570 (College Board)

KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

BẢNG VÀNG HỌC VIÊN

SAT CHÂU CÁT TƯỜNG

Bảng vàng học viên

Bé Khanh Đặng

SAT Bứt phá + Nâng cao Cam kết 140++ => Kết quả 1510

Bé Phan Nguyễn Thảo Nguyên

SAT Nâng cao

Bé Lê Tâm Anh

SAT Bứt phá + Nâng cao Cam kết 140++ => Bứt phá kết quả1530

KHÁNH ĐẶNG – SAT 1510
"SAT Bứt phá + Nâng cao cam kết 140++ → 1510"

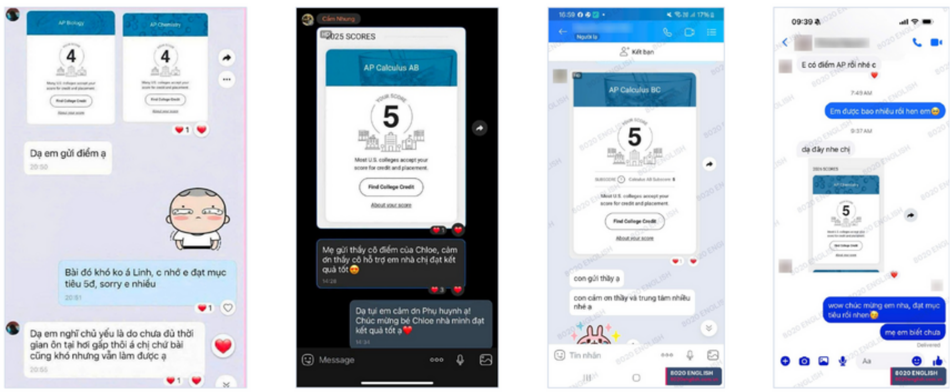
THẢO NGUYÊN – SAT 1520
"SAT Nâng cao → 1520"

TÂM ANH – SAT 1530
"SAT Bứt phá + Nâng cao cam kết 140++ → 1530"

Bảng vàng SAT — Học viên đạt 1510 · 1520 · 1530

KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

ĐIỂM SỐ AP



AP Biology: 4 · AP Chemistry: 4 | **AP Calculus AB: 5** | **AP Calculus BC: 5** | **AP Chemistry: 5**

Bảng điểm AP thật của học viên – nhiều môn đạt điểm 4 & 5

Điểm AP thật — Calculus AB/BC 5/5 · Biology & Chemistry 4–5 (College Board)

Mục lục • Contents

IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME • Unit 1

Skills and Assessment: Paper 1 Source Analysis, Paper 2 & 3 Essays

Mục tiêu Unit: Nắm vững cấu trúc bài thi IB History (Paper 1, Paper 2, Paper 3 và Internal Assessment) cùng thời lượng, số điểm và tỉ trọng của từng phần; thành thạo khung phân tích nguồn sử liệu OPCVL (Origin – Purpose – Content – Value – Limitations) áp dụng cho nguồn viết, nguồn hình ảnh và nguồn số liệu thống kê; luyện kỹ thuật trả lời bốn dạng câu hỏi của Paper 1; rèn kỹ năng viết luận sử học Paper 2/3 theo command terms, có luận đề (thesis) rõ ràng, lập luận phân tầng theo mức độ quan trọng và bằng chứng cụ thể (tên riêng, ngày tháng, số liệu); hiểu cấu trúc, yêu cầu và tiêu chí chấm điểm của bài Internal Assessment (Điều tra Lịch sử nội bộ).

1.1 The shape of the IB History examination

The IB Diploma Programme History course (Route 2: 20th-century world history, first assessed 2017) is assessed through up to four components, and the skills each one rewards are different enough that they need to be practised separately. Two of the components are common to every student, Standard Level (SL) or Higher Level (HL); one is HL only. Before any content is learned, it is worth understanding exactly what each paper is testing, because the mark schemes reward different behaviour in each case: Paper 1 rewards careful, disciplined reading of sources; Paper 2 and Paper 3 reward sustained, evidence-based argument; the Internal Assessment rewards independent historical enquiry.

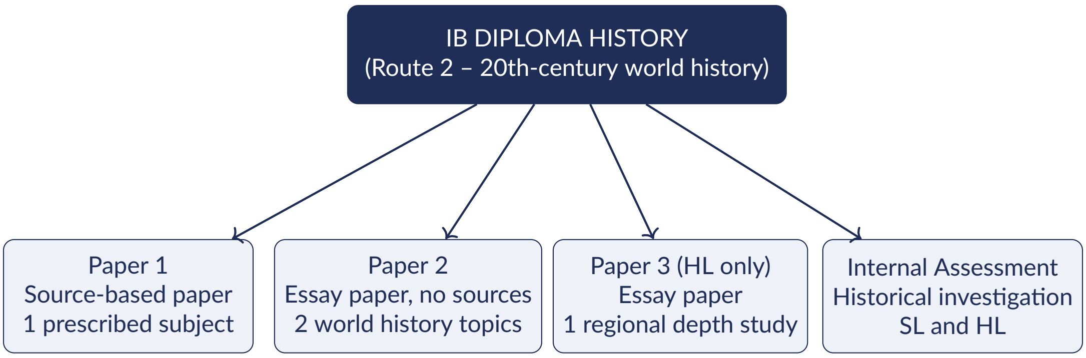


Figure 1.1 — The four assessment components of IB History and the skill each one is designed to test.

Paper 1 is a source-based paper built around one prescribed subject chosen by the school from five options: Military leaders; Conquest and its impact; The move to global war; Rights and protest; Conflict and intervention. Candidates are given four or five short primary and secondary sources (written and/or visual) on a specific case study within that prescribed subject, and answer four structured questions in one hour for 25 marks. No sources are memorised in advance – the sources are given in the exam itself – so Paper 1 rewards a transferable reading skill rather than recall.

Paper 2 is an essay paper with no sources provided at all: candidates write two full essays, each from a different world history topic (WHT), out of twelve WHTs offered across the course (examples relevant to this course include Independence movements, 1800–2000; Authoritarian states; Causes and effects of 20th century wars; and The Cold War). One hour thirty minutes, 40 marks total (20 per essay), testing the ability to construct a sustained, thesis-driven argument entirely from memorised own knowledge.

Paper 3 is HL only: an essay paper on one regional depth study (for example, a region such as Asia and Oceania, the Americas, or Europe and the Middle East, as offered by the school), with six questions set and three essays required. Two hours thirty minutes, 45 marks, roughly fifty minutes per essay including planning time.

The Internal Assessment (IA) is a 2,200-word historical investigation worth 25 marks, completed by both SL and HL students over the course of the two years and marked by the classroom teacher, then externally moderated by the IB.

Component	SL weight	HL weight	Time allowed	Marks
Paper 1	30%	20%	1 hour	25
Paper 2	45%	25%	1 hour 30 minutes	40
Paper 3 (HL only)	—	35%	2 hours 30 minutes	45
Internal Assessment	25%	20%	completed over two years	25

Table 1.1 — Weighting, timing and marks for each component of IB History, Standard Level versus Higher Level.

> **In one line:** SL students sit Paper 1 + Paper 2 + the IA (three grades built from three very different skills); HL students sit all four components, with Paper 3 as the single biggest slice of the final grade (35%) – so for HL candidates, essay-writing skill on an in-depth regional topic matters more than any other single skill in the course.

1.1.1 How component marks combine into a final subject grade

Each component is marked separately, converted to a percentage of the marks available, and then combined according to the weightings in Table 1.1 into a single overall percentage for the subject. That overall percentage is then converted, using grade boundaries set by the IB after each exam session, into the final subject grade reported on the Diploma, on the usual 1–7 scale. Because grade boundaries are set only after all scripts from a session have been marked (to account for small variations in difficulty between sessions), no fixed percentage-to-grade table can be quoted in advance – but the practical implication for revision planning is constant across sessions: a student should allocate study and practice time roughly in proportion to each component's weighting, not in proportion to how much content each component happens to cover.

Reading the weighting table: a worked example

Scenario: An HL student has limited revision time remaining before their exams and wants to know which single component should receive the largest share of that remaining time.
Reasoning: Using Table 1.1, Paper 3 carries the largest single weighting for HL students at 35%, ahead of Paper 2 (25%), Paper 1 (20%), and the IA (20%). The most relevant skill to prioritise is therefore essay technique at regional depth (Section 4 of this unit, particularly the subsection "HL Paper 3: what changes at regional depth"), since Paper 3 specifically rewards a higher density of named, dated evidence and comparative range within one region, over and above the general essay architecture that also applies to Paper 2.

Paper 1 and Paper 2 are common papers: SL and HL candidates sit exactly the same Paper 1 and exactly the same Paper 2, marked against exactly the same criteria – the difference in final weighting between SL and HL for these two papers comes only from how heavily each score counts toward the overall grade, not from any difference in the paper itself. Paper 3 and the Internal Assessment are where the courses genuinely diverge: Paper 3 is sat by HL candidates only, and while the IA's word count, structure, and assessment criteria are identical for SL and HL, HL candidates are expected to draw on the additional depth of study built up over the extra content covered at HL when selecting and investigating their research question.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Có bốn phần thi: Paper 1 (phân tích nguồn sử liệu, không cần thuộc lòng, 1 giờ), Paper 2 (viết 2 bài luận không có nguồn, từ 2 chủ đề lịch sử thế giới khác nhau, 1 giờ 30), Paper 3 – chỉ dành cho HL (viết 3 bài luận về một khu vực nghiên cứu sâu, 2 giờ 30), và Internal Assessment – bài điều tra lịch sử 2.200 từ do chính học viên chọn đề tài, viết trong suốt khoá học. Học sinh SL không thi Paper 3 nên tỉ trọng Paper 2 của SL (45%) cao hơn hẳn HL (25%); ngược lại HL dồn 35% điểm vào Paper 3. Vì vậy, chiến lược ôn thi của SL và HL nên khác nhau về mức độ đầu tư cho từng kỹ năng.

1.1.2 What Paper 1 sources look like

Paper 1 sources are drawn from a specific case study inside the chosen prescribed subject – for example, if the school studies "The move to global war" with a focus on Japanese expansionism and European expansionism, the Paper 1 sources for a given exam session will be four or five short extracts (each perhaps 100–250 words, or one image) connected to that case study: a speech, a diary extract, a newspaper report, an official inquiry, a photograph, a cartoon, a table of statistics. Candidates never know in advance exactly which sources will appear, so the skill being tested is not memorised content but the transferable ability to interrogate any unfamiliar source quickly and accurately under time pressure.

1.1.3 What Paper 2 and Paper 3 essays look like

Because no sources are given, Paper 2 and Paper 3 test something almost the opposite of Paper 1: a bank of accurate, specific own knowledge (names, dates, statistics, named events) that the candidate can select from and organise into an argument that directly answers the command term of the question set. A well-prepared candidate answers a Paper 2 question not by writing everything they know about a topic, but by building a case – a thesis – and then marshalling only the evidence that supports or complicates that case.

1.1.4 What the Internal Assessment looks like

The IA is the one component where the student chooses the topic and the question. It is not an essay under exam conditions; it is a structured investigation, written over weeks, with access to library and internet research, that must still demonstrate exactly the same underlying skills as Papers 1–3: careful source evaluation (as in Paper 1) and a sustained analytical argument (as in Paper 2/3), applied to a research question of the student's own design. Section 6 of this unit covers the IA requirements in full.

1.1.5 The five prescribed subjects of Paper 1

Every school teaches only one of the five Paper 1 prescribed subjects, but it is useful to know the full range, both to understand how Paper 1 questions are generally framed and because several later units of this course draw case-study material from more than one of them.

- **Military leaders** – examines the strategic decisions, methods of leadership, and historical impact of military commanders from two different regions and periods.
- **Conquest and its impact** – examines the causes, course, and political, social, and economic consequences of a major conquest before the 20th century.
- **The move to global war** – examines the expansionist foreign policies pursued in Europe and Asia during the interwar period that contributed to the outbreak of global conflict.

- **Rights and protest** – examines the origins, methods, and outcomes of civil rights and protest movements.
- **Conflict and intervention** – examines the causes, course, and effects of a conflict that prompted intervention by outside states or international bodies.

Regardless of which prescribed subject a school studies, the four question types described in Section 3 of this unit, and the OPCVL framework described below, apply in exactly the same way – Paper 1 tests a transferable reading skill, not memorised content specific to one prescribed subject.

Two prescribed subjects recur particularly often as sources of worked examples throughout this unit, because their case studies are widely taught and produce especially clear source material:

- Within **The move to global war**, a commonly taught case study is Japanese expansion in East Asia between 1931 and 1941 (including the Manchurian Crisis and the Lytton Report used earlier in this unit), alongside German and Italian expansion in Europe between 1933 and 1940 (including the Munich Agreement and the policy of appeasement).
- Within **Rights and protest**, commonly taught case studies include civil rights movements such as the movement in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, and anti-apartheid protest in South Africa.

1.1.6 The assessment objectives behind every mark

Every mark on every IB History paper is ultimately assigned against one of four assessment objectives shared across the course:

The four assessment objectives (AOs):

- **AO1 – Knowledge and understanding:** accurate recall of relevant historical knowledge (names, dates, events, terms).
- **AO2 – Application and analysis:** using that knowledge to construct an argument, and analysing historical sources, concepts, or events rather than simply describing them.
- **AO3 – Synthesis and evaluation:** combining evidence from several sources or several strands of argument into a single evaluated judgement.
- **AO4 – Selection and use of appropriate skills:** for example, the specific skill of citing sources explicitly (Paper 1, Question 3) or structuring a sourced, referenced investigation (the Internal Assessment).

Paper 1 draws most heavily on AO2–AO4 (working with given sources); Paper 2 and Paper 3 draw most heavily on AO1–AO3 (recall plus argument plus judgement, with no sources given); the IA draws on all four simultaneously, which is exactly why it is weighted so heavily (20–25%) despite being only 2,200 words long.

Recognising the assessment objectives inside one answer

Consider the Question 3 model paragraph on the League of Nations and Manchuria used later in this unit. **AO1** is demonstrated by the accurate recall of specific facts (the Lytton Report, February 1933, Japan's withdrawal from the League). **AO2** is demonstrated by analysing why the League's structural weakness mattered, rather than simply describing events. **AO3** is demonstrated by combining Source B, Source D, and outside knowledge into a single evaluated judgement about why the League failed. **AO4** is demonstrated by the explicit citation of sources by letter throughout, which is a skill specific to Paper 1 Question 3 rather than a mark of general historical knowledge.

1.1.7 Reading strategy for the first minutes of Paper 1

Before writing a single word of an answer, it pays to spend the first eight to ten minutes of Paper 1 reading and annotating every source, because the four questions are designed so that later questions depend on having already understood the earlier material in context.

A simple annotation routine

For each source, in the margin or between lines, jot down three short abbreviations as you read:

- **O/P** – one phrase capturing Origin and Purpose together (for example, "PM speech, reassure public post-Munich").
- **a key phrase underlined** – the single sentence most likely to be quoted or paraphrased in an answer.
- **V/L** – one quick word or phrase for Value and one for Limitation, so that by the time Question 1(b) or Question 3 is reached, the thinking has already been done and only needs to be written up in full sentences.

This routine converts source-reading from a passive first pass into active preparation for every question that follows, and is the single most effective time-management habit for Paper 1.

1.1.8 Building a Paper 1 reading routine through revision

The annotation routine above is a skill, not a piece of knowledge, and like any skill it improves with deliberate repeated practice rather than one-off reading. An effective revision habit is to practise the first ten minutes of Paper 1 in isolation, repeatedly, on unfamiliar sources (not necessarily connected to the school's own prescribed subject case study), timing the annotation pass and checking afterward that an Origin/Purpose phrase, a key underlined sentence, and a quick Value/Limitation note were captured for every source. Because the sources given in the actual exam are always unfamiliar, this kind of practice on unfamiliar practice sources – rather than only re-reading sources already covered in class – is what actually transfers to exam performance.

1.1.9 Frequently asked questions about the exam format

- **Can I choose which prescribed subject, world history topics, or regional option I study?** These are chosen by the school, not the individual student, and are usually fixed for the whole cohort; the choice is normally made well in advance based on teacher expertise and available resources.
- **Are all sources on Paper 1 in English?** Sources are provided in the language of examination for the school; where an original source was not originally in that language, a translated version is provided, and this translation itself becomes part of the source's Origin worth noting where relevant.
- **What happens if I run out of time on Question 3?** A partial, well-organised answer that clearly names at least some of the sources and links them to own knowledge will still earn some credit; an unfinished answer earns more marks than an unstarted one, so it is worth writing a brief final linking sentence even under severe time pressure, rather than leaving the response mid-sentence.
- **Do I need to remember the exact wording of a source to quote it?** No – Question 1(a) rewards accurate comprehension expressed in your own words, and later questions reward accurate paraphrase and citation by source letter; exact verbatim quotation is not required and copying very long strings of source text is generally not credited as demonstrating understanding.
- **Can the same piece of own knowledge be used in both Question 3 and a Paper 2 essay later in the exam session?** Yes – the skills and knowledge developed for one component reinforce the others, and it is common (and expected) for the same underlying historical knowledge to support both a Paper 1 Question 3 answer and a related Paper 2 or Paper 3 essay.

- **Is there a specific required essay length for Paper 2 and Paper 3?** There is no fixed minimum word count, but within the roughly forty (Paper 2) to forty-eight (Paper 3) minutes available per essay, a well-organised response with a full introduction, three to four body paragraphs, a counter-argument, and a conclusion typically runs to several hundred words – length itself is not credited, only the quality and precision of the argument produced within it.
- **Can I bring my own notes or a dictionary into the exam room?** No – Papers 1, 2, and 3 are all closed-book assessments; all required own knowledge must be recalled from memory, and any sources needed are provided within the exam paper itself.
- **If my school studies more than one case study within a prescribed subject, will Paper 1 draw on both?** Paper 1 sources are normally built around a single specified case study for that exam session; schools generally prepare students using guidance on which case study is current for their session.

Typical strengths and weaknesses reported for each component

- **Paper 1:** candidates commonly do well at comprehension (Question 1(a)) but lose marks on Question 2 by comparing sources one at a time instead of thematically, and on Question 3 by summarising sources without naming them explicitly or without integrating outside knowledge.
- **Paper 2:** candidates commonly show strong factual knowledge but lose marks through an unstated or unclear thesis, through listing causes without ranking their relative importance, or through a one-sided argument with no genuine counter-argument.
- **Paper 3:** the same strengths and weaknesses as Paper 2 apply, with the additional expectation of a higher density of specific, named evidence and, where relevant, comparison across more than one country or period within the studied region.
- **Internal Assessment:** candidates commonly choose a workable, focused research question but lose marks in Section 2 by writing a narrative account of events rather than a sustained analytical argument, and in Section 3 by describing personal research experience rather than reflecting on the historian's method.

1.2 Paper 1: source types and the OPCVL framework

OPCVL: the five-part source-evaluation framework

Every Paper 1 question that asks you to evaluate a source (chiefly Question 1(b), but also underlying the synthesis required in Question 3) is marked against the same five-part framework, usually abbreviated **OPCVL**:

- **Origin** – Who created this source? When and where? What type of source is it (a private diary, a government report, a newspaper editorial, a photograph)? Origin is a statement of fact taken from the source's attribution line, not an opinion.
- **Purpose** – Why was this source created, and for what audience? A private diary has a different purpose from a speech intended for a mass radio audience; an official government report commissioned to investigate a crisis has a different purpose from a newspaper editorial trying to persuade readers of a policy position.
- **Content** – What does the source actually say or show? A brief, accurate summary of its central claims, tone, and any notable emphases or omissions.
- **Value** – What can a historian legitimately learn from this source, given its origin and pur-

pose? Value is always argued *because of* the origin and purpose, not despite them – even a heavily biased source has value *as evidence of that bias*, or as evidence of what one side wanted the public to believe.

- **Limitations** – What can a historian *not* safely conclude from this source? Limitations follow logically from the same origin and purpose: a memoir written twenty years after the event is limited by the fallibility of memory and by the writer's wish to justify their own past decisions; a propaganda poster is limited as evidence of what actually happened, though not as evidence of government messaging.

The single most common examiner comment on weak Paper 1 answers is that Value and Limitations are stated *generically* ("it might be biased," "it is useful because it is a primary source") rather than derived specifically from that source's own Origin and Purpose. A high-scoring answer always closes the loop: Origin and Purpose → specific Value → specific Limitation.

VN GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

OPCVL là khung 5 bước để đánh giá bất kỳ nguồn sử liệu nào: **Origin** (Nguồn gốc – ai viết, khi nào, ở đâu, loại nguồn gì), **Purpose** (Mục đích – viết để làm gì, cho ai đọc/nghe), **Content** (Nội dung – nguồn nói gì), **Value** (Giá trị – nhà sử học có thể rút ra kết luận gì từ nguồn này, và tại sao chính Origin/Purpose lại khiến nó có giá trị), **Limitations** (Hạn chế – điều gì KHÔNG thể kết luận chắc chắn từ nguồn này, và tại sao chính Origin/Purpose lại tạo ra hạn chế đó). Lỗi phổ biến nhất là học sinh viết Value/Limitations một cách chung chung ("nguồn này có thể có định kiến") thay vì liên hệ trực tiếp với Origin và Purpose cụ thể của từng nguồn – đây là điều giám khảo luôn tìm kiếm.

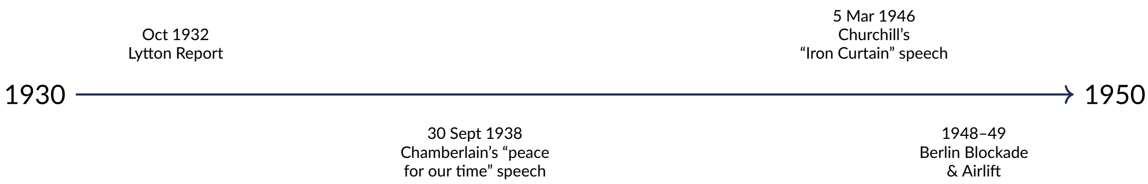


Figure 1.2 — Real dated events referenced by the worked source examples and practice sources used in this unit.

1.2.1 Primary sources, secondary sources, and how OPCVL changes

Most Paper 1 sources are primary (produced at the time by a participant or eyewitness), but Paper 1 source sets frequently include one secondary source too – typically a short extract from a historian's later analysis. OPCVL still applies, but the emphasis shifts: Origin becomes "which historian, writing when, drawing on what kind of evidence base"; Purpose becomes "what argument is this historian trying to establish, and for what audience (an academic readership, a general readership, a school textbook)"; Value shifts toward the historian's access to hindsight and to a wide range of other sources that a contemporary eyewitness could not have consulted; and Limitations shift toward the historian's own selectivity and interpretive stance – a secondary source is not automatically more objective than a primary one, only differently positioned.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A frequent mistake is treating the label "primary source" as if it automatically meant "more valuable" or "more reliable," and the label "secondary source" as if it automatically meant "biased" or "less useful." Both labels only describe a source's relationship to the event in time – they do not by themselves determine value or limitation. A primary source written under extreme political pressure to say something specific can be far less reliable as a factual record than a careful secondary account written decades later with access to archives from multiple sides; conversely, a primary source can be uniquely valuable *because* it shows contemporary belief or feeling, which no secondary source, however well researched, can replicate. Always argue Value and Limitations from the specific Origin and Purpose of the actual source in front of you, never from the general category it belongs to.

A related point applies to translated sources: many Paper 1 sources originally produced in a language other than the language of examination are given only in translation. Where this is stated or evident, it is worth noting that translation itself is an additional editorial step – word choice in translation can subtly shift emphasis or tone – so a historian working from a translated source should, where possible, treat this as a further, if usually minor, limitation on how precisely the source's exact original wording can be analysed.

1.2.2 Written sources: speeches, diaries, memoirs, newspapers, official reports

Written sources form the bulk of most Paper 1 source sets, but they are not a single category for OPCVL purposes – each sub-type carries its own characteristic Value and Limitations pattern.

- **Speeches** are composed for a specific live audience and moment; their Value lies in showing exactly what a leader wanted a particular audience to hear at that moment, and their Limitation lies in the gap between public rhetoric and private intention or actual policy.
- **Diaries** are usually private and near-contemporaneous, which raises their Value as an unfiltered, in-the-moment record, but they still reflect only one person's partial, subjective viewpoint, and diarists sometimes write with half an eye on eventual publication.
- **Memoirs** are written after the fact, often years or decades later, by a participant justifying or explaining their own role; their Value is insider detail and hindsight, but their Limitation is retrospective distortion, selective memory, and self-interest.
- **Newspaper editorials** reveal how an event was being framed for a domestic readership at the time, but are limited by the newspaper's known political alignment and the commercial need to sell copies.
- **Official reports and treaties** (the outputs of government commissions, international bodies, or negotiated agreements) tend to carry Value from their formal, evidence-gathering process and multiple contributing testimonies, but are limited by the political constraints under which the body operated and by compromises built into any negotiated text.

Worked OPCVL: a speech, 30 September 1938

Source: Extract from a speech by British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, delivered outside 10 Downing Street on 30 September 1938, on returning from the Munich Conference: "...this morning I had another talk with the German Chancellor ...and here is the paper which bears his name upon it as well as mine ...My good friends, this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Downing Street peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time."
Origin: A public speech delivered by the British Prime Minister immediately after signing the Munich Agreement, which permitted German annexation of the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia in exchange for a pledge of no further territorial demands.
Purpose: To reassure the British public, following weeks of acute war anxiety, that the government's policy of negotiating with Hitler had averted war, and to present the Munich settlement as a personal diplomatic triumph.
Content: Chamberlain reports a private conversation with Hitler and displays a signed paper, framing the outcome as "peace with honour" and explicitly using the phrase "peace for our time."
Value: As a public statement by the head of government, it is directly valuable as evidence of

the British government's official justification for appeasement and of the genuine, wide public relief at the moment war was avoided; it also captures precisely how the policy was sold to the electorate.
Limitations: As a piece of political self-presentation delivered at a moment of maximum public anxiety, it cannot be taken as evidence that Chamberlain privately believed war had been permanently averted, nor as an objective assessment of Hitler's real intentions – within a year Germany had invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia and then Poland, showing the limits of what the speech could actually guarantee.

Practice 1 – OPCVL on a written source

Source (paraphrased): An extract from the Lytton Report, published by the League of Nations Commission of Enquiry in October 1932, following its investigation into the Japanese seizure of Manchuria: "The Commission recognises that Japan has genuine grievances ...but finds that the military operations of the Japanese forces ...cannot be regarded as measures of legitimate self-defence. The Commission recommends that Manchuria be granted a wide measure of autonomy, consistent with the sovereignty and administrative integrity of China."
Using this source, identify the **Origin** and **Purpose**, and then discuss one **Value** and one **Limitation** of the source for a historian studying the Manchurian Crisis.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: An official report by an international commission (chaired by the Earl of Lytton) appointed by the League of Nations to investigate the causes and legitimacy of Japan's occupation of Manchuria, published in October 1932.
Purpose: To provide the League of Nations' member states with an impartial factual and legal basis for deciding how to respond to Japan's actions, and to recommend a settlement.
Value: Because it was produced by an international commission that travelled to the region, interviewed multiple parties, and was formally presented to the League, it carries strong Value as a considered, multi-source, semi-judicial assessment – rather than the partisan claim of either Japan or China alone – and is directly useful as evidence of the international community's official position on the crisis.
Limitation: Because the League had no enforcement mechanism and depended on the willingness of great powers (including Japan itself, a permanent Council member) to accept its findings, the report's Value as a predictor of what would actually happen is limited – Japan rejected the report's conclusions and withdrew from the League in March 1933, so the document tells us more about the League's diplomatic reasoning than about the actual trajectory of events in Manchuria.
Examiner note: notice that the Value and Limitation above both trace directly back to the same fact stated in Origin – that this was an *international commission report with no enforcement power*. That single fact generates both the Value (a considered, multi-party judgement) and the Limitation (no ability to make the judgement stick). This is the pattern examiners reward most highly: one clearly stated feature of Origin/Purpose used to generate both a Value point and a Limitation point.

1.2.3 Visual sources: photographs, political cartoons, propaganda posters

Visual sources reward a slightly different reading strategy from written sources, because their Content includes composition, symbolism, and caption, not only words.

- **Photographs** appear to be neutral records, but every photograph is the result of a choice about what to include in the frame, when to press the shutter, and (especially before publication) whether and how to crop or caption it – so a photograph's Value as "objective" evidence is always qualified by who selected, released, and captioned it, and for what purpose.

- **Political cartoons** use exaggeration, caricature, and symbolism (a stock figure representing a nation, an animal representing a political idea) to make an argument in a single image; their Value lies in showing how an issue was being interpreted for a domestic audience at a specific moment, and their Limitation is that a cartoon is, by design, a simplified and one-sided argument, not a report of fact.
- **Propaganda posters** are explicitly persuasive and commissioned by a government, party, or movement; their Value is as direct evidence of the messages an authority wanted the public to absorb, and their Limitation is that they tell us almost nothing reliable about how the public actually responded to that message.

Worked OPCVL: a political cartoon, autumn 1938

Source (paraphrased description): A British newspaper cartoon published shortly after the Munich Agreement (September 1938). It shows a figure representing Britain, wearing an umbrella labelled "Appeasement," shaking hands with a soldier figure labelled "Germany" who is hiding a dagger behind his back; in the background a small figure labelled "Czechoslovakia" looks on, excluded from the handshake.
Origin: A cartoon published in a British newspaper in the weeks after the Munich Conference, drawn by an editorial cartoonist for a mass domestic readership.
Purpose: To criticise the government's policy of appeasement by suggesting that Chamberlain's trust in Hitler was misplaced and that Czechoslovakia had been sacrificed without consultation.
Content: A handshake scene combining a symbol of British diplomacy (the umbrella, closely associated with Chamberlain's public image), a hidden dagger symbolising German bad faith, and an excluded, powerless Czechoslovak figure.
Value: It is valuable evidence that critical, sceptical opinion of appeasement existed in the British press even before the outbreak of war, and it shows exactly which visual shorthand (the umbrella, the hidden dagger) a contemporary cartoonist expected readers to instantly recognise.
Limitations: As a single cartoonist's opinion published in one newspaper, it cannot be used as evidence of majority public opinion at the time (opinion polling and other newspapers in 1938 in fact showed considerable public relief and support for Chamberlain), and its exaggerated, symbolic style is a poor guide to Hitler's actual undisclosed intentions, which remained genuinely uncertain to contemporaries in late 1938.

Practice 2 – OPCVL on a visual source

Source (paraphrased description): A propaganda poster produced by a state information ministry during the early Cold War, showing an idealised industrial worker looking confidently toward a rising sun, above a slogan promising a better future through five-year economic planning.
Explain the **Purpose** of this poster, and give one **Value** and one **Limitation** it has for a historian researching everyday living standards in the period.

Lời giải chi tiết

Purpose: To build public morale and support for the state's economic planning programme by presenting an optimistic, idealised vision of the worker's role in national progress.
Value: It is valuable evidence of the image the state itself wanted to project of industrial labour and of the official narrative used to justify the sacrifices demanded by economic planning – useful for a historian studying state propaganda and messaging strategy.
Limitation: As a commissioned, idealised image, it cannot be used as reliable evidence of *actual* living standards, working conditions, or popular morale at the time – a historian would need to cross-reference it against independent statistical or eyewitness sources (memoirs, foreign observers' reports, ration records) before drawing any conclusion about everyday life.

1.2.4 Statistical sources: tables and graphs of data

Statistical sources – tables of casualty figures, economic output, unemployment, trade volumes, or similar quantified data – require an extra first step before Origin/Purpose/Content/Value/Limitations can be applied meaningfully: identifying exactly *what is being measured, by whom, and how*. A historian must ask whether the compiling body had access to accurate underlying records, whether the categories used (for instance, "military casualties" versus "civilian casualties") are defined consistently across the whole table, and whether the act of compiling the statistics itself served a political purpose (a government might undercount its own losses, or overcount an opponent's, or select a base year that makes a trend look more favourable than it really was).

Six questions to ask of any statistical source before applying OPCVL:

- Who compiled these figures, and when relative to the events they describe?
- What exact category is being measured, and is that category defined consistently throughout the source?
- What method was used to collect the underlying data (administrative records, surveys, estimates)?
- Does the compiling body have any incentive to overstate or understate the figures?
- What base year or comparison point is being used, and could a different choice of base year change the impression given?
- What groups or categories might be undercounted or excluded entirely by the method used?

Worked OPCVL: a statistical table

Source (paraphrased): A table published in an official post-war government report, listing estimated military and civilian casualty figures for a 20th-century conflict, broken down by year and by combatant nation, compiled from military and civil-registry records.
Origin: A statistical table compiled and published by a national government after the end of the conflict, drawing on military and civil administrative records.
Purpose: To provide an official record of the human cost of the conflict, likely intended for both domestic remembrance purposes and international negotiation or reparations discussions.
Content: Year-by-year and nation-by-nation figures for military and civilian deaths, presumably showing the overall scale and the changing intensity of the conflict over time.
Value: As an official compilation drawing on administrative records rather than a single eyewitness or newspaper estimate, it has strong Value as a considered, quantified baseline that later historians can cross-reference against other combatants' figures.

Limitations: Wartime and immediate post-war record-keeping is frequently incomplete, especially for civilian deaths in occupied or contested territory, and a government compiling its own casualty figures may have incentives (for remembrance, for reparations claims, or for domestic morale) to round figures up or down – so the table's precision should not be mistaken for certainty, and totals in this kind of source are best treated as informed estimates rather than exact counts.

Practice 3 – OPCVL on a statistical source

Source (paraphrased): A graph published by a national statistical office, showing the unemployment rate of a European country rising sharply between 1929 and 1932, roughly tripling over that period, before falling again after 1933.
A student writes: "This source is useful because it is a primary source and shows unemployment went up." Identify the weakness in this answer and rewrite the Value and Limitation properly, linking them to the graph's Origin and Purpose.

Lời giải chi tiết

Weakness: The student's answer treats "primary source" as automatically equal to "valuable," and does not explain *why* this specific graph, from this specific compiling body, is useful – nor does it consider any limitation at all.
Improved Value: Because it was compiled by a national statistical office using standardised administrative methods (rather than estimated by a newspaper or individual), the graph is valuable as a considered quantitative baseline for tracking the scale and timing of the economic downturn, and for corroborating or challenging other sources (memoirs, newspaper reports) that describe worsening conditions in the same years.
Improved Limitation: Official unemployment statistics of this period typically counted only registered claimants in certain categories of work, which means the graph likely understates the true number of people without work (for example, those in casual or unregistered labour, or women not counted as part of the formal workforce) – so the graph shows a real and significant trend, but its absolute figures should not be read as a complete picture of economic hardship.

1.2.5 A fourth type: oral testimony and interviews

Some Paper 1 source sets include a transcript of an interview or recorded oral testimony – for instance, an extract from a recorded interview with a veteran, refugee, or eyewitness, recorded years or decades after the event. Oral testimony combines features of both a diary and a memoir: like a memoir, it is retrospective and subject to the fallibility of long-term memory and the wish to present one's own past actions favourably; but unlike a written memoir, it is typically produced in response to a specific interviewer's questions, which means its Content and emphasis are partly shaped by what the interviewer chose to ask, not solely by what the interviewee independently chose to say. A historian using oral testimony should therefore consider both the interviewee's position (participant, bystander, victim) and the interview's own context (who conducted it, for what project, how long after the event) before drawing conclusions from it.

Worked OPCVL: an oral history interview

Source (paraphrased): An extract from a recorded interview, conducted as part of a university oral history archive project in the 1990s, with a woman recalling her experience as a factory worker during a wartime mobilisation of the civilian economy decades earlier: "We were proud of what we did, but nobody explained afterward that so many of the jobs would simply disap-

pear once the men came home."
Origin: An oral history interview recorded roughly fifty years after the events described, as part of a university archive project systematically collecting testimony from surviving participants.
Purpose: To preserve first-hand testimony of ordinary civilian wartime experience for historical research and public record, before living witnesses were no longer available.
Value: It gives voice to a perspective – that of an ordinary female wartime worker – that is often under-represented in official government or military records, and its retrospective vantage point allows the speaker to comment knowledgeably on the longer-term consequences (loss of employment after the war) that a strictly contemporaneous source could not yet have known.
Limitations: Fifty years of intervening time raises the ordinary risks of memory change and reinterpretation in light of later events and later social attitudes, and as a single interviewee's account it cannot be generalised to the experience of all wartime workers without corroboration from other testimonies or from independent employment statistics for the period.

1.2.6 A fifth type: maps

Occasionally a Paper 1 source is a map – for instance, a map showing territorial changes, troop movements, or the boundaries proposed by a treaty or peace settlement. A map's Origin and Purpose matter just as much as with any other visual source: a map produced by one of the parties to a dispute (to support its own territorial claim) has a different Value and Limitation profile from a map produced by a neutral international body attempting a fair settlement. When reading a map source, note carefully what the map chooses to show and what it omits (a map emphasising ethnic or linguistic boundaries tells a different story from a map emphasising existing administrative boundaries, even of the same territory), since this editorial choice is itself part of the map's Content and Purpose.

1.2.7 Cross-referencing sources of different types

Paper 1 source sets are usually deliberately mixed – a written source, a visual source, and a statistical source on the same case study – precisely so that Question 3 can reward candidates who notice where different *types* of source corroborate or contradict one another. A statistical table showing a sharp rise in unemployment corroborates a memoir's description of economic hardship; a propaganda poster's optimistic imagery, by contrast, may directly contradict what a private diary or an independent statistical source suggests about the same period, and that contradiction is itself valuable evidence – it shows the gap between official messaging and lived experience, which is often exactly the analytical point a strong Question 3 answer should draw out. When two sources of different types agree, say so explicitly and explain why their agreement, coming from two very different kinds of evidence, is particularly persuasive; when they disagree, use the OPCVL differences between them (one official and persuasive, one private and unfiltered, for instance) to explain *why* they disagree, rather than simply noting that they do.

Weak versus strong OPCVL writing, side by side

Weak: "This source is a speech. It was made to tell people about the war. It says the war is going well. It is useful because it is a primary source, but it might be biased."
Strong: "This source is a radio speech delivered by the head of government to a mass domestic audience during a period of military setbacks. Its purpose was to sustain public morale despite unfavourable developments on the battlefield. It is valuable as direct evidence of the specific reassurance strategy the government judged necessary at this stage of the conflict, but as a morale-focused public broadcast it cannot be treated as an accurate account of the military situation itself, which is precisely what its persuasive purpose required it to present favourably."

The weak version identifies the source type and a vague label (“biased”) without ever explaining why; the strong version turns the same basic facts into a chain of reasoning, from Origin and Purpose through to a specific, explained Value and a specific, explained Limitation.

OPCVL checklist, before submitting any source-evaluation answer:

- Is **Origin** stated as a fact (who, when, what type of source), not an opinion?
- Is **Purpose** linked to a specific intended audience or specific aim, not just “to inform”?
- Is **Content** summarised briefly and accurately, without simply re-copying long strings of the source’s own wording?
- Does **Value** explain *why* the source is useful, tracing that reason back to its specific Origin or Purpose?
- Does **Limitations** explain *why* the source falls short, again tracing that reason back to its specific Origin or Purpose, rather than a generic “it might be biased”?

Rapid recall drill: OPCVL and source types

- *Q: What does OPCVL stand for?* A: Origin, Purpose, Content, Value, Limitations.
- *Q: Why is a private diary usually valuable as a source?* A: It is typically unfiltered and contemporaneous, showing genuine private belief or feeling rather than curated public messaging.
- *Q: What is the main limitation of a memoir?* A: It is retrospective, so subject to fallible memory and to the writer’s wish to present their own past actions favourably.
- *Q: Why can a photograph not be treated as fully objective?* A: Because framing, timing, cropping, and captioning all involve choices made by whoever selected and released the image.
- *Q: What extra first step does a statistical source require before OPCVL can be applied?* A: Identifying exactly what is being measured, by whom, and by what method, since compiling statistics is itself a choice that can serve a political purpose.
- *Q: What is the most common examiner criticism of weak OPCVL answers?* A: That Value and Limitations are stated generically, rather than derived specifically from the source’s own Origin and Purpose.

1.3 Paper 1 in practice: the four question types

Paper 1 always asks the same four questions, in the same order, testing four distinct skills that build on one another: first read a single source accurately, then evaluate a single source critically, then compare two sources against each other, and finally synthesise all the sources together with outside knowledge.

The four Paper 1 questions, at a glance:

- **Question 1(a)** – Comprehension. Approximately 3 marks. Based on *one* source only. No outside knowledge is credited – the answer must come directly from the source's own words or content.
- **Question 1(b)** – Value and limitations. Approximately 4 marks. Based on *one* source (often a different source from 1(a)). Requires a full OPCVL-style judgement, not just comprehension.
- **Question 2** – Compare and contrast. Approximately 6 marks. Based on *two* sources. Must be organised thematically (by point of comparison), not source-by-source.
- **Question 3** – Extended response. Approximately 9 marks. Uses *all* the sources given *and* the candidate's own knowledge, explicitly naming which source supports which point.

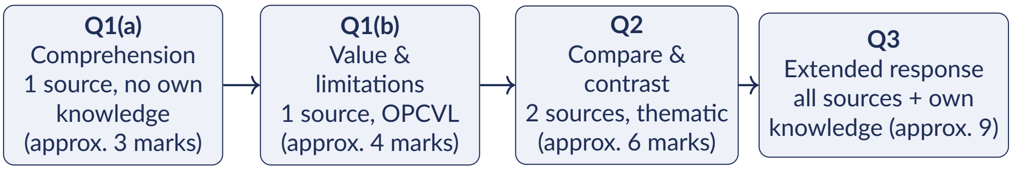


Figure 1.3 — The rising skill demand of the four Paper 1 questions, left to right.

1.3.1 Question 1(a): comprehension

The safest marks on the entire paper, because the answer is always contained in the source itself – yet many candidates lose marks here by paraphrasing too loosely or by adding outside knowledge that is not credited. The technique is simple: identify exactly which lines of the source answer the question, then express that content in your own words (direct copying of long strings of text is usually not enough to demonstrate understanding), without adding interpretation or context the source does not provide. Question 1(a) is frequently split into two short parts (for example, "(i)" and "(ii)"), each targeting a different specific detail in the source, so read the sub-parts carefully and answer exactly what each one asks rather than writing one long combined answer.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The most common way to lose marks on Question 1(a) is adding outside knowledge that the source itself does not contain – for example, naming the historical event a diary entry is clearly describing, even when the source itself never names it. Examiners can only award comprehension marks for what is actually stated or directly implied *in the source*; knowledge of the wider context should be saved for Question 3, where it is explicitly rewarded.

1.3.2 Question 1(b): value and limitations

This is a compressed OPCVL question focused specifically on Value and Limitations (Origin, Purpose, and Content are assumed background, though referencing them strengthens the answer). Two common structures both work: either (i) one value point and one limitation point, each fully explained and linked to Origin/Purpose, or (ii) a single balanced judgement that explains how the very same feature of the source (for instance, its private nature, or its official status) is simultaneously a source of value *and* a source of limitation. The second approach often scores more highly because it demonstrates genuine analytical connection rather than two disconnected observations. Whichever structure is used, always state Value and Limitations as full, specific sentences ("this source is valuable because ..., since ...") rather than single unexplained words ("useful," "biased"), since unexplained labels earn little or no credit under the mark scheme.

How credit is broadly distributed on Question 1(b): marks are generally split evenly between the Value point and the Limitation point, and within each point, credit depends on *explanation* rather than mere identification – simply naming a feature of the source ("it is a private letter") earns little on its own, whereas explaining what that feature allows or prevents a historian from concluding earns the fuller allocation available for that point.

1.3.3 Question 2: compare and contrast two sources

The most common technique error on Paper 1 is answering Question 2 *source by source* ("Source A says X. Source B says Y.") rather than *thematically* ("Both sources agree that X, although Source A emphasises ...while Source B instead stresses ..."). Examiners are explicitly instructed to reward thematic organisation, because it demonstrates that the candidate has actually compared the sources rather than merely summarised each one in turn. A strong Question 2 answer identifies two or three explicit points of comparison (similarities *and* differences are usually both required, depending on the exact command term used) and discusses both sources within each point.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Writing a full paragraph about Source A, and then a second full paragraph about Source B, is the single most common way to underperform on Question 2, even when both paragraphs individually contain accurate content. The mark scheme rewards explicit, sustained comparison – so every point made about Source A should be directly and explicitly set against the corresponding point in Source B within the same sentence or the next one, using linking language such as "similarly," "by contrast," "whereas," or "unlike Source A, Source B ...".

How credit is broadly distributed on Question 2: credit is generally available for each clearly developed point of comparison (a similarity or a difference), up to the number of points the mark allocation supports, plus a smaller allocation for the overall quality and explicitness of the comparison across the whole answer – meaning two or three well-developed, explicitly linked points of comparison typically outperform four or five points that are each only briefly asserted.

1.3.4 Question 3: synthesis with own knowledge

Question 3 is the only Paper 1 question that rewards outside knowledge, and it is marked most highly when sources and own knowledge are *woven together* in the same sentences and paragraphs, rather than presented as two separate blocks ("the sources say ..." followed later by "and I also know that ..."). Every point should explicitly name the source it draws on ("Source B suggests that ..., which is consistent with the fact that ...") so the examiner can see exactly how the sources and own knowledge are being combined into a single, developed argument. A useful planning habit is to draft, before writing, a short list mapping each source letter to the one or two points own knowledge it will support – this prevents the common problem of using only two of four or five given sources and forgetting the rest.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The most common Question 3 mistake is writing two separate sections – first a summary of what the sources say, then, afterward, a separate block of own knowledge – rather than integrating the two throughout. Examiners specifically look for sentences that name a source *and* extend it with own knowledge in the very same sentence (as in the worked example below); an answer that never explicitly names a source by letter, even if factually accurate, will struggle to reach the top marks available for this question.

This section's specimen source set: the Manchurian Crisis

The worked Question 3 paragraph below refers to a specimen four-source Paper 1 set built around the Manchurian Crisis of 1931–33, defined here so the source letters used in the paragraph are clear:

- **Source A** – a paraphrased official Japanese government statement of 1931 describing the occupation of Manchuria as a measure of legitimate self-defence against local disorder.
- **Source B** – the Lytton Report (October 1932), introduced earlier in this unit, rejecting Japan's self-defence claim and recommending autonomy for Manchuria under Chinese sovereignty.
- **Source C** – a paraphrased appeal by the Chinese government to the League of Nations Assembly, requesting collective action against what it describes as an unprovoked invasion.
- **Source D** – a paraphrased British newspaper cartoon from 1933 depicting the League of Nations as a toothless figure watching Japan walk away with Manchuria, captioned to question whether collective security could ever be enforced against a determined great power.

Worked Question 3 paragraph: sources woven with own knowledge

Prompt (paraphrased): "Using the sources and your own knowledge, evaluate the reasons why the League of Nations failed to prevent Japanese expansion in Manchuria in the early 1930s."
Model paragraph: Source B, the Lytton Report, suggests that the League's own investigating commission recognised Japan's grievances but firmly rejected its claim of self-defence, recommending autonomy for Manchuria under continued Chinese sovereignty – indicating that the League's own machinery was capable of reaching a clear-sighted judgement on the facts. However, Source D (the cartoon) implies that contemporary opinion already doubted whether such judgements could be enforced against a determined great power. This is consistent with outside knowledge of the League's own structural weakness: the League possessed no standing military force of its own and depended entirely on member states – including Britain and France, both preoccupied with domestic economic crisis after 1929 and reluctant to risk conflict in East Asia over a region in which they had limited strategic interest – to apply meaningful sanctions. When the League's Assembly adopted the Lytton Report's findings in February 1933, Japan's response was not compliance but withdrawal from the organisation entirely, demonstrating that a correct diagnosis (Source B) was not sufficient without an enforcement mechanism the sources and the wider context both show the League lacked.

A complete four-question walkthrough on one source set

Source J (paraphrased): A speech by a civil rights movement leader, delivered to a mass rally in 1963, states: "We have come to cash a cheque – the promise that all be guaranteed the rights of citizenship. We refuse to believe the bank of justice is bankrupt."
Source K (paraphrased): A contemporary newspaper editorial, published the following day, states: "Yesterday's rally drew an unprecedented crowd, and the movement's leader spoke with a moral force that even sceptical observers found difficult to dismiss, whatever their view of his specific demands."
Q1(a), comprehension (Source J only): The speaker uses the metaphor of a "cheque" to describe the promise of full citizenship rights, and states that the movement refuses to accept that this promise cannot be honoured, using the phrase "bank of justice."
Q1(b), value and limitations (Source J): As a public speech delivered directly to a mass rally, it is valuable as first-hand evidence of exactly which rhetorical strategies (extended metaphor,

moral appeal) the movement's leadership used to mobilise mass support at this moment; however, as a persuasive public address aimed at rallying support, it cannot be used as neutral evidence of how the wider, non-participating public actually responded to the movement's demands.

Q2, compare and contrast (Sources J and K): Both sources agree that the rally was a significant public event centred on a moral argument for full citizenship rights. They differ in perspective and register: Source J is the movement's own persuasive rhetoric, delivered from within the movement to mobilise supporters, whereas Source K is an external, retrospective assessment written for a newspaper's general readership, noting the speech's emotional impact even among those who did not necessarily support the movement's specific demands – suggesting that the speech's moral force reached beyond the immediate audience of supporters.

Q3, synthesis with own knowledge: Source J's use of the "cheque" metaphor reflects a deliberate rhetorical strategy of appealing to widely shared national ideals in order to make the movement's demands harder to dismiss as merely sectional. Source K's observation that even sceptical observers found the speech difficult to dismiss is consistent with outside knowledge that this rally and the surrounding wave of mass demonstrations in the early 1960s did in fact contribute to building the broad public and political pressure that helped bring about major civil rights legislation later in the decade. Taken together, the two sources suggest that the movement's success depended not only on the scale of mobilisation itself but on rhetorical strategies capable of persuading audiences well beyond the movement's own existing base of support.

A second walkthrough: mixing a statistical source with a written source

Source L (paraphrased): A table published by a newly independent state's finance ministry in the early 1960s, showing that over 80% of export earnings still came from a single agricultural commodity, largely unchanged from the last years of colonial administration.

Source M (paraphrased): A speech by the new state's first president, delivered at the independence ceremony, declares: "Today we are masters of our own destiny, free to build an economy that serves our own people, not a distant market."

Q1(a), comprehension (Source L only): The table shows that export earnings remained heavily concentrated in a single agricultural commodity, at a similar level of concentration to the pre-independence period.

Q1(b), value and limitations (Source M): As a speech delivered at a symbolically significant public ceremony, it is valuable evidence of the aspirations and rhetoric of economic self-determination that accompanied independence; however, as an optimistic ceremonial address, it cannot be taken as evidence of what was actually achieved in practice, nor of the real economic constraints the new government would go on to face.

Q2, compare and contrast (Sources L and M): Both sources relate to the new state's economic prospects at the moment of independence, but they point in different directions: Source M expresses confident aspiration for economic transformation, while Source L, a statistical record from the same general period, indicates that the underlying structure of the economy had not yet actually changed – suggesting a gap between political rhetoric and economic reality.

Q3, synthesis with own knowledge: Source M's confident declaration of economic self-determination reflects the genuine political achievement of independence, but Source L's statistics indicate that the colonial-era pattern of dependence on a single export commodity persisted well beyond the transfer of political power. This is consistent with outside knowledge that colonial-era infrastructure, trade relationships, and patterns of investment often could not be quickly restructured simply because political sovereignty had changed hands, meaning that formal independence and genuine economic transformation frequently proceeded on very different timescales in the newly independent states of this period.

Practice 4 – Question 1(a) style

Source (paraphrased): A diary entry from a Berlin resident, dated late June 1948: "The roads west are closed again this week, and the trains too. They say no coal, no food will come through by rail or road now. Everyone is asking how long the planes can really keep the whole city fed."
According to this source, what change had recently taken place, and how were people responding to it? (Do not use outside knowledge – base your answer only on this source.)

Lời giải chi tiết

The source indicates that road and rail routes into the city had been closed, cutting off supplies of coal and food. People are described as anxious and uncertain, openly questioning whether an alternative means of supply – described only as "the planes" – would be sufficient to sustain the entire city. (Note: outside knowledge that this refers to the Soviet Blockade of Berlin and the Western Allied airlift of 1948–49 should *not* be added here, since Question 1(a) credits only what the source itself states.)

Practice 5 – Question 1(b) style

Source (paraphrased): The same diary entry as Practice 4, from an ordinary Berlin resident, written for personal use and never intended for publication.
Discuss the value and limitations of this source for a historian studying civilian experience of the 1948–49 Berlin Blockade.

Lời giải chi tiết

Value: As a private diary never intended for publication, it is valuable evidence of genuine, unfiltered contemporary civilian anxiety, showing precisely what ordinary residents knew and feared at the time (uncertainty over whether an airlift could truly sustain a city), without the distortion of official messaging from either side of the Cold War divide.
Limitations: As the view of a single individual, it cannot be generalised to the experience of the whole city, and as a same-week, in-the-moment record it lacks the benefit of hindsight – the diarist could not have known in June 1948 that the Berlin Airlift would in fact succeed in supplying the city until the blockade was lifted in May 1949, so the source captures anxiety rather than outcome.

Practice 6 – Question 2 style

Source E (paraphrased): A Western newspaper editorial from July 1948 states: "The Soviet blockade is a naked act of coercion, aimed at starving West Berlin into submission. The Allied airlift, whatever its difficulties, is a moral necessity."
Source F (paraphrased): A Soviet state newspaper editorial from the same month states: "The Western powers introduced an illegal separate currency into Berlin, threatening the economic stability of the Soviet zone. Restrictions on transit were a necessary defensive measure, not an attack on the German population."

Compare and contrast what Sources E and F suggest about responsibility for the Berlin crisis of 1948.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarity: Both sources agree that a serious rupture occurred in mid-1948 involving movement of goods into Berlin, and both present their own side's action as a justified response to the other's prior provocation – neither source admits its own side acted first without cause.
Difference 1 – cause: Source E identifies the Soviet blockade itself as the origin of the crisis and frames it as unprovoked coercion, whereas Source F identifies the West's introduction of a new currency as the origin, framing the transit restrictions as a defensive reaction rather than an initiating act.
Difference 2 – moral framing: Source E uses explicitly moral language ("moral necessity," "starving ...into submission") to justify the Allied response as a matter of humanitarian obligation, while Source F uses legal and security language ("illegal," "necessary defensive measure") to justify the Soviet action as protection of Soviet-zone stability rather than an act of aggression – showing that each side's press constructed a self-justifying narrative aimed at its own domestic and international audience.

Practice 7 – Question 3 style

Prompt (paraphrased): "Using Sources E and F and your own knowledge, evaluate the reasons for the breakdown of Four-Power cooperation over Berlin in 1948."
Write one developed paragraph (4–6 sentences) that names both sources explicitly and integrates outside knowledge of the wider Cold War context.

Lời giải chi tiết

Source F's claim that the Western currency reform threatened Soviet-zone stability is not simply propaganda – it reflects a real underlying disagreement, since the introduction of the Deutsche Mark in the Western zones in June 1948 did genuinely threaten to destabilise the Soviet-administered zone's own currency and economic control, giving Stalin a concrete grievance beyond mere rhetoric. However, Source E's framing of the blockade as "naked coercion" is also consistent with the wider trajectory of Four-Power relations, which had already been deteriorating since 1946–47 over disagreements about German reconstruction, reparations, and the shape of postwar Europe more broadly. Together, the two sources suggest that the Berlin crisis was not a single, isolated dispute over currency but the point at which years of accumulating mutual distrust between the wartime Allies became impossible to manage through continued four-power administration of Germany, leading directly to the practical partition of Germany into two separate states by 1949.

Useful phrases for each question type

Having a small bank of ready sentence-openers for each question type saves valuable time under pressure and helps ensure the mark scheme's expectations are met explicitly rather than only implicitly:

- **Q1(a):** "The source states that ..."; "According to the source, ..."; "The source indicates ...".
- **Q1(b):** "This source is valuable because ..., since ..."; "However, it is limited because ..., since ..."; "Because this source is ...(origin/purpose), it can/cannot be used to ...".
- **Q2:** "Both sources agree that ..."; "However, whereas Source A ..., Source B instead ...";

"Unlike Source A, Source B …"; "This difference in emphasis reflects the different origin/purpose of each source …".

- **Q3:** "Source B suggests that …, which is consistent with the fact that …"; "This is supported by Source D, which shows …"; "Taken together, the sources and outside knowledge suggest …".
- **Q3 (introducing a qualification):** "While Source C implies …, this must be balanced against outside knowledge that …"; "Sources A and C together suggest …, although Source B complicates this picture by showing …".

Paper 1 self-check, before moving on: Did Question 1(a) use only the source's own words and content, with no outside knowledge added? Did Question 1(b) state Value and Limitations as full explained sentences, linked to Origin/Purpose, rather than single unexplained labels? Was Question 2 organised by point of comparison, discussing both sources together within each point, rather than source-by-source? Did Question 3 explicitly name every source it used, weaving own knowledge into the same sentences rather than presenting it separately? A "yes" to all four is the difference between a solid Paper 1 script and a merely adequate one.

1.3.5 A glossary of historical-analysis vocabulary

Precise analytical vocabulary is one of the fastest ways to raise the quality of both Paper 1 Question 3 answers and Paper 2/3 essays, because it lets a candidate state a relationship between events exactly, rather than relying on the vague, all-purpose word "caused."

Vocabulary for describing causation and change

- **Long-term / underlying cause** – a condition present well before the event, which made it possible or likely, without on its own making it certain.
- **Short-term / immediate cause (trigger)** – the specific event or decision that converted existing underlying conditions into an actual outcome at a particular moment.
- **Necessary condition** – a factor without which the outcome could not have occurred, even if that factor alone was not enough to produce it.
- **Sufficient condition** – a factor which, by itself, was enough to produce the outcome.
- **Catalyst** – a factor that accelerated a process that was already underway, without itself being the underlying cause of that process.
- **Correlation versus causation** – two events occurring together or in sequence does not, by itself, establish that one caused the other; a strong answer explains the mechanism connecting them, not merely their timing.
- **Turning point** – a moment after which the direction or trajectory of events changed in a way that could not easily be reversed.
- **Consolidation** – the process by which a new leader, government, or policy moves from initial acquisition of power or adoption to a more secure, lasting position.
- **Legitimacy** – the degree to which a government or leader's authority is accepted as rightful, whether through legal process, tradition, or popular consent.
- **Watershed** – an event or period marking a decisive, lasting shift from one set of conditions to another.

- **Precedent** – a prior decision or event that establishes a pattern subsequent actors treat as a guide, justification, or benchmark.
- **Escalation** – a step-by-step increase in the scale, scope, or intensity of a conflict or dispute, often through a sequence of actions and reactions.
- **Retrenchment** – a deliberate scaling back of a previous policy, commitment, or level of ambition, often in response to changed circumstances.
- **Continuity** – the persistence of an existing condition, policy, or structure despite surrounding change, worth noting explicitly rather than assuming change is always the more significant story.
- **Status quo** – the existing state of affairs before a given change; useful shorthand when comparing what was expected to persist against what actually changed.

Rapid recall drill: the four Paper 1 questions

- *Q: How many sources does Question 1(a) use, and is outside knowledge credited?* A: One source only; no outside knowledge is credited.
- *Q: What is the most common technique error on Question 2?* A: Answering source by source rather than organising the answer thematically, by point of comparison.
- *Q: Which question is worth the most marks, and what must every point in it do?* A: Question 3, worth approximately 9 marks; every point should explicitly name the source it draws on and weave it together with outside knowledge in the same sentence.
- *Q: What single feature should a strong Question 1(b) answer trace Value and Limitations back to?* A: The source's specific Origin and Purpose.
- *Q: Roughly how should the one-hour Paper 1 be divided?* A: Around ten minutes reading and annotating sources, then time on each question broadly proportional to its marks, with the most time reserved for Question 3.

1.4 Paper 2 and Paper 3: essay technique

Paper 2 and Paper 3 essays are marked using the same generic markbands (out of 20 marks per essay in both papers), which reward, in roughly this order of importance: a clear, focused response to the actual question asked; accurate, relevant, and specific supporting knowledge; a structured, developed argument with a clear line of reasoning; and, at the very top bands, a balanced, critical engagement with alternative perspectives or interpretations. Everything in this section is designed to move an essay up through those markbands.

1.4.1 Command terms: what the question is actually asking you to do

Every Paper 2 and Paper 3 question opens with a command term, and misreading the command term is one of the most severe and avoidable ways to lose marks – a well-written, accurate essay that answers the wrong *kind* of question (for instance, writing a one-sided narrative in response to "Evaluate," which requires weighing strengths and limitations) will be capped well below the top markbands regardless of factual knowledge.

Command term	What it actually requires
Analyse	Break a topic down into its essential elements and examine how they relate to one another.
Assess	Weigh up strengths and weaknesses, or arguments for and against, and reach a supported judgement of importance or value.
Compare	Give an account of similarities between two or more items, referring to both throughout (not one after the other).
Compare and contrast	Give an account of both similarities *and* differences between two or more items, referring to both throughout.
Discuss	Offer a balanced review of a range of arguments or factors, with a clearly stated conclusion supported by evidence.
Evaluate	Make an appraisal by weighing up strengths and limitations (similar to Assess, with emphasis on judgement of merit).
Examine	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers underlying assumptions and interrelationships.
Explain	Give a detailed account that includes reasons or causes.
Identify	Provide a brief, clearly stated answer from a number of possibilities; recognise a distinguishing feature.
Justify	Give valid reasons or evidence to support a conclusion or a course of action.
To what extent	Consider the merits of an argument or claim, present a supported judgement on how far it holds true, usually with reference to other contributing factors.

Table 1.2 — Command terms most frequently used in IB History Paper 2 and Paper 3 questions.

1.4.2 Further command terms worth recognising

A small number of additional command terms appear occasionally, most often on Paper 1 rather than Paper 2/3, and are worth recognising even though they demand a lighter response than the terms in Table 1.2:

- **Describe** – give a detailed account, without necessarily requiring analysis of causes or significance.
- **Outline** – give a brief account or summary of the main points, in broad terms.
- **Define** – give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, or concept.
- **State** – give a specific name, value, or brief answer, without explanation or justification.
- **Suggest** – propose a solution, explanation, or possible answer, typically where certainty is not required or available.
- **Comment** – give a judgement or opinion based on the evidence provided, usually more briefly than a full "Evaluate" or "Discuss" response.

None of these four requires the weighing of evidence or the balanced judgement that "Evaluate," "Assess," or "To what extent" require – mistaking one of the heavier command terms in Table 1.2 for one of these lighter ones (or vice versa) is a common and entirely avoidable way to misjudge how much analytical depth a question actually requires.

Essay architecture

A strong Paper 2/3 essay follows a consistent shape, regardless of topic:

1. **Introduction and thesis** – a short paragraph (3–5 sentences) that states the question's key terms in your own words, previews the factors or lines of argument the essay will weigh, and ends with an explicit **thesis**: a one- or two-sentence direct answer to the question that the rest of the essay will defend.
2. **Body paragraphs** – typically three to four, each built on the same internal structure: a **claim** (a clear point that advances the thesis), **evidence** (specific named events, dates, individuals, or statistics that substantiate the claim), and a **link back to the question** (an explicit sentence connecting the evidence to the exact wording of the question, so the examiner never has to guess why this paragraph matters).
3. **Counter-argument** – at least one paragraph (or a clearly signalled element within a body paragraph) that considers a plausible alternative view or complicating factor, and explains why the essay's thesis nonetheless holds, or how it must be qualified. This is what separates top-band answers from merely competent ones: it demonstrates genuine, balanced historical judgement rather than a one-sided list.
4. **Conclusion** – a short paragraph that restates the thesis in light of the evidence presented (not merely repeating the introduction word for word) and, where the question invites it (especially "To what extent" questions), offers a final, weighted judgement – which factor mattered *most*, and why.

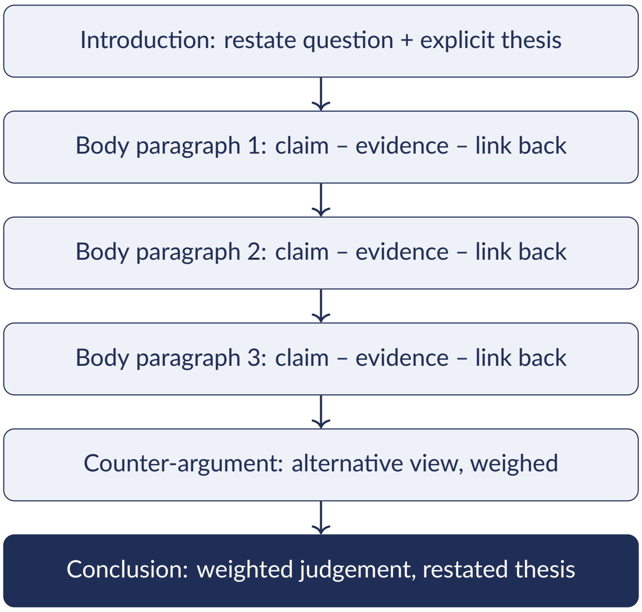


Figure 1.4 — The standard architecture of a Paper 2 / Paper 3 essay.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Một bài luận Paper 2/3 mạnh luôn có: (1) **Mở bài** nêu rõ luận đề (thesis) – câu trả lời trực tiếp cho câu hỏi; (2) các **đoạn thân bài** theo cấu trúc luận điểm – dẫn chứng cụ thể (tên riêng, ngày tháng, số liệu) – liên hệ lại câu hỏi; (3) một đoạn **phản biện** xem xét góc nhìn khác, cho thấy lập luận cân bằng chứ không một chiều; (4) **kết bài** đưa ra nhận định có trọng số – yếu tố nào quan trọng nhất và vì sao. Thiếu bước phản biện hoặc chỉ liệt kê nguyên nhân mà không xếp hạng mức độ quan trọng là lý do phổ biến khiến bài luận bị giới hạn ở mức điểm trung bình dù kiến thức đầy đủ.

1.4.3 Claim, evidence, link: turning knowledge into a paragraph

Knowing facts is not the same as writing an analytical paragraph, and this is where many otherwise well-prepared candidates lose marks. The three-part internal structure of a body paragraph – claim, evidence, link back to the question – is worth practising in isolation before attempting a full essay.

Turning a fact into an analytical paragraph

Facts known: Unemployment rose sharply in a European country between 1929 and 1932; the existing coalition government changed several times in this period; a previously marginal political party grew rapidly in electoral support over the same years.

Weak version (facts listed, no claim, no link): "Unemployment went up a lot after 1929. There were also several different governments. A small party became more popular."

Strong version (claim – evidence – link): *Claim:* Economic collapse after 1929 was the most significant single factor undermining confidence in the existing political system. *Evidence:* unemployment rose sharply within three years, and the resulting hardship coincided with a rapid succession of short-lived coalition governments, none able to implement an effective response. *Link back to the question:* this sequence shows that economic crisis did not merely coincide with growing support for a radical alternative, but directly caused it, by demonstrating to voters that the existing system could not manage the crisis – which is precisely the mechanism the question asks candidates to assess.

Notice that the strong version contains exactly the same underlying facts as the weak version; the difference is that each fact is now attached to an explicit claim and an explicit link back to the question's own wording.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A very common mid-band habit is what examiners sometimes call the "shopping list" essay: a series of body paragraphs, each describing one possible cause accurately, but with no paragraph ever stating which cause mattered *more* than another, and no attempt to explain how the causes interacted. A top-band essay does not merely list causes – it ranks them, explicitly stating (usually in the conclusion, but ideally signalled earlier too) which factor was most significant and why, and shows how causes connected to or reinforced one another rather than treating each as an isolated, self-contained paragraph.

1.4.4 HL Paper 3: what changes at regional depth

Paper 3 tests the same underlying essay skills as Paper 2, but at greater depth, on a single region studied in detail across the whole period (rather than two comparatively narrower world history topics). Three features typically distinguish a strong Paper 3 essay from a strong Paper 2 essay:

- **Case-study density:** because Paper 3 questions are set on one region studied intensively over roughly two years, examiners expect a noticeably higher density of specific, named evidence per paragraph – several named events, individuals, or statistics per body paragraph, rather than one or two.
- **Comparative range within the region:** Paper 3 essays often benefit from drawing on more than one country or period within the studied region to support a single argument (for example, comparing how two different states in the same region responded to a similar pressure), which is rarely possible, or even relevant, on the broader Paper 2 world history topics.
- **Extra planning and writing time:** with roughly forty-eight minutes available per essay (compared with roughly forty on Paper 2), candidates are expected to produce a slightly longer, more developed response – typically one additional body paragraph of specific evidence beyond what a strong Paper 2 essay would include.

1.4.5 Using historiography appropriately

At the very top markbands, examiners reward brief, accurate awareness that historians have debated the interpretation of an event, provided this is used to sharpen the essay's own argument rather than dropped in as a decorative name-check. This does not require memorising long lists of named historians; a single well-placed sentence acknowledging a genuine scholarly debate is usually enough.

Using historiography in one sentence

Weak (name-dropping without function): "Some historians disagree about this topic."
Stronger (functional, sharpens the argument): "Historians remain divided over how much weight to give economic collapse as against long-term political weakness in explaining this outcome; the argument developed here follows the view that economic crisis acted as the immediate trigger, while political weakness had already made the system vulnerable to exactly this kind of shock."
The stronger version uses the historiographical debate to *state the essay's own position within it*, which is what markbands are actually rewarding – not the mention of debate for its own sake.

General vocabulary for describing historiographical positions

- **Orthodox interpretation** – the traditional, earliest-established explanation of an event, often based on the sources or perspectives available soonest after the event.
- **Revisionist interpretation** – a later interpretation that challenges the orthodox view, often based on newly available sources (such as opened archives) or a changed political and academic context.
- **Post-revisionist interpretation** – an interpretation that attempts to synthesise or move beyond the orthodox-revisionist debate, often by incorporating a wider range of evidence or perspectives than either earlier position.
- **Structural explanation** – an explanation emphasising long-term social, economic, or institutional conditions over the choices of individual leaders.
- **Intentionalist explanation** – an explanation emphasising the deliberate decisions and intentions of specific individual leaders over long-term structural conditions.

Using this vocabulary precisely (for example, stating that an essay follows a broadly structural rather than intentionalist explanation) is a concise, low-risk way to demonstrate historiographical awareness without needing to cite specific named historians.

1.4.6 Model thesis 1: causes of the Second World War (WHT 11)

Model thesis and paragraph plan – causes of WWII

Question (paraphrased): "Examine the relative importance of the causes of the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939."
Thesis: While the Treaty of Versailles and the failure of collective security through the League of Nations created the underlying conditions for renewed European conflict, it was the combination of Hitler's specific expansionist aims and the Western policy of appeasement that converted those long-term conditions into an actual war in 1939.
Paragraph plan:

- *Paragraph 1 (long-term structural cause):* The Treaty of Versailles's territorial, military, and reparations terms generated lasting German resentment and provided a political platform later exploited for domestic support.

- *Paragraph 2 (institutional failure):* The League of Nations' inability to enforce its own findings (for example, over Manchuria in the early 1930s) and its failure over the Abyssinian Crisis (1935–36) demonstrated to potential aggressors that treaty violations carried limited international cost.
- *Paragraph 3 (immediate trigger):* A sequence of unilateral German actions – remilitarising the Rhineland (1936), the Anschluss with Austria (1938), and the annexation of the Sudetenland (1938) – escalated step by step, each one testing and confirming the limits of Western resolve.
- *Counter-argument / paragraph 4:* Appeasement is sometimes defended as a rational response to British and French military unpreparedness and the trauma of the First World War; this essay would concede that appeasement bought time for rearmament, while arguing it also removed the last realistic diplomatic opportunities to check German expansion before 1939.
- *Conclusion:* Long-term structural grievance created the conditions for war, but it was the specific decisions of 1936–39 – German escalation matched by Western concession – that determined *when* and *how* war actually broke out.

1.4.7 Model thesis 2: the rise to power of an authoritarian leader (WHT 10)

Model thesis and paragraph plan – rise of an authoritarian leader

Question (paraphrased): "Examine the reasons for the successful rise to power of an authoritarian leader in the interwar period."
Thesis: The rise of interwar authoritarian leaders is best explained not by any single cause but by the combination of severe economic crisis, the weakness and division of existing democratic institutions, and the leader's own effective use of propaganda and paramilitary organisation to exploit both.
Paragraph plan:

- *Paragraph 1 (economic conditions):* Severe economic dislocation (postwar inflation, and later the global downturn beginning in 1929) undermined public confidence in existing governments and made radical alternatives more attractive to voters and elites alike.
- *Paragraph 2 (institutional weakness):* Fragmented multi-party parliamentary systems, frequent changes of government, and elite willingness to use an authoritarian figure instrumentally against a perceived greater threat (often the political left) removed institutional barriers that might otherwise have blocked a rise to power.
- *Paragraph 3 (the leader's own methods):* Skilled use of mass propaganda, control of paramilitary organisations to intimidate opponents, and tactical alliance-building with conservative elites converted underlying conditions into an actual seizure or acquisition of power.
- *Counter-argument / paragraph 4:* Economic and institutional explanations risk understating individual political agency and contingency (specific tactical decisions, negotiations, and misjudgements by rival politicians); this essay would argue that conditions were necessary but not sufficient – without the leader's specific tactical choices, the same conditions might not have produced the same outcome.

- *Conclusion:* No single factor is sufficient alone; the interaction of economic crisis, institutional weakness, and individual political skill together explains both the timing and the success of the rise to power.

Practice 8 – essay planning, To what extent

Question (paraphrased): "To what extent was appeasement responsible for the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939?"
Write a one-sentence thesis and a plan of three body paragraphs plus one counter-argument paragraph.

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: Appeasement significantly contributed to the outbreak of war by allowing successive German violations of the postwar settlement to go unchallenged, but it was not the sole cause – it operated alongside the deeper legacy of Versailles and Hitler's own pre-existing expansionist aims, which appeasement enabled rather than created.
Paragraph 1: Appeasement over the Rhineland (1936) and Austria (1938) removed early opportunities to enforce the postwar settlement at comparatively low cost.
Paragraph 2: The Munich Agreement (September 1938) is the clearest case: rather than securing lasting peace, it convinced German leadership that Britain and France would not act even over direct territorial demands, encouraging the further demand for, and eventual seizure of, the rest of Czechoslovakia by March 1939.
Paragraph 3: By contrast, the guarantee to Poland in March 1939 and the ending of appeasement did not itself prevent war, showing that once the underlying expansionist aim existed, the policy shift came too late to reverse the momentum appeasement had allowed to build.
Counter-argument: Appeasement can be defended as a rational choice given British and French military unpreparedness, public war-weariness, and the strategic wish to avoid fighting Germany, Italy, and Japan simultaneously; this essay would concede these constraints were real but argue they explain why appeasement was adopted, not that it therefore had no causal role in permitting the war that followed.

Practice 9 – essay planning, Compare and contrast

Question (paraphrased): "Compare and contrast the methods used by two authoritarian leaders, one in Europe and one elsewhere, to consolidate power after taking office."
Identify three points of comparison you would use to organise this essay thematically (not leader-by-leader), and briefly state what each paragraph would argue.

Lời giải chi tiết

Point of comparison 1 – legal versus extra-legal methods: Compare the extent to which each leader used formally legal mechanisms (emergency decrees, enabling legislation passed by an existing legislature) versus extra-legal force (paramilitary intimidation, suppression of rival parties) to accumulate power.
Point of comparison 2 – role of existing elites: Compare how far each leader depended on the cooperation of pre-existing elites (military commanders, landowners, business interests, conservative politicians) who calculated they could control or benefit from the new leader, and how quickly (if at all) that calculation proved mistaken.

Point of comparison 3 – use of propaganda and mass mobilisation: Compare the methods each regime used to build active popular support or at least passive acceptance (mass rallies, state control of media, youth organisations) rather than relying on coercion alone.
Organising the essay by these three themes – rather than describing one leader fully and then the other – ensures the comparison is explicit throughout, which is exactly what the command term "Compare and contrast" rewards.

1.4.8 Writing effective introductions

The introduction is where an essay's whole argument is set up, so it is worth drafting deliberately rather than as a throat-clearing warm-up. Three short model openings below show how the same underlying content can be adapted to different command terms.

Three model introductions for different command terms

For "Examine the reasons …": "The rise to power of interwar authoritarian leaders is often explained by economic crisis alone; this essay examines the interaction of economic collapse, institutional weakness, and individual political skill, arguing that no single factor is sufficient on its own to explain either the timing or the success of these movements."
For "To what extent …": "Economic crisis is frequently cited as the primary cause of interwar political instability; this essay argues that while economic collapse was the most significant immediate trigger, it operated only because pre-existing institutional weakness had already removed the barriers that might otherwise have contained its political effects."
For "Compare and contrast …": "Although separated by geography and political tradition, two interwar authoritarian movements pursued strikingly similar methods of consolidating power once in office; this essay compares their use of legal and extra-legal methods, their reliance on existing elites, and their use of propaganda, arguing that the similarities in method were more significant than the differences in national context."
Each introduction states the question's key terms, previews the essay's structure, and ends with an explicit thesis – the underlying content is broadly the same across all three, but the framing changes to match exactly what each command term requires.

1.4.9 Chronological precision inside an analytical essay

A common misconception is that avoiding narrative means avoiding dates altogether; in fact, precise chronology remains essential even in a fully analytical essay, because the *sequence* of events is often exactly what establishes a causal claim. Stating that "rising unemployment (1929–32) preceded the change of government (1932–33), which in turn preceded the change in political leadership (1933)" is not narrative description for its own sake – it is evidence of a causal chain, and removing the dates would remove the evidence that the sequence, and therefore the causal claim, actually holds. The distinction between narrative and analysis is not about whether dates appear, but about whether the essay explains *why* one event led to another, rather than simply reporting that one came after another.

Essay self-check, before submitting any Paper 2/3 essay: Does the introduction state an explicit, one-sentence thesis that directly answers the command term used? Does every body paragraph state a claim, support it with specific named evidence, and explicitly link back to the question's wording? Is there a genuine counter-argument or alternative perspective, rather than only one-sided supporting evidence? Does the conclusion offer a weighted judgement (which factor mattered most, and why) rather than simply repeating the introduction?

1.4.10 Topic sentences and signposting

Examiners typically read a large number of scripts under significant time pressure themselves, which makes clear signposting genuinely valuable rather than a stylistic nicety: a body paragraph's opening sentence (its **topic sentence**) should state the paragraph's claim clearly enough that an examiner skimming only topic sentences could reconstruct the whole essay's line of argument. Words and phrases such as "the most significant factor," "a further contributing cause," "by contrast," and "ultimately, however," signal to the examiner exactly how each paragraph relates to the ones before and after it, and to the essay's overall thesis.

> **(!) Lỗi thường gặp:** A small set of vague, all-purpose phrases recur in weaker essays and are worth deliberately avoiding: "a lot of things changed," "this had a big impact," "there were many reasons," and "things got worse for people." Each of these can always be replaced with something more precise – naming what changed, describing the specific nature and scale of the impact, naming the specific reasons in order of importance, or specifying which group of people and in what way conditions worsened for them. Precision is not a matter of style alone; it is what allows an examiner to award analysis marks rather than only descriptive marks.

1.4.11 A complete specimen essay

The extract below shows the WWII model thesis and paragraph plan from earlier in this section written out as a complete short essay, illustrating how a paragraph plan actually becomes continuous prose.

Specimen essay: causes of the outbreak of war in Europe, 1939

Introduction: Historians have long debated whether the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 is best explained by long-term structural grievance or by short-term policy failure. This essay argues that while the Treaty of Versailles and the collapse of collective security created the underlying conditions for renewed conflict, it was the specific combination of Hitler's expansionist aims and the Western policy of appeasement that converted those conditions into an actual war.

Body paragraph 1: The Treaty of Versailles's territorial losses, military restrictions, and reparations obligations generated lasting German resentment, providing fertile political ground that was later exploited for domestic support; this grievance did not by itself cause war in 1939, but it supplied the underlying condition without which the later specific decisions would have had far less domestic support.

Body paragraph 2: The League of Nations' demonstrated inability to enforce its own findings, from its failure to act decisively over Manchuria in the early 1930s to its failure over the Abyssinian Crisis of 1935–36, signalled to potential aggressors that international treaty violations carried limited real cost, directly weakening the credibility of collective security as a check on expansion.

Body paragraph 3: A sequence of unilateral German actions – the remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936, the Anschluss with Austria in 1938, and the annexation of the Sudetenland later in 1938 – escalated step by step, with each successive action testing, and confirming, the limits of Western resolve, culminating in the invasion of Poland in September 1939.

Counter-argument paragraph: Appeasement is sometimes defended as a rational response to genuine British and French military unpreparedness and to the deep public war-weariness following the First World War; this is a fair point, and appeasement likely did buy valuable time for rearmament, but it also removed the last realistic diplomatic opportunities to check German expansion while the cost of doing so remained comparatively low.

Conclusion: Long-term structural grievance created the conditions in which war became possible, but it was the specific decisions taken between 1936 and 1939 – German escalation matched, at each stage, by Western concession – that determined when, and how, war actually broke out; of the two, the pattern of escalation and concession in these final years was the more decisive factor, since without it the underlying grievance alone might have continued to be managed through diplomacy, as it largely had been throughout the 1920s.

Specimen essay: the impact of decolonization (WHT 8)

Introduction: Decolonization between 1945 and 1980 brought formal political independence to a large number of new states, but the significance of this change for the people living in those states remains debated. This essay argues that the long-term impact of decolonization was decisively shaped by the political institutions, economic structures, and international pressures inherited from the colonial period, which frequently constrained the choices available to new governments regardless of their political intentions.
Body paragraph 1: The political institutions and borders left behind at independence, often drawn for colonial administrative convenience rather than to reflect existing political or ethnic communities, shaped the stability of the governments that inherited them, contributing in a number of cases to internal division that new governments then had to manage or suppress.
Body paragraph 2: Colonial-era economic policy had frequently encouraged reliance on the export of a narrow range of raw materials or cash crops, and this pattern of dependence generally persisted well beyond the transfer of political power, limiting the ability of many new states to diversify their economies quickly, since infrastructure, trade relationships, and patterns of investment could not be restructured simply because sovereignty had changed hands.
Body paragraph 3: Superpower competition for influence during the Cold War added a further external pressure on newly independent states, in some cases producing external intervention that interacted with, and sometimes worsened, internal post-independence challenges already present from the colonial legacy.
Counter-argument paragraph: It could be argued that formal independence itself represented the most significant change, restoring political self-determination regardless of subsequent economic or institutional difficulty; this essay would concede that political sovereignty was a substantial and often hard-won achievement, but would argue that its practical significance for ordinary citizens depended heavily on whether it was accompanied by genuine institutional and economic change, which in many cases it was not, at least in the shorter term.
Conclusion: Decolonization produced a genuine and significant political transformation, but its deeper social and economic impact was constrained by inherited colonial structures that independence alone did not remove; of the factors considered, inherited economic dependence was the most persistent obstacle, since political institutions could in principle be reformed by a new government's own choices, whereas the inherited economic relationship with former colonial and other external markets took considerably longer to change.

1.4.12 How examiners actually mark a script

Understanding the marking process helps explain why certain habits (explicit theses, named evidence, explicit linkage) matter so much. Examiners are trained on the same generic markbands described in this unit, and typically read an essay once for overall impression before checking it systematically against the markband descriptors, considering focus and understanding of the question, the range and accuracy of supporting knowledge, the quality of structure and argument, and, at the highest levels, critical engagement with alternative views. A mark is then awarded at the level that best fits the whole essay, not simply totalled up point by point – which is exactly why an essay with excellent factual content but a buried, unstated thesis can score lower than an essay with slightly less content but a clear, sustained, explicitly-linked argument throughout.

1.4.13 A quick-reference bank of sample theses

Practising the single skill of writing a one-sentence thesis, without necessarily writing the full essay, is an efficient way to build fluency. A few further examples, on generic and safely broad prompts:

- *"Assess the impact of a 20th-century war on civilian populations."* Thesis: While combat itself directly affected relatively few civilians in some conflicts, the disruption of food supply, housing, and family life meant that the war's impact on civilian populations was, in most respects, as severe as its impact on combatants.
- *"Discuss the reasons for the success of one independence movement."* Thesis: The movement succeeded not because of any single decisive event, but because sustained internal political organisation coincided with a moment of reduced capacity or will on the part of the colonial power to maintain control.
- *"Evaluate the effectiveness of one international organisation in maintaining peace."* Thesis: The organisation was effective at managing disputes between smaller or weaker states, but structurally incapable of restraining a great power determined to act against its rulings.

Rapid recall drill: essay technique

- *Q: What four elements must every essay introduction establish?* A: The question's key terms restated in the candidate's own words, a preview of the lines of argument, and an explicit one- or two-sentence thesis.
- *Q: What three-part structure should every body paragraph follow?* A: Claim, evidence, and an explicit link back to the exact wording of the question.
- *Q: What is the "shopping list" essay mistake?* A: Listing multiple causes with no ranking of relative importance and no explanation of how they interacted.
- *Q: What must a strong counter-argument paragraph do, beyond simply mentioning an alternative view?* A: Explain why the essay's own thesis nonetheless holds, or how it must be qualified in light of that alternative view.
- *Q: What changes about essay expectations moving from Paper 2 to HL Paper 3?* A: A higher density of named, dated evidence per paragraph, greater comparative range within the studied region, and slightly more writing time per essay.

1.4.14 How Paper 1 skills and Paper 2/3 skills reinforce each other

Although Paper 1 and Paper 2/3 look very different on the exam paper – one gives sources, the others do not – the underlying historical knowledge and reasoning built while practising one component directly strengthens the other. Careful OPCVL work on a Paper 1 source set builds exactly the kind of precise, source-grounded knowledge (who said what, when, and why) that later becomes named evidence in a Paper 2/3 body paragraph; conversely, the discipline of building a ranked, thesis-driven argument for Paper 2/3 is the same discipline needed to organise a strong Question 3 answer, rather than simply listing what each source says. Treating Paper 1 revision and Paper 2/3 revision as entirely separate activities wastes this overlap – a case study analysed carefully for Paper 1 practice is also a case study whose named details, statistics, and turning points are now available for use in a Paper 2/3 essay on a related topic.

1.5 Planning and writing under timed conditions

Knowledge and technique only translate into marks if they can be produced accurately within a strict time limit. Examiners repeatedly note that many candidates who clearly know the content still lose marks purely through poor time management: running out of time on a final essay, spending too long on a low-mark question, or writing an essay with no plan that drifts away from the question part-way through.

Suggested time allocation:

- **Paper 1 (1 hour, 25 marks):** approximately 10 minutes reading and annotating all sources before writing anything; then roughly 5, 8, 12, and 20 minutes on Questions 1(a), 1(b), 2, and 3 respectively – broadly proportional to the marks available, with extra time reserved for the highest-value Question 3, and only very brief planning notes for Questions 1–2.
- **Paper 2 (1 hour 30 minutes, 2 essays, 40 marks):** approximately 5 minutes selecting which two questions to answer and jotting a thesis and paragraph plan for each *before* writing either essay in full, then roughly 40 minutes per essay, leaving a short buffer for a final check.
- **Paper 3 (2 hours 30 minutes, 3 essays, 45 marks):** approximately 10–15 minutes selecting three questions and planning all three theses, then roughly 45–48 minutes per essay including its own brief plan.

A physical script checklist for Paper 1

- Label each answer clearly with its question number, including sub-parts such as 1(a) and 1(b).
- Write Question 2 and Question 3 in continuous, connected prose, not bullet points – bullet points make it harder to demonstrate the explicit, sustained comparison and synthesis these questions require.
- Cross out any discarded draft plans with a single clear line rather than erasing, so the annotation and thinking underneath a final answer remains visible if needed.
- Leave a small visible gap between answers, so that an examiner (or the candidate, checking back) can immediately see where one answer ends and the next begins.
- If a source annotation from the reading stage turns out to be useful in an answer, refer to it in full sentences within the answer itself – marginal annotations on the source booklet are not themselves marked.

A physical script checklist for Paper 2 and Paper 3

- Write a brief paragraph plan (claims only, a few words each) before starting continuous prose, and keep this plan visible while writing so the essay does not drift from it.
- Begin each essay on a clearly labelled new answer, stating which question number is being answered.
- Write in full paragraphs with clear topic sentences, not bullet points – markbands reward sustained, connected argument.
- If time runs short, prioritise finishing with a brief, direct concluding judgement over adding another partially developed body paragraph.
- Leave a few minutes, if possible, to reread the introduction and conclusion together and check that the conclusion actually answers the thesis stated at the start.

1.5.1 Choosing which questions to answer

On Paper 2, candidates must answer from two *different* world history topics – picking two questions from the same topic, even if both look attractive, scores zero for the second essay. Before writing anything, read every available question fully and identify, for each, whether you have enough specific evidence (not just a general sense of the topic) to sustain a full essay; a topic you recognise vaguely is a worse choice than a topic you can support with five or six named, dated pieces of evidence. On Paper 3, the six questions set are not evenly spread across the whole syllabus period studied, so it is worth quickly checking, for each of the six, which specific period or country it draws on, rather than assuming the first three questions that look familiar are automatically the best three choices.

1.5.2 Handling a question on an unfamiliar angle of a familiar topic

Even within a well-revised topic, exam questions sometimes ask about an angle that was not the main focus of classroom study – for example, asking specifically about the economic rather than the political dimension of a case study a class spent more time discussing politically. When this happens, the safest strategy is not to abandon the question for a different one (which wastes the time already spent reading it) but to identify which parts of existing knowledge *do* bear on the specific angle asked, even if that connection was not explicitly taught, and to build the thesis and paragraph plan honestly around only that available evidence, rather than writing generally about the topic and hoping the examiner infers relevance. An essay that directly, if narrowly, answers the specific question asked will always outscore a broader essay that only partially engages with it.

1.5.3 Precision versus generalisation

The single clearest difference between top-band and mid-band essays is the level of precision in the evidence used. A mid-band essay might state that "the economy got much worse, causing political instability"; a top-band essay states that "unemployment roughly tripled between 1929 and 1932, and the resulting political instability produced several changes of government within a short period, each less able to command a parliamentary majority than the last." Named individuals, precise or approximate dates, and quantified statistics are what allow an examiner to award analysis marks rather than merely descriptive-narrative marks.

> **What separates a top-band essay from a mid-band essay:**
>
> - **Precision:** specific named individuals, events, dates, and (where relevant) statistics, rather than vague generalisation.
> - **Explicit linkage:** every paragraph closes by tying its evidence directly back to the exact wording of the question, rather than leaving the examiner to infer the connection.
> - **Balance:** a genuine counter-argument or alternative perspective is considered and evaluated, not just factors that support one predetermined view.
> - **Ranked causation:** multiple causes are explicitly weighed against one another ("the most significant factor was ..., because ..., more so than ...") rather than simply listed one after another with equal, undifferentiated weight.

> **For contrast, a bottom-band script typically shows:** no clear thesis, or a thesis that simply restates the question without taking a position; evidence that is vague, inaccurate, or largely absent, with few or no named individuals, dates, or statistics; a structure that is difficult to follow, with paragraphs that do not build a sustained argument; and a conclusion that is missing entirely or that introduces new, unsupported claims rather than drawing together the essay's existing evidence. Recognising these features is useful not only for self-assessment, but also when peer-marking a classmate's practice essay against the criteria in this unit.

1.5.4 Annotating the question before you start writing

Before drafting a thesis, it helps to physically mark up the question itself: circle the command term (this determines the *kind* of response required), underline the specific factor or period named in the question (this determines the *scope* – do not drift outside it), and note in the margin two or three factors you plan to weigh against each other. This thirty-second habit prevents the single most damaging structural error on Paper 2/3: writing a competent, well-evidenced essay that answers a slightly different question from the one actually set, for instance discussing the entire causes of a war when the question specifically asked about the role of one named factor relative to others.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Under time pressure, a natural instinct is to write down everything relevant that comes to mind, on the theory that more content must mean more marks. In practice, examiners cap essays according to markbands that reward focused, well-selected, well-linked evidence – an essay that includes six loosely related facts with no clear argument will typically score lower than a shorter essay built around four facts that are explicitly weighed and linked back to the question throughout. When planning, it is worth actively deciding which known facts to *leave out* because they do not serve the specific thesis chosen, not only which facts to include.

Practice 10 – improve a weak paragraph

A student writes: "There were lots of reasons for the war. The economy was bad and people were angry. Also there was a treaty that people didn't like. The leader was popular too. All these things caused the war to start."
Identify three specific weaknesses in this paragraph and rewrite it in improved form (3–4 sentences), inventing plausible but clearly generic supporting detail.

Lời giải chi tiết

Weaknesses: (1) No specific evidence at all – no named event, date, or statistic; (2) the four causes are simply listed with no attempt to weigh their relative importance; (3) there is no explicit link back to the question being asked.
Improved version: Economic collapse in the early 1930s, marked by sharply rising unemployment and business failures, was the most significant immediate cause, since it discredited the existing government and created a receptive audience for radical political alternatives. This economic crisis compounded long-standing resentment at the postwar peace settlement, which had already left a legacy of national grievance for over a decade. The leader's own popular appeal and organisational skill then converted this combination of economic desperation and long-term grievance into active political support, rather than causing the crisis independently. Taken together, it was the economic shock acting on pre-existing grievance – rather than any single factor alone – that best explains the timing of this political shift.

Practice 11 – time-budget planning

A candidate has 90 minutes for Paper 2 and must answer two essays from two different world history topics. It takes them roughly 3 minutes to read all the available questions properly. Propose a full time budget for the remaining 87 minutes, including planning time for both essays, and explain your reasoning.

Lời giải chi tiết

Suggested budget (87 minutes remaining): 4 minutes selecting the two questions and jotting a one-sentence thesis for each; 4 minutes writing a brief paragraph plan (claims only, not full sentences) for Essay 1; 38 minutes writing Essay 1 in full; 3 minutes re-checking the plan and thesis for Essay 2; 36 minutes writing Essay 2 in full; 2 minutes for a final read-through of both essays, checking that each conclusion actually answers the question asked.

Reasoning: Planning both theses *before* committing to either essay avoids the common error of starting an essay, running out of good evidence half-way through, and being unable to switch topics without losing all the time already spent. Slightly more time is allocated to whichever essay is written first, since fatigue and time pressure typically make the second essay faster to plan (having already warmed up) but require firm discipline to stop and move to a final check rather than continuing to add content that no longer earns additional marks.

1.5.5 Pacing across a full exam session

HL candidates typically sit Paper 1, Paper 2, and Paper 3 across one or more exam sessions, sometimes with more than one paper on the same day. Because Paper 3's three-essay demand is intellectually and physically the most tiring of the three papers, it is worth planning rest, food, and review time around the session schedule in advance rather than leaving it to chance: a rushed final essay, written while fatigued at the end of a long paper, is exactly where avoidable technique errors (forgetting to state a thesis, drifting from the question, running out of time to write a conclusion) are most likely to appear. Between papers on the same day, a brief, calm review of the command-terms table and the essay-architecture checklist is a more useful use of a short break than continuing to revise new content.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Running out of time before writing a conclusion is one of the most costly and most avoidable ways to lose marks, because the conclusion is exactly where the essay's final, weighted judgement is expected – without it, an otherwise strong essay can be capped below the top markbands even if every body paragraph was excellent. If time is genuinely running short, it is far better to cut the final body paragraph short by a sentence or two in order to leave two minutes for a brief, direct concluding judgement, than to run out of time entirely with no conclusion at all.

A five-point pre-exam revision checklist for this unit: (1) Can you recite the four Paper 1 question types, their approximate mark values, and what each one specifically rewards? (2) Can you apply OPCVL confidently to an unfamiliar source of any of the four types covered in this unit within about ninety seconds? (3) Do you have the eleven command terms and what each specifically requires memorised well enough to recognise them instantly in an unfamiliar question? (4) Can you produce a one-sentence thesis and a three-to-four-paragraph plan for a new Paper 2/3 question within about five minutes? (5) Is your Internal Assessment research question focused enough to summarise, and defend as focused, in one sentence?

1.5.6 Building a fact bank for Paper 2 and Paper 3

Because Paper 2 and Paper 3 provide no sources, the quality of an essay is capped by the quality and precision of the knowledge a candidate can recall under pressure. A practical revision method is to build a set of short index cards (physical or digital), one per major case study, each recording: the exact date range; three to five named individuals and their roles; three to five specific statistics or quantified facts; and one or two short, memorable phrases summarising a key historiographical debate or turning point. Reviewing these cards regularly, rather than re-reading full notes from the beginning each time, keeps the specific, precise detail that separates top-band from mid-band essays readily available for recall in an exam.

- **Card front:** name of case study, exact date range.
- **Card back, section 1:** named individuals and their specific roles.
- **Card back, section 2:** key statistics (economic, military, demographic) with approximate values and dates.

- **Card back, section 3:** one sentence on a genuine historiographical debate relevant to this case study.

1.5.7 Self-testing and timed practice

Reading notes is a poor substitute for retrieval practice under realistic conditions. Three self-testing habits are worth building into a revision schedule: writing a thesis and paragraph plan for an unfamiliar Paper 2/3 question, timed to five minutes, without looking at notes first; completing a full Paper 1 source set under strict, timed conditions at least once every one to two weeks in the final months before the exam; and exchanging practice essays with a classmate to mark against the top-band-versus-mid-band criteria in this unit, since identifying weaknesses in someone else's work is often an easier way to internalise a criterion than applying it to one's own writing.

A sample revision timeline in the final ten weeks before exams:

- **Weeks 10–8:** build fact-bank index cards for every case study; complete one untimed Paper 1 source set and one untimed Paper 2 essay plan per week, checking each against the self-check boxes in this unit.
- **Weeks 7–5:** move to fully timed practice for Paper 1 and Paper 2 (and Paper 3 for HL), one of each per week; begin drafting and revising the Internal Assessment toward its final structure.
- **Weeks 4–2:** complete at least one full timed sitting of each paper under exact exam-day time limits; exchange essays with a classmate for peer marking against the markband criteria.
- **Final week:** review fact-bank cards, the command-terms table, and the self-check boxes in this unit; avoid attempting large amounts of unfamiliar new content this close to the exam.

1.5.8 Managing exam-day pressure

A calm, systematic approach under pressure is itself a skill worth rehearsing in practice conditions, not left to be discovered for the first time in the real exam. If a chosen essay question turns out to be harder to support with evidence than it first appeared, it is better to notice this in the first five minutes of planning (while switching to a different question is still realistic) than to discover it midway through writing. If a Paper 1 source proves unusually difficult to interpret, moving on to answer the other questions first and returning to the difficult source afterward with fresh eyes is often more productive than losing several minutes stuck on a single point early in the paper.

Weak versus strong use of a statistic inside an essay sentence

Weak: "Unemployment was very high, which caused problems for the government."
Strong: "Unemployment rose from around two million to around six million within three years, a scale of economic dislocation that directly undermined public confidence in the existing government's ability to manage the crisis."
The strong version supplies an approximate but specific figure and a specific time frame, and then explains the mechanism by which that statistic connects to the essay's argument – simply inserting a number without explaining its significance earns little more credit than the vague version above it.

Rapid recall drill: time management and precision

- Q: *Roughly how much time should be spent reading and annotating sources before writing on Paper 1?* A: Approximately ten minutes.

- *Q: What four features separate a top-band from a mid-band essay?* A: Precision, explicit linkage back to the question, balance (a genuine counter-argument), and ranked rather than merely listed causation.
- *Q: What is the most damaging consequence of running out of time before writing a conclusion?* A: The essay's final, weighted judgement is missing, which can cap an otherwise strong essay below the top markbands.
- *Q: What should be included on a Paper 2/3 revision index card?* A: The exact date range, three to five named individuals and their roles, three to five specific statistics, and one sentence on a relevant historiographical debate.

1.6 The Internal Assessment

The Internal Assessment (IA) is a 2,200-word historical investigation into a research question of the student's own choosing, worth 25 marks for both SL and HL students. It is not a shorter version of a Paper 2 essay: it requires an explicit, focused research question, a structured evaluation of two sources chosen specifically because they are important to that question, and a final reflection on the process of historical investigation itself.

Section	Word count	Marks	What it must contain
1. Identification and evaluation of sources	approx. 500	6	A clearly stated research question; identification of two sources of particular relevance; an OPCVL-style evaluation of those two sources' origin, purpose, value, and limitations.
2. Investigation	approx. 1,300	15	An organised, analytical argument addressing the research question directly, integrating evidence from a range of sources (not only the two evaluated in Section 1), with clear structure and a substantiated conclusion.
3. Reflection	approx. 400	4	Reflection on what the investigation revealed about the methods used by, and challenges facing, historians researching this kind of question.
Total	**2,200**	**25**	

Table 1.3 — Structure of the IB History Internal Assessment.

1.6.1 Choosing a suitable topic

The IA topic need not come from the prescribed subject or world history topics studied in class – students may investigate any historical topic they choose, provided it can be framed as a focused research question and supported by available sources. In practice, three criteria distinguish a workable topic from an unworkable one: **genuine personal interest** (a two-year investigation is easier to sustain and usually reads better when the student is actually curious about the question); **source availability** (a topic with published sources, whether digitised archives, published document collections, or accessible secondary literature, is far more practical than a topic where the only relevant material is inaccessible or in a language the student cannot read); and **genuine debate** (a good research question has more than one reasonable answer – if the answer is obvious and uncontested, there is little for Section 2's analytical argument to actually argue).

1.6.2 Section 1: identification and evaluation of sources

The research question must be specific and answerable within 2,200 words – a question covering an entire decade or an entire country's foreign policy is too broad; a question focused on one decision, one policy, or one short period, phrased in a form such as "To what extent ..." or "How significant was ...," is far more manageable. Two sources are then selected specifically because they are central to answering that question (not simply the two most convenient sources found), and each is evaluated using the same OPCVL logic developed earlier in this unit, with Value and Limitations argued specifically *for this research question*, not in the abstract.

> **A rough word budget for Section 1 (approx. 500 words):**
>
> - Approximately 50–80 words stating the research question and briefly explaining why it is significant or worth investigating.
> - Approximately 180–210 words evaluating the first key source (Origin, Purpose, Value, Limitations, specifically for this research question).
> - Approximately 180–210 words evaluating the second key source, on the same basis.

This is the section where the most marks are available, and also where the most common and costly error occurs (see the pitfall box below). The investigation must be organised **analytically** – around themes, factors, or types of evidence relevant to the research question – rather than as a chronological **narrative** retelling of events. A useful test: if the section could be summarised as "first this happened, then this happened, then this happened," it is a narrative; if it can be summarised as "the evidence suggests X was the most significant factor because ..., although Y also contributed ...," it is an analytical investigation of the kind Section 2 requires.

> **A rough structure for Section 2 (approx. 1,300 words, organised analytically, not chronologically):**
>
> - A brief opening paragraph restating the research question and previewing the two or three analytical strands the investigation will weigh (mirroring the introduction of a Paper 2/3 essay).
> - Two or three main analytical sections, each addressing one strand of the research question, integrating evidence from multiple sources and explicitly weighing that evidence's strength.
> - A closing paragraph offering a substantiated conclusion that directly answers the research question, including a judgement on which strand of evidence was most significant.

1.6.3 Section 3: reflection

Section 3 asks not "what did I personally learn" in a general sense, but specifically what the investigation revealed about **the methods and challenges of the historian** researching this kind of topic – for instance, difficulties caused by gaps or biases in the surviving sources, challenges in establishing causation from incomplete evidence, or ways the investigation illustrates broader debates about how historians can know what they claim to know. A reflection that only describes the student's personal research experience ("I found this hard because there were not many sources in English") without connecting it to the wider methodological point misses most of the available marks.

> **(!) Lỗi thường gặp:** The single most common Internal Assessment error is writing Section 2 as a **narrative account** of what happened, rather than as an **analytical argument** that directly addresses the research question throughout. A narrative retelling of events, however accurate and detailed, does not by itself demonstrate the historical skills the IA is designed to assess – constructing an argument, weighing evidence, and reaching a substantiated judgement. The fix is structural: before writing, convert the research question into two or three analytical sub-

headings or sub-arguments (for example, "the role of economic factors," "the role of political leadership," "the role of external pressure"), and organise all evidence under those headings, discarding any narrative detail that does not directly serve one of them.

Narrative versus analytical: the same research question, two extracts

Research question: "To what extent was the Berlin Blockade of 1948–49 caused by disagreements over currency reform in the Western occupation zones of Germany?"

Narrative extract (weak): "In March 1948, the Western powers announced plans for currency reform. In June 1948, the new currency was introduced. Shortly afterward, the Soviet Union closed road and rail access to Berlin. The Western powers then began an airlift to supply the city. The blockade continued until May 1949, when it was lifted."

Analytical extract (strong): "The timing of the blockade – imposed within days of the Western currency reform reaching Berlin – strongly supports currency policy as the immediate trigger, rather than a coincidental escalation of unrelated tensions. However, the readiness of Soviet authorities to escalate to a full blockade, rather than a more limited protest, suggests that currency reform served as the occasion for action already being considered on other grounds, including broader disagreement over the future shape of a German state largely aligned with the West. The evidence therefore supports currency reform as the immediate trigger while indicating that broader Four-Power tension was the necessary underlying condition without which a currency dispute alone would have been unlikely to produce a blockade of this scale."

Notice that the analytical extract uses exactly the same underlying facts as the narrative extract, but organises them around the research question's specific causal claim, explicitly using the vocabulary of trigger versus underlying condition introduced earlier in this unit.

1.6.4 The role of the supervisor and the moderation process

The IA is supervised by the classroom teacher, who may discuss the research question, comment in general terms on drafts, and confirm that the final work meets the required academic conduct standards, but who does not correct specific content errors or rewrite sentences on the student's behalf – the investigation must remain the student's own independent work. The teacher then applies the assessment criteria to award a mark, and a sample of marked work from the school is externally moderated by the IB to check that the school's marking is consistent with the standard applied across all IB schools; a moderator may adjust a school's marks up or down if they judge the school's application of the criteria to have been too generous or too harsh, which is one reason why following the criteria precisely (rather than simply writing a good, general piece of historical writing) matters for the final mark actually awarded.

1.6.5 Research question templates

Turning a broad area of interest into a focused, answerable research question is often the hardest single step of the whole IA process. A small set of reusable templates can help:

- "To what extent was [a specific decision or event] caused by [a specific named factor], rather than by [a competing named factor]?"
- "How significant was [a named individual's] role in [a specific, narrowly defined outcome]?"
- "Why did [a specific policy] succeed in [one specific place or period] but fail in [a clearly comparable one]?"
- "What was the impact of [a specific, dated event] on [a clearly defined group], between [year] and [year]?"

Each template forces the student to name a specific factor, individual, policy, or group, and a specific, bounded time period – exactly the narrowing that turns an unmanageable topic ("the causes of the Cold War") into a workable one (as in the worked example below).

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Three kinds of research question tend to produce weak investigations regardless of how carefully Section 2 is then written: questions with an obvious, uncontested answer (leaving nothing genuine to argue); questions covering too broad a period or too large a geographic scope to support in 2,200 words; and questions for which the two sources actually available to the student are not, on reflection, well suited to a genuine OPCVL evaluation (for example, because both sources say essentially the same thing, giving little for Section 1's evaluation to meaningfully compare). Testing a candidate research question against these three risks before committing to it can save considerable rework later.

Sample Section 1 extract: research question and source evaluation

Research question: To what extent was the Berlin Blockade of 1948–49 caused by disagreements over currency reform in the Western occupation zones of Germany, rather than by broader Four-Power tensions?
Source selected for evaluation: An official transcript of Four-Power council discussions on German currency policy, spring 1948.
Origin and Purpose: An official diplomatic record, produced to document the positions taken by each occupying power during formal negotiations over the administration of occupied Germany.
Value: As a formal record of an official negotiation, it offers direct evidence of each power's stated position and the specific points of disagreement raised, valuable for establishing precisely when and how the currency dispute became an open point of conflict.
Limitations: As an official record of formal diplomatic exchanges, it captures the positions each power was willing to state on the record, not necessarily each power's full private reasoning or ultimate objectives – for those, it would need to be read alongside private diplomatic correspondence or memoirs of participants.

Sample Section 3 extract: a functioning reflection

Weak reflection (personal, not methodological): "I found this investigation difficult because there were not many sources available in English, but I learned a lot about the Berlin Blockade."
Stronger reflection (methodological): "This investigation highlighted a recurring challenge for historians researching Cold War diplomacy: the official record available to Western researchers is heavily weighted toward Western archives and memoirs, meaning that claims about Soviet motivations in this investigation rest more on inference from Soviet public statements than on direct access to internal Soviet decision-making records. This asymmetry in surviving, accessible evidence is a broader methodological limitation facing much Cold War historiography, not simply a limitation of this particular investigation, and it means that conclusions here about the relative weight of currency policy versus broader tension should be read as more securely established for the Western side of the dispute than for the Soviet side."
The stronger version uses the specific research experience to illustrate a genuine, generalisable point about historical method, which is exactly what Section 3 rewards.

Practice 12 – refining a research question

A student proposes the research question: "What were the causes of the Cold War?"
Explain why this question is too broad for a 2,200-word investigation, and propose a more focused version.

Lời giải chi tiết

Why it is too broad: "The Cold War" spans several decades, multiple continents, and many distinct episodes of tension; within 2,200 words (and only 1,300 of those in the analytical Section 2), it is impossible to investigate causation across such a broad span in enough specific, evidenced detail to reach the higher markbands, which reward depth of analysis over breadth of coverage.
More focused version: "To what extent was the Berlin Blockade of 1948–49 caused by disagreements over the currency reform in the Western occupation zones of Germany?" – this narrows the investigation to one specific episode, one specific and testable causal claim, and a manageable body of source material, allowing genuine depth of analysis within the word limit.

Practice 13 – OPCVL for an IA source

A student investigating the research question above selects, as one of their two key sources, a memoir published in the 1960s by a former Western military governor of Berlin, describing his role in planning the airlift response.
Write a brief Value and Limitations evaluation of this source specifically for this research question.

Lời giải chi tiết

Value: As the memoir of a senior official directly involved in planning the Western response, it offers first-hand insider detail on the decision-making process and the practical constraints Western planners faced – valuable for a research question focused specifically on the Western side of the causal picture.
Limitations: Written roughly fifteen years after the events it describes, the memoir is subject to the retrospective distortions typical of this source type (selective memory, and a natural tendency for a former official to present his own decisions and his own side's actions in a favourable light); it also, by its nature, reflects only the Western perspective, so it cannot alone answer a research question about *Soviet* motivations for the currency dispute, and would need to be balanced against sources reflecting the other side.

1.6.6 Word count, citation, and referencing conventions

The 2,200-word limit applies to the running text of all three sections; the bibliography or source list, any footnotes or endnotes used purely for referencing (as opposed to substantive additional argument), and any appendices are not included in that count – but examiners and moderators can and do check word counts, and work substantially over the limit is simply not read or credited beyond the cut-off point, which makes concise, tightly edited prose a genuine advantage rather than a stylistic preference. Every source used, whether quoted directly, paraphrased, or drawn on for a statistic, should be cited using a consistent referencing system throughout (numbered footnotes or an author-date system are both acceptable, provided the same system is used consistently), and every citation should point to a corresponding entry in the final source list – an argument that draws on evidence without citing where that evidence came from cannot be credited under the assessment criterion covering use of sources.

Sample bibliography entries, two acceptable formats

Numbered-footnote style (in text): "...as one former official later acknowledged.[3]" – with footnote 3 at the bottom of the page giving the full source details, and a full bibliography entry at the end of the investigation.

Author-date style (in text): "...as one former official later acknowledged (Smith, 1968, p. 42)." – with a corresponding alphabetised entry in the final bibliography giving the full publication details.
Either format is acceptable; what matters is picking one system and applying it with complete consistency throughout the investigation, so that every citation can be traced to exactly one bibliography entry.

Reflection (Section 3) is not the same as a conclusion. A conclusion (which belongs inside Section 2, at the end of the analytical argument) states the answer to the research question and summarises why the evidence supports it. The Reflection (Section 3) is a distinct, separate requirement: it steps back from the specific findings to discuss the *historian's method* – what the process of researching this particular question revealed about the challenges of using these particular kinds of sources, the difficulty of reaching certainty from incomplete evidence, or a genuine methodological limitation the investigation ran into. Simply repeating the conclusion's findings in different words, without this methodological step back, does not meet the requirement of Section 3 and is a common way to lose marks that are otherwise straightforward to earn.

Rapid recall drill: the Internal Assessment

- Q: *What are the three sections of the IA, and their approximate word counts and marks?* A: Section 1, Identification and evaluation of sources (approx. 500 words, 6 marks); Section 2, Investigation (approx. 1,300 words, 15 marks); Section 3, Reflection (approx. 400 words, 4 marks).
- Q: *What is the single most common Section 2 error?* A: Writing a narrative account of events rather than an analytical argument that addresses the research question throughout.
- Q: *What must Section 3 discuss that a conclusion does not?* A: The methods and challenges of the historian researching this kind of question, not simply a restatement of the findings.
- Q: *What three criteria help identify a workable IA topic?* A: Genuine personal interest, source availability, and genuine scholarly debate (more than one reasonable answer to the research question).
- Q: *Is the bibliography included in the 2,200-word count?* A: No – the bibliography, footnotes used purely for referencing, and appendices are excluded from the word count.

1.7 Practice bank: mixed Paper 1, Paper 2/3, and command-term review

The items below mix all the skills covered in this unit, using a deliberately wide range of topics and periods so that the underlying technique – not the specific historical content – is what is being practised. Full historical content for each topic named here is developed in the later units of this course.

Before attempting each item below: identify which of the skills covered in this unit it is testing (OPCVL on a specific source type; one of the four Paper 1 question types; command-term recognition; or essay/thesis planning), attempt a full answer under a self-imposed time limit matching the relevant guidance from Section 5, and only then compare your answer against the solution – checking specifically for the habits (explicit linkage, named evidence, ranked causation, source citation by letter) identified throughout this unit as separating strong answers from weak ones.

Practice 14 – command term identification (MCQ)

Which command term requires the candidate to weigh up both strengths *and* limitations of an argument or interpretation before reaching a judgement?

(A) Identify
(B) Evaluate
(C) Describe
(D) Outline

Lời giải chi tiết

Answer: (B) Evaluate. "Evaluate" specifically requires an appraisal that weighs up strengths and limitations before reaching a conclusion – "Identify" asks only for brief recognition of a feature, and "Describe" and "Outline" both ask only for a summary account without any requirement to weigh competing considerations.

Practice 15 – command term identification (MCQ)

A question asks: "**To what extent** did economic factors explain the rise to power of an authoritarian leader?" What does this command term specifically require, beyond simply describing economic factors?

(A) A list of every economic factor involved, with no judgement required
(B) A supported judgement on how far economic factors mattered relative to other contributing factors
(C) A comparison of two different leaders only
(D) A description of the leader's biography

Lời giải chi tiết

Answer: (B). "To what extent" requires the candidate to reach and support a judgement about the *degree* of importance of the named factor, which necessarily means considering other contributing factors as well and weighing them against each other – not simply listing evidence for the named factor alone, and not merely describing or comparing without a final judgement.

Practice 16 – command term identification (MCQ)

Which pair of command terms both explicitly require attention to **both** of two items being discussed throughout the answer, rather than treating one and then the other separately?

(A) Explain and Justify
(B) Identify and Assess
(C) Compare and Compare and contrast
(D) Discuss and Examine

Lời giải chi tiết

Answer: (C) Compare and Compare and contrast. Both terms require an account that refers to both items throughout the response (similarities only, for "Compare"; similarities and differences, for "Compare and contrast") – answering item-by-item rather than thematically fails to meet either command term's requirement, which is exactly the most common technique error on Paper 1 Question 2 and on any Paper 2/3 question using these terms.

Practice 17 – Question 1(a) style, new topic

Source (paraphrased): Extract from a radio address by a national leader, March 1933, addressing a domestic banking crisis: "Let me state my belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself …I can assure you that it is safer to keep your money in a reopened bank than under the mattress."
What reassurance does the speaker give, and to whom is it directed? (Base your answer only on the source.)

Lời giải chi tiết

The speaker reassures listeners that reopened banks are a safer place for their money than keeping cash at home, and directly addresses public fear itself as the main obstacle to be overcome. The reassurance is directed at ordinary members of the public with savings, who are being urged to trust the banking system and return their deposits rather than withdraw or hoard cash.

Practice 18 – Question 1(b) style, new topic

Using the same radio address as Practice 17, discuss its value and limitations for a historian studying public confidence during a national banking crisis.

Lời giải chi tiết

Value: As a direct broadcast address by the head of government at the height of the crisis, it is valuable evidence of the specific reassurance strategy used by the government to restore public confidence, and of the tone (calm, direct, personal) judged necessary to counter public panic.
Limitations: As a persuasive public broadcast rather than a private record, it cannot be used as evidence that public confidence actually *was* restored, nor of the underlying financial health of the banking system itself – a historian would need independent evidence, such as bank deposit or withdrawal statistics in the following weeks, to assess whether the reassurance succeeded in practice.

Practice 19 – Question 2 style, new topic

Source G (paraphrased): A 1946 speech by a Western statesman warns that "an iron curtain has descended across the Continent," dividing free nations from those under increasing Soviet control.
Source H (paraphrased): A Soviet response, published shortly afterward, accuses the speaker of "war-mongering" and of seeking to justify continued Western military presence in Europe under the pretext of a manufactured threat.
Compare and contrast the arguments made in Sources G and H about the division of postwar Europe.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarity: Both sources agree that a serious division was emerging across Europe by 1946, and both treat this division as a matter of urgent international concern rather than a temporary or minor disagreement.
Difference: Source G presents the division as something being imposed *by* Soviet policy on previously free nations, framing the West's concern as defensive; Source H instead presents

Source G's warning itself as the aggressive act, framing Western rhetoric as a deliberate pretext for maintaining military influence in Europe – so each source blames the other side for causing the division it describes, illustrating how quickly public rhetoric on both sides hardened into competing narratives in the early postwar years.

Practice 20 – Question 3 style, new topic

Prompt (paraphrased): "Using Sources G and H and your own knowledge, evaluate the reasons why wartime cooperation between the Allied powers broke down so quickly after 1945."
Write one developed paragraph naming both sources and integrating outside knowledge.

Lời giải chi tiết

Source G's warning of an "iron curtain" reflects a genuine and rapidly growing Western perception that Soviet-backed governments were being consolidated across Eastern Europe in the years immediately following the war, removing the buffer of genuinely independent states that had briefly seemed possible in 1945. Source H's counter-accusation of "war-mongering" suggests that Soviet leadership interpreted such Western statements not as neutral observation but as evidence of continuing Western hostility, consistent with long-standing Soviet suspicion of the Western powers dating back to the interwar period and reinforced by wartime disagreements over the opening of a second front and the treatment of Eastern Europe. Read together, the two sources suggest that the breakdown of cooperation was accelerated by a spiral of mutual perception in which each side's defensive statements were read by the other as evidence of aggressive intent, turning wartime alliance into peacetime confrontation within less than two years of victory.

Practice 21 – essay planning, Discuss

Question (paraphrased): "Discuss the impact of decolonization on newly independent states between 1945 and 1980."
Propose a thesis and three thematic body-paragraph headings that would organise this essay analytically (rather than country-by-country).

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: While decolonization brought formal political independence to a large number of new states, its long-term impact was decisively shaped by the economic structures, borders, and institutions inherited from colonial rule, which frequently constrained the choices available to new governments regardless of their political intentions.
Paragraph 1 – political institutions: The nature of the institutions and borders left behind (often drawn for colonial administrative convenience rather than to reflect existing political or ethnic communities) shaped the stability of the new states' governments.
Paragraph 2 – economic structures: Reliance on the export of a narrow range of raw materials or cash crops, a pattern established under colonial economic policy, limited the ability of many new states to diversify their economies quickly after independence.
Paragraph 3 – Cold War pressures: Superpower competition for influence in newly independent states added external pressure and, in some cases, external intervention, which interacted with (and sometimes worsened) internal post-independence challenges.
Organising by theme, rather than describing one country's independence process fully before moving to the next, allows the essay to build a single sustained argument about impact rather than several disconnected narratives.

Practice 22 – essay planning, Paper 3 style regional depth question

Question (paraphrased): "Assess the extent to which Cold War rivalry shaped the domestic politics of one country in your chosen region between 1945 and 1991."
Outline what a strong response would need to establish in its introduction, and what its counter-argument paragraph should address.

Lời giải chi tiết

Introduction should establish: the specific country and time period chosen; a working definition of what "Cold War rivalry" means in this context (direct superpower intervention, economic or military aid tied to alignment, ideological competition influencing domestic political movements); and a clear thesis stating the essay's judgement on *how much* weight Cold War rivalry carries relative to purely domestic factors (economic conditions, internal political traditions, ethnic or regional divisions) in shaping that country's politics.
Counter-argument paragraph should address: the risk of overstating external influence – a strong essay would concede that domestic actors often used superpower rivalry instrumentally to advance pre-existing internal aims (for example, a domestic faction seeking foreign backing for a conflict that had independent domestic origins), rather than treating the country purely as a passive arena in which external powers imposed outcomes. This keeps the essay's final judgement balanced rather than one-sided.

Practice 23 – command term identification (MCQ)

A question asks students to "**Justify**" the decision of a government to pursue a particular policy. What must the response include that a purely descriptive answer would lack?

(A) A chronological list of events only

(B) Valid reasons or evidence that support the decision as a conclusion

(C) A comparison with a different country's policy

(D) A definition of key terms only

Lời giải chi tiết

Answer: (B). "Justify" specifically requires valid reasons or evidence that support a conclusion or course of action – a purely descriptive account of what happened, without explaining *why* the decision could be considered reasonable or defensible given the circumstances, would not meet this command term's requirement.

Practice 24 – full mini source-set, Q1(a)+Q1(b) combined

Source (paraphrased): An extract from the memoir of a former colonial administrator, published two decades after independence: "We believed at the time that we were preparing the territory for eventual self-government, though I now recognise that the timetable we set was shaped more by our own political convenience in the metropole than by any realistic assessment of local readiness."
(a) According to the source, what does the writer now believe shaped the timetable for self-government? (b) Discuss the value and limitations of this source for a historian studying the process of decolonization.

Lời giải chi tiết

(a) The writer states that, in retrospect, the timetable for self-government was shaped more by political convenience in the colonial home country ("the metropole") than by a genuine assessment of whether the local territory was actually ready for self-government.
(b) Value: As the account of a former administrator directly involved in colonial policy, it offers valuable insider insight into the real, often unstated motivations behind official timetables, and its retrospective, admittedly self-critical tone gives it particular value as a rare acknowledgement running against the colonial power's own official justification at the time.
Limitations: Written twenty years after independence, it is subject to hindsight and to the possibility that the writer is now distancing himself from a policy that appears in a poor light after the fact; as the perspective of a single administrator, it cannot be generalised to the motivations of the entire colonial administration or government, and would need to be checked against official government records from the actual period of decision-making.

Practice 25 – essay planning, Examine

Question (paraphrased): "Examine the reasons why one international organisation failed to prevent a major conflict in the 20th century."
Give a thesis and identify which underlying assumption of the organisation's design the essay would need to uncover, per the command term "Examine."

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: The organisation's failure resulted less from any single case of poor judgement than from a structural assumption built into its design – that member states would voluntarily enforce collective decisions even against their own immediate national interest – an assumption that proved unreliable whenever a powerful member state's interests diverged from the organisation's ruling.
Underlying assumption to uncover: "Examine" requires uncovering assumptions and interrelationships, not just narrating the sequence of failure; here, the essay should surface the assumption of voluntary compliance without independent enforcement power, and show the interrelationship between that structural design choice and the specific historical cases (such as the organisation's response to territorial aggression by a major or great power) where compliance was withheld precisely because no independent enforcement mechanism existed.

1.8 Chapter summary

The skills ladder of this unit

This unit has moved through a deliberate progression of skills, each building on the one before:

- **Section 1** established the shape of the exam itself: four components, different weightings for SL and HL, and the distinct skill each one rewards.
- **Section 2** built the OPCVL framework and showed how it adapts across written, visual, statistical, and oral sources.
- **Section 3** applied OPCVL inside the specific structure of Paper 1's four question types, from single-source comprehension through to full synthesis with own knowledge.
- **Section 4** shifted to essay technique for Paper 2 and Paper 3: command terms, essay architecture, historiography, and fully worked model theses and essays.

- **Section 5** converted technique into exam-day practice: time allocation, precision, and the habits that separate top-band from mid-band work.
- **Section 6** applied exactly the same underlying skills – source evaluation and analytical argument – to the independent, self-directed context of the Internal Assessment.
- **Section 7** brought all of these skills together across a wide range of topics and periods, so that the techniques, rather than any single case study, are what should now feel automatic.

Every subsequent unit in this course applies these same skills – OPCVL, the four Paper 1 question types, and essay architecture built around an explicit, evidenced, and weighted thesis – to specific historical content. The content changes from unit to unit; the underlying skills tested in every exam do not.

Glossary of abbreviations used in this unit: OPCVL – Origin, Purpose, Content, Value, Limitations (source-evaluation framework). **AO1–AO4** – the four assessment objectives (knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; synthesis and evaluation; selection and use of appropriate skills). **WHT** – World History Topic (one of twelve options for Paper 2). **IA** – Internal Assessment (the historical investigation). **SL / HL** – Standard Level / Higher Level.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: As a final recap, the five mistakes most consistently identified across this unit are: (1) stating Value or Limitations generically instead of deriving them from a source's specific Origin and Purpose; (2) answering Paper 1 Question 2 source-by-source instead of thematically; (3) presenting sources and own knowledge as two separate blocks in Question 3 instead of weaving them together, source by name; (4) listing causes in a Paper 2/3 essay without ranking their relative importance or explaining how they interacted; and (5) writing the Internal Assessment's Section 2 as a narrative account instead of a sustained analytical argument. Checking a finished answer against this list, in addition to the more detailed self-check boxes throughout this unit, is a fast and effective final review habit.

Quick reference: where to look in this unit for a specific problem. Struggling to explain why a source is valuable or limited: Section 2, the OPCVL checklist. Unsure how to organise a Paper 1 comparison question: Section 3, Question 2. Struggling to weave sources and own knowledge together: Section 3, Question 3, and its worked walkthroughs. Essay reads like a list of causes with no clear argument: Section 4, "claim, evidence, link" and the essay self-check keyfact. Running out of time before finishing an essay or a paper: Section 5, time allocation and the pitfall on unfinished conclusions. Internal Assessment reading like a narrative: Section 6, the narrative-versus-analytical worked comparison.

Prescribed Subject: The Move to Global War

> **Mục tiêu Unit:** Trình bày và phân tích hai case study bắt buộc của Paper 1 IB History, Prescribed Subject 1 "The Move to Global War": (1) sự bành trướng của Nhật Bản tại Đông Á giai đoạn 1931–1941, từ khủng hoảng Mãn Châu đến Trân Châu Cảng; (2) sự bành trướng của Đức và Ý tại châu Âu giai đoạn 1933–1939, từ khi Hitler củng cố quyền lực đến khi Thế chiến II bùng nổ. Học viên cần nắm chắc trình tự sự kiện, chuỗi nguyên nhân–hệ quả, vai trò và những hạn chế mang tính cấu trúc của Hội Quốc Liên, chính sách xoa dịu (appeasement), tranh luận sử học (historiography) xung quanh Hitler, và có kỹ năng phân tích nguồn sử liệu theo khung OPCVL cũng như viết luận so sánh hai case study đúng cấu trúc Paper 1 và Paper 2/3.

2.1 Background: the international order after 1919

The peace settlements that followed the First World War rested on an unproven idea: that armed aggression could be deterred not by rival alliances but by *collective security* – the principle, embedded in the Covenant of the League of Nations, that an attack on one member state was an attack on all, to be met by a coordinated diplomatic, economic or (in theory) military response. Parallel to the League, the victorious powers also tried to manage the naval balance of power directly through treaty diplomacy, since naval building had been a major cause of pre-1914 tension and remained the clearest measure of great-power status in the 1920s.

2.1.1 The Washington Naval Conference and the London Naval Treaty

Between November 1921 and February 1922, the United States hosted a conference in Washington, D.C. that produced the Five-Power Treaty, an agreement between the United States, Britain, Japan, France and Italy to limit the tonnage of their capital ships (battleships and battlecruisers) according to a fixed ratio.

> **Washington Naval Treaty (Five-Power Treaty), 1921–22** – capital-ship tonnage ratio agreed between the United States, Britain, Japan, France and Italy: **5 : 5 : 3 : 1.75 : 1.75**. Japan accepted a ratio inferior to the United States and Britain, but one that in practice still gave it clear naval dominance in the western Pacific, since the American and British fleets were divided between the Atlantic, the Pacific and home waters. Even so, many Japanese naval officers, the political right and the nationalist press denounced the ratio as a national humiliation, imposed by Western powers determined to keep Japan permanently subordinate.

The Washington system was extended in April 1930, when Britain, the United States and Japan signed the London Naval Treaty, applying similar tonnage limits to cruisers, destroyers and submarines. The Japanese government of Prime Minister Osachi Hamaguchi accepted the London ratios over the fierce objections of the Navy General Staff, which argued that the resulting fleet would be too weak to guarantee Japan's security in a future conflict with the United States. Hamaguchi's decision to overrule the navy and sign the treaty provoked a nationalist backlash: he was shot by an ultranationalist assailant in November 1930 and died of his wounds the following year. The assassination attempt on a sitting prime minister for accepting an internationally negotiated arms-limitation treaty was an early, alarming sign that a militant nationalist minority was prepared to use violence against Japan's own civilian leaders whenever they were seen to compromise with the West – a pattern that would recur, and escalate, through the early 1930s.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Hội nghị Hải quân Washington (1921–22) quy định tỉ lệ trọng tải tàu chiến chủ lực giữa Mỹ, Anh, Nhật, Pháp, Ý là 5 : 5 : 3 : 1.75 : 1.75. Nhật chấp nhận tỉ lệ thấp hơn Mỹ và Anh nhưng vẫn đủ mạnh để thống trị Tây Thái Bình Dương; tuy vậy phe dân tộc chủ nghĩa trong quân đội Nhật coi đây là một sự sỉ nhục. Hiệp ước Hải quân London (1930) mở rộng giới hạn sang tàu tuần dương, khu trục và tàu ngầm; Thủ tướng Hamaguchi ký hiệp ước này bất chấp phản đối của Bộ Tổng tham mưu Hải quân, và bị ám sát cuối năm 1930 (qua đời năm 1931). Sự kiện này cho thấy bạo lực chính trị dân tộc chủ nghĩa đã bắt đầu nhắm vào chính các nhà lãnh đạo dân sự Nhật Bản.

2.1.2 Structural weaknesses of the League of Nations

The League of Nations, established by the Covenant annexed to the Treaty of Versailles, was the institutional embodiment of collective security. In practice, however, it suffered from weaknesses that were built into its structure from the outset, and these weaknesses would be tested – and found wanting – in both case studies covered in this chapter.

Why collective security struggled to work

- **No standing army or police force:** the League could only ask member states to volunteer troops, warships or economic measures against an aggressor; it had no independent means of enforcement of its own.
- **Unanimity in the Council:** major decisions generally required unanimous agreement among Council members (excluding the parties to a dispute), making decisive action easy to block or dilute.
- **The absence of the United States:** the US Senate had refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and never joined the League, depriving the organisation of the military and economic weight of the world's largest industrial power precisely when it was most needed.
- **Slow, legalistic procedures:** disputes were referred to investigative commissions that took months to report, and to Assembly votes that took months more to organise – giving an aggressor ample time to consolidate territorial gains before any collective response could even be agreed, let alone implemented.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Hội Quốc Liên có những điểm yếu mang tính cấu trúc: không có quân đội riêng, phải dựa vào sự tự nguyện đóng góp của các nước thành viên; nguyên tắc nhất trí tuyệt đối (unanimity) khiến việc ra quyết định rất khó khăn; Mỹ – cường quốc mạnh nhất thời điểm đó – không tham gia; và các thủ tục điều tra, biểu quyết diễn ra quá chậm, cho phép nước xâm lược có đủ thời gian củng cố những gì đã chiếm được trước khi cộng đồng quốc tế kịp phản ứng. Đây chính là những điểm sẽ bị Nhật Bản và sau đó là Ý, Đức khai thác triệt để trong suốt thập niên 1930.

Figure 2.1. The international order under strain, 1919–1933: naval diplomacy, domestic backlash in Japan, and the opening event of the first case study.

Practice 2.1 – Structured short answer

(a) Using your own knowledge, explain what is meant by the term "collective security" as embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations. [3 marks]
(b) Explain two structural weaknesses of the League of Nations that limited its ability to respond to aggression in the 1930s. [4 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

(a) Collective security was the principle that member states of the League of Nations would act together to deter or punish aggression against any one of them, rather than relying on rival alliance systems as before 1914. Under the Covenant, an act of aggression by one state was to be treated as a matter of concern to the League as a whole; members were expected to apply coordinated diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions and, if necessary, contribute military force to restrain the aggressor, so that no single state would have to confront an aggressor alone.
(b) *Weakness 1 – No independent enforcement mechanism.* The League had no standing army, navy or police force of its own. It could only request that member states voluntarily supply troops or warships to enforce its decisions, and states were frequently unwilling to risk their own forces or trade relationships over disputes that did not touch their vital interests. This meant that even when the League correctly identified an aggressor, as with Japan in Manchuria, it had no independent means of compelling a change in behaviour.
Weakness 2 – The absence of the United States. Although the League had been proposed by American President Woodrow Wilson, the US Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and the United States never joined the League. This deprived the organisation of the military and economic power of the world's largest industrial economy, and it meant that any economic sanctions imposed by League members could be undermined simply by an aggressor trading with the US instead – as nearly happened with oil supplies to Italy during the Abyssinian Crisis.

2.2 Case study 1: Japanese expansion in East Asia, 1931--1941

2.2.1 Militarism and the collapse of party government

By 1930 Japan possessed the institutions of a constitutional, party-based government, but these institutions were fragile and increasingly challenged from within by an ultranationalist current that combined reverence for the emperor, contempt for parliamentary compromise, resentment of the "unequal" naval treaties, and a conviction that Japan's destiny lay in continental expansion. The onset of the Great Depression sharpened this mood. Japan's rural economy depended heavily on the export of raw silk, above all to the United States; when American demand collapsed after 1929, silk prices fell catastrophically, ruining farming households across the country and feeding a narrative, eagerly promoted by nationalist propagandists and sympathetic officers, that party politicians and the great business conglomerates (*zaibatsu*) that funded them had failed the nation and that only the armed forces retained the discipline and purity of purpose to save it.

Within the Japanese army, this ideological current combined with a distinctive institutional pathology known as *gekokujo* – literally "the low overrules the high" – in which junior and mid-ranking officers took drastic unilateral action in the field, confident that Tokyo would be presented with a fait accompli that it could not politically afford to reverse, and that they would be protected or even promoted rather than punished. Gekokujo was not merely occasional indiscipline; it became, across the 1930s, close to an operating principle of the Kwantung Army (the Japanese force stationed to guard the South Manchuria Railway), which repeatedly manufactured incidents and expanded Japanese control on its own initiative, with the civilian government in Tokyo left to ratify decisions after the fact rather than direct them.

The vulnerability of civilian government to this pressure was demonstrated brutally in the May 15th Incident of 1932, when a group of young naval officers and army cadets assassinated Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai at his official residence. Inukai had attempted to restrain military adventurism in China and to preserve party control over policy; his murder effectively ended the era of party cabinets in Japan. No party leader again became prime minister for the rest of the decade: successive governments were led by figures acceptable to the military, and the armed forces – backed by the right to nominate (or refuse to nominate) the army and navy ministers, without whom no cabinet could be formed – exercised a steadily tightening grip over foreign and economic policy.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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Từ 1930, chính phủ theo mô hình đảng phái (party government) của Nhật Bản ngày càng suy yếu trước làn sóng dân tộc cực đoan. Đại khủng hoảng kinh tế làm sụp đổ ngành xuất khẩu tơ lụa, khiến nông dân bần cùng và tạo cớ cho phe quân phiệt đổ lỗi cho các chính trị gia dân sự. Hiện tượng *gekokujo* ("cấp dưới lấn át cấp trên") khiến các sĩ quan cấp thấp/trung của Đạo quân Quan Đông (Kwantung Army) tự ý hành động, đặt chính phủ Tokyo vào thế đã rồi. Vụ ám sát Thủ tướng Inukai năm 1932 chấm dứt kỷ nguyên nội các đảng phái, mở đường cho quân đội chi phối chính sách đối nội và đối ngoại của Nhật trong suốt thập niên 1930.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Đừng viết "Nhật Bản xâm lược Mãn Châu" như thể đó là quyết định thống nhất, có chủ đích từ đầu của chính phủ Tokyo. Trong giai đoạn 1931–1937, phần lớn các bước bành trướng ban đầu là do Đạo quân Quan Đông tự khởi xướng (gekokujo), và chính phủ dân sự / thậm chí Bộ Tổng tham mưu tại Tokyo thường chỉ phê chuẩn sau khi sự việc đã xảy ra. Đây là điểm khác biệt quan trọng so với Đức Quốc xã, nơi Hitler trực tiếp chỉ đạo hầu hết các bước bành trướng – và là một luận điểm so sánh quan trọng cho bài luận Compare and Contrast.

2.2.2 The Manchurian Crisis, 1931–1933

Manchuria, the resource-rich region of north-eastern China, had long been an object of Japanese strategic interest: Japan held rights over the South Manchuria Railway and stationed the Kwantung Army along its route to protect this asset. On the night of 18 September 1931, officers of the Kwantung Army detonated a small explosive charge on the railway line near Mukden (the Mukden Incident), causing negligible actual damage but immediately blaming Chinese saboteurs and using the incident as the pretext to launch a full military occupation of Manchuria. The operation had not been authorised by the government in Tokyo, which was informed only after it was already under way; faced with a fait accompli and a wave of nationalist enthusiasm at home, the civilian government felt unable to order a withdrawal, and the army command in Tokyo effectively endorsed what its own field officers had already decided.

Within months the Kwantung Army had occupied the whole of Manchuria, and in 1932 it proclaimed the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo, install ing Puyi – the last emperor of the Qing dynasty, deposed as a child in 1912 – as its nominal head of state. Real power in Manchukuo rested entirely with Japanese military and civilian advisers; the "state" functioned as a source of raw materials, a settlement frontier for Japanese emigrants, and a strategic buffer against the Soviet Union.

China appealed to the League of Nations, which appointed a commission of enquiry under the British peer Lord Lytton to investigate on the spot. The Lytton Commission's report, published in October 1932, concluded that Japan's action could not be justified as legitimate self-defence, that Manchukuo was not a genuine expression of local self-determination but a creation of the Japanese military, and it recommended that Manchuria be granted autonomy under continued Chinese sovereignty rather than recognised as an independent (in reality Japanese-controlled) state. In

February 1933 the League Assembly formally adopted the Lytton Report's findings by an overwhelming vote. Japan's response was to reject the League's authority outright: in March 1933 the Japanese government announced its withdrawal from the League of Nations, and its delegate, Yosuke Matsuoka, famously walked out of the Assembly chamber as the vote was read.

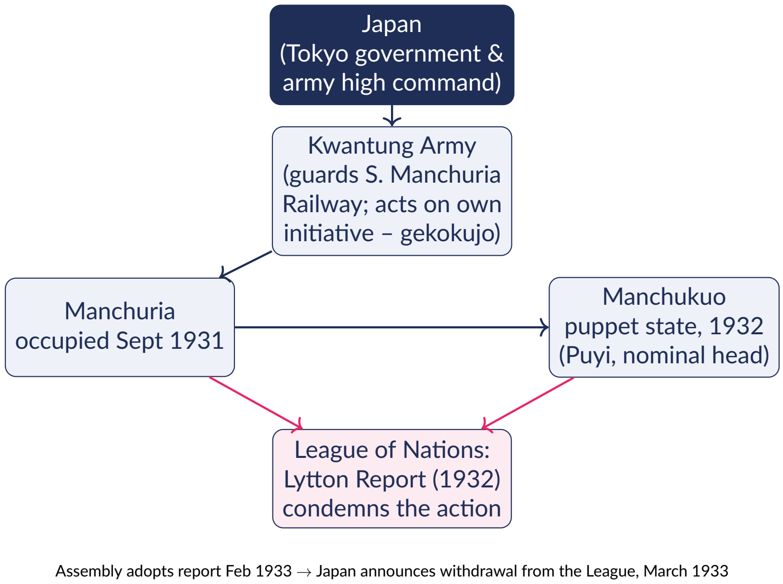

Figure 2.2. The Manchurian Crisis: from a staged railway incident to Japan's formal break with the League of Nations.

VN GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

Sự kiện Mukden (18/9/1931) là một vụ nổ nhỏ do chính sĩ quan Nhật dàn dựng trên tuyến đường sắt Nam Mãn Châu, sau đó đổ lỗi cho phía Trung Quốc để lấy cớ chiếm đóng toàn bộ Mãn Châu. Năm 1932, Nhật dựng lên nhà nước bù nhìn Mãn Châu Quốc (Manchukuo) với Phổ Nghi (Puyi) – vị hoàng đế cuối cùng của nhà Thanh – làm nguyên thủ trên danh nghĩa. Ủy ban Lytton của Hội Quốc Liên kết luận hành động của Nhật không phải tự vệ chính đáng; Đại hội đồng thông qua báo cáo này tháng 2/1933, và Nhật tuyên bố rút khỏi Hội Quốc Liên ngay tháng 3/1933 – minh chứng rõ ràng cho việc Hội Quốc Liên không có công cụ thực sự để cưỡng chế một cường quốc.

OPCVL worked example – a Kwantung Army officer's private account

Source: an unpublished memoir written after 1945 by a former Kwantung Army staff officer, describing his own role in planning the explosion on the railway near Mukden in September 1931 and his conviction that decisive action, not instructions from Tokyo, was what the situation required.
Origin: the source originates from a former Kwantung Army officer directly involved in planning the incident, writing his memoir after the war. *Purpose:* as a private memoir written after 1945, its purpose was most likely personal reflection or self-justification for a domestic Japanese readership, rather than an official record intended for publication at the time. *Content:* it would likely describe the officer's own initiative, his belief that Manchuria was vital to Japan's survival, and his lack of concern for Tokyo's authorisation. *Value:* exceptionally valuable for illustrating the gekokujo mentality and the autonomy of field officers from a direct, first-hand perspective – precisely the kind of internal decision-making that official communiqués concealed at the time. *Limitations:* written many years after the events and after Japan's defeat, the account may be shaped by hindsight, by a wish to defend personal reputation, or by the passage of time affecting memory; as a single individual's perspective it cannot be generalised to explain

the motives of the whole Kwantung Army or the Tokyo government.

Practice 2.2 – OPCVL source analysis

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, value and limitations for historians studying the outbreak of the Manchurian Crisis, analyse a Japanese army officer's private memoir (written some years after 1945) recounting his first-hand role in staging the September 1931 explosion on the South Manchuria Railway near Mukden. [6 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: the source is a first-person memoir by an officer who directly participated in planning the Mukden Incident, giving it exceptional evidentiary weight as an eyewitness account of decision-making that was deliberately concealed from the Japanese and international public at the time. *Purpose:* written after 1945, once Japan had been defeated and the pre-war military leadership discredited, the memoir's purpose was likely a mixture of personal historical record-keeping and self-justification, perhaps written to explain (or defend) the officer's actions to a post-war Japanese audience that by then knew the war had ended catastrophically. *Content:* such a memoir would be expected to reveal the deliberate, premeditated nature of the "incident" (contradicting the official 1931 claim that Chinese saboteurs were responsible), the officer's belief that Manchuria was essential to Japan's economic and strategic survival, and his confidence that Tokyo would not overrule facts on the ground – illustrating gekokujo in practice. *Value:* the source is highly valuable precisely because it is an insider's confession of premeditation, something official Japanese government statements of 1931–33 always denied; it therefore helps historians establish that the Kwantung Army, not Chinese provocation, caused the crisis, and it illuminates the internal culture of insubordination that drove Japanese expansion more broadly. *Limitations:* written well after the events, the account is vulnerable to the distortions of memory, to selective emphasis that flatters or excuses the author, and to hindsight bias shaped by Japan's ultimate defeat; as the testimony of one individual, it cannot establish how representative his motives were of the wider officer corps or of the Tokyo military leadership, and it says nothing about the reaction of the civilian government once the fait accompli was presented to it.

Practice 2.3 – Examine

Examine the reasons for Japanese expansion into Manchuria in the period 1931–1933. [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong response identifies multiple, interacting causes rather than a single explanation, and weighs their relative importance.

Economic pressure. The Great Depression devastated Japan's silk export economy and intensified the argument, pushed by nationalists and military figures, that Japan needed secure access to raw materials and markets on the Asian mainland, since it lacked significant natural resources of its own. Manchuria's coal, iron and agricultural land made it an obvious target.

Strategic and security concerns. The Kwantung Army existed specifically to protect the South Manchuria Railway; its officers argued that Chinese nationalism (following the Northern Expedition and the unification efforts of the Guomindang) and the proximity of Soviet power in the region threatened Japan's existing rights and required a decisive, permanent solution rather

than continued negotiation.
Domestic politics and militarism. The weakening of party government, the assassination of moderate figures such as Hamaguchi, and the culture of gekokujo meant that the Kwantung Army could act with near-total autonomy, confident that Tokyo would ratify its decisions rather than risk a domestic backlash or the appearance of weakness.
The international context. The League of Nations' slow, consensus-based procedures, and the absence of the United States, meant Japan calculated – correctly, as it turned out – that the diplomatic and economic costs of seizing Manchuria would be manageable: the Lytton Report condemned the action, but no sanctions or military response followed, and Japan absorbed the reputational cost of leaving the League rather than reversing its gains.
A balanced conclusion should note that while economic and strategic motives explain *why* Manchuria was attractive, it was the specific combination of a weak civilian government and an autonomous, insubordinate military that explains *how* and *why then* the crisis unfolded as it did – and that the League's weak response then encouraged further, larger acts of expansion later in the decade.

2.2.3 War with China, 1937–1941

Japanese ambitions on the Asian mainland did not stop at Manchuria. In April 1934, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Eiji Amau, issued a statement – soon dubbed the Amau Doctrine, or an "Asian Monroe Doctrine" – asserting that Japan bore special responsibility for peace and order in East Asia and that other powers should refrain from offering China financial, military or technical assistance without Japanese consent. The declaration signalled that Tokyo now regarded all of China, not merely Manchuria, as falling within its sphere of predominant interest.

Full-scale war began with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 7 July 1937, a clash between Japanese and Chinese troops near Beijing that rapidly escalated, deliberately on the Japanese side, into a general invasion of China – the Second Sino-Japanese War. Chinese resistance was strengthened by a development that had taken place the previous December: the Xi'an Incident of December 1936, in which the Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek was detained by his own generals and pressured into ending his civil war against the Chinese Communist Party in favour of a Second United Front against Japan. Although cooperation between the Guomindang and the Communists remained tense and partial, the united front denied Japan the swift, negotiated victory its planners had expected.

Japanese forces advanced rapidly along the Chinese coast and up the Yangtze valley, capturing the Nationalist capital of Nanjing in December 1937. In the weeks that followed, Japanese troops carried out a campaign of mass killing, rape and destruction against the civilian population and disarmed soldiers of the city, an atrocity known as the Nanjing Massacre (December 1937 – January 1938).

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Số liệu thương vong trong Thảm sát Nam Kinh là một chủ đề gây tranh cãi trong giới sử học và ngoại giao, không nên trích dẫn một con số duy nhất như thể đó là sự thật hiển nhiên không thể bàn cãi. Các ước tính dao động rộng, từ khoảng 100.000 đến hơn 300.000 người thiệt mạng, tuỳ theo nguồn (toà án quân sự Đông Kinh, các nhà nghiên cứu Trung Quốc, một số nhà nghiên cứu Nhật Bản theo khuynh hướng xét lại). Trong bài thi, nên viết: "estimates of the death toll remain disputed among historians, ranging from roughly 100,000 to over 300,000" thay vì khẳng định một con số cụ thể.

Japan never succeeded in translating its battlefield victories into a negotiated peace with the Nationalist government, which retreated inland and continued to resist with growing Soviet, and later American and British, material support. Instead, in November 1938, Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe proclaimed Japan's vision of a "New Order in East Asia": a regional bloc uniting Japan, Manchukuo and China under Japanese leadership, presented as liberation from Western imperialism but functioning in practice to justify continued Japanese occupation and economic exploitation. To lend this

New Order a veneer of Chinese participation, Japan sponsored a collaborationist regime in Nanjing in 1940 under Wang Jingwei, a former senior Guomindang official, though this puppet government commanded little genuine authority or popular legitimacy and Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government, based inland, was recognised internationally as China's legitimate government throughout the war.

VN GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

Học thuyết Amau (1934) tuyên bố Nhật có "trách nhiệm đặc biệt" với hòa bình Đông Á, ngăn các cường quốc khác hỗ trợ Trung Quốc. Sự kiện cầu Lư Câu (Marco Polo Bridge, 7/7/1937) mở màn cuộc Chiến tranh Trung–Nhật lần hai. Sự kiện Tây An (12/1936) buộc Tưởng Giới Thạch lập Mặt trận Thống nhất lần hai với Đảng Cộng sản Trung Quốc để cùng kháng Nhật. Sau khi chiếm Nam Kinh (12/1937), quân Nhật gây ra vụ thảm sát với số người chết ước tính rất khác nhau tùy nguồn (100.000 – hơn 300.000), một chủ đề vẫn còn gây tranh cãi. Nhật sau đó dựng chính quyền bù nhìn Uông Tinh Vệ (Wang Jingwei) năm 1940 nhưng không thay thế được chính phủ Trung Hoa Dân Quốc của Tưởng Giới Thạch trên trường quốc tế.

Practice 2.4 – Structured short answer

(a) Explain what is meant by the "Second United Front" and why it was formed in December 1936. [3 marks]
(b) Explain why historians disagree about the death toll of the Nanjing Massacre. [3 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

(a) The Second United Front was the alliance formed in December 1936 between the Guomindang (Nationalist) government of Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communist Party, suspending their ongoing civil war in order to resist Japanese aggression jointly. It was formed as a direct result of the Xi'an Incident, in which Chiang was detained by his own subordinate commander, Zhang Xueliang, who along with other officers pressed him to abandon his campaign against the Communists and instead confront the more immediate threat posed by Japan, which had already annexed Manchuria and was pressing further into northern China.
(b) Historians disagree over the Nanjing Massacre death toll chiefly because of the destruction, loss or suppression of contemporary records, the difficulty of verifying population figures for a city swollen with refugees at the time, and because the issue remains politically and diplomatically sensitive between China and Japan, with each side's sources sometimes reflecting national narratives – some official Chinese estimates place the toll above 300,000, while some more conservative (and, at the far end, revisionist) Japanese estimates suggest a substantially lower figure, closer to or somewhat above 100,000. The wide range in commonly cited figures (roughly 100,000 to over 300,000) itself reflects these evidentiary and political complications rather than a simple factual dispute that can be resolved from a single source.

Practice 2.5 – Examine

Examine the causes of the outbreak of full-scale war between Japan and China in July 1937. [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Causes can be grouped into long-term, underlying pressures and the immediate trigger.
Long-term causes include the precedent and momentum created by the Manchurian Crisis, which demonstrated that Japan could seize Chinese territory without meaningful international punishment; the Amau Doctrine of 1934, which signalled that Tokyo now viewed the whole of

China, not just Manchuria, as within its sphere of predominant interest; the continuing dominance of the military over Japanese civilian government after 1932; and Chinese nationalism, strengthened by the Xi'an Incident and the formation of the Second United Front, which gave China's Nationalist government both the incentive and, to a degree, the domestic political cover to resist Japanese demands rather than continue a policy of piecemeal concession.

The immediate trigger was the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 7 July 1937, a localised clash between Japanese and Chinese soldiers near Beijing during a night exercise. What made this incident different from earlier localised clashes was less the event itself than the decisions taken afterwards: hard-liners within the Japanese army command pressed for a punitive expedition to "teach China a lesson," while the Chinese Nationalist government, unlike in earlier crises, chose confrontation rather than a negotiated local settlement.

A well-supported answer should conclude that the war was less a sudden departure than the culmination of a six-year trajectory of expanding Japanese ambition, the failure of the League and Western powers to check that ambition after 1931–33, and a shift in Chinese resolve – with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident functioning as a spark rather than a fundamental cause in its own right.

2.2.4 The road to Pearl Harbor

By 1940 Japan's war in China had become a costly stalemate, and Japanese strategists increasingly looked toward South-East Asia both to cut off supply routes reaching Chiang Kai-shek's forces and to secure the oil, rubber and other raw materials that a prolonged war effort, and Japan's overall industrial economy, urgently required. The fall of France in June 1940 created an opportunity: with metropolitan France defeated and its colonies administered by the collaborationist Vichy regime, Japan pressured Vichy into accepting the occupation of northern French Indochina in September 1940, securing bases from which to interdict supplies to China.

That same month, September 1940, Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, a mutual-assistance agreement under which each power promised to support the others if any one of them was attacked by a state not already involved in the European war or the Sino-Japanese War – a provision aimed squarely at deterring the United States from entering either conflict. In July 1941 Japan extended its occupation to southern French Indochina, placing its forces within striking distance of British Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines.

The United States response was immediate and severe: Washington froze Japanese assets and, together with Britain and the Dutch government-in-exile, imposed a comprehensive oil embargo on Japan, cutting off the overwhelming majority of the petroleum on which the Japanese navy and war economy depended. With its oil reserves finite and shrinking, the Japanese government faced a stark choice between a diplomatic retreat from China and Indochina, or a rapid military solution to seize the oil and resources of South-East Asia before those reserves ran out.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the impasse failed. On 26 November 1941, US Secretary of State Cordell Hull delivered what became known as the Hull Note, demanding that Japan withdraw entirely from China and Indochina as a condition for lifting the embargo – terms the Japanese government and military leadership regarded as unacceptable and tantamount to abandoning everything gained since 1931. Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe, who had sought a negotiated accommodation with Washington, resigned in October 1941 when it became clear he could not reconcile the military's demands with American terms; he was replaced by General Hideki Tojo, a committed advocate of pressing ahead with war preparations. On 7 December 1941 (US date; 8 December in Japan), Japanese carrier aircraft launched a surprise attack on the United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, bringing the United States directly into the Second World War and transforming the Sino-Japanese conflict into part of a genuinely global war.

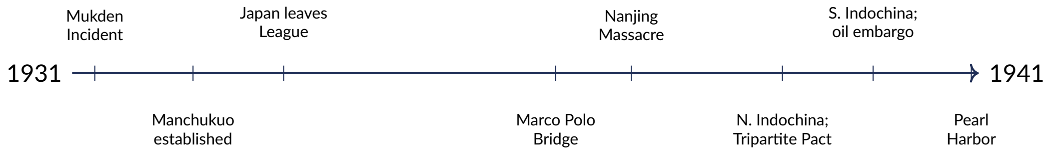

Figure 2.3. Japan's road to war, 1931–1941: from Manchuria to a Pacific war with the United States.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Sau khi chiếm Đông Dương thuộc Pháp phía Bắc (9/1940) và ký Hiệp ước Ba bên (Tripartite Pact) với Đức–Ý cùng tháng, Nhật tiếp tục chiếm Đông Dương phía Nam (7/1941). Mỹ đáp trả bằng lệnh phong tỏa tài sản và cấm vận dầu mỏ toàn diện, đẩy Nhật vào thế phải lựa chọn giữa rút lui hay chiến tranh. Công hàm Hull (26/11/1941) yêu cầu Nhật rút hoàn toàn khỏi Trung Quốc và Đông Dương – điều kiện mà giới quân sự Nhật coi là không thể chấp nhận. Thủ tướng Konoe từ chức (10/1941), Tojo Hideki lên thay, và Nhật tấn công Trân Châu Cảng ngày 7/12/1941 (giờ Mỹ), chính thức đưa Mỹ vào Thế chiến II.

Practice 2.6 – To what extent

To what extent was United States policy responsible for the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States in December 1941? [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong response weighs US actions against Japanese decisions rather than assigning responsibility to one side alone.

Case for significant US responsibility. The asset freeze and oil embargo imposed after Japan's occupation of southern Indochina in July 1941 deprived Japan of the overwhelming majority of its oil supply almost overnight, creating an existential economic pressure that Japanese planners believed could only be resolved by negotiation or war within a matter of months. The Hull Note of 26 November 1941, demanding complete Japanese withdrawal from both China and Indochina, offered Tojo's government no face-saving path to a negotiated settlement and was interpreted in Tokyo as effectively an ultimatum.

Case for Japanese responsibility. It was Japan's own decision to occupy northern and then southern Indochina, and its earlier decision to press deep into China after 1937 without a viable strategy for winning a negotiated peace, that created the conditions the US was responding to. The Tripartite Pact of September 1940 was a calculated Japanese move to deter American intervention through the threat of a two-front war, not a defensive necessity. Ultimately, it was the Japanese government and military high command, not Washington, that chose to answer economic pressure with a surprise attack rather than a negotiated retreat from China and Indochina.

A balanced conclusion should note that US policy (the embargo, the Hull Note) closed off options and created urgency, but Japan's own expansionist choices since 1931 had created the strategic overreach that made those options so limited in the first place; responsibility is therefore best understood as shared, with the immediate decision to attack remaining a Japanese choice.

Practice 2.7 – Paper 1 Q2, cross-referencing

Source A: the Tripartite Pact, September 1940 – Germany, Italy and Japan pledge to assist one another if any of the three is attacked by a power not already involved in the European war or the war in China (understood by contemporaries to mean the United States).

Source B: the Hull Note, 26 November 1941 – the United States demands that Japan with-

draw all military forces from China and Indochina as a condition for lifting the oil embargo and unfreezing Japanese assets.
Compare and contrast what Sources A and B reveal about the deterioration of relations between Japan and the United States before December 1941. [6 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: both sources reveal a relationship already defined by mutual distrust and by an expectation of confrontation rather than accommodation. Source A shows Japan pre-emptively seeking to deter American intervention through alliance diplomacy, implying Tokyo already anticipated conflict with Washington over its actions in Asia; Source B shows the United States, over a year later, unwilling to accept the territorial and strategic position Japan had built up, confirming that the deterrence strategy of Source A had failed. Both sources also show each side setting conditions the other found very difficult to accept, illustrating a widening, not narrowing, gap between the two positions over 1940–41.
Differences: Source A is a Japanese-initiated multilateral commitment aimed at strengthening Japan's diplomatic position through alliance with European Axis powers, reflecting a strategy of deterrence through alignment; Source B is a unilateral American diplomatic demand reflecting a strategy of economic and diplomatic pressure (the embargo) rather than alliance-building, since the United States had no equivalent formal alliance system in the Pacific at this stage. Source A is proactive and precedes the crisis of 1941, while Source B is reactive, issued after Japan's occupation of southern Indochina and the imposition of the oil embargo, and represents something close to a final diplomatic position rather than an opening move.

2.3 Case study 2: German and Italian expansion, 1933--1939

2.3.1 Hitler's aims and early steps, 1933–35

Adolf Hitler's foreign-policy programme, developed in *Mein Kampf* and refined once he became chancellor in January 1933, rested on three interlocking aims that shaped nearly every major decision examined in this section.

Hitler's foreign-policy aims

- **Reversing the Treaty of Versailles:** ending reparations, rearmament restrictions, territorial losses and the "war guilt" clause, which Hitler and German nationalists more broadly regarded as a humiliating *Diktat* imposed on a defeated but undefeated nation.
- **Uniting all German-speaking peoples** (*Grossdeutschland*) within a single Reich, bringing in populations in Austria, the Sudetenland and elsewhere left outside Germany's 1919 borders.
- ***Lebensraum* ("living space"):** the conquest of territory, above all in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, for German settlement, agricultural self-sufficiency and racial-ideological domination, combined with a violent anti-communism that framed the USSR as both an ideological enemy and the ultimate target of expansion.

Hitler moved cautiously but deliberately in his first two years in power. In October 1933 Germany withdrew from both the League of Nations and the ongoing Geneva Disarmament Conference, officially in protest at the other powers' refusal to grant Germany "equality of status" in armaments, but in practice removing an international framework that constrained German rearmament. In March 1935 Hitler took a much bolder step, publicly announcing the reintroduction of military conscription and the existence of a German air force (the Luftwaffe) – both flatly prohibited by the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. Crucially, no other power responded with anything beyond diplomatic protest.

The following month, in April 1935, representatives of Britain, France and Italy met at Stresa, in northern Italy, and formed the so-called Stresa Front, jointly condemning German rearmament and pledging to uphold the Locarno frontiers and the independence of Austria. The Stresa Front, however, collapsed within weeks of its own creation: in June 1935 Britain, acting entirely on its own initiative and without consulting its supposed Stresa partners, signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, permitting Germany to build a navy up to thirty-five per cent of British tonnage – itself a breach of Versailles that Britain unilaterally sanctioned. France and Italy were outraged at not being consulted, and the appearance of a united anti-German front, barely two months old, was exposed as hollow.

VN GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

Mục tiêu đối ngoại của Hitler gồm ba trụ cột: xoá bỏ Hiệp ước Versailles, thống nhất mọi vùng nói tiếng Đức (Grossdeutschland), và chinh phục "không gian sinh tồn" (Lebensraum) ở Đông Âu/Liên Xô. Đức rút khỏi Hội Quốc Liên và Hội nghị Giải trừ Quân bị năm 1933; công khai tái vũ trang và khôi phục chế độ nghĩa vụ quân sự tháng 3/1935 – vi phạm trực tiếp Versailles mà không bị trừng phạt. Mặt trận Stresa (Anh–Pháp–Ý, 4/1935) lên án việc này nhưng sụp đổ gần như ngay lập tức khi Anh tự ý ký Hiệp ước Hải quân Anh–Đức (6/1935), cho phép Đức xây dựng hải quân bằng 35% trọng tải Anh – một hành động đơn phương phá vỡ chính sự đoàn kết mà Stresa vừa tạo ra.

Practice 2.8 – Structured short answer

Explain why the Stresa Front of April 1935 failed to restrain German rearmament. [4 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

The Stresa Front, formed by Britain, France and Italy in April 1935 specifically to condemn German rearmament and defend the post-war territorial settlement, collapsed almost immediately because its own members did not act in a genuinely united way. Just two months later, in June 1935, Britain unilaterally signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, permitting German naval rearmament up to thirty-five per cent of British tonnage without consulting France or Italy. This directly contradicted the spirit of Stresa, since Britain itself sanctioned exactly the kind of unilateral treaty-breaking that Stresa had been formed to oppose. It signalled to Hitler that the Western powers were divided and that Britain, at least, was prepared to negotiate directly with Germany over rearmament rather than maintain a united front, encouraging him to press ahead with further, bolder violations of Versailles in the following years.

2.3.2 Abyssinia and the collapse of collective security

While Hitler tested the resolve of the Western powers in central Europe, Benito Mussolini pursued his own long-standing ambition to build an Italian empire in East Africa. In October 1935, Italian forces invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia), one of the few remaining independent African states and, significantly, a fellow member of the League of Nations. Mussolini's motives combined a search for colonial prestige and raw materials with a desire to avenge Italy's humiliating defeat at the Battle of Adwa in 1896, when Ethiopian forces had inflicted one of the few outright defeats of a European colonial army by an African state.

The invasion was conducted with notable brutality: Italian forces used mustard gas against Ethiopian troops and civilians, a direct violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning chemical weapons in warfare. The League of Nations condemned the invasion and voted to impose economic sanctions on Italy, but the sanctions list was deliberately drawn up to exclude oil – the one commodity whose denial might genuinely have crippled the Italian war effort – and the Suez Canal, Italy's main supply route to East Africa, remained open throughout the conflict. The credibility of even this limited sanctions regime was then shattered in December 1935, when the terms of a secret deal negotiated between British Foreign Secretary Samuel Hoare and French Prime Minister Pierre Laval were leaked to the press. The Hoare-Laval Pact proposed ceding roughly two-thirds of Abyssinia to Italian control in exchange for ending the war – a plan that, if implemented, would have rewarded outright aggression against a League member. Public outrage in Britain and France at the exposure of this secret bargain forced both governments to disown the plan; Hoare himself was compelled to resign.

By May 1936 Italian forces had captured Addis Ababa and completed the conquest of Abyssinia; Emperor Haile Selassie went into exile and delivered a memorable appeal to the League of Nations Assembly that went unanswered by any effective action. Italy formally withdrew from the League in 1937. The diplomatic fallout pushed Mussolini decisively toward Berlin: in October 1936 Italy and Germany announced the Rome-Berlin Axis, a loose statement of shared interests that hardened over the following years into the formal military alliance of the Pact of Steel, signed in May 1939.

Why the Abyssinian Crisis mattered beyond Africa: it demonstrated conclusively, to Hitler above all, that the League of Nations would condemn aggression in words while declining to impose sanctions capable of actually stopping it, that Britain and France would prioritise their own diplomatic and strategic convenience (courting Mussolini as a potential counterweight to Germany) over consistent enforcement of the League Covenant, and that the Stresa Front – already weakened by the Anglo-German Naval Agreement – was now finished as any kind of coordinated anti-German (or anti-Italian) alignment. Every subsequent German move examined in this chapter took place against this backdrop of demonstrated Western hesitancy.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Ý xâm lược Abyssinia (10/1935) để trả thù thất bại Adwa (1896) và mở rộng đế quốc, dùng cả khí độc – vi phạm Nghị định thư Geneva 1925. Hội Quốc Liên áp lệnh trừng phạt nhưng cố tình loại trừ dầu mỏ, khiến biện pháp này gần như vô hiệu. Hiệp ước Hoare–Laval (bí mật nhượng phần lớn Abyssinia cho Ý) bị rò rỉ cuối 1935, gây phẫn nộ công luận và sụp đổ. Ý hoàn tất chinh phục tháng 5/1936, rút khỏi Hội Quốc Liên năm 1937, và ngả hẳn về phía Đức qua Trục Rome–Berlin (10/1936), tiền đề cho Hiệp ước Thép (Pact of Steel, 5/1939). Sự kiện này cho thấy rõ ràng Hội Quốc Liên bất lực, càng khuyến khích Hitler hành động táo bạo hơn.

Practice 2.9 – OPCVL source analysis

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, value and limitations, analyse a League of Nations Assembly resolution of 1935 announcing economic sanctions against Italy following the invasion of Abyssinia, in which oil is notably absent from the list of restricted goods. [6 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: the source is an official resolution passed by the League of Nations Assembly, representing the collective (if compromised) position of the member states voting for sanctions against Italy. *Purpose:* its explicit purpose was to demonstrate to Italy, to Ethiopia and to the world that the League was responding to a clear act of aggression against a member state, upholding the principle of collective security. *Content:* the resolution would list specific goods restricted from sale to Italy, while conspicuously omitting oil – the single commodity most capable of halting Italy's military campaign given its dependence on imported petroleum for its navy, air force and mechanised army. *Value:* the document is highly valuable as direct evidence of the gap between the League's stated principles and its practical willingness to act; it allows historians to demonstrate precisely how self-interest (Britain and France's reluctance to alienate Italy entirely, given its potential value against Germany, and fear that an oil embargo might provoke Mussolini into war) shaped an ostensibly principled response. *Limitations:* as a formal diplomatic resolution, the document does not itself explain the private motives, disagreements or diplomatic bargaining (such as the concurrent secret Hoare-Laval negotiations) that lay behind the decision to exclude oil; a researcher would need supplementary sources, such as British and French cabinet records, to fully explain why the sanctions were designed as they were.

Practice 2.10 – To what extent

To what extent did the League of Nations' handling of the Abyssinian Crisis (1935–36) demonstrate the failure of collective security? [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Evidence supporting failure. The League's sanctions excluded oil and left the Suez Canal open, ensuring Italy could continue its campaign essentially unimpeded; the leaked Hoare-Laval Pact revealed that Britain and France were simultaneously negotiating to reward Italian aggression with territorial concessions, directly contradicting the principle that League members would act to reverse rather than legitimise conquest; and Italy completed its conquest of Abyssinia within months regardless of League condemnation, suffering no consequence beyond eventual withdrawal from the organisation in 1937 – an outcome Mussolini could clearly live with.
Some qualifications. The League did, for the first time, formally identify Italy as an aggressor and impose some economic sanctions, a modest departure from complete inaction; and the crisis did impose real diplomatic cost on Italy, distancing it (at least initially, before the Axis) from Britain and France.
A well-supported conclusion should judge that the Abyssinian Crisis represented a decisive failure of collective security in practice, even if not in principle: the episode showed that when a great power's aggression conflicted with the immediate diplomatic interests of Britain and France, those interests – not consistent enforcement of the Covenant – determined the League's actual response, a lesson Hitler drew directly and rapidly acted upon in the Rhineland the following spring.

2.3.3 The Rhineland, Spain, and Austria

Hitler drew a direct lesson from the Abyssinian Crisis: in March 1936, while international attention remained fixed on East Africa, German troops marched into and remilitarised the Rhineland, the zone along France's border that the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Pact of 1925 had both required to remain demilitarised. The move was a calculated gamble – German forces at the time were still far smaller than the French army, and Hitler later admitted the troops had orders to withdraw if France responded with force. No such response came: France, absorbed in its own domestic political instability and unwilling to act without British backing, took no military action, and Britain showed little appetite for confrontation over what many British commentators described, revealingly, as Germany merely reoccupying "its own back garden." The remilitarisation of the Rhineland removed the last significant physical and strategic constraint on German rearmament and westward military planning.

Later in 1936, civil war broke out in Spain between the Republican government and Nationalist forces under General Francisco Franco. Germany and Italy intervened decisively on Franco's side, both to support an ideologically sympathetic authoritarian movement and to use the conflict as a live testing ground for weapons, tactics and inter-service coordination. The German Condor Legion, an air unit dispatched to support Franco, carried out the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in April 1937, an attack on a civilian population centre that shocked international opinion (and inspired Picasso's famous painting) and offered an early, grim preview of the aerial bombardment of cities that would characterise the Second World War. The Spanish Civil War, which continued until 1939, also deepened the practical, military cooperation between Berlin and Rome that had begun with the Rome-Berlin Axis.

Austria had already been the scene of an earlier, failed attempt at Nazi-driven unification. In July 1934, Austrian Nazis attempted a coup and assassinated the Austrian chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, an authoritarian but independent-minded leader who had resisted Nazi influence. At this stage, however, Mussolini – then still on friendly terms with Austria and deeply suspicious of German ambitions on Italy's northern border – mobilised Italian troops at the Brenner Pass as a clear warning to Hitler, and Germany, unwilling to risk confrontation with Italy at this early stage, did not intervene to support the coup, which collapsed. The episode showed that Anschluss (union between Germany and Austria, explicitly forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles) required not just Nazi sympathisers inside Austria but also the absence of effective outside opposition.

By 1938, that outside opposition had evaporated. Italy, now aligned with Germany through the Axis rather than opposed to it, no longer had any interest in defending Austrian independence against Hitler. In March 1938 the Austrian chancellor, Kurt Schuschnigg, announced a plebiscite intended to demonstrate popular support for continued Austrian independence; Hitler, unwilling to risk a vote that might go against him, presented Schuschnigg with an ultimatum to cancel the plebiscite and resign in favour of a pro-Nazi replacement. German troops crossed into Austria on 12 March 1938 to a generally enthusiastic reception, and Austria was formally annexed (the Anschluss) into the German Reich. A retroactive plebiscite held in April 1938, conducted under conditions of intense intimidation and with no meaningful opposition permitted, recorded an approval rate of roughly ninety-nine per cent – a figure that testifies to the coercive conditions of the vote rather than to genuine, freely expressed public opinion.

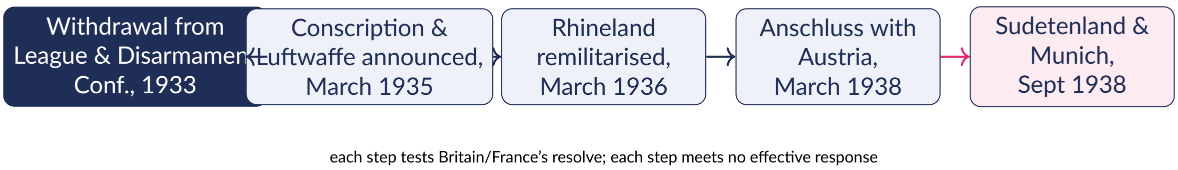

Figure 2.4. Germany's step-by-step revision of the post-war order, 1933–1938.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Tháng 3/1936, Đức tái vũ trang vùng Rhineland (vi phạm cả Versailles lẫn Locarno) trong lúc thế giới đang tập trung vào Abyssinia; Pháp và Anh không phản ứng quân sự. Nội chiến Tây Ban Nha (1936–39) là nơi Đức và Ý can thiệp ủng hộ Franco, gồm vụ ném bom Guernica (4/1937) gây chấn động dư luận quốc tế. Một âm mưu đảo chính thân Đức Quốc xã tại Áo năm 1934 thất bại (Thủ tướng Dollfuss bị ám sát) vì Mussolini điều quân tới đèo Brenner để cảnh cáo Hitler. Nhưng đến 3/1938, khi Ý đã ngả về phía Đức, Hitler sáp nhập Áo (Anschluss) mà không gặp trở ngại nào – cuộc trưng cầu dân ý sau đó (4/1938) cho ra kết quả "ủng hộ" khoảng 99% trong điều kiện bị cưỡng ép nặng nề.

Practice 2.11 – Structured short answer

(a) Explain why France and Britain did not respond militarily to the German remilitarisation of the Rhineland in March 1936. [4 marks]
(b) Explain why Mussolini did not support Germany during the attempted Nazi coup in Austria in July 1934, but did not oppose the Anschluss in March 1938. [4 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

(a) France did not respond militarily partly because of domestic political instability that made decisive foreign-policy action difficult, and partly because French military doctrine and public opinion were fundamentally defensive in orientation, built around reliance on the Maginot Line rather than offensive action; French leaders were also unwilling to act without firm British backing. Britain, for its part, showed little appetite for confrontation, with influential opinion regarding the move as Germany reoccupying what was, after all, its own territory, and British rearmament at this stage was not yet advanced enough to give policymakers confidence in a strong stance. The absence of any coordinated Anglo-French response confirmed to Hitler that treaty violations carried little practical risk.

(b) In 1934 Mussolini still regarded an independent Austria as a useful buffer protecting Italy's northern border and had not yet aligned with Germany; he therefore mobilised troops at the Brenner Pass to deter Hitler from supporting the Nazi coup that had just assassinated Chancellor Dollfuss, and Germany backed down rather than risk conflict with Italy. By 1938, however, the diplomatic landscape had changed completely: Italy's isolation after the Abyssinian Crisis and League sanctions had pushed Mussolini into the Rome-Berlin Axis with Hitler, so Italy no longer had either the will or the diplomatic position to defend Austrian independence against Germany, and Mussolini raised no objection when German troops entered Austria in March 1938.

Practice 2.12 – Examine

Examine the reasons why Germany was able to achieve the Anschluss with Austria in March 1938 without facing effective international opposition. [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Several factors combined to remove effective opposition to the Anschluss.

The changed position of Italy. In 1934 Mussolini had actively deterred a Nazi-backed Austrian coup by mobilising at the Brenner Pass; by 1938, Italy's estrangement from Britain and France after the Abyssinian sanctions had pushed it firmly into alignment with Germany via the Rome-Berlin Axis, removing the one power previously willing to act decisively to protect Austrian independence.

The precedent of unpunished treaty violation. Germany had already withdrawn from the League and the Disarmament Conference (1933), openly rearmed (1935) and remilitarised the Rhineland (1936) without facing any effective sanction; each unanswered step reduced the credibility of any future threat of intervention and encouraged Hitler to believe a fourth violation would meet the same passive response.

British and French policy priorities. Both governments were reluctant to risk war over what many in Britain, in particular, viewed as a legitimate expression of German-Austrian national kinship (consistent with the principle of self-determination, even though the Treaty of Versailles had explicitly forbidden Anschluss); British policy under Chamberlain was already moving toward a broader strategy of accommodating German grievances believed to be reasonable, a strategy that would soon be labelled appeasement.

Hitler's use of an internal ultimatum rather than outright invasion. By pressuring Schuschnigg to cancel his plebiscite and resign, and by ensuring Austrian Nazi sympathisers were positioned to invite German troops in, Hitler ensured events had the appearance of an internal Austrian political transition rather than a naked act of external aggression, making outside intervention appear both more difficult to justify and less urgent to Western observers.

A strong conclusion should note that the Anschluss succeeded not because of any single factor but because Germany's earlier, unpunished violations of Versailles had already dismantled the coalition of powers – Italy foremost among them – that might otherwise have opposed it.

2.3.4 The Sudeten Crisis and Munich

Emboldened by the Anschluss, Hitler turned next to Czechoslovakia, a state created in 1919 that contained a substantial German-speaking minority concentrated in the border region known as the Sudetenland. Konrad Henlein, leader of the Sudeten German Party and secretly directed and financed by Berlin, escalated a series of demands for Sudeten German autonomy throughout 1938, each calibrated by Hitler to be just difficult enough for the Czechoslovak government to refuse, providing a pretext for German intervention on behalf of an "oppressed" German minority.

As tension rose, the British government dispatched Lord Runciman on an official mediation mission to Czechoslovakia in August 1938 to investigate the Sudeten German grievances and propose a settlement; the Runciman Mission ultimately recommended concessions favourable to the Sudeten Germans, reinforcing the British view that some accommodation of Hitler's demands was reasonable. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain then took the unprecedented step of flying to Germany personally to negotiate directly with Hitler. At their first meeting, at Berchtesgaden on 15 September 1938, Chamberlain agreed in principle that areas of Czechoslovakia with a clear German-speaking majority should be allowed to join Germany through the principle of self-determination. When the two leaders met again at Godesberg on 22–23 September 1938, however, Hitler raised his demands substantially, now insisting on immediate German military occupation of the Sudetenland rather than a negotiated, phased transfer – terms that even Chamberlain initially found unacceptable, bringing Europe to the brink of war.

A final conference was convened at Munich on 29–30 September 1938, bringing together Chamberlain, French Prime Minister Édouard Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini (who proposed the conference and positioned himself as a mediator). Neither Czechoslovakia, whose territory was being decided, nor the Soviet Union, which had a mutual-assistance treaty with Czechoslovakia and had offered to honour it, was invited to participate. The Munich Agreement transferred the Sudetenland to Germany, along with its substantial fortifications, industry and ethnic German population, in exchange for Hitler's assurance that this represented his last territorial demand in Europe. Chamberlain returned to London and, addressing crowds outside 10 Downing Street, famously declared that he had secured "peace for our time" – a claim that would be catastrophically disproved within less than a year.

Appeasement

Appeasement was the policy, most closely associated with Chamberlain's government but reflecting a broader British and French consensus in the later 1930s, of making concessions to Germany's stated grievances in the belief that reasonable accommodation would satisfy Hitler's ambitions and preserve peace. It rested on several assumptions: that the Treaty of Versailles had indeed been overly harsh and that some German claims (self-determination for Austrian and Sudeten Germans, an end to unilateral disarmament) were legitimate; that Britain was militarily unprepared for war and needed time to rearm; that public opinion, still scarred by the losses of the First World War, would not support renewed conflict over what seemed to be limited, negotiable claims; and that a strong, stable Germany could act as a bulwark against Soviet communism. Critics both at the time (notably Winston Churchill) and among later historians have argued that appeasement mistook a limited, negotiable set of grievances for what was in fact an open-ended programme of expansion, and that each concession simply financed and emboldened the next demand.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Đảng Đức Sudeten của Henlein, được Berlin hậu thuẫn bí mật, liên tục đưa ra yêu sách tự trị cho vùng Sudetenland của Tiệp Khắc năm 1938. Phái đoàn Runciman (8/1938) khuyến nghị nhượng bộ. Chamberlain gặp Hitler tại Berchtesgaden (15/9/1938) rồi Godesberg (22–23/9/1938, Hitler tăng yêu sách). Hội nghị Munich (29–30/9/1938) – có Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, Mussolini, nhưng KHÔNG có Tiệp Khắc hay Liên Xô – nhượng vùng Sudetenland cho Đức. Chamberlain tuyên bố "peace for our time" khi về London – một tuyên bố sẽ nhanh chóng bị chứng minh là sai lầm. Chính sách xoa dịu (appeasement) xuất phát từ niềm tin Versailles quá khắc nghiệt, Anh chưa sẵn sàng chiến tranh, và hy vọng Đức mạnh sẽ là bức tường chắn chống chủ nghĩa cộng sản.

OPCVL worked example – a British newspaper report on the Munich Agreement

Source: an article published in a mainstream British national newspaper on 1 October 1938, reporting Chamberlain's return from Munich and reproducing his "peace for our time" remarks with broadly approving commentary.
Origin: a mainstream British newspaper, published the day after the Munich Agreement was signed and Chamberlain returned to London. *Purpose:* to inform British readers of the outcome of the conference and, through its editorial tone, to shape public opinion regarding the government's policy – in this case, most likely to reassure a public anxious about the recent risk of war. *Content:* likely to report the terms of the agreement, reproduce Chamberlain's public statements, and convey the immediate relief felt by much of the British public that war had, for the moment, been avoided. *Value:* valuable evidence of contemporary British public mood and of how the government's own justification for appeasement was communicated to, and apparently accepted by, ordinary readers at the time, before the policy's failure became evident. *Limitations:* a single newspaper's editorial line cannot represent the full range of contemporary opinion (Churchill and others were sharply critical at the time); published only one day after the agreement, it reflects immediate relief rather than considered, longer-term judgement, and it could not have anticipated Germany's occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia less than six months later.

Practice 2.13 – OPCVL source analysis

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, value and limitations, analyse a mainstream British national newspaper's front-page report, published on 1 October 1938, welcoming the Munich Agreement and Chamberlain's declaration of "peace for our time." [6 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: the source is a mainstream British newspaper report published the day immediately following the signing of the Munich Agreement and Chamberlain's return to London. *Purpose:* its purpose was to inform the British public of the settlement's terms and, through generally approving coverage, to reflect and reinforce a mood of relief, implicitly endorsing the government's policy of negotiation over confrontation. *Content:* the report would likely reproduce Chamberlain's own words, describe scenes of public celebration, and frame the agreement as a triumph of statesmanship that had averted a European war. *Value:* the source is valuable for establishing the genuine, widespread sense of relief among the British public in the immediate aftermath of Munich, helping historians understand why Chamberlain's policy commanded broad domestic support at the time, despite the reservations of some politicians; it also documents exactly how the government's justification for concession was communicated to ordinary citizens. *Limitations:* as a single newspaper's account written within a day of the event, it necessarily reflects immediate emotional relief rather than considered analysis, cannot represent the full spectrum of contemporary opinion (critics such as Churchill condemned the agreement even as it was signed), and – being written in September 1938 – could not know that Germany would occupy the remainder of Czechoslovakia within six months, an outcome that would fundamentally discredit the "peace for our time" claim.

Practice 2.14 – To what extent

To what extent was appeasement a reasonable policy for Britain and France to pursue toward Germany between 1935 and 1938? [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Case that appeasement was reasonable at the time. Britain in particular was militarily unprepared for a major war in the mid-to-late 1930s and needed time to rearm; public and political opinion, still shaped by the trauma of the First World War, had little appetite for renewed conflict over issues – Austrian and Sudeten German self-determination – that could plausibly be framed as legitimate grievances rather than limitless ambition; and some of Germany's early claims (equality in armaments, revision of what many regarded as an excessively punitive Versailles settlement) did have genuine merit on their own terms, distinct from the question of how far Hitler intended to go.
Case that appeasement was a serious misjudgement. Each concession – rearmament unchallenged in 1935, the Rhineland unopposed in 1936, the Anschluss unopposed in March 1938, the Sudetenland ceded at Munich – did not satisfy Hitler's ambitions but instead demonstrated to him that Britain and France would not resist, directly encouraging the next, larger demand; the exclusion of Czechoslovakia and the USSR from the Munich Conference undermined trust in Western commitments among precisely the states whose cooperation would be needed against future German aggression, and arguably contributed to the Soviet Union's decision to seek its own accommodation with Hitler in August 1939.
A strong response should reach a supported judgement rather than sit on the fence: many historians argue that appeasement was understandable given the constraints of 1935–37 (the need for time to rearm, the reasonableness of some early German claims) but became a serious strategic error by 1938, once the pattern of German behaviour after each concession made plain that Hitler's aims were not limited to reversing specific, negotiable grievances.

Practice 2.15 – Paper 1 Q2, cross-referencing

Source A: Neville Chamberlain's statement outside 10 Downing Street, late September 1938, declaring that the Munich Agreement represented "peace for our time."
Source B: a contemporary speech by Winston Churchill in the House of Commons, October 1938, condemning the Munich Agreement as a defeat disguised as a settlement and warning that Czechoslovakia had been sacrificed and that further German demands would follow.
Compare and contrast what Sources A and B reveal about British reactions to the Munich Agreement. [6 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: both sources are delivered by senior British political figures immediately after the Munich Agreement and both recognise that a major decision affecting the European balance of power has just been taken; neither source disputes the basic facts of what was agreed, only its meaning and likely consequences. Both speakers are also, in their own ways, addressing British public anxiety about the risk of war that had built up during September 1938.

Differences: Source A presents the agreement as a genuine diplomatic success that has secured lasting peace, reflecting the government's official justification for a policy of negotiated concession; Source B presents the same agreement as a strategic defeat, arguing that Czechoslovakia's security and fortifications have been surrendered without a fight and predicting, correctly, that further German demands would soon follow rather than be forestalled. The two sources therefore reveal a fundamental division in contemporary British political opinion: mainstream government and much public opinion initially shared Chamberlain's relief, while a minority, associated with Churchill, immediately regarded the settlement as appeasement of an insatiable aggressor rather than a durable peace.

2.3.5 From Munich to war

Hitler's assurance at Munich that the Sudetenland represented his last territorial demand proved worthless within six months. In March 1939 German forces occupied the remainder of Czechoslovakia: Bohemia and Moravia were absorbed directly as a German protectorate, while Slovakia was established as a nominally independent state that functioned in practice as a German client. That same month, Germany also annexed the port city and surrounding district of Klaipeda (Memel) from Lithuania, another small-scale territorial seizure that attracted less attention than Czechoslovakia but confirmed the pattern of continuing expansion.

The occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia – a state with no significant German-speaking majority population left to "liberate" – exposed the argument that Hitler's ambitions were limited to uniting German-speakers as fundamentally inadequate, and it transformed British and French policy virtually overnight. On 31 March 1939 Britain (with French support) issued a formal guarantee to Poland, pledging military assistance if Polish independence were threatened, a decisive break from the accommodating policy pursued at Munich and a clear signal that further German expansion by force would now be resisted.

Hitler's next target was Poland, and specifically the German-populated Free City of Danzig and the Polish Corridor separating East Prussia from the rest of Germany. To secure his eastern flank against the risk of a two-front war and to remove any prospect of Soviet support for Poland or the Western powers, Hitler negotiated a stunning reversal of ideological alignment: on 23 August 1939 Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact (the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), a non-aggression agreement between two states whose ideologies were nominally in complete opposition. A secret protocol attached to the pact divided Poland into German and Soviet zones of occupation and assigned the Baltic states to the Soviet sphere of influence, effectively giving Stalin a free hand in eastern Europe in exchange for Soviet neutrality while Germany dealt with Poland and, if necessary, the Western powers.

With his eastern flank secured, Hitler ordered the invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939. Britain and France, honouring their guarantee, declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939. On 17 September 1939, in accordance with the secret protocol, Soviet forces invaded Poland from the east, and the country was partitioned between Germany and the USSR within weeks – the opening campaign of a war that would become genuinely global once Japan's own campaign of expansion (examined in the previous section) merged with it after December 1941.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Tháng 3/1939, Đức chiếm nốt phần còn lại của Tiệp Khắc (Bohemia–Moravia thành lãnh thổ bảo hộ, Slovakia thành nhà nước bù nhìn) và sáp nhập Memel (Klaipeda) từ Lithuania – cho thấy rõ lời hứa tại Munich là dối trá. Anh (và Pháp) lập tức cam kết bảo vệ Ba Lan (31/3/1939). Hiệp ước Xô–Đức (Molotov–Ribbentrop, 23/8/1939) với nghị định thư bí mật chia Ba Lan và vùng Baltic thành hai khu vực ảnh hưởng, giúp Hitler yên tâm phía Đông trước khi tấn công Ba Lan (1/9/1939). Anh, Pháp tuyên chiến ngày 3/9/1939; Liên Xô xâm chiếm phía Đông Ba Lan ngày 17/9/1939, hoàn tất việc phân chia lãnh thổ.

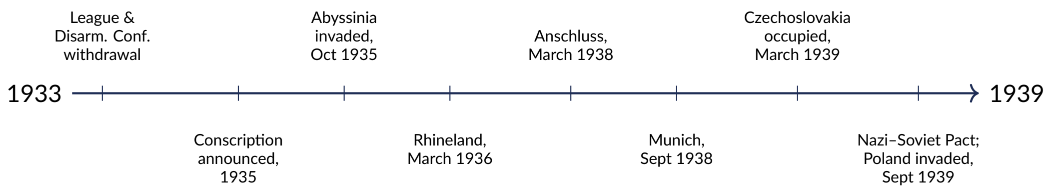

Figure 2.5. Germany and Italy, 1933–1939: from rearmament to the outbreak of war in Europe.

Practice 2.16 – Structured short answer

(a) Explain why Britain and France issued a guarantee to Poland in March 1939, having failed to guarantee Czechoslovakia's borders at Munich in 1938. [4 marks]
(b) Explain why Hitler and Stalin, ideological enemies, signed a non-aggression pact in August 1939. [4 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

(a) At Munich in September 1938, Britain and France still believed that Hitler's demands were limited and negotiable – specifically, restricted to uniting German-speaking populations such as the Sudeten Germans – and that accommodating this specific grievance would preserve peace. The German occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, a state with no substantial German-speaking population left to unite, decisively disproved this assumption: it showed that Hitler's ambitions extended to outright conquest of non-German territory, not merely the correction of specific, ethnically justified grievances. This shift in British and French assessment of Hitler's intentions led them to conclude that further concessions would not produce lasting peace, and that a clear, public commitment to resist future aggression – extended to Poland, the next likely target – was necessary to deter Hitler rather than encourage him further.
(b) Both dictators had immediate strategic reasons to set aside their ideological hostility. Hitler wanted to avoid a two-front war when he invaded Poland, securing Soviet neutrality (and, through the secret protocol, effective Soviet cooperation in partitioning Poland and eastern Europe) so that Germany would not have to fight the USSR and the Western powers simultaneously. Stalin, for his part, distrusted British and French intentions (suspecting they might prefer to see Germany and the USSR exhaust each other in war) and used the pact to buy time to continue rebuilding Soviet military strength, while the secret protocol allowed the Soviet Union to reclaim substantial territory in eastern Poland and the Baltic states without having to fight for it immediately.

Practice 2.17 – Examine

Examine the reasons for the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939. [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Long-term causes include the resentments created by the Treaty of Versailles, which gave Hitler's revisionist demands genuine domestic popularity in Germany, and the demonstrated weakness of collective security shown first by the League's handling of Manchuria and then decisively by the Abyssinian Crisis, which taught Hitler that treaty violations carried minimal cost.
Medium-term causes include the sequence of unopposed German actions between 1935 and 1938 – rearmament, the Rhineland, the Anschluss, the Sudetenland – each of which strengthened Germany's strategic position while reinforcing Hitler's belief that Britain and France

lacked the will to fight; the collapse of the Stresa Front; and the policy of appeasement itself, which, whatever its rationale, functioned in practice as a series of rewards for aggression. *Immediate causes* include the German occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, which discredited appeasement and produced the British guarantee to Poland; the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939, which removed the risk of Soviet opposition to a German invasion of Poland and gave Hitler the confidence to proceed; and Hitler's specific territorial demands regarding Danzig and the Polish Corridor, which Poland, backed by its British and French guarantees, refused to concede.

A strong conclusion should emphasise that while the invasion of Poland was the immediate trigger for the British and French declarations of war, the deeper explanation lies in the cumulative failure of collective security and Western deterrence since 1931 (Manchuria) and 1935 (Abyssinia), which convinced Hitler that further aggression would once again go unpunished – a calculation that, in the case of Poland, finally proved wrong.

2.4 Historiography of the origins of the Second World War

Historians have long debated not just the sequence of events described above, but the deeper question of how far Hitler was pursuing a fixed, premeditated programme of conquest, and how far he was an opportunist improvising in response to circumstances he did not fully control.

The orthodox / intentionalist interpretation

The orthodox view, dominant in the years immediately after 1945 and associated with the case presented by the prosecution at the Nuremberg trials, holds that Hitler possessed a clear, premeditated programme of expansion set out in broad outline as early as *Mein Kampf* (1925) and pursued with remarkable consistency thereafter. Central to this interpretation is the Hossbach Memorandum, the minutes of a meeting held on 5 November 1937 at which Hitler set out his expansionist intentions to his senior military and foreign-policy leadership. Historians in this tradition – sometimes labelled "intentionalists" – argue that this document, used as evidence at Nuremberg, demonstrates that Hitler's later actions (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland) were the deliberate unfolding of a long-held plan for German domination of Europe, rather than a series of improvised reactions to circumstance.

This orthodox consensus was challenged sharply in 1961, when the British historian A. J. P. Taylor published *The Origins of the Second World War*, one of the most controversial works of post-war historical writing. Taylor argued that Hitler, while undeniably an aggressive and unscrupulous nationalist leader with far-reaching ambitions, did not operate according to a fixed timetable or blueprint for war; rather, Taylor suggested, Hitler behaved largely as a traditional German statesman exploiting the mistakes, weaknesses and divisions of other powers opportunistically, improvising his diplomacy from crisis to crisis rather than executing a premeditated "war plan." Taylor's book provoked outrage among many historians and contemporaries, who accused him of appearing to minimise Hitler's personal responsibility for the war and of treating the Nazi regime as though it were conducting ordinary great-power diplomacy. The controversy nonetheless opened up a lasting and productive historiographical debate, sometimes described as the contest between "intentionalists," who emphasise Hitler's personal ideology and long-term intentions as the primary driving force of Nazi foreign policy, and "structuralists" (or "functionalists"), who emphasise the internal structures, institutional rivalries and radicalising dynamics of the Nazi regime and the wider international system as shaping and accelerating decisions that were not necessarily planned far in advance.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Trường phái chính thống ("intentionalist") cho rằng Hitler có một kế hoạch bành trướng có chủ đích từ rất sớm (từ Mein Kampf, 1925), và dẫn Bản ghi nhớ Hossbach (5/11/1937) – được dùng làm bằng chứng tại Tòa án Nuremberg – như minh chứng cho kế hoạch đó. Năm 1961, sử gia người Anh A.J.P. Taylor xuất bản cuốn *The Origins of the Second World War*, gây tranh cãi lớn khi cho rằng Hitler thực chất hành động như một chính khách cơ hội, tùy cơ ứng biến trước sai lầm của các cường quốc khác, chứ không theo một "kế hoạch chiến tranh" cố định. Cuộc tranh luận này mở ra trường phái "structuralist/functionalist", nhấn mạnh vai trò của cấu trúc nội bộ chế độ Đức Quốc xã và bối cảnh quốc tế, đối lập với trường phái intentionalist nhấn mạnh ý chí cá nhân của Hitler.

Practice 2.18 – OPCVL source analysis

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, value and limitations, analyse the Hossbach Memorandum (minutes of a meeting held on 5 November 1937, recording Hitler's statement of his expansionist aims to senior military and foreign-policy leaders) as a source for historians studying the origins of the Second World War. [6 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: the source is a set of official minutes, recorded by Colonel Friedrich Hossbach, of a meeting at which Hitler addressed his most senior military commanders and foreign-policy officials on 5 November 1937. *Purpose:* the meeting's purpose, from Hitler's perspective, was to communicate his strategic thinking and expansionist priorities to the small circle of officials whose cooperation he needed, rather than to make any public statement; the minutes themselves served as an internal administrative record of that meeting. *Content:* the document records Hitler setting out his view that Germany's future required territorial expansion, discussed candidly with his military and foreign-policy leadership rather than for any external audience. *Value:* the document is highly valuable to historians precisely because it was not intended for public consumption, and was later used as evidence at the Nuremberg trials to demonstrate the premeditated character of Nazi foreign policy; it offers a rare direct window into Hitler's private strategic thinking, addressed to the officials who would have to carry it out, rather than a public statement crafted for propaganda purposes. *Limitations:* the minutes were recorded by a single participant (Hossbach) and are therefore subject to the possibility of paraphrase, omission or emphasis reflecting his own understanding of the meeting; some historians, notably A. J. P. Taylor, have questioned how far the document proves a fixed, binding timetable for war as opposed to Hitler thinking aloud among a trusted circle, meaning its use as proof of a rigid "master plan" remains historiographically contested rather than universally accepted.

Practice 2.19 – Evaluate

Evaluate the extent to which A. J. P. Taylor's interpretation of Hitler's foreign policy in *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961) has been accepted by historians. [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Case for Taylor's interpretation. Taylor could point to real examples of apparent improvisation: the Rhineland remilitarisation in 1936 was a calculated risk rather than the execution of a fixed timetable, the Anschluss in 1938 unfolded rapidly out of a domestic Austrian political crisis rather than a long-prepared invasion plan, and Hitler repeatedly adjusted his tactics (as at Godesberg, where he raised his demands beyond what had been agreed at Berchtesgaden) in response to what other powers would tolerate, suggesting flexible opportunism rather than rigid adherence to a pre-set plan.

Case against Taylor's interpretation. Critics point to the consistency of Hitler's stated aims from *Mein Kampf* onward – reversing Versailles, uniting German-speakers, securing Lebensraum in the east – as evidence of an underlying, consistent ideological programme even if the specific timing and tactics of individual steps were improvised; the Hossbach Memorandum, though a single, contested document, was treated by the Nuremberg prosecution and by many subsequent historians as showing that Hitler did discuss expansion by force with his military leadership well in advance, undermining the idea that he was purely reactive.

Overall historiographical assessment. Taylor's specific claim that Hitler had no more expansionist intent than a "traditional" German statesman is now widely regarded by historians as understated and has not been broadly accepted in its strongest form; however, his broader argument – that Hitler's foreign policy combined genuine ideological goals with real opportunism and improvisation in timing and method – has been influential and has fed into the more balanced structuralist/functionalist scholarship that followed, which sees Nazi foreign policy as driven by both Hitler's ideological intentions and the radicalising dynamics of the regime and international circumstances. A strong answer should conclude that Taylor's work is valued today less for its specific conclusions about Hitler's motives, which most historians now reject or heavily qualify, than for the methodological debate it provoked about how historians should weigh ideology, intention and structural circumstance in explaining the causes of the war.

2.5 Comparing the two case studies

Although Japanese expansion in East Asia and German/Italian expansion in Europe unfolded on different continents, in different political systems and largely independently of one another until the Tripartite Pact of 1940, IB Paper 1 and Paper 2/3 questions frequently require direct comparison between the two. The comparison rewards attention both to genuine parallels and to important differences in the mechanics of decision-making.

Dimension	Japan, 1931–41	Germany & Italy, 1933–39
Driving force	Military-led ultranationalism; no single, coherent "master plan," but a recurring pattern of field initiative (gekokujo) later ratified by Tokyo	Centrally directed ideological programme (reversing Versailles, uniting German-speakers, Lebensraum), articulated consistently by Hitler personally
Decision-making	Often driven by the Kwantung Army acting independently in the field; civilian government frequently presented with a fait accompli	Overwhelmingly directed by Hitler personally, though the specific timing and tactics of individual steps were often improvised in response to circumstance
First major test of the League	Manchuria, 1931–33 (Lytton Report condemns Japan; no sanctions applied)	Abyssinia, 1935–36, and the Rhineland, 1936 (sanctions on Italy exclude oil; no response to German remilitarisation)
Consequence of the League's weak response	Confirmed the League powerless in the Far East; emboldened the move to full-scale war with China in 1937	Confirmed collective security powerless in Europe; emboldened the Anschluss, the Sudeten Crisis and, ultimately, the invasion of Poland
Outcome	Full-scale war with China (1937), expansion into French Indochina, war with the United States and Britain from December 1941	War in Europe from September 1939, following the invasion of Poland

Table 2.1. Comparing the two Paper 1 case studies: Japanese and German/Italian expansion.

Both case studies illustrate the same underlying lesson about the international order of the 1930s: whenever the League of Nations or the Western powers were tested by outright aggression – Manchuria in 1931, Abyssinia in 1935, the Rhineland in 1936 – the response fell well short of what the League Covenant promised, and in each case the aggressor absorbed at most a limited, manageable diplomatic cost. The critical difference lies in the mechanism of decision-making: Japanese expansion was frequently improvised from below by an autonomous, insubordinate military, while German expansion was directed from above by a single individual pursuing a consistent (if flexibly executed) ideological programme – a distinction central to any strong Compare and Contrast response on this topic.

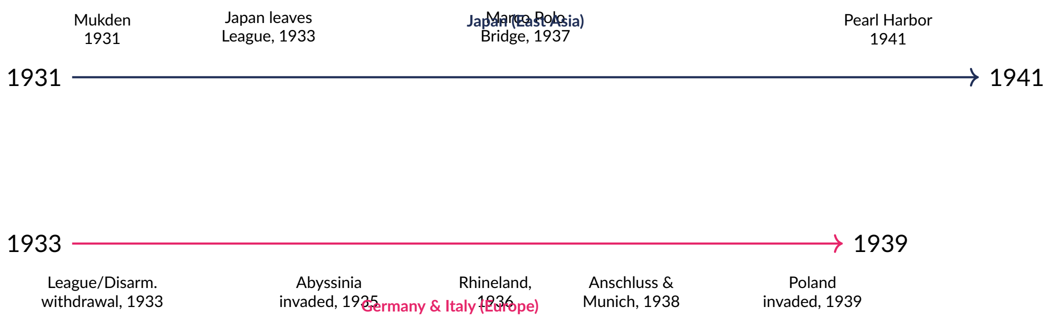

Figure 2.6. The two case studies compared on parallel timelines: recurring patterns of unpunished aggression, 1931–1941.

Practice 2.20 – Compare and contrast

Compare and contrast the methods used by Japan and by Germany/Italy to achieve territorial expansion in the period 1931–1939. [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities. Both Japan and Germany/Italy exploited the structural weaknesses of the League of Nations, relying on its lack of an independent enforcement mechanism and the reluctance of Britain and France to risk military confrontation; both used manufactured or opportunistic pretexts to justify aggression (the staged explosion at Mukden; Henlein's orchestrated Sudeten German demands); and both established puppet or client political structures to give their conquests a veneer of local legitimacy (Manchukuo under Puyi; the Wang Jingwei regime in China; the nominally independent Slovak state after March 1939).

Differences. Japanese expansion was frequently initiated by the independent action of field commanders (the Kwantung Army) under the pattern of gekokujo, with the civilian government in Tokyo often ratifying decisions after the fact rather than directing them; German and Italian expansion, by contrast, was directed far more consistently from the top, with Hitler personally negotiating, timing and escalating each step (though often improvising tactics, as at Godesberg). Japan's expansion also proceeded through sustained, large-scale warfare against China from 1937 onward, whereas Germany's major territorial gains before September 1939 (the Rhineland, Austria, the Sudetenland, the rest of Czechoslovakia) were achieved without full-scale war, through a combination of intimidation, diplomacy and the West's unwillingness to resist – it was only the invasion of Poland that finally triggered a wider European war.

A strong response should conclude that while both powers exploited an identical structural weakness in the international system, the internal mechanics of Japanese and German decision-making differed in important ways, and this difference in method is itself linked to a difference in outcome: Germany's expansion escalated in Europe from September 1939, while Japan's expansion escalated into a Pacific war only after the added pressure of American economic sanctions in 1941.

Practice 2.21 – Structured short answer

Compare the role played by puppet or collaborationist regimes in Japanese expansion (Manchukuo; the Wang Jingwei regime) with their role in German expansion (post-Munich Slovakia). [6 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

In both cases, the aggressor power established a nominally independent or autonomous political structure to disguise direct control as a form of local self-government, reducing (though never eliminating) the appearance of outright annexation and providing a rhetorical justification – self-determination or local partnership – for continued occupation. Manchukuo (1932), under the figurehead Puyi, and the Wang Jingwei regime in Nanjing (1940) both served Japan's purposes by attempting to demonstrate that Japanese-directed authority in China and Manchuria enjoyed Chinese consent, even though real power remained with Japanese military and civilian advisers. Similarly, the nominally independent Slovak state created after the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939 allowed Germany to argue that it was not annexing the whole of Czechoslovakia outright, while in practice Slovakia functioned as a German client state. The key difference is scale and purpose within the wider strategy: Manchukuo and the Wang Jingwei regime were central, long-running instruments for administering a large occupied population across years of continuing warfare, whereas the Slovak state was a comparatively minor, short-term diplomatic device used to make a single act of annexation appear less absolute, within a much faster-moving sequence of German territorial moves.

2.6 Exam practice: consolidated Paper 1 and Paper 2/3 bank

The items below draw on material from across the whole chapter and are designed to be attempted after both case studies have been revised together.

Practice 2.22 – OPCVL source analysis

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, value and limitations, analyse a Japanese government propaganda poster from the late 1930s depicting Japan, Manchukuo and China as three figures joining hands beneath the slogan of a "New Order in East Asia," intended for domestic Japanese and occupied Chinese audiences. [6 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: the poster originates from official or officially sanctioned Japanese propaganda channels in the late 1930s, during the period when Prime Minister Konoe's "New Order in East Asia" concept was being actively promoted. *Purpose:* its purpose was to legitimise continued Japanese military presence and economic control in China by presenting it as harmonious partnership rather than conquest, aimed at reassuring domestic Japanese opinion of the justice of the war effort and, where distributed in occupied areas, at encouraging Chinese acquiescence. *Content:* the poster would show the three "partners" – Japan, Manchukuo and China – as equal, cooperating figures, deliberately omitting any depiction of the ongoing war, the Nanjing Massacre or the coercive reality of Manchukuo and the Wang Jingwei regime. *Value:* the source is valuable evidence of how the Japanese government wished to represent its expansion to its own public and to occupied populations, illustrating the official justificatory language (partnership, liberation from Western imperialism) used to legitimise what was in fact military occupation and resource extraction. *Limitations:* as propaganda, the poster cannot be taken as an accurate description of conditions in occupied China or Manchukuo, and it says nothing about Chinese resistance, the Second United Front, or wartime atrocities; a historian would need to cross-reference it with military records, eyewitness accounts and Chinese sources to assess how far (if at all) the depicted harmony corresponded to reality.

Practice 2.23 – Paper 1 Q2, cross-referencing

Source A: the Lytton Commission's report, October 1932, concluding that Japan's occupation of Manchuria could not be justified as self-defence and that Manchukuo did not represent genuine local self-determination.
Source B: a statement by the League of Nations Assembly, February 1933, formally adopting the Lytton Report's findings, followed by Japan's announcement of withdrawal from the League in March 1933.
Compare and contrast what Sources A and B reveal about the effectiveness of the League of Nations in responding to the Manchurian Crisis. [6 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: both sources show the League acting broadly in accordance with its own investigative and deliberative procedures – commissioning an independent inquiry (Source A) and then formally adopting its findings through an Assembly vote (Source B) – suggesting that, on paper, the League's collective-security machinery functioned as designed, correctly identifying Japan as the aggressor in both documents.
Differences: Source A is essentially diagnostic, a factual and legal judgement about what happened and why it could not be justified, produced by an independent investigative commission; Source B is a formal political outcome, revealing that the practical consequence of the League correctly identifying an aggressor was not intervention, sanction or reversal of the occupation, but simply Japan's withdrawal from the organisation altogether. Read together, the two sources show a telling gap between the League's diagnostic capacity (accurately identifying aggression) and its enforcement capacity (being unable to compel a change in Japan's behaviour), which is precisely the structural weakness of collective security examined earlier in this chapter.

Practice 2.24 – Structured short answer

(a) Identify two ways in which economic factors contributed to Japanese expansion between 1931 and 1937. [4 marks]
(b) Identify two ways in which economic factors contributed to the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States in 1941. [4 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

(a) First, the collapse of Japan's silk export trade during the Great Depression devastated the rural economy and strengthened nationalist arguments that Japan required secure access to raw materials and markets on the Asian mainland, feeding support for a more assertive continental policy. Second, Manchuria itself offered coal, iron ore and agricultural land that nationalist and military planners argued Japan needed to reduce its dependence on imported resources and to sustain a self-sufficient war economy, providing a concrete economic incentive behind the Kwantung Army's occupation of the region in 1931.
(b) First, the United States, Britain and the Dutch government-in-exile imposed an asset freeze and a comprehensive oil embargo on Japan after its occupation of southern Indochina in July 1941, cutting off the overwhelming majority of Japan's petroleum supply and creating a finite window in which Japan's navy and war economy could continue to function, sharply increasing pressure for a rapid decision. Second, Japan's own drive to secure the oil and raw materials of South-East Asia (the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya) was itself an economic motive for war, since a diplomatic retreat from China and Indochina, as demanded by the Hull Note, was seen by Japanese military leaders as economically unacceptable after years of costly investment in continental expansion.

Practice 2.25 – Examine

Examine the reasons why the policy of collective security, as embodied in the League of Nations, failed to prevent aggression in both East Asia and Europe during the 1930s. [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Structural weaknesses of the League itself. As established in Section 2.1, the League lacked any independent army or police force, required near-unanimous agreement for significant action, operated without the participation of the United States, and moved through slow investigative and deliberative procedures that gave aggressors time to consolidate their gains – weaknesses present from the League's founding and exploited identically by Japan over Manchuria and by Italy over Abyssinia.

The priorities of Britain and France. In both case studies, Britain and France repeatedly placed their own immediate diplomatic and strategic interests above consistent enforcement of the Covenant: they hesitated to alienate Japan given their competing interests in Asia, and they excluded oil from sanctions against Italy and negotiated the Hoare-Laval Pact partly because they hoped to keep Mussolini as a potential counterweight to Germany.

The cumulative, self-reinforcing effect of unpunished aggression. Each unpunished act of aggression – Manchuria in 1931–33, Abyssinia in 1935–36, the Rhineland in 1936 – reduced the credibility of any future threat of collective action and directly encouraged the next aggressor, or the same aggressor's next step, since the practical cost of defying the League had been shown, repeatedly, to be manageable.

Differences in ultimate outcome should also be noted. in East Asia, the failure of collective security allowed Japan to escalate gradually from Manchuria to full war with China and eventually South-East Asia and the Pacific; in Europe, the same pattern of failure allowed Germany to escalate from rearmament to the outright invasion of Poland, at which point Britain and France finally abandoned appeasement and declared war – suggesting that collective security's failure was not merely a passive absence of response but an active contributor to the timing and confidence with which both Japan and Germany chose to escalate.

A convincing conclusion should draw the two case studies together explicitly, arguing that the failure of collective security in the 1930s was not two isolated episodes but a single, connected pattern in which each unpunished crisis lowered the perceived risk of the next, across both continents.

Practice 2.26 – Compare and contrast

Compare and contrast the roles played by Britain in responding to Japanese expansion in Manchuria (1931–33) and to German expansion in the Rhineland and Sudetenland (1936–38). [15 marks]

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities. In both cases Britain, as a leading member of the League of Nations (in the Manchurian case) and as the central diplomatic actor in Europe (in the German case), prioritised avoiding direct military confrontation over enforcing international agreements by force; in both cases Britain supported or accepted formal condemnation of the aggressor in principle (the Lytton Report; criticism of German treaty violations) while declining to back that condemnation with effective sanctions or military deterrence; and in both cases British policymakers were influenced by domestic public opinion that had little appetite for war so soon after 1918, and by competing strategic priorities elsewhere (imperial commitments in Asia; rearmament timetables in Europe).

Differences. Over Manchuria, Britain acted primarily through the multilateral framework of the League of Nations, supporting the Lytton Commission's investigation but taking no significant unilateral action of its own, since British interests in China, while real, were not judged to justify the risks of confronting Japan directly. Over Germany, by contrast, Britain increasingly pursued direct, bilateral diplomacy outside the League framework altogether – most clearly in Chamberlain's personal negotiations with Hitler at Berchtesgaden, Godesberg and Munich – reflecting both the League's by-then evident irrelevance as an enforcement mechanism and Britain's judgement that Germany, unlike Japan, posed a direct and proximate threat to core

British and European security interests that required active, direct management rather than passive multilateral condemnation.
A strong conclusion should note that the shift from multilateral passivity (Manchuria) to direct bilateral appeasement (Germany) reflects both the declining credibility of the League by the late 1930s and Britain's growing recognition, evident by 1938–39, that a European conflict posed a far more immediate danger to British security than events in East Asia – a recognition that nonetheless still failed, in the short term, to prevent war.

Causes and Effects of 20th-Century Wars

> **Mục tiêu Unit:** Sau unit này, học viên có thể: (1) phân tích và phân loại nguyên nhân dài hạn, trung hạn và ngắn hạn dẫn đến Thế Chiến I và Thế Chiến II theo khung MAIN và các mốc thời gian cụ thể; (2) trình bày diễn biến Khủng hoảng Tháng Bảy 1914 và chuỗi tuyên chiến hình thành từ hệ thống liên minh; (3) mô tả bản chất của hai cuộc chiến (chiến tranh chiến hào, chiến tranh tổng lực, Blitzkrieg, Holocaust, vũ khí hạt nhân); (4) đánh giá hậu quả chính trị, kinh tế, xã hội của hai cuộc chiến qua Hòa ước Versailles, Hội Quốc Liên, Liên Hợp Quốc và Tòa án Nuremberg; (5) so sánh nguyên nhân và hậu quả của hai cuộc chiến, vận dụng các trường phái sử học (Fischer, Clark, Taylor); (6) luyện kỹ năng OPCVL phân tích nguồn sử liệu và viết bài luận Paper 2 dạng so sánh, đánh giá và "to what extent".

This chapter addresses IB History Paper 2, World History Topic 10: *Causes and effects of twentieth-century wars*, using the First World War (1914–1918) and the Second World War (1939–1945) as the two principal case studies. Paper 2 questions are essay-based and thematic rather than narrative: instead of describing one country's experience in isolation, students are asked to identify patterns of causation — long-term, medium-term and immediate — and patterns of consequence — political, economic, social, diplomatic — that can be compared meaningfully across more than one conflict. This differs in emphasis from the *Move to Global War* prescribed subject covered earlier in this book, which follows the specific diplomatic and military path to war in Europe and East Asia through a source-based, Paper 1 lens. Here, the two world wars are treated as a single comparative unit built for essay writing: causes, nature, and effects, followed by historiographical debate and direct comparison.

> **Chapter map.** Section 1 – long-term causes of WWI (MAIN). Section 2 – the July Crisis of 1914. Section 3 – the nature of WWI. Section 4 – effects of WWI and the peace settlement. Section 5 – the nature of WWII. Section 6 – effects of WWII. Section 7 – historiography of the causes of war. Section 8 – comparing the two wars, with an extended practice bank.

3.1 Long-term causes of the First World War

By 1914, the major European powers had avoided a general continental war for close to a century, yet beneath this surface stability, several structural tensions had been accumulating for decades. Historians commonly organise these long-term causes using the acronym **MAIN**: Militarism, Alliances, Imperialism and Nationalism. No single strand made war in 1914 inevitable; together, however, they created a continent primed to convert a localised crisis into a general war within weeks.

> **MAIN in one line:** an arms race hardened military options into rigid plans (Militarism); two rival blocs turned a bilateral dispute into a continental one (Alliances); colonial competition sharpened great-power distrust (Imperialism); and ethnic nationalism destabilised the multinational empires of the east while fuelling revanchism in the west (Nationalism).

3.1.1 Militarism

From the mid-1890s, Germany's naval programme — driven by Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz and enacted through a series of Fleet Acts — set out to build a battle fleet capable of challenging British naval supremacy. Britain's response after 1906, the launch of *HMS Dreadnought*, a revolutionary all-big-gun battleship that instantly made older vessels obsolete, triggered an intense Anglo-German naval race: each new class of dreadnought from one side was matched by the other, and naval spending consumed an ever-larger share of both national budgets. The race did more than strain treasuries; it convinced British policymakers that Germany's ambitions were not merely commercial but strategic, and pushed London further into informal partnership with France and Russia.

On land, every major power maintained large conscript armies overseen by professional general staffs that drew up detailed mobilisation and offensive plans years in advance. Germany's plan, associated with Chief of the General Staff Alfred von Schlieffen, assumed that Germany would eventually have to fight France and Russia simultaneously. Because Russia's army was larger but slower to mobilise across its vast territory, the plan committed Germany to a rapid knockout blow against France first — through neutral Belgium, to outflank French frontier defences — before turning east to face Russia. The critical consequence was that German mobilisation was, by design, indistinguishable from an offensive war plan on a fixed railway timetable: there was no German plan for a purely defensive or partial mobilisation. Once the machinery of mobilisation began, diplomats on every side found their room for manoeuvre collapsing.

3.1.2 The alliance system

Following Germany's unification and victory over France in 1871, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck worked to isolate France diplomatically. The result was the **Triple Alliance** of 1882, binding Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy in a defensive pact. Over the following decades a counter-bloc formed: the **Franco-Russian Alliance** of 1894 gave France a powerful ally in the east; the **Entente Cordiale** of 1904 resolved long-standing Anglo-French colonial disputes and drew Britain and France into closer diplomatic cooperation; and the **Anglo-Russian Entente** of 1907 settled British and Russian rivalry over Persia and Central Asia. Together these three agreements formed what became known as the **Triple Entente**. None of the Entente agreements was, on paper, a binding military alliance in the way the Triple Alliance was — but in practice they created strong diplomatic and military expectations of mutual support. By 1914, Europe was effectively divided into two armed camps, so that a dispute involving any two powers carried a real risk of drawing in their respective partners.

3.1.3 Imperialism

Competition for colonial markets, raw materials and strategic prestige added another layer of great-power rivalry, particularly as a newly unified and industrialising Germany pursued *Weltpolitik* — a "world policy" of overseas expansion that inevitably collided with the established British and French empires. Two crises over Morocco illustrate how imperial rivalry reinforced the alliance blocs rather than remaining a separate issue. In the **First Moroccan (Tangier) Crisis of 1905**, Kaiser Wilhelm II's visit to Tangier publicly challenged French claims over Morocco, testing whether the new Entente Cordiale would hold; the crisis was resolved diplomatically at the Algeciras Conference, but it hardened Anglo-French solidarity rather than weakening it. In the **Agadir Crisis of 1911**, Germany dispatched the gunboat *Panther* to the Moroccan port of Agadir in a further challenge over French influence; again the crisis was resolved without war, but it deepened British suspicion that Germany was willing to risk confrontation to test the Entente, further entrenching the two-bloc system.

3.1.4 Nationalism

In south-eastern Europe, the gradual decline of Ottoman power left a volatile "powder keg" of competing national ambitions. Serbian nationalism, in particular, sought to unite South Slav peoples — including those living inside Austria-Hungary's own borders — directly threatening the cohesion of the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire. The **Balkan Wars of 1912–13** reshaped the region, significantly expanding Serbia's territory and self-confidence and alarming Vienna still further about the durability of its southern frontier. In Western Europe, French **revanchism** — the desire to recover Alsace-Lorraine, lost to Germany after France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 — kept alive a specific, personal grievance against Germany within French politics and made the Franco-Russian alliance strategically indispensable to Paris.

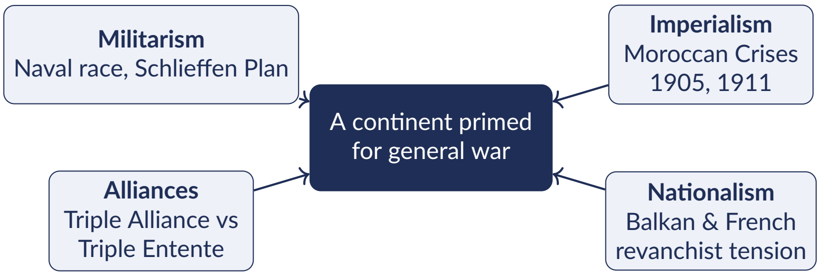

Figure 3.1 — The four long-term (MAIN) causes of the First World War converging by 1914.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Bốn nguyên nhân dài hạn của Thế Chiến I được ghi nhớ qua từ khóa **MAIN**: **M**ilitarism (chạy đua vũ trang Anh–Đức, Kế hoạch Schlieffen buộc Đức phải tấn công chớp nhoáng), **A**lliances (Liên minh Ba bên Đức–Áo-Hung–Ý đối đầu Hiệp ước Ba bên Anh–Pháp–Nga), **I**mperialism (tranh giành thuộc địa, hai cuộc khủng hoảng Morocco 1905 và 1911), và **N**ationalism (chủ nghĩa dân tộc Balkan đe dọa Áo-Hung, tinh thần phục thù của Pháp về Alsace-Lorraine). Không yếu tố nào một mình gây ra chiến tranh, nhưng cộng hưởng lại khiến châu Âu trở thành một "thùng thuốc súng" chỉ chờ ngòi nổ.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Many essays simply list the four MAIN factors without explaining *how* each one narrowed the options available to decision-makers in 1914. A strong Paper 2 answer must show the mechanism: for example, not just "there were alliances" but "the alliance system meant that Russian mobilisation in support of Serbia automatically triggered German mobilisation under the Schlieffen Plan, which in turn required an attack on France." Simply naming causes without connecting them to the July Crisis rarely earns top marks.

Practice 1 — Structured short-answer

Explain **two** ways in which militarism increased tension between the great powers of Europe before 1914.

Lời giải chi tiết

Point 1 — the Anglo-German naval race. After the launch of *HMS Dreadnought* in 1906, Germany's Fleet Acts committed it to matching Britain's new class of all-big-gun battleships. Because *Dreadnought* instantly rendered older ships obsolete, both navies effectively had to rebuild from a similar starting point, producing an intense and highly public arms race. This convinced British opinion that Germany's ambitions were strategic rather than purely commercial, and pushed Britain into closer, more binding cooperation with France.

Point 2 — the Schlieffen Plan and the logic of mobilisation. Germany's war plan assumed a two-front war against France and Russia and required a rapid knockout of France, via Belgium, before Russia's slower mobilisation was complete. This meant German mobilisation *was* the war plan — there was no partial or purely defensive option. Once Russia began mobilising to support Serbia in late July 1914, German military planners argued that any delay would fatally undermine the Schlieffen timetable, removing flexibility from the diplomats.

Linking sentence: both examples show militarism operating not simply as background tension but as a mechanism that converted diplomatic crises into rigid military timetables.

Practice 2 — Source analysis (OPCVL)

Source: adapted from a British newspaper editorial, July 1911, commenting on the Agadir Crisis.
"The despatch of a German gunboat to a Moroccan port that concerns France and Britain far more than Germany can only be read as a deliberate test of the friendship between London and Paris. If we do not stand firmly beside our French friends now, we invite further and bolder tests of our resolve in the future."

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, and value and limitations, analyse this source for a historian studying the causes of the First World War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: the source is a British newspaper editorial from 1911, written during the Agadir Crisis, a moment of acute Anglo-German tension over Morocco.
Purpose: editorials aim to shape public and political opinion; here, the purpose is to argue that Britain must support France firmly against Germany.
Content: the extract frames the German gunboat's arrival as a deliberate provocation designed to test, rather than genuinely pursue, an interest in Morocco, and calls explicitly for solidarity with France.
Value: the source is valuable evidence of *contemporary British perceptions* of German intentions — it shows how the Moroccan crises were read in Britain not as isolated colonial disputes but as tests of the Entente Cordiale, helping explain why the crises hardened alliance blocs rather than remaining strictly colonial matters.
Limitations: as an editorial, it reflects opinion and persuasive intent rather than a neutral assessment of German policy; it cannot tell us Germany's actual objectives in Agadir, and a single newspaper cannot be assumed to represent the full range of British official or public opinion at the time.

3.2 The July Crisis and the outbreak of war

If the MAIN factors explain *why* Europe was primed for a general war, the July Crisis of 1914 explains *how* a regional assassination in the Balkans escalated, within about five weeks, into a war engulfing the entire continent.

On **28 June 1914**, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife Sophie were assassinated in Sarajevo, the capital of the recently annexed province of Bosnia, by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb nationalist linked to the secretive Black Hand network. Austria-Hungary suspected — correctly — that elements of the Serbian state had assisted the plotters, and moved to punish Serbia decisively. Before acting, Vienna sought assurance of German backing: on **5 July 1914**, Germany issued what is often called the "**blank cheque**" — an unconditional pledge of support for Austria-Hungary regardless of the consequences, including the risk of Russian intervention. This encouraged Vienna to act more aggressively than it might otherwise have dared.

On **23 July 1914**, Austria-Hungary delivered an ultimatum to Serbia containing a series of harsh demands, deliberately drafted to be difficult for any sovereign government to accept in full — including a demand that Austro-Hungarian officials be permitted to participate directly in an investigation on Serbian soil. Serbia was given only forty-eight hours to respond. On **25 July**, Serbia's reply accepted most of the demands but stopped short of accepting direct Austro-Hungarian involvement in its internal investigation, while simultaneously ordering the mobilisation of its own army as a precaution. Austria-Hungary judged the response insufficient and, on **28 July 1914**, declared war on Serbia.

Russia, as Serbia's traditional protector and a fellow Slavic and Orthodox power, began mobilising its army in the following days in support of Serbia. Because Germany's war planning treated Russian mobilisation as the trigger for its own two-front strategy, Germany declared war on Russia on **1 August 1914**. Two days later, on **3 August**, Germany declared war on France, Russia's ally. On **4 August**, German forces began implementing the Schlieffen Plan by invading neutral Belgium in order to outflank French defences — and it was this invasion, violating an 1839 treaty guaranteeing Belgian neutrality that Britain had itself signed, which brought Britain into the war against Germany later that same day.

From Sarajevo to general war in five weeks: 28 June (assassination) → 5 July (German blank cheque) → 23 July (Austro-Hungarian ultimatum) → 28 July (Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia) → 1 August (Germany declares war on Russia) → 3–4 August (Germany declares war on France, invades Belgium, Britain declares war on Germany). Within roughly one week of Austria-Hungary's declaration of war on Serbia, the alliance system had converted a regional Balkan dispute into a general European war.

Figure 3.2 — The July Crisis: from a regional assassination to a general European war.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Khủng hoảng Tháng Bảy cho thấy hệ thống liên minh đã biến một vụ ám sát ở Balkan thành chiến tranh toàn châu Âu chỉ trong khoảng năm tuần. Vụ ám sát Thái tử Franz Ferdinand (28/6/1914) dẫn đến "tấm séc trắng" của Đức (5/7), tối hậu thư khắc nghiệt của Áo-Hung gửi Serbia (23/7), Áo-Hung tuyên chiến với Serbia (28/7), Nga động viên quân đội để bảo vệ Serbia, kéo theo Đức tuyên chiến với Nga (1/8) rồi với Pháp (3/8), và cuối cùng Anh tuyên chiến với Đức (4/8) vì Đức xâm phạm nền trung lập của Bỉ. Đây là ví dụ kinh điển cho thấy các hiệp ước liên minh có thể biến xung đột khu vực thành chiến tranh toàn cầu.

Worked example — reading the ultimatum as a source

Source (paraphrased): the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum of 23 July 1914 demanded, among other things, that Serbia suppress all anti-Austrian propaganda and organisations, dismiss officials named by Austria-Hungary, and allow Austro-Hungarian officials to take part in the investigation into the assassination on Serbian territory — with a response required within forty-eight hours.

Analysis: the deliberately short deadline and the demand for direct Austro-Hungarian involvement inside Serbia's own justice system reveal the document's true purpose. This was not primarily a genuine attempt to secure justice through negotiation; it was constructed so that a "reasonable" refusal would still occur, providing Austria-Hungary with a justification for war it had already decided to pursue with German backing. A historian should therefore treat the ultimatum less as a diplomatic proposal and more as an instrument of pre-planned escalation — a useful example of how a primary source's *content* and its *purpose* can diverge sharply.

Practice 3 — Structured short-answer

(a) Identify the event that occurred in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914.
(b) Explain what is meant by the German "blank cheque" of 5 July 1914.

(c) Explain why a regional crisis in the Balkans had developed into a general European war by early August 1914.

Lời giải chi tiết

(a) On 28 June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife Sophie were assassinated in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb nationalist linked to the Black Hand.
(b) The "blank cheque" refers to Germany's pledge of 5 July 1914 to support Austria-Hungary unconditionally in any action it took against Serbia, without setting limits on how far Austria-Hungary should go. This removed a key restraint on Vienna and encouraged a harsher response than might otherwise have occurred.
(c) The crisis escalated because the alliance system linked each power's decisions to another's. Austria-Hungary's declaration of war on Serbia (28 July) activated Russian mobilisation in Serbia's defence; German war planning treated Russian mobilisation as requiring an immediate German declaration of war on Russia (1 August) followed swiftly by war on France (3 August) under the logic of the Schlieffen Plan; the resulting German invasion of Belgium then brought Britain into the war (4 August) over the violation of Belgian neutrality. What began as an Austro-Serbian dispute over an assassination therefore became a general war because none of the great powers could act without triggering a corresponding obligation elsewhere in the alliance network.

Practice 4 — Source analysis (OPCVL)

Source: adapted from a continental European newspaper, late July 1914, describing scenes of public mobilisation.
"Crowds gathered before the war ministry as the mobilisation notices were posted, cheering as though a festival, not a war, had been declared. Few among them seemed to grasp that the very trains now being prepared to carry troops to the frontier follow a timetable that, once begun, cannot easily be reversed."

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, and value and limitations, analyse this source for a historian studying why the July Crisis escalated so rapidly.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: a newspaper account from late July 1914, describing public reactions at the moment mobilisation orders were issued.
Purpose: to report — and perhaps to dramatise — the public mood of enthusiasm at the outbreak of what would become a general war.
Content: the extract juxtaposes popular celebration with an authorial warning about the rigidity of mobilisation timetables, hinting at the "war by timetable" idea discussed later in this chapter.
Value: it is valuable for illustrating contemporary nationalist enthusiasm for war in 1914 (a social/cultural dimension of causation) and for showing that even contemporaries sensed the mechanical, hard-to-reverse nature of mobilisation once triggered.
Limitations: a single newspaper account cannot establish how representative this enthusiasm was across the population, and journalistic accounts of "crowds cheering" are prone to exaggeration for dramatic effect; it should be cross-checked against other evidence (for example, conscription records or private diaries) before being used to generalise about public opinion in 1914.

3.3 The nature of the First World War

The Schlieffen Plan's assumption of a rapid war of movement failed within weeks: the German advance through Belgium and northern France was halted, and by late 1914 both sides had dug in along a continuous line of trenches running from the North Sea to the Swiss border. For the next three-and-a-half years, the Western Front became a byword for industrialised, attritional stalemate.

New technology reshaped combat but, in the war's middle years, mostly reinforced deadlock rather than breaking it. Machine guns gave defenders an overwhelming advantage over attacking infantry advancing across open ground; poison gas was introduced as a weapon intended to break the trench deadlock but produced horrific casualties without delivering a decisive breakthrough; aircraft, initially used for reconnaissance, increasingly took on combat roles as the war progressed; and in **1916**, at the **Battle of the Somme**, Britain introduced the tank — an armoured vehicle designed specifically to cross trenches and barbed wire, though early models were unreliable and did not immediately transform the battlefield. That same year, at **Verdun**, French and German forces fought one of the war's longest and most costly battles of attrition, a struggle whose symbolic significance — endurance for its own sake — came to represent the war's grinding character as much as any territorial objective.

	Verdun (1916)	The Somme (1916)
Front	Western Front, eastern France	Western Front, northern France
Belligerents	France vs Germany	Britain (with France) vs Germany
Character	Prolonged battle of attrition; became a symbol of national endurance	Major Allied offensive; first significant use of the tank
Significance	Illustrates the war's grinding, attritional character	Illustrates both new technology and continued stalemate

Figure 3.3 — Two defining battles of 1916 on the Western Front.

The war was fought not only at the front but through the mobilisation of entire societies — a defining feature historians call **total war**. Governments introduced rationing as resources were diverted to the front; propaganda posters, censorship and state control of information shaped public morale and recruitment; and with millions of men mobilised, women moved into munitions factories, agriculture, transport and clerical roles previously closed to them. This wartime contribution fed into political change once the war ended: in Britain, for example, the Representation of the People Act of 1918 extended the vote to some women (property-owning women over thirty) for the first time, a partial but symbolically significant expansion of suffrage linked to women's wartime service.

Two developments outside the Western Front changed the war's trajectory decisively. First, the strain of total war combined with military failures to fuel revolution inside Russia in 1917; the Bolshevik government that eventually took power sought an immediate exit from the war, concluding the **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918** with the Central Powers. Russia ceded vast territories in exchange for peace, removing an entire front from the war and freeing German troops to be redeployed westward for a final offensive. Second, the **United States entered the war in April 1917**, driven substantially by Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare against merchant and passenger shipping and by the interception of the **Zimmermann Telegram**, in which Germany had proposed a military alliance with Mexico against the United States. American manpower, industry and finance tipped the material balance decisively against the Central Powers over the following eighteen months.

Facing collapse on the Western Front, exhausted economies, and internal unrest, Germany and its allies sought terms, and fighting ended with the **Armistice of 11 November 1918**, suspending hostilities pending a full peace settlement.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Chiến tranh Thế giới I nổi bật với chiến tranh chiến hào bế tắc ở Mặt trận phía Tây, vũ khí mới (súng máy, khí độc, xe tăng ra mắt tại trận Somme 1916) và hai trận đánh biểu tượng năm 1916 (Verdun và Somme). Đây cũng là "chiến tranh tổng lực": chính phủ kiểm soát khẩu phần lương thực, tuyên truyền, và phụ nữ tham gia sản xuất công nghiệp — góp phần dẫn đến việc mở rộng quyền bầu cử cho phụ nữ sau chiến tranh (Anh, 1918). Năm 1917–1918, Nga rút khỏi chiến tranh sau Cách mạng và Hòa ước Brest-Litovsk (3/1918), trong khi Mỹ tham chiến (4/1917) do chiến tranh tàu ngầm không hạn chế và Bức điện Zimmermann. Chiến tranh kết thúc bằng Đình chiến ngày 11/11/1918.

Practice 5 — Structured short-answer

Explain **two** ways in which the nature of warfare on the Western Front changed between 1914 and 1918.

Lời giải chi tiết

Change 1 — from a war of movement to trench stalemate. The Schlieffen Plan's assumption of a rapid war of movement collapsed within weeks of the invasion of Belgium and France, and by late 1914 continuous trench lines stretched from the North Sea to the Swiss border. Machine guns and barbed wire gave defenders a decisive advantage, so that offensives such as Verdun and the Somme (both 1916) produced enormous casualties for very limited territorial gain.

Change 2 — the introduction of new technology aimed at breaking the deadlock. Poison gas was introduced to try to force a breakthrough, and in 1916 Britain introduced the tank at the Somme specifically to overcome trenches and barbed wire. Although these innovations did not immediately end the stalemate, they signalled a shift toward the mechanised, technology-driven combined-arms warfare that would define the Second World War two decades later.

Practice 6 — Source analysis (OPCVL)

Source: adapted from a soldier's letter home, Western Front, 1916 (illustrative extract for practice).
"We have not moved more than a few hundred yards in as many weeks. The guns never truly stop; one grows almost used to it. What I cannot grow used to is the mud, which seems to swallow boots, rifles, even men. We are told a new machine, armoured against bullets, will soon be sent to help us forward."

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, and value and limitations, analyse this source for a historian studying conditions on the Western Front in 1916.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: a soldier's private letter home from the Western Front in 1916, the year of both Verdun and the Somme.
Purpose: to communicate personal experience to family, not to provide a formal military report — suggesting relative honesty but also a narrow, individual perspective.
Content: the letter describes prolonged stalemate, constant artillery bombardment, and appalling ground conditions, and refers to the imminent arrival of an armoured vehicle (the tank).
Value: first-hand soldier testimony is valuable for understanding the lived experience of trench warfare and attritional stalemate, and this extract corroborates the wider historical picture of 1916 as a year of costly, static fighting in which new technology (the tank) was introduced in the hope of a breakthrough.

Limitations: a single letter reflects one soldier's localised experience and may be shaped by a desire to reassure family members rather than convey the full horror of conditions; it cannot by itself establish conditions across the whole of the Western Front, and letters were often subject to military censorship.

3.4 Effects of the First World War

The **Paris Peace Conference** opened in **January 1919**, dominated by the "**Big Four**": Woodrow Wilson of the United States, David Lloyd George of Britain, Georges Clemenceau of France, and Vittorio Orlando of Italy.

Leader (country)	Principal aim at the Conference
Wilson (USA)	Idealistic peace based on his Fourteen Points: open diplomacy, self-determination for nations, and a League of Nations to prevent future wars.
Lloyd George (Britain)	A settlement firm enough to satisfy British public opinion, but cautious about excessively punishing Germany, whose economic recovery mattered to British trade and to the future European balance of power.
Clemenceau (France)	Maximum security guarantees and reparations, reflecting the devastation of northern France and the trauma of two German invasions within living memory (1870–71 and 1914–18).
Orlando (Italy)	Territorial gains promised to Italy for joining the Allies; Orlando left the conference largely dissatisfied, feeding a domestic narrative of a "mutilated victory."

Figure 3.4 — Aims of the "Big Four" at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919.

The central tension at the conference was between Wilson's idealistic vision and French demands for a punitive settlement capable of permanently weakening Germany. The resulting compromise, the **Treaty of Versailles**, signed on **28 June 1919** — exactly five years after the Sarajevo assassination — satisfied none of the Big Four completely.

Category	Main terms
War guilt	Article 231 assigned Germany and its allies responsibility for causing the war, providing the legal basis for reparations.
Reparations	Fixed in 1921 at 132 billion gold marks, payable to the Allied powers.
Territorial	Alsace-Lorraine returned to France; a "Polish Corridor" created, giving Poland access to the Baltic Sea and separating East Prussia from the rest of Germany; the Saar placed under League of Nations administration pending a future plebiscite.
Colonial	German overseas colonies stripped and redistributed as League of Nations mandates.
Military	German army capped at 100,000 volunteers, conscription banned, an air force forbidden, the navy restricted, and the Rhineland demilitarised.

Figure 3.5 — Main terms of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

Germany was not the only defeated power to be settled by treaty. The **Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye** formally dismantled Austria-Hungary and reduced Austria to a small republic, explicitly forbidding future union with Germany; the **Treaty of Neuilly** settled terms with Bulgaria; the **Treaty of Trianon** imposed severe territorial losses on Hungary; and the **Treaty of Sevres** dismantled much of the Ottoman Empire. Sevres, however, proved unenforceable: following the Turkish War of Independence led by Mustafa Kemal, it was renegotiated as the more favourable **Treaty of Lausanne in 1923**, recognising the new Turkish Republic on considerably better terms than Sevres had allowed.

Beyond Europe, the League of Nations **mandate system** distributed former German and Ottoman territories as trusteeships rather than outright colonies. The Middle Eastern ”Class A” mandates — considered nearly ready for eventual self-government — placed Iraq and Palestine under British administration and Syria and Lebanon under French administration. In practice, these mandates closely resembled colonial rule and provoked considerable Arab nationalist resentment, a tension that would resurface repeatedly across the twentieth century.

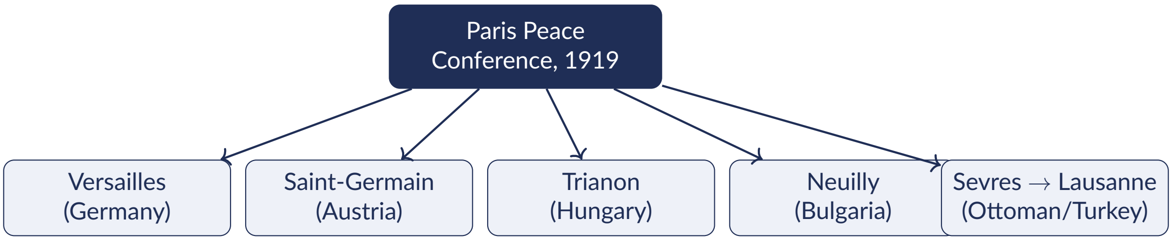

Figure 3.6 — The five peace treaties of 1919–1923 emerging from the Paris Peace Conference.

A period of apparent reconciliation followed. The **Locarno Treaties of 1925** saw Germany voluntarily accept its western borders with France and Belgium, prompting talk of a ”spirit of Locarno,” and in **1926** Germany joined the League of Nations as a permanent member of its Council — a significant step toward reintegrating Germany into the international system. Economically, however, the settlement proved fragile. French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr industrial region, undertaken after Germany defaulted on reparations deliveries, contributed to the catastrophic German **hyperinflation of 1923**, which wiped out savings and deepened public resentment of the Republic charged with implementing Versailles. The **Dawes Plan (1924)** restructured reparations payments and brought American loans to stabilise the German currency and economy, and the **Young Plan (1929)** further reduced and rescheduled the total reparations bill — though its implementation coincided almost exactly with the onset of the Great Depression, undermining the entire financial arrangement just as it was meant to take effect.

The war and its settlement also swept away four empires. The **German Empire** ended with the Kaiser's abdication and the establishment of the Weimar Republic; the **Austro-Hungarian Empire** was dismantled into a patchwork of new and enlarged nation-states; the **Ottoman Empire** was dismantled and eventually replaced by the Turkish Republic; and the **Russian Empire** collapsed with the overthrow of the Tsar in **February 1917**. New states across Central and Eastern Europe — including Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia — emerged from these collapses, though frequently with unresolved minority and border disputes that would persist for decades. In Russia, the Bolsheviks under Lenin seized power in **October 1917**, establishing the world's first communist state — an ideological rupture whose consequences, from the Russian Civil War to the later Cold War, are explored further elsewhere in this book.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Hội nghị Hòa bình Paris (1/1919) do ”Bộ Tứ” (Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Orlando) chi phối, dẫn đến Hòa ước Versailles (28/6/1919): Đức phải nhận trách nhiệm gây chiến (Điều 231), bồi thường 132 tỷ mác vàng (ấn định 1921), mất lãnh thổ (Alsace-Lorraine, Hành lang Ba Lan, Saar), mất thuộc địa (thành ủy trị League of Nations), và bị giới hạn quân đội. Các hòa ước khác giải thể Áo-Hung (Saint-Germain), xử lý Bulgaria (Neuilly), Hungary (Trianon), và Đế quốc Ottoman (Sevres, sau sửa thành Lausanne 1923). Hệ thống ủy trị trao Iraq/Palestine cho Anh, Syria/Lebanon cho Pháp. Về kinh tế: siêu lạm phát Đức 1923, Kế hoạch Dawes (1924) và Young (1929) cố gắng điều chỉnh bồi thường nhưng thất bại khi Đại Khủng hoảng ập đến. Bốn đế quốc sụp đổ (Đức, Áo-Hung, Ottoman, Nga), và Cách mạng Nga 1917 khai sinh nhà nước cộng sản đầu tiên.

Worked example — OPCVL analysis of a 1919 German source

Source: adapted from a German newspaper editorial, late June 1919, reacting to the announcement of the peace terms.

"A treaty is placed before us that we are permitted neither to negotiate nor to amend, only to sign under threat of renewed invasion. We are told that we alone bear the guilt for a catastrophe that engulfed every great power of Europe, and that we must pay a debt whose final size no one has yet dared to name. This is not a peace; it is a dictated sentence."

Origin: a German newspaper editorial from June 1919, written immediately after the terms of Versailles were made public, before the treaty's formal signature.
Purpose: to mobilise German public outrage against the treaty, which many Germans quickly labelled a *Diktat* — a dictated settlement imposed rather than negotiated.
Content: the source rejects the legitimacy of Article 231 (the War Guilt Clause), objects to the absence of genuine negotiation, and highlights uncertainty over the eventual reparations bill (not fixed until 1921).
Value: the source is valuable for understanding the immediate German public reaction to Versailles and helps explain why the treaty became such a potent source of domestic resentment against the Weimar Republic, later exploited by nationalist and extremist movements.
Limitations: as a piece of persuasive journalism, it does not offer a balanced legal or historical assessment of German responsibility for the war, and a single editorial cannot be assumed to represent the entire spectrum of German opinion in 1919 (some German commentators, for instance, focused more on specific territorial or economic terms than on the war-guilt principle itself).

Practice 7 — Structured short-answer

Explain **two** political effects of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany.

Lời giải chi tiết

Effect 1 — domestic resentment against the Weimar Republic. Because the Republic's own representatives were obliged to sign the treaty, the "War Guilt Clause" (Article 231) and the sense that Germany had been handed a dictated settlement rather than a negotiated peace became strongly associated with the new democratic government itself, rather than with the wartime imperial leadership that had actually taken Germany to war. This gave nationalist and extremist movements a powerful grievance to exploit throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s.
Effect 2 — military and territorial restrictions. Limiting the German army to 100,000 volunteers, banning conscription and an air force, and demilitarising the Rhineland left Germany, in its own view, permanently vulnerable, while territorial losses such as the Polish Corridor severed East Prussia from the rest of the country. These restrictions became a rallying point for German politicians across the political spectrum who argued the treaty needed to be revised, and later provided a specific, popular justification for German rearmament in the 1930s.

Practice 8 — Evaluate essay

Evaluate the effectiveness of the League of Nations in maintaining international peace during the 1920s.

Lời giải chi tiết

Introduction: the League of Nations, established as part of the Paris peace settlement, aimed to prevent future wars through collective security and open diplomacy. Its record during the 1920s was mixed: modestly effective in smaller disputes, but structurally weakened from birth.
Case for effectiveness: the League successfully mediated several minor territorial disputes in the 1920s and provided a framework for the diplomatic reconciliation reflected in the Locarno Treaties (1925) and Germany's admission to League membership (1926), suggesting that in a relatively stable international climate the League could support cooperative diplomacy.
Case against effectiveness: the League's greatest structural weakness was the absence of the United States, whose Senate never ratified membership, depriving the organisation of one of the world's most powerful economies and militaries. The League also lacked its own military force and depended on member states voluntarily supplying troops or sanctions, giving it little genuine enforcement power against a determined great power.
Judgement: the League's 1920s record shows it could support peace where major powers already wished to cooperate (as at Locarno), but it had no mechanism to compel compliance from a power unwilling to cooperate — a limitation that would be exposed far more seriously once expansionist regimes emerged in the following decade.

Practice 9 — Compare/contrast

Compare the aims of Georges Clemenceau and Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarity: both leaders wanted a settlement that would prevent a future German war and both recognised that some restructuring of the European order was necessary after four years of devastating conflict.
Difference 1 — underlying philosophy. Wilson's Fourteen Points reflected an idealistic vision of open diplomacy, national self-determination and collective security through the League of Nations, aiming at a durable, less punitive peace. Clemenceau, by contrast, prioritised concrete French security: reparations, territorial guarantees, and measures to weaken Germany's capacity to invade France again.
Difference 2 — the reason for this contrast. France had suffered direct, repeated invasion (1870–71 and 1914–18) with fighting largely on its own soil, giving Clemenceau's demands an immediate, existential urgency that the geographically distant United States did not share; Wilson could therefore afford to prioritise long-term international structures over short-term territorial punishment.
Conclusion: the resulting Treaty of Versailles was a compromise between these positions — containing both Wilson's League of Nations and Clemenceau's punitive war-guilt and reparations clauses — which arguably satisfied neither leader's vision completely and left the settlement vulnerable to challenge from both sides of the debate in the following decade.

3.5 The nature of the Second World War

Where the First World War had become synonymous with static trench stalemate, the Second World War is most associated with **Blitzkrieg** ("lightning war") — the coordinated use of fast-moving armoured units, air power and mechanised infantry to achieve rapid breakthroughs and encirclements. This approach produced swift German victories in the war's opening phase and marked a decisive break from the attritional pattern of 1914–18.

Several turning points reshaped the war's trajectory. The **Battle of Britain (July–October 1940)** saw the Royal Air Force deny Germany the air superiority it needed to launch an invasion of Britain, the first major setback to German ambitions. **Operation Barbarossa (22 June 1941)**, Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, opened an enormous Eastern Front that would ultimately prove a catastrophic strategic overreach. The **Battle of Stalingrad (August 1942–February 1943)** ended in decisive Soviet victory and is widely regarded as the war's psychological and material turning point on the Eastern Front, after which German forces were pushed onto the strategic defensive. **D-Day (6 June 1944)** brought Allied forces ashore in Normandy, opening the long-awaited second front in Western Europe. In the Pacific, a strategy of **island-hopping** — seizing key island bases while bypassing others — gradually brought Allied forces closer to the Japanese home islands through 1945.

Technology again transformed the character of total war: **radar** provided early warning that proved decisive in the Battle of Britain; codebreaking and signals intelligence shaped strategic and tactical decisions on multiple fronts; and the **Manhattan Project**, the Allied programme to develop the atomic bomb, produced a weapon of unprecedented destructive power by 1945.

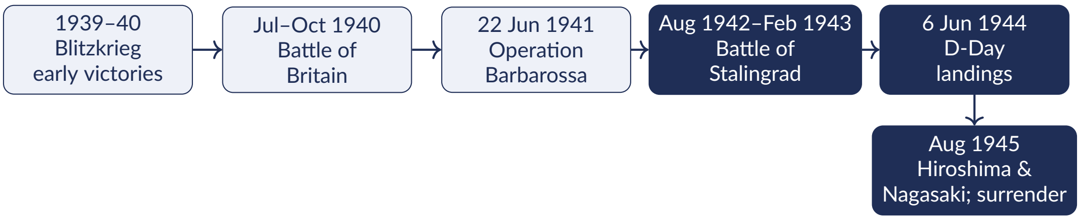

Figure 3.7 — Key turning points of the Second World War, 1939–1945.

The war's darkest dimension was the **Holocaust**, the systematic murder of European Jews carried out as deliberate Nazi state policy. At the **Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942**, senior Nazi officials coordinated the bureaucratic and logistical implementation of what they called the "Final Solution." A network of concentration and extermination camps, together with **Einsatzgruppen** — mobile killing units operating behind the advancing German army in the East — carried out mass murder on an industrial scale. An estimated **6 million Jews** were murdered, alongside Roma people, disabled people, political prisoners, and Soviet prisoners of war, in one of history's most systematic genocides.

The war in the Pacific ended after the United States dropped atomic bombs on **Hiroshima (6 August 1945)** and **Nagasaki (9 August 1945)**. Japan announced its surrender on **15 August 1945**, formally signed aboard USS *Missouri* on **2 September 1945**, bringing the Second World War to its close.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Thế Chiến II nổi bật với chiến thuật Blitzkrieg (chiến tranh chớp nhoáng) thay vì chiến hào tĩnh. Các bước ngoặt quan trọng: Trận Không chiến nước Anh (7–10/1940), Chiến dịch Barbarossa xâm lược Liên Xô (22/6/1941), Trận Stalingrad (8/1942–2/1943) — bước ngoặt trên Mặt trận phía Đông, Ngày D-Day đổ bộ Normandy (6/6/1944), và chiến dịch "nhảy đảo" ở Thái Bình Dương. Công nghệ mới gồm radar, phá mã, và Dự án Manhattan (bom nguyên tử). Holocaust — được điều phối tại Hội nghị Wannsee (20/1/1942) — giết hại khoảng 6 triệu người Do Thái cùng người Roma, người khuyết tật, tù nhân chính trị và tù binh Liên Xô. Chiến tranh kết thúc sau hai quả bom nguyên tử tại Hiroshima (6/8/1945) và Nagasaki (9/8/1945), Nhật Bản đầu hàng ngày 15/8/1945 và ký văn kiện chính thức ngày 2/9/1945.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Students sometimes describe the Holocaust as an incidental "side effect" of the war rather than as a deliberate, centrally organised Nazi policy objective pursued alongside the military campaign. The Wannsee Conference is important precisely because it shows bureaucratic, state-level coordination of genocide — treat it as a distinct causal strand in your analysis of the war's nature, not merely as background detail.

Practice 10 — Structured short-answer

Explain the significance of **two** turning points in the Second World War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Turning point 1 — the Battle of Stalingrad (August 1942–February 1943). The decisive Soviet victory at Stalingrad destroyed a major German army and marked the point after which German forces on the Eastern Front were permanently on the strategic defensive. It is widely regarded as the psychological and material turning point of the entire war in Europe, since it demonstrated that Germany could be defeated and shifted momentum irreversibly toward the Soviet Union.
Turning point 2 — D-Day (6 June 1944). The Allied landings in Normandy opened a long-awaited second front in Western Europe, forcing Germany to fight a war on multiple fronts simultaneously (against the Soviet Union in the east and the Western Allies advancing from Normandy). This combined pressure accelerated Germany's collapse over the following year.
Significance together: both turning points illustrate how the war's outcome depended on Germany's growing inability to sustain a war of this scale on more than one front simultaneously — a strategic problem strikingly similar to the two-front dilemma German planners had tried to solve with the Schlieffen Plan a generation earlier.

Practice 11 — Source analysis (OPCVL)

Source: adapted from the recollection of a post-war observer at the Nuremberg Trials, describing testimony about the Wannsee Conference.
"What struck those in the courtroom was not chaos but order: minutes, memoranda, and a carefully organised meeting convened to allocate administrative responsibility for a policy of extermination, as though it were any other matter of state business."

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, and value and limitations, analyse this source for a historian studying the nature of the Holocaust.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: a post-war recollection of testimony given at the Nuremberg Trials (1945–46), describing evidence relating to the Wannsee Conference of January 1942.
Purpose: to convey to a later audience how methodically the "Final Solution" had been planned and administered at the highest levels of the Nazi state.
Content: the extract stresses the bureaucratic, documentary character of the meeting — minutes and memoranda coordinating mass murder as a matter of ordinary state administration.
Value: it is valuable for demonstrating that the Holocaust was not a chaotic by-product of war but a deliberately planned, centrally coordinated state policy, a point of central importance for any account of the nature of Nazi Germany's war; it also reflects how post-war trials brought this documentary evidence into the historical record.
Limitations: as a recollection rather than the original documentary record itself, it is a secondary account of testimony and may be shaped by the observer's own reaction to the horror of what was described; it should ideally be checked against the surviving Wannsee Conference minutes and other Nuremberg trial documentation.

3.6 Effects of the Second World War

The Second World War was the deadliest conflict in human history, with total deaths — military and civilian combined — estimated at **70 to 85 million**, several times the toll of the First World War.

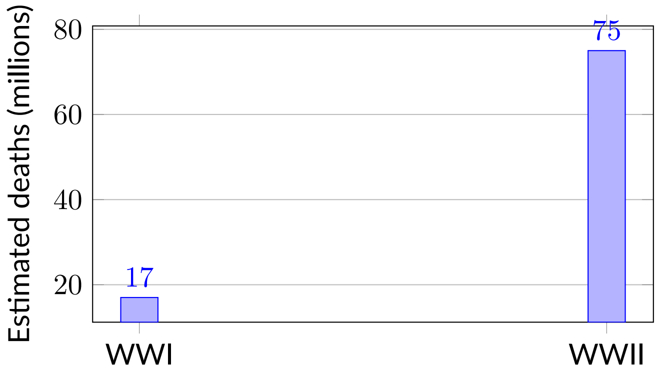

Figure 3.8 — Estimated total deaths, WWI and WWII (widely-cited approximate figures: WWI 15–20 million, WWII 70–85 million; midpoint values shown).

The post-war settlement was designed, in large part, to correct the perceived failures of the post-1919 order. The **United Nations Charter** was signed in **San Francisco on 26 June 1945** and came into force on **24 October 1945**. Unlike the League of Nations, the United Nations built in a mechanism to keep the great powers engaged: a **Security Council** with five permanent members holding **veto power**, ensuring that the organisation could not act against the fundamental interests of its most powerful members — a structural response to the League's fatal weakness of never securing US participation.

The **Nuremberg Trials**, conducted by an International Military Tribunal from **20 November 1945 to 1 October 1946**, tried **22 leading Nazi officials** for war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes against peace, and conspiracy. **Twelve** were sentenced to death, including Hermann Goring, who died by suicide the night before his scheduled execution. The trials established the influential legal principle that following superior orders was not, by itself, a valid defence against charges of war crimes — a precedent that has shaped international law ever since.

Economic lessons from the interwar period also shaped the post-war order. At the **Bretton Woods Conference in July 1944** — convened before the war had even ended — the Allied powers designed a new international economic system, establishing the **International Monetary Fund** and the **World Bank** to stabilise currencies and finance post-war reconstruction and development, a deliberate attempt to avoid repeating the financial chaos (hyperinflation, uncoordinated reparations, the Depression) that had undermined the post-1919 settlement.

Germany itself was occupied and divided into zones administered by the victorious Allied powers; wartime cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies collapsed into rivalry, and by 1949 the occupation zones had hardened into two separate German states — a process examined in detail in the Cold War chapter of this book. More broadly, the European colonial powers emerged from the war economically exhausted and politically weakened, no longer able to sustain pre-war levels of imperial control; this acceleration of independence movements across Asia and Africa is examined further in the decolonisation chapter.

	League of Nations (1920)	United Nations (1945)
Founding moment	Part of the Paris peace settlement, 1919–20	Charter signed San Francisco, 26 Jun 1945; in force 24 Oct 1945
US participation	Senate refused ratification; US never joined	Founding member, permanent Security Council seat
Enforcement	No standing military; relied on voluntary member action	Security Council can authorise action, but five permanent members hold a veto
Great-power design	Assumed voluntary cooperation among equals	Explicitly privileges great powers to keep them engaged

Figure 3.9 — Structural comparison of the League of Nations and the United Nations.

VN GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

Thế Chiến II gây ra khoảng 70–85 triệu người chết — nhiều gấp nhiều lần Thế Chiến I. Liên Hợp Quốc ra đời (Hiến chương ký tại San Francisco 26/6/1945, có hiệu lực 24/10/1945) với Hội đồng Bảo an và quyền phủ quyết của 5 ủy viên thường trực — khắc phục điểm yếu chí mạng của Hội Quốc Liên (Mỹ không tham gia). Tòa án Nuremberg (20/11/1945–1/10/1946) xét xử 22 quan chức Đức Quốc xã, 12 người bị tử hình (bao gồm Goring tự sát trước khi bị hành quyết), thiết lập nguyên tắc "làm theo lệnh cấp trên" không phải lý do bào chữa hợp lệ. Hội nghị Bretton Woods (7/1944) lập ra IMF và Ngân hàng Thế giới. Đức bị chia vùng chiếm đóng, sau này tách thành hai quốc gia (1949). Các đế quốc thực dân châu Âu kiệt quệ, thúc đẩy quá trình phi thực dân hóa.

Practice 12 — Structured short-answer

Explain the aims and structure of the United Nations, established in 1945.

Lời giải chi tiết

Aim: the United Nations was established to maintain international peace and security more effectively than the League of Nations had managed, alongside promoting cooperation on economic, social and humanitarian issues.

Structure — the Security Council. The Security Council, with five permanent members holding veto power, was designed specifically to keep the great powers invested in the organisation — a direct response to the League's central weakness, since a veto-holding great power could not simply walk away from the organisation the way the United States had refused to join the League.

Founding and entry into force. The Charter was signed in San Francisco on 26 June 1945, while the Second World War was still ending in the Pacific, and came into force on 24 October 1945, reflecting the Allied powers' determination to have a new security framework ready immediately after the fighting stopped.

Practice 13 — Source analysis (OPCVL)

Source: adapted from a courtroom correspondent's report on the Nuremberg Trials, 1946.

"The prosecution argued that obedience to superior orders could no longer excuse acts that shocked the conscience of humanity. Several defendants insisted they had merely followed the chain of command; the tribunal was not persuaded."

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, and value and limitations, analyse this source for a historian studying the significance of the Nuremberg Trials.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: a journalist's courtroom report from the Nuremberg Trials, 1946, describing the tribunal's reasoning.
Purpose: to inform contemporary readers of the proceedings and their legal significance.
Content: the extract highlights the rejection of the "superior orders" defence, a central legal innovation of the trials.
Value: it is valuable as evidence of how the tribunal's reasoning was communicated to and understood by the public at the time, and it correctly identifies the trial's most historically significant legal precedent — that following orders does not excuse war crimes.
Limitations: a journalist's summary simplifies complex legal argument for a general readership and may not capture the full nuance of the tribunal's deliberations on each individual defendant; it should be supplemented with the tribunal's own judgment for a full legal analysis.

Practice 14 — Evaluate essay

Evaluate the impact of the Second World War on the process of decolonisation.

Lời giải chi tiết

Introduction: the Second World War significantly accelerated the end of European overseas empires, though it acted alongside pre-existing nationalist movements rather than creating them from nothing.
Case for significant impact: the war left Britain, France and other colonial powers economically exhausted, financially dependent on wartime loans, and militarily overstretched, sharply reducing their capacity to suppress nationalist movements or fund continued colonial administration. The moral authority of empires that had just fought against Nazi racial ideology was also undermined, as colonised peoples increasingly pointed out the contradiction between fighting for freedom abroad while denying it at home.
Case for continuity with pre-war trends: nationalist movements across Asia and Africa had been developing for decades before 1939; the war accelerated rather than created these pressures, and the pace and process of decolonisation varied enormously by region and colonial power in the decades that followed.
Judgement: the war is best understood as a powerful accelerant — it did not invent anti-colonial nationalism, but it removed the economic and military capacity of European powers to resist it indefinitely, compressing into a couple of decades a process of imperial retreat that might otherwise have unfolded far more slowly.

3.7 Historiography: interpreting the causes of war

Historians have long disagreed over how responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War should be apportioned — a debate that illustrates a wider point for Paper 2 essay writing: causation is itself a historiographical question, not simply a list of agreed facts.

In the years after 1919, and partly in reaction to the Versailles war-guilt clause, many historians favoured a view of **shared, collective European responsibility**: the war was widely seen as the product of a dangerously unstable system — militarism, alliances, imperial rivalry, nationalism — into which every great power had, to some degree, blundered.

This consensus was directly challenged in **1961** by the German historian **Fritz Fischer**, whose book *Griff nach der Weltmacht* ("Grasp for World Power") used newly available German archives to argue that Germany's political and military leadership had pursued a deliberate bid for continental, and even global, hegemony, and that domestic elites saw external war as a means of defusing internal social and political pressures. Fischer's thesis placed primary, premeditated responsibility on

Germany specifically, provoking intense and lasting controversy among historians (sometimes called the "Fischer controversy") precisely because it broke so sharply with the earlier consensus of shared blame.

More recent scholarship has shifted the debate again. **Christopher Clark**'s *The Sleepwalkers* (2012) returns to a multi-causal account, portraying the July Crisis as a complex chain of miscalculation, poor communication, and structural pressure in which decision-makers across *all* the great powers — not Germany alone — narrowed their own options for peace, memorably likening Europe's leaders to sleepwalkers stumbling toward a catastrophe none of them fully intended or foresaw.

An older, structuralist alternative comes from **A.J.P. Taylor**, whose concept of "**war by timetable**" argued that once mobilisation began, the rigid railway and deployment schedules developed by military planners removed the flexibility diplomats needed to de-escalate the crisis — so that the technical logic of military planning itself, rather than any single leader's intentions, pushed Europe toward war.

Three historiographical schools on the origins of WWI

Historian	Core argument	Key challenge/criticism
Fritz Fischer (1961)	Germany's leadership deliberately pursued hegemony; primary responsibility rests with Germany.	Seen by critics as underplaying the choices and miscalculations made by other great powers.
Christopher Clark (2012)	A complex, shared chain of miscalculation among all great powers; no single guilty party.	Critics argue it can understate the specific weight of German and Austro-Hungarian decision-making in escalating the crisis.
A.J.P. Taylor	"War by timetable" — rigid mobilisation plans removed diplomatic flexibility once triggered.	Seen as too structurally deterministic, downplaying the role of deliberate political choices (e.g. the blank cheque).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Ba trường phái sử học chính về nguyên nhân Thế Chiến I: (1) Fritz Fischer (1961) — trong sách "Griff nach der Weltmacht," cho rằng giới lãnh đạo Đức chủ động theo đuổi bá quyền, Đức chịu trách nhiệm chính; (2) Christopher Clark (2012, "The Sleepwalkers") — nhấn mạnh trách nhiệm chia sẻ giữa các cường quốc, một chuỗi tính toán sai lầm phức tạp chứ không phải một bên "có tội" duy nhất; (3) A.J.P. Taylor — ý tưởng "chiến tranh theo thời gian biểu," cho rằng lịch trình động viên quân sự cứng nhắc đã xóa bỏ khả năng linh hoạt ngoại giao. Một bài luận Paper 2 xuất sắc nên trích dẫn các quan điểm sử học này để thể hiện chiều sâu phân tích, thay vì chỉ kể lại diễn biến sự kiện.

Practice 15 — Structured short-answer

Outline Fritz Fischer's argument about the origins of the First World War, and explain one criticism of it.

Lời giải chi tiết

Fischer's argument: in *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (1961), Fischer used German archival evidence to argue that Germany's political and military leadership deliberately pursued a bid for continental and global hegemony, and that domestic elites viewed war as a way of managing internal social and political tensions. This placed primary and premeditated responsibility for the war's outbreak on Germany specifically.

Criticism: critics, including later historians such as Christopher Clark, argue that Fischer's focus on German intentions understates the extent to which *other* great powers also made choices during the July Crisis — Austro-Hungarian brinkmanship, Russian mobilisation, and French willingness to support Russia — that narrowed the path to peace. On this view, an exclusive focus on German responsibility risks oversimplifying a genuinely multi-causal crisis.

Practice 16 — To what extent essay

To what extent do you agree with Christopher Clark's view that the outbreak of the First World War resulted from shared miscalculation among the great powers rather than the deliberate design of a single power?

Lời giải chi tiết

Introduction: Clark's *The Sleepwalkers* (2012) portrays the July Crisis as a complex chain of miscalculation involving all the great powers, in contrast to Fischer's earlier emphasis on deliberate German responsibility. Assessing this claim requires weighing evidence of deliberate intent against evidence of structural miscalculation.
Evidence supporting Clark: decisions by Austria-Hungary (the deliberately harsh ultimatum), Russia (mobilisation in support of Serbia), and even Serbia's own internal tolerance of nationalist networks like the Black Hand, all contributed independently to escalation; no single power's archives reveal a long-prepared plan for a general European war in the way Fischer claimed for Germany's bid for hegemony.
Evidence qualifying Clark: Germany's "blank cheque" of 5 July 1914 was a specific, consequential political choice — not simply a structural pressure — that directly enabled Austria-Hungary's aggressive response; this suggests that while miscalculation was widespread, some choices (particularly Germany's) carried disproportionate weight in permitting escalation.
Judgement: a balanced answer would agree that the crisis was not the product of a single, long-premeditated plan for general war of the kind Fischer described, while still noting that certain choices — especially the German blank cheque — were more consequential and less accidental than the "sleepwalking" metaphor might suggest on its own. Strong essays would state explicitly that historiographical interpretation is not simply a matter of picking one "correct" school, but of weighing the evidence each uses.

Practice 17 — Compare/contrast

Compare Taylor's "war by timetable" thesis with Fischer's argument about German responsibility for the First World War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarity: both interpretations attempt to explain why the July Crisis escalated into general war so quickly, and both draw on the machinery of German military planning (the Schlieffen Plan) as important evidence.
Difference 1 — agency versus structure. Fischer's thesis is fundamentally about *deliberate political choice*: Germany's leadership consciously sought hegemony and accepted, even welcomed, the risk of war. Taylor's "war by timetable," by contrast, is a *structural* argument: it treats the rigid mobilisation schedules themselves, rather than any leader's intentions, as the decisive factor removing room for diplomacy.
Difference 2 — implications for responsibility. Fischer's argument assigns clear moral and political responsibility to Germany's leadership. Taylor's argument, if accepted fully, tends to

diffuse responsibility away from individual decision-makers and onto the impersonal logic of military planning shared by every great power with a general staff.
Conclusion: the two theses are not mutually exclusive — Taylor's structural pressures help explain *why* the crisis moved so fast once escalation began, while Fischer's emphasis on deliberate German ambition helps explain *why* Germany was willing to risk that escalation in the first place.

3.8 Comparing the causes and effects of the two wars

Both the First and Second World Wars emerged from an unstable balance of power and unresolved nationalist grievance, and both ended with new international institutions designed to prevent a recurrence of large-scale war. Yet the two conflicts differ fundamentally in how deliberately they were caused, a distinction that matters greatly for essay-writing under this Paper 2 topic.

Feature	First World War	Second World War
Nature of causation	Decentralised alliance system; no single power is agreed by all historians to have planned a general war in advance	Substantially the product of deliberate, premeditated expansionist programmes pursued by specific aggressor regimes
Trigger mechanism	Assassination of Franz Ferdinand, escalating through alliance obligations within about five weeks	A prepared invasion (Poland, 1939) following a sustained programme of territorial expansion and rearmament
Role of ideology	Nationalism present, but no single unifying expansionist ideology shared by the eventual aggressor bloc	Explicit expansionist ideologies (Nazism, fascism, Japanese militarism) central to war aims
Scale of civilian/genocidal violence	Civilian suffering severe, but no policy comparable to the Holocaust	The Holocaust — a centrally planned genocide — a defining and distinctive feature
Post-war institution	League of Nations; weakened by absence of the United States	United Nations; Security Council veto keeps great powers engaged
Link between the wars	—	Treaty of Versailles is the crucial structural link: its punitive terms, economic burden, and enforcement failures fed the resentment and instability later exploited by aggressor regimes

Figure 3.10 — Comparing the causation and character of the First and Second World Wars.

Figure 3.11 — The Treaty of Versailles as the structural link between the two world wars.

A short synthesis: the First World War arose substantially from a decentralised system of alliances, without any single power's archives clearly showing a long-premeditated plan for general war (though historians disagree sharply on how far German ambition should be weighted more heavily, as the historiography above shows). The Second World War, by contrast, arose substantially from the deliberate, premeditated expansionist programmes of specific regimes — Nazi Germany above all, alongside fascist Italy and militarist Japan — that consciously exploited the economic grievances, territorial resentments, and weakened collective-security structures left behind by the Versailles settlement. The Treaty of Versailles is therefore the crucial structural link joining the two conflicts: its punitive terms, unstable economics, and the failure of the League of Nations to enforce or revise it created exactly the conditions that expansionist regimes were later able to exploit.

Exam technique: IB Paper 2 questions on this topic often invite comparison across *two* wars, ideally from different regions of the world. WWI and WWII, although both originated in Europe, are acceptable as core case studies because both had genuinely global scope, participants, and consequences; however, where a question explicitly asks for wars from different regions, be ready to substitute a further case study of your own from wider reading rather than relying on WWI and WWII alone.

Practice 18 — Compare/contrast essay

Compare and contrast the long-term causes of the First World War and the Second World War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Introduction: both wars had roots in an unstable European balance of power and unresolved nationalist grievance, but the nature of causation differs sharply between a decentralised alliance system (WWI) and deliberate aggressor programmes (WWII).
Similarity 1 — nationalism and territorial grievance. Both wars were fuelled by specific territorial resentments: French revanchism over Alsace-Lorraine before 1914, and German revanchism over the territorial and military terms of Versailles before 1939. In both cases, a defeated or dissatisfied power's desire to reverse a specific loss fed into the drive toward war.
Similarity 2 — failure of collective security. In both periods, the international system in place — the alliance blocs before 1914, the League of Nations before 1939 — failed to provide a credible mechanism for resolving disputes short of war.
Difference 1 — the presence of a single expansionist aggressor. WWI's causes are genuinely decentralised: militarism, alliances, imperialism and nationalism operated across every great power roughly simultaneously, and no single power's war aims before 1914 amounted to a comprehensive programme of continental conquest agreed upon by all historians. WWII's causes, by contrast, centre on the deliberate, ideologically driven expansionist programmes of specific regimes.
Difference 2 — the role of ideology. WWI's nationalism was diffuse and largely ethnic/territorial; WWII's aggressor states were driven by explicit totalising ideologies (Nazism's racial empire-building, Japanese militarist expansionism) that gave their expansionist aims a scope and a genocidal dimension without a real parallel in 1914.
Conclusion: the two wars share structural preconditions — nationalism, failed collective security — but differ fundamentally in agency: WWI is best explained as a system failure, WWII as the deliberate exploitation of that system's unresolved failures by specific aggressor regimes.

Practice 19 — Evaluate essay

Evaluate the extent to which the Treaty of Versailles was responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Introduction: the Treaty of Versailles (1919) is frequently cited as a long-term cause of the Second World War, but its responsibility must be weighed against medium-term factors (the

Great Depression from 1929) and short-term factors (appeasement, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the invasion of Poland).
Case for significant responsibility: the War Guilt Clause and reparations fixed at 132 billion gold marks created lasting German resentment that nationalist and extremist politicians, including Hitler, exploited directly; the military restrictions (a 100,000-strong army, no air force, a demilitarised Rhineland) gave German politicians of every stripe a popular, unifying grievance around which to build support for treaty revision and eventual rearmament.
Case for limiting Versailles' responsibility: the treaty alone did not make war inevitable in 1939 — Germany's economy had substantially recovered by the late 1920s (aided by the Dawes and Young Plans) before the Great Depression reintroduced economic catastrophe, and it was this later economic collapse, alongside specific short-term decisions (the appeasement policy of the 1930s, the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, and the decision to invade Poland), that converted resentment into an actual war.
Judgement: Versailles is best understood as a necessary long-term precondition rather than a sufficient cause on its own — it created the resentment and instability that a specific regime with an explicit expansionist ideology was later able to exploit, but the war itself required additional medium-term (economic collapse) and short-term (deliberate policy choices, including appeasement and Hitler's decision for war) factors to actually occur in 1939 rather than at some earlier or later point.

Practice 20 — To what extent essay

To what extent was nationalism the most significant cause of both the First and Second World Wars?

Lời giải chi tiết

Introduction: nationalism contributed significantly to both wars, but its role and relative weight differ between the two conflicts, and it rarely operated alone.
Nationalism in WWI: Balkan nationalism directly destabilised Austria-Hungary and provided the immediate spark (the Sarajevo assassination); French revanchism over Alsace-Lorraine sustained a specific national grievance against Germany. However, nationalism operated alongside — and was reinforced by — militarism, the alliance system, and imperial rivalry; it is difficult to isolate nationalism as more significant than the alliance mechanism that actually converted a Balkan dispute into a general war.
Nationalism in WWII: German nationalism, fused with Nazi racial ideology, provided the ideological core of the drive to overturn Versailles and pursue territorial expansion. Yet the war's outbreak also depended heavily on the specific economic collapse of the Depression and the diplomatic failures of appeasement — factors distinct from nationalism itself.
Judgement: nationalism was a necessary ingredient in both wars but was not sufficient alone in either case: in WWI it required the alliance system to convert a nationalist crisis into a general war, and in WWII it required the added ideological, economic and diplomatic conditions examined above. A well-supported answer should argue that nationalism functioned as fuel rather than as the single spark in both conflicts.

Practice 21 — Structured short-answer

Compare one political effect and one economic effect of the First World War with one political effect and one economic effect of the Second World War.

Lời giải chi tiết

WWI — political effect: the collapse of four empires (German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian) and the creation of new nation-states across Central and Eastern Europe, often with unresolved minority and border disputes.
WWI — economic effect: reparations fixed at 132 billion gold marks in 1921, combined with the 1923 hyperinflation following the Ruhr occupation, destabilised the German economy and fed political resentment of the Weimar Republic.
WWII — political effect: the creation of the United Nations (Charter signed 26 June 1945) with a Security Council veto system, alongside the occupation and eventual division of Germany into separate states.
WWII — economic effect: the Bretton Woods Conference (July 1944) established the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, creating a managed international economic order explicitly intended to avoid repeating the financial instability of the interwar period.
Comparative point: in both cases the victorious powers designed new institutions in direct response to what they judged had gone wrong after the previous war — the United Nations addressing the League's structural weakness, and Bretton Woods addressing the uncoordinated, destabilising economics of reparations and war debts after 1919.

Practice 22 — Source comparison

Source A: adapted from a 1919 German newspaper editorial (see the worked example in Section 3.4).
Source B: adapted from a delegate's address at the San Francisco Conference, June 1945.
"Let this Charter stand as our pledge that the errors of the last peace will not be repeated: that no single power will be made to bear a verdict of guilt alone, and that those who hold the greatest strength will also hold the greatest responsibility for keeping the peace."

Compare and contrast what Sources A and B suggest about how the victors of the two world wars approached their respective peace settlements.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarity: both sources reflect explicit awareness of the previous settlement's shortcomings — Source A reacts against the perceived injustice of Versailles' war-guilt principle, while Source B is a direct, deliberate response by the 1945 victors to that very same criticism.
Difference in content: Source A criticises a treaty imposed without negotiation and blame assigned to a single power; Source B explicitly promises to avoid repeating that approach, tying great-power responsibility to great-power strength (foreshadowing the Security Council veto).
Difference in origin and purpose: Source A is a defeated power's press reaction, aiming to mobilise domestic outrage; Source B is a victors' public statement of intent, aiming to build legitimacy for a new institution among sceptical smaller powers and domestic audiences (including, crucially, the US Senate, whose ratification the League had never secured).
Value of comparing them: read together, the two sources show a clear historical throughline — the 1945 settlement was consciously designed as a corrective to the perceived flaws of 1919, particularly around collective blame and enforcement, even if in practice the great-power veto created its own new limitations on the United Nations' effectiveness.

Practice 23 — Discuss/evaluate essay

"The Second World War was caused primarily by the decisions of individual leaders and regimes, not by impersonal structural forces." Discuss this statement with reference to the historiographical debate on the causes of the First World War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Introduction: the historiographical debate on WWI's origins (Fischer's emphasis on deliberate agency versus Taylor's structural determinism, moderated by Clark's shared-miscalculation model) offers a useful framework for assessing how far WWII's outbreak should be explained by individual agency rather than impersonal forces.

Case for individual/regime agency: unlike WWI, where no single power's archives reveal a long-premeditated plan for general war, WWII followed a sustained, deliberate programme of territorial expansion and rearmament pursued consciously by specific regimes (Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, militarist Japan). This makes a Fischer-style emphasis on deliberate agency considerably more persuasive for WWII than it is even for WWI.

Case for structural forces: the economic devastation of the Great Depression from 1929, and the punitive, resentment-generating terms of Versailles, created the conditions in which expansionist regimes could gain and sustain domestic support; without these structural preconditions, the same leaders may not have found the same opportunities to pursue aggressive policy.

Judgement: the causes of WWII are best explained through an interaction of agency and structure: structural conditions (Versailles' terms, the Depression, the League's weakness) explain *why the opportunity existed*, while the deliberate ideological and strategic choices of specific regimes explain *why that opportunity was seized so decisively and violently*. This mirrors, in a more agency-weighted form, the same debate historians have over WWI's origins.

Practice 24 — Paper 2 synthesis essay

Examine the causes and effects of two wars, each chosen from a different region of the world, in the twentieth century.

Lời giải chi tiết

Exam-technique note: where a question explicitly requires wars from different regions, use this chapter's material on the First and Second World Wars for one case (both had genuinely global reach even though they originated in Europe), and be prepared to draw a second case study from your own wider reading of a war based substantially outside Europe for full regional range. The structure below models how to organise such an essay using the material developed in this chapter; adapt the second case to whichever additional war your course has covered.

Causes — Case study 1 (First World War): long-term causes (militarism, the alliance system, imperialism, nationalism) created a Europe primed for general war; the immediate trigger was the Sarajevo assassination of 28 June 1914, escalating within about five weeks through the alliance system into a general European war by early August 1914.

Effects — Case study 1: the Treaty of Versailles (28 June 1919) imposed war guilt, reparations, territorial loss and military restrictions on Germany; the League of Nations was created but structurally weakened by the absence of the United States; four empires collapsed, and the Russian Revolution of 1917 produced the world's first communist state.

Causes — Case study 2 (Second World War, as an illustration of a second case within this

chapter's scope): long-term causes (the unresolved grievances of Versailles, the League's structural weakness), medium-term causes (the Great Depression from 1929), and short-term causes (appeasement, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, and the invasion of Poland) combined to produce a war driven substantially by deliberate expansionist policy.

Effects — Case study 2: an estimated 70–85 million deaths, the Holocaust, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the creation of the United Nations (1945) and the Bretton Woods economic institutions, the Nuremberg Trials, and the acceleration of decolonisation.

Comparative conclusion: whichever two wars are ultimately compared, a strong Paper 2 essay treats causes and effects as a matched pair for each case study, and closes with an explicit comparative judgement — here, that a decentralised system failure (WWI) and a settlement's unresolved failures being deliberately exploited by aggressor regimes (WWII) sit at different points on the same causal spectrum, connected directly by the Treaty of Versailles.

Authoritarian States: Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Castro

> **Mục tiêu Unit:** Sau khi hoàn thành Unit này, học sinh có thể: (1) phân tích các điều kiện tiền đề (khủng hoảng kinh tế, thể chế yếu, lãnh tụ có sức thu hút kết hợp với đảng có tổ chức, tuyên truyền, bạo lực bán quân sự) dẫn tới sự ra đời của các nhà nước độc tài thế kỷ 20; (2) so sánh phương thức lên nắm quyền của Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Trạch Đông và Fidel Castro; (3) đánh giá các biện pháp củng cố và duy trì quyền lực – khủng bố, tuyên truyền, sùng bái cá nhân, kiểm soát giáo dục/thanh niên/phụ nữ/tôn giáo; (4) phân tích mục tiêu và kết quả của chính sách kinh tế và xã hội dưới từng chế độ, kể cả những tổn thất nhân mạng còn gây tranh cãi trong giới sử học; (5) viết luận Paper 2 dạng so sánh–đối chiếu (compare/contrast), phân tích (examine) và đánh giá mức độ (to what extent) theo đúng cấu trúc và tiêu chí chấm điểm của IB History HL/SL.

This chapter addresses the IB History Paper 2 world history topic on Authoritarian States. It compares four twentieth-century rulers who governed by very different ideologies – Adolf Hitler's National Socialism, Joseph Stalin's Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, Mao Zedong's Chinese communism, and Fidel Castro's Cuban Marxism-Leninism – but who relied on strikingly similar mechanisms to seize, consolidate and retain power. The chapter is organised thematically, following the official syllabus structure, so that each section draws evidence from all four regimes before a final comparative synthesis. Throughout, remember that Paper 2 essays are marked on the quality of comparison and analysis, not on how many facts can be listed for a single country: examiners reward candidates who can explain *why* a mechanism worked in one context and not in another.

> **Exam relevance.** Paper 2 questions on this topic typically ask you to: (a) examine the conditions that allowed an authoritarian leader to emerge; (b) compare methods used by two leaders to consolidate power; (c) evaluate the aims and results of economic or social policies; or (d) assess the extent to which a named factor (ideology, terror, propaganda, economic crisis) explains a regime's survival. Always select two rulers you know in depth rather than trying to cover all four superficially.

4.1 Conditions for the Emergence of Authoritarian States

No individual leader creates an authoritarian state in a vacuum. Historians studying Germany, the Soviet Union, China and Cuba identify a recurring cluster of preconditions: economic collapse combined with a sense of national humiliation; political institutions too weak or too discredited to resist a determined challenger; a leader with genuine charisma allied to a disciplined, hierarchical party; the technological and organisational capacity to broadcast propaganda to a mass audience; and a paramilitary or party militia willing to use violence before the leader has full command of the state's own security apparatus. These conditions rarely appear in isolation – it is their combination, and their sequence, that turns a political crisis into a permanent seizure of power.

4.1.1 Economic Crisis and National Humiliation

In each case a severe economic shock discredited the existing order and made radical alternatives look reasonable to millions of ordinary citizens. Weimar Germany was already weakened by the humiliation of defeat and by the hyperinflation of the early 1920s when the Great Depression pushed unemployment to approximately six million by 1932, destroying middle-class confidence in parliamentary government and driving voters toward the extremes of the political spectrum. Tsarist Russia had collapsed in 1917 under the strain of the First World War, and the Bolshevik state that Stalin later dominated was itself born from the same crisis of legitimacy that toppled the old regime. China's Guomindang government had been discredited by decades of warlordism, Japanese invasion, and the corruption and inflation of the civil-war years, conditions the Chinese Communist Party exploited in its final push to power in 1946–49. Cuba under Batista suffered no famine or hyperinflation on the German or Soviet scale, but widespread resentment of a corrupt, US-aligned dictatorship, combined with glaring inequality between Havana and the countryside, created the political opening that the 26th of July Movement exploited from 1956.

Core concept: crisis as opportunity, not cause

Economic crisis alone never explains an authoritarian takeover – many states experienced depression, inflation or war without producing a Hitler, a Stalin, a Mao or a Castro. Crisis matters because it discredits existing institutions and creates a demand for decisive, "strong" leadership. Candidates who write "the Depression caused Hitler's rise" without explaining the intervening mechanisms (discredited coalition government, fear of communism, propaganda promising order) will not access the top mark bands.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Khủng hoảng kinh tế (siêu lạm phát, thất nghiệp, nạn đói, chiến tranh) không tự động sinh ra chế độ độc tài – nó chỉ tạo ra *điều kiện*: làm mất niềm tin vào chính phủ hiện hành và khiến dân chúng khao khát một lãnh đạo "cứng rắn" hứa hẹn ổn định. Khi viết luận, học sinh cần giải thích cơ chế trung gian (ví dụ: đảng phái truyền thống mất uy tín, sợ hãi chủ nghĩa cộng sản, bộ máy tuyên truyền hứa hẹn trật tự) chứ không chỉ liệt kê con số khủng hoảng.

4.1.2 Weak or Discredited Political Institutions

A second precondition is the fragility of the institutions that might otherwise have blocked an authoritarian challenger. The Weimar Republic's constitution allowed the president to rule by emergency decree (Article 48) and produced a fragmented, multi-party Reichstag in which stable coalitions were difficult to sustain – conditions Hitler exploited once appointed Chancellor. The Bolshevik one-party state that emerged from the Russian Civil War had already banned rival parties and suppressed internal factions before Stalin began his rise, so his task was not to destroy democracy but to capture an already-authoritarian party apparatus from within, using his control of appointments as General Secretary from 1922. The Guomindang state in China never established secure control over the whole country and was further weakened by the invasion of Japan and by rampant wartime and postwar inflation, leaving it unable to resist the Communist Party's disciplined military and political organisation in the renewed civil war of 1946–49. In Cuba, Batista's dictatorship rested on personal loyalty and repression rather than durable institutions, and its collapse on the flight of Batista himself (1 January 1959) left almost no organised alternative capable of resisting the 26th of July Movement.

4.1.3 Charismatic Leadership and Party Organisation

Max Weber's concept of "charismatic authority" – legitimacy based on the perceived extraordinary personal qualities of a leader rather than on law or tradition – helps explain why Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Castro were each able to command intense personal loyalty. Yet charisma alone was never sufficient: each leader also commanded, or came to command, a disciplined party organisation capable of translating popular or elite support into administrative control. The Nazi Party's cellular structure of block wardens, gauleiters and paramilitary formations gave Hitler a functioning shadow government even before 1933. The Bolshevik/Communist Party's hierarchical discipline, inherited from Lenin, gave Stalin the institutional lever (control of appointments and promotions as General Secretary) to build a personal patronage network throughout the state and party bureaucracy. The Chinese Communist Party's decades of guerrilla organisation-building, culminating in the Long March (October 1934–October 1935) and the leadership consolidated by Mao at the Zunyi Conference (January 1935), gave the party both military experience and an internal command structure ready to govern once the civil war was won. Castro's 26th of July Movement, though far smaller in scale than the Nazi or Chinese Communist parties, provided the same essential ingredients: a hierarchy of committed cadres, a charismatic leader, and comrades such as Che Guevara and Raul Castro capable of exercising independent command.

4.1.4 Propaganda and the Manufacture of Consent

Twentieth-century authoritarian movements were the first to exploit mass media – newspapers, radio, cinema, and later television – systematically to manufacture popular consent rather than relying solely on coercion. Nazi propaganda under Joseph Goebbels, Stalinist "socialist realism," Maoist mass campaigns built around the cult of the Little Red Book, and Cuban state media all served the same underlying function: to present the leader as the embodiment of the nation or the revolution, to depict enemies as existential threats, and to make dissent appear not merely illegal but unpatriotic or counter-revolutionary.

4.1.5 Paramilitary Violence and State Terror

Finally, each movement possessed, or rapidly built, an organisation willing to use violence against opponents before it controlled the formal machinery of the state. The Nazi SA (Sturmabteilung) intimidated political opponents on the streets of Weimar Germany throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Bolshevik Cheka and its successor agencies had already normalised political terror during the Russian Civil War, providing the institutional template later expanded into the NKVD under Stalin. The Chinese Communist Party's Red Army, forged during the Long March and the civil war, gave Mao a coercive instrument long before 1949. Castro's guerrilla column, operating from the Sierra Maestra after the Granma landing (2 December 1956), performed the same role for the 26th of July Movement. In every case, the transition from irregular or party violence to formalised, state-controlled terror (the Gestapo and SS, the NKVD, party security organs, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution) marks the shift from *winning* power to *consolidating* it – the subject of Section 4.3.

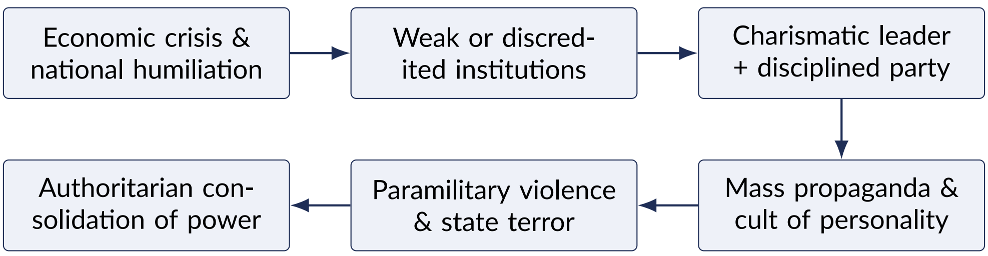

Figure 4.1: The recurring sequence of conditions behind twentieth-century authoritarian consolidation. Each stage is necessary but not sufficient on its own – historians debate the relative weight of each factor for each regime.

Practice 4.1 – Examine essay

Examine the role of economic crisis in the rise to power of **one** authoritarian leader you have studied.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong response (using Hitler as the chosen leader) would argue that economic crisis was a necessary but not sufficient condition. **Paragraph 1** establishes the scale of the crisis: hyperinflation in the early 1920s and, more decisively, the Great Depression from 1929, which pushed unemployment to roughly six million by 1932 and devastated the coalition governments of the late Weimar Republic. **Paragraph 2** shows the mechanism by which crisis translated into Nazi support: middle-class fear of both communism and economic ruin drove voters toward a party promising national renewal and order, dramatically increasing the Nazi Party's electoral strength in the early 1930s. **Paragraph 3** introduces the counter-argument/other factors: Hitler's failed Beer Hall Putsch (8–9 November 1923) had already taught the Nazi leadership that legal, electoral methods combined with elite backroom deals were far more effective than an attempted coup, so the crisis of 1929–32 was decisive *because* the party had by then adopted a legal strategy and built a nationwide organisation capable of exploiting it. **Paragraph 4** notes that economic crisis alone did not make Hitler's appointment as Chancellor (30 January 1933) inevitable: it resulted from backroom manoeuvring by conservative elites (von Papen, Hindenburg's circle) who believed they could control him. **Conclusion**: economic crisis created the conditions for radical politics to flourish, but Hitler's rise also depended on tactical adaptation after 1923, party organisation, and elite miscalculation – a multi-causal argument scores far higher than a single-cause one.

Practice 4.2 – Source analysis (OPCVL)

Source: adapted from a Nazi Party recruitment pamphlet for the Hitler Youth, distributed in a German town, 1936. "Join the ranks of the Hitler Youth! Here German boys learn discipline, comradeship and love of the Fatherland. Weak, divided Germany is gone – under our Führer a new, united nation is rising. Every boy has a duty to serve the community before himself."

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, value and limitations, analyse this source for a historian studying how the Nazi regime built support among German youth in the 1930s.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: an official Nazi Party recruitment pamphlet, meaning it was produced by the movement itself for the specific purpose of persuasion, not neutral reporting. **Purpose:** to recruit boys into the Hitler Youth and to reinforce the message, aimed indirectly at parents, that membership was patriotic and character-building. **Content:** it emphasises discipline, comradeship, national unity and self-sacrifice for the community – themes consistent with the regime's known strategy of using youth organisations to bypass the family and the churches as competing sources of loyalty. **Value:** the source is valuable precisely because it is propaganda – it shows historians the vocabulary and appeals the regime believed would work on German families in the mid-1930s, and it corroborates other evidence of state efforts to control the upbringing of the young. **Limitations:** as promotional material it says nothing about coercion (membership became compulsory over time), nothing about dissenting families, and nothing about the experience of those excluded from the *Volksgemeinschaft* it invokes; it must be cross-referenced with membership statistics, personal testimony, and legislation to assess actual reach and compulsion.

4.2 Rise to Power: Methods Used

Although each leader operated within a distinct political system, their paths to power reveal a common pattern: an early failure or setback that taught the value of working through, rather than against, existing structures; patient organisation-building; exploitation of a moment of crisis; and, in three of the four cases, the use of armed force at some stage. This section treats each leader in turn before Section 4.6 draws the comparison together.

4.2.1 Hitler's Path to Power, 1923–1933

Hitler's first attempt to seize power was a failure. On 8–9 November 1923 he led the Nazi Party in the Beer Hall Putsch, an attempted coup against the Bavarian state government in Munich modelled loosely on Mussolini's March on Rome. The putsch collapsed almost immediately and Hitler was arrested and imprisoned. This failure was, paradoxically, one of the most important turning points in Hitler's career: while imprisoned he wrote *Mein Kampf*, setting out his ideology, and concluded that legal methods – building electoral support and cultivating alliances with conservative elites – offered a far more reliable path to power than an attempted coup. Over the following decade the Nazi Party rebuilt itself as a mass electoral movement, and the Depression-era crisis of the early 1930s handed that strategy its opportunity: as unemployment surged, the Nazi Party's electoral support grew dramatically, and conservative politicians around President Hindenburg came to see Hitler as a useful figure who could be brought into government and controlled. On 30 January 1933 Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany through a legal, constitutional process – not by revolution – a decision his conservative backers would soon come to regret.

4.2.2 Stalin's Path to Power, 1922–1929

Stalin's rise depended less on public charisma than on mastery of party bureaucracy. Appointed General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1922, a position other Bolshevik leaders regarded as merely administrative, Stalin used his control over appointments, promotions and party records to build a patronage network of loyal officials throughout the Soviet Union. Following Lenin's death (21 January 1924), Stalin allied with Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev to isolate and discredit Leon Trotsky, the figure most Bolsheviks regarded as Lenin's natural successor. Trotsky was expelled from the Communist Party in 1927, deported from the USSR in 1929, and was eventually assassinated in Mexico in 1940. Having used the political left of the party to destroy Trotsky, Stalin then reversed course, turning on his former allies Zinoviev and Kamenev, and subsequently on Nikolai Bukharin's more moderate "right" faction, which had favoured a slower pace of economic transformation. By exploiting shifting ideological alliances – allying with each faction only long enough to eliminate the next – Stalin held effectively unchallenged power within the party by around 1929, several years before the mass terror of the later 1930s (Section 4.3) eliminated any remaining potential rivals.

4.2.3 Mao's Path to Power, 1921–1949

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was founded in 1921, one of many small revolutionary organisations competing for influence in a fractured, warlord-dominated China. After early cooperation and then violent conflict with the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) under Chiang Kai-shek, the CCP's rural base areas came under military pressure, forcing the party's armed forces onto the Long March (October 1934–October 1935), an immense strategic retreat across difficult terrain. During the march, at the Zunyi Conference (January 1935), Mao consolidated his position as the dominant leader within the party's military and political leadership – a decisive moment often treated as the true beginning of Mao's supremacy within the CCP. Following the temporary wartime truce with the Guomindang against Japanese occupation, civil war resumed in full in 1946; the CCP's more disciplined organisation, land-reform appeal to the peasantry, and superior military strategy allowed it to defeat the Guomindang by 1949. Mao proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949, marking the transition from a revolutionary movement to the ruling power over the world's most populous state.

4.2.4 Castro's Path to Power, 1953–1959

Fidel Castro's movement took its name, the 26th of July Movement, from a failed attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba on 26 July 1953 – itself a defeat, but one that established Castro's reputation as a determined opponent of the Batista dictatorship. After imprisonment and exile, Castro and a small group of followers, including his brother Raul Castro and the Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara, returned to Cuba aboard the yacht *Granma*, landing on 2 December 1956. The surviving guerrillas retreated into the Sierra Maestra mountains, from which they waged a sustained guerrilla campaign, gradually winning peasant support and attracting urban allies opposed to Batista's corrupt, US-backed regime. As the guerrilla campaign expanded and Batista's own forces proved unwilling to fight effectively, the regime collapsed rapidly at the end of 1958; Batista fled Cuba on 1 January 1959, and Castro's forces took power with little further resistance.

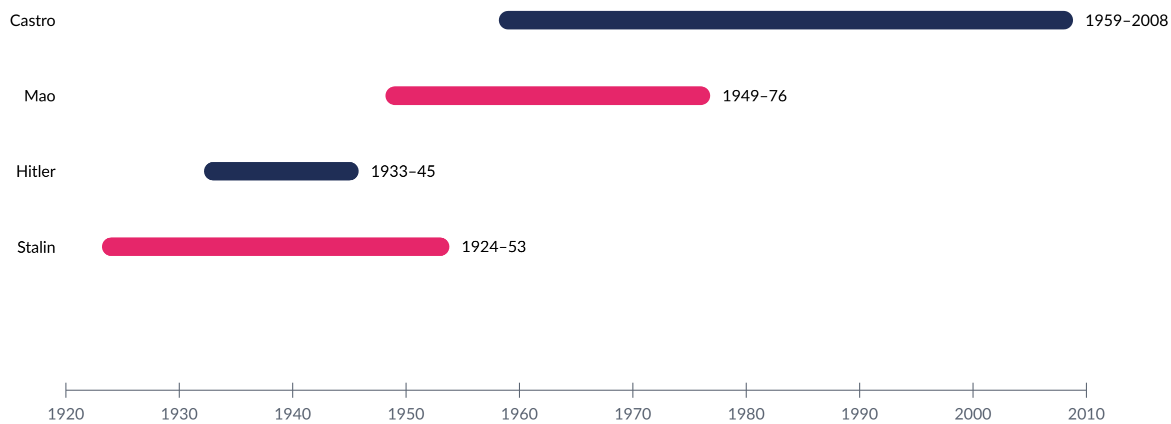

Figure 4.2: Years in power. Stalin's tenure as unchallenged Soviet leader is conventionally dated from Lenin's death (1924); Mao and Castro are shown from the founding of their respective states.

Practice 4.3 – Examine essay

Discuss the reasons for Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany in January 1933.

Lời giải chi tiết

A well-structured answer separates **long-term** and **short-term** factors and explains how they interacted. Long-term factors: the weaknesses of the Weimar constitution (fragmented multi-party Reichstag, presidential emergency powers under Article 48); the lasting resentment created by defeat in the First World War; and the Nazi Party's reorganisation after the failed Beer Hall Putsch (8–9 November 1923), which shifted its strategy toward legal, electoral methods. Short-term factors: the Great Depression, which pushed unemployment to roughly six million by 1932 and destroyed confidence in the existing governing coalitions, driving a surge in Nazi electoral support; and the political miscalculation of conservative elites around President Hindenburg (particularly Franz von Papen), who believed Hitler could be brought into a coalition government and controlled by conservative ministers. The essay should conclude that Hitler's appointment was not the result of a popular majority (the Nazi Party never won an outright majority in a free election) but of a convergence between mass electoral strength, built over a decade of patient reorganisation, and an elite bargain struck by conservative politicians who badly underestimated him.

Practice 4.4 – Examine essay

Examine how Stalin used his position as General Secretary to eliminate his political rivals between 1922 and 1929.

Lời giải chi tiết

Key points: (1) the office of General Secretary, created in 1922 and initially regarded by senior Bolsheviks as a minor administrative post, in fact controlled appointments, promotions and party records, allowing Stalin to place loyal supporters throughout the state and party bureaucracy; (2) after Lenin's death (21 January 1924), Stalin formed a temporary alliance with Zinoviev and Kamenev against Trotsky, using the party's disciplinary machinery and public debate to discredit Trotsky's standing; Trotsky was expelled from the Communist Party in 1927 and deported from the USSR in 1929 (later assassinated in Mexico in 1940); (3) having eliminated Trotsky, Stalin then turned against his former allies Zinoviev and Kamenev, and against Bukharin's more moderate right-wing faction, exploiting genuine policy disagreements over the pace of industrialisation and collectivisation; (4) by around 1929 Stalin held unchallenged power within the party, years before the mass violence of the Great Purge (1936–38) removed any remaining potential threats. A strong essay stresses that Stalin's method was fundamentally *bureaucratic and tactical* – shifting alliances to isolate one rival at a time – rather than reliant on personal charisma or public appeal.

Practice 4.5 – Examine essay

Examine the significance of the Long March for Mao Zedong's rise to power within the Chinese Communist Party.

Lời giải chi tiết

The Long March (October 1934–October 1935) was a costly, difficult retreat of Communist forces from Guomindang encirclement, but its significance for Mao's career was transformative rather than purely military. At the Zunyi Conference (January 1935), held during the march, Mao consolidated his position as the dominant figure in the party's military and political leadership, sidelining rivals associated with earlier, less successful strategies. The march also created a founding myth of endurance and sacrifice that later Communist propaganda used to legitimise the leadership that had guided the survivors, and it forged the core group of military and political leaders who would go on to lead the CCP to victory in 1949. A well-argued response should balance this with the point that Mao's ultimate rise to national power in 1949 also depended on subsequent factors – the wartime united front against Japan, the CCP's land-reform appeal to the peasantry, and the Guomindang's military and economic collapse in the renewed civil war of 1946–49 – so the Long March should be treated as a critical stepping stone in Mao's internal party ascent rather than the sole explanation for Communist victory.

Practice 4.6 – To what extent essay

To what extent was the guerrilla campaign from the Sierra Maestra the decisive factor in Fidel Castro's rise to power?

Lời giải chi tiết

A balanced "to what extent" response weighs the guerrilla campaign against other contributing factors before reaching a supported judgement. **In favour**: the campaign, waged from the Sierra Maestra following the Granma landing (2 December 1956) by a small guerrilla force including Che Guevara and Raul Castro, gradually built peasant support, demonstrated the regime's military weakness, and produced the propaganda victories (survival against a much larger army) that gave Castro national and international standing. **Against, or additional fac-**

tors: Batista's own regime was already deeply unpopular and corrupt, alienating much of the urban middle class and business elite even before the guerrilla campaign gained momentum; the earlier failed Moncada Barracks attack (26 July 1953) had already given Castro's movement its name and its founding narrative of sacrifice; and Batista's flight on 1 January 1959 came suddenly, following the collapse of morale within his own armed forces rather than a decisive military defeat of the government in open battle. **Judgement**: the guerrilla campaign was necessary – it kept the movement alive, built its legitimacy, and provided the armed force that filled the vacuum when Batista fled – but it operated within, and was accelerated by, the prior collapse of Batista's own political and military authority; both military and political-legitimacy factors should be given weight.

4.3 Consolidation and Maintenance of Power

Winning power and keeping it are analytically distinct problems, and IB examiners frequently reward candidates who can separate the two. Once in office, each leader had to convert a fragile initial position into durable control, typically by combining four overlapping instruments: legal or quasi-legal measures to eliminate institutional checks; terror directed first at organised political opposition and then at rivals within the ruling movement itself; propaganda and a cult of personality to build positive popular identification with the leader; and control of education, youth organisations, the role of women, and religious institutions to reshape society over the long term.

4.3.1 Hitler: The "Legal Revolution" and Terror, 1933–34

Hitler's consolidation of power in 1933–34 is often described as a "legal revolution" because each step was given a veneer of constitutional legitimacy even as it destroyed constitutional government. On 27 February 1933 the Reichstag building burned; the Nazi government blamed a communist conspiracy and used the fire to persuade President Hindenburg to sign the Reichstag Fire Decree, suspending civil liberties (freedom of speech, assembly and the press) and permitting the arrest of political opponents, especially communists. With opposition parties intimidated and many of their deputies arrested or absent, the Reichstag passed the Enabling Act on 23 March 1933, granting Hitler's cabinet the power to enact laws without parliamentary approval – effectively ending multi-party democracy in Germany by legal vote rather than by coup. Trade unions were dissolved, rival parties were banned or dissolved themselves, and Germany became a one-party state within months.

The final major step in this consolidation targeted rivals within the Nazi movement itself. On 30 June 1934, the Night of the Long Knives, Hitler ordered the murder of Ernst Röhm, the leader of the SA paramilitary organisation whose size and radicalism had alarmed the army and conservative elites, along with other actual and perceived rivals. The purge reassured the army leadership, whose cooperation Hitler needed, and eliminated the one internal force that might have challenged his personal authority. When President Hindenburg died in August 1934, Hitler merged the offices of president and chancellor into the single position of *Führer*, a move subsequently endorsed in a plebiscite held under conditions that made genuine opposition extremely difficult to express.

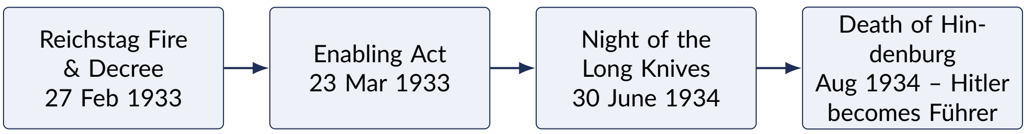

Figure 4.3: The four steps of Hitler's "legal revolution," February 1933 – August 1934.

Behind this legal facade, coercion was institutionalised through the Gestapo (secret police) and the SS under Heinrich Himmler, and the first concentration camp, at Dachau, opened in 1933 to hold political prisoners. Propaganda was centralised under Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, which controlled the press, radio and film; the annual Nuremberg rallies staged spectacular displays of unity and strength, and the 1936 Berlin Olympics were used to project an image of a modern, orderly, welcoming Germany to an international audience. Youth were organised through the Hitler Youth for boys and the League of German Girls for girls, both designed to build loyalty to the regime that could outweigh loyalty to family, school or church. Women were directed toward a domestic role summarised in the slogan "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" (children, kitchen, church) and encouraged to have large families through incentives such as the Mother's Cross award. The regime initially sought accommodation with organised religion through the Reich Concordat with the Vatican (20 July 1933), but subsequently moved against clergy who resisted Nazi control of the churches, including Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, key figures of the dissenting Confessing Church. Resistance persisted despite the risks: the White Rose student group was uncovered and its members executed in 1943, and Claus von Stauffenberg led a failed assassination and coup attempt against Hitler on 20 July 1944.

> **(!) Lỗi thường gặp:** Do not describe Nazi Germany's transition to dictatorship as simply "illegal." The strength of Hitler's consolidation lay precisely in its constitutional camouflage – the Enabling Act was passed by a vote of the Reichstag (albeit under intimidation), not imposed by military coup. Examiners reward candidates who can explain *why* legality mattered as propaganda and as a device for securing elite cooperation.

4.3.2 Stalin: Purges and the Cult of Personality

Stalin's consolidation after 1929 rested on an ever-expanding apparatus of terror administered by the NKVD (the secret police). The mid-to-late 1930s saw a series of public show trials in which former senior Bolsheviks confessed, often under duress, to fantastic conspiracies: Zinoviev and Kamenev were tried and executed in August 1936, and Bukharin was tried and executed in March 1938. These trials formed part of the wider Great Purge (1936–38), sometimes referred to as the Yezhovshchina after Nikolai Yezhov, the NKVD chief who directed much of the terror during these years before he too was purged and executed. The purge extended deep into the military: Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, one of the Red Army's most capable commanders, was executed in June 1937 along with numerous other senior officers, significantly weakening the Red Army's experienced officer corps. Millions of ordinary citizens, alongside party officials, were sent to the Gulag system of forced-labour camps, often on fabricated or arbitrary charges.

Alongside terror, Stalin cultivated an intense cult of personality, presented through "socialist realism" in art, literature and film – a style mandated to depict Soviet life, and Stalin himself, in heroic, idealised terms rather than realistically. Youth were organised through the Communist Party's youth wings, the Komsomol for older adolescents and the Young Pioneers for younger children, instilling ideological loyalty from an early age. The Russian Orthodox Church, already weakened since the revolution, faced continued persecution, with clergy arrested, churches closed, and state atheism promoted as official doctrine.

Worked example: comparing Hitler's and Stalin's terror apparatus

A common Paper 2 task asks candidates to compare methods of consolidation. A strong comparative paragraph on terror might run: "Both Hitler and Stalin relied on a dedicated secret police (the Gestapo and the NKVD respectively) and both directed violence not only against organised political opposition but against rivals within their own movement – Hitler's purge of the SA leadership in the Night of the Long Knives (1934) parallels Stalin's purge of Bukharin's faction and of the military high command (1936–38). The key difference lies in scale and target: Stalin's Great Purge extended to millions of ordinary citizens sent to the Gulag on fabricated charges, producing a climate of terror that penetrated far deeper into everyday Soviet society than Nazi terror did into German society before the war, where coercion in the mid-1930s was initially concentrated more narrowly on identified political and racial enemies." Note how this paragraph makes a direct comparison (similarity and difference) rather than describing each regime in a separate, disconnected paragraph.

4.3.3 Mao: Campaigns and the Cultural Revolution

Mao's consolidation of power after 1949 proceeded through a sequence of mass political campaigns rather than a single decisive purge. Land reform in the early 1950s redistributed land from landlords to peasants, but was frequently accompanied by public "speak bitterness" meetings in which accused landlords were denounced, humiliated and often killed by local communities mobilised by the party – a method that simultaneously destroyed the old rural elite and bound the peasantry to the new regime through complicity. In 1956–57 Mao launched the Hundred Flowers Campaign, briefly inviting open criticism of the party under the slogan of letting "a hundred flowers bloom"; when criticism proved more extensive and pointed than expected, the regime reversed course into a harsh Anti-Rightist Campaign that persecuted many of those who had spoken out.

The most far-reaching consolidation drive was the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), which Mao launched partly to reassert his authority within the party after the failures of the Great Leap Forward (Section 4.4) had weakened his standing relative to more pragmatic colleagues. Mobilising millions of young Red Guards, the campaign attacked the "Four Olds" (old customs, culture, habits and ideas) and targeted Mao's own rivals within the Communist Party leadership; President Liu Shaoqi, one of Mao's principal rivals, was purged and died in custody in 1969. The campaign was accompanied by an intense cult of personality centred on Mao and popularised through the mass distribution of the Little Red Book of his quotations. Ordinary education was severely disrupted as schools and universities closed for extended periods, and the Down to the Countryside Movement sent large numbers of urban youth, including former Red Guards, to work in rural areas – officially to learn from the peasantry, but also serving to disperse a mobilised youth movement that had become difficult for the party to control.

4.3.4 Castro: Institutionalising the Revolution

Castro's regime consolidated power through a combination of grassroots surveillance and formal one-party rule. The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), established in 1960, organised neighbourhood-level structures across Cuba that combined social mobilisation (local health and education campaigns) with surveillance of residents for signs of counter-revolutionary activity or dissent – an instrument of both control and popular participation. In 1965 the Communist Party of Cuba was formally established as the sole legal political party, closing off any institutional path to organised opposition. The state also asserted comprehensive control over the media, ensuring that news and cultural output reinforced the regime's narrative. Unlike Hitler's or Stalin's regimes, Castro's consolidation was not accompanied by mass terror on a comparable scale; instead, the regime relied heavily on the genuine popular legitimacy generated by the mass literacy campaign and the construction of a universal healthcare system, both of which functioned simultaneously as real social achievements and as powerful instruments of political legitimation.

Leader	Terror / security body	Landmark episode	Propaganda / cult tool	Youth organisation
Hitler	Gestapo, SS (Himmler); Dachau (1933)	Night of the Long Knives, 30 June 1934	Goebbels' propaganda ministry; Nuremberg rallies; 1936 Olympics	Hitler Youth; League of German Girls
Stalin	NKVD (Yezhov, 1936–38)	Great Purge & show trials, 1936–38; Tukhachevsky executed 1937	Socialist realism; cult of personality	Komsomol; Young Pioneers
Mao	Party security organs; mobilised Red Guards	Cultural Revolution, 1966–76; Liu Shaoqi purged	Little Red Book; cult of personality	Red Guards (mobilised youth)
Castro	Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (1960)	Communist Party of Cuba made sole legal party, 1965	State-controlled media; literacy & healthcare as legitimation	Party-affiliated youth & student organisations

Table 4.1: Instruments of consolidation and control compared across the four regimes.

Practice 4.7 – Source analysis (OPCVL)

Source: adapted from a Cuban government description of Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, distributed to explain the organisation's role, early 1960s. "Every block, every neighbourhood, stands guard for the Revolution. Together we organise vaccination campaigns and literacy classes, and together we watch for the enemies of the people who would return Cuba to the days of Batista."

Analyse the value and limitations of this source for a historian studying the function of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

Lời giải chi tiết

Value: the source directly illustrates the dual function historians attribute to the CDRs – combining genuine social mobilisation (vaccination campaigns, literacy classes) with political surveillance ("watch for the enemies of the people") – confirming that these were not purely repressive bodies but instruments that blended welfare provision with control, which helps explain their broad popular participation. Its official origin also reveals how the regime wished the CDRs to be perceived by ordinary Cubans. **Limitations:** as a government-produced description, it necessarily presents the CDRs in a positive light and gives no indication of how surveillance was experienced by those who dissented, nor any sense of the coercive pressure to participate that some residents may have felt; it should be cross-referenced with independent or dissident accounts and with scholarship on the CDRs' role in identifying and reporting political nonconformity to assess the balance between voluntary participation and social pressure.

Practice 4.8 – Compare and contrast essay

Compare and contrast the methods used by Hitler and Stalin to consolidate their power.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: both used a combination of legal/quasi-legal measures and terror; both eliminated rivals within their own movement as well as external opposition (Hitler purging the SA leadership in 1934; Stalin purging Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin's factions and the military high command in 1936–38); both built an intense cult of personality reinforced through controlled mass media and youth organisations (Hitler Youth/League of German Girls; Komsomol/Young Pioneers); both used a dedicated secret police (Gestapo/SS; NKVD) and camp systems for political prisoners (early concentration camps; the Gulag). **Differences**: Hitler's early consolidation (1933–34) proceeded through ostensibly legal, constitutional mechanisms – the Reichstag Fire Decree and the Enabling Act – passed with parliamentary or presidential sanction, whereas Stalin operated within an already one-party state and consolidated through internal party manoeuvring and later extra-legal terror rather than constitutional change; Stalin's Great Purge (1936–38) extended coercion far more broadly into Soviet society, implicating millions of ordinary citizens through the Gulag system, whereas Nazi terror before the war was initially concentrated more narrowly on identified political and racial targets; and religious policy differed – Hitler initially sought accommodation with the Catholic Church via the Reich Concordat (1933) before turning on dissenting clergy, whereas Stalin's regime pursued sustained state atheism and persecution of the Orthodox Church throughout. **Conclusion**: both regimes reveal a common logic of legal camouflage followed by escalating terror and cult-building, but the scale, targets and constitutional framing of that terror differed significantly, reflecting the different starting points of a multi-party democracy (Germany) and an already one-party state (the USSR).

Practice 4.9 – Examine essay

Examine the role of the Cultural Revolution in Mao Zedong's consolidation of power within the Chinese Communist Party.

Lời giải chi tiết

Key argument: the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) should be understood primarily as a mechanism for Mao to reassert personal authority after his standing within the party had been weakened by the catastrophic failure of the Great Leap Forward (Section 4.4). By mobilising millions of young Red Guards against the "Four Olds" and encouraging them to attack officials at every level, Mao redirected political energy away from party structures that might have constrained him and toward direct, personalised loyalty – reinforced through mass circulation of the Little Red Book and an intense cult of personality. The purge of President Liu Shaoqi, a chief rival and advocate of more pragmatic economic policies, who was removed from power and died in custody in 1969, exemplifies how the campaign functioned to eliminate specific internal rivals as much as to pursue genuine ideological renewal. A well-rounded answer also notes the campaign's costs to Mao's own long-term authority and to the state: closure of schools and universities disrupted a generation's education, economic production suffered from the resulting disorder, and the later Down to the Countryside Movement was in part a device to disperse a Red Guard movement that had grown difficult even for Mao to control. The Cultural Revolution therefore succeeded in the short term at eliminating Mao's rivals and reinforcing his cult of personality, but at a considerable cost to institutional stability and human welfare.

4.4 Aims and Results of Economic Policies

Economic policy served two purposes in each regime: to deliver genuine transformation (industrialisation, military readiness, redistribution) and to demonstrate the superiority of the regime's ideology in practice. Judged by their own stated aims, the record is mixed at best, and in the cases of Stalin's collectivisation and Mao's Great Leap Forward, catastrophic in human terms.

4.4.1 Hitler's Economic Policy

Nazi economic policy in the 1930s combined public-works spending, labour mobilisation and, increasingly, preparation for war. The Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich Labour Service) organised young men into public-works projects, most famously the construction of the autobahn network, both reducing unemployment statistics and building infrastructure with military utility. In 1936 Hermann Göring was placed in charge of the Four Year Plan, an explicit programme to prepare the German economy for war within four years through accelerated rearmament, resource stockpiling and moves toward self-sufficiency (autarky) in strategic materials. Officially reported unemployment fell sharply from its Depression-era peak, and the regime presented this recovery as proof of National Socialist economic superiority over liberal capitalism; in reality, the recovery was substantially driven by state-directed rearmament spending and labour conscription rather than by a return to healthy private-sector growth, leaving the German economy oriented toward war rather than sustainable civilian prosperity.

4.4.2 Stalin's Economic Policy

Stalin's economic transformation of the Soviet Union rested on two linked programmes. The Five-Year Plans, beginning in 1928, set ambitious state-directed targets for heavy industrial output (coal, steel, machinery), achieving rapid industrial growth in absolute terms, though frequently by prioritising quantity and headline targets over quality, worker welfare, or consumer goods. Forced collectivisation of agriculture, beginning in 1929, aimed to consolidate small peasant farms into large collective units and to eliminate the "kulaks" – more prosperous peasants – as a distinct social class, through confiscation of land and livestock, deportation, and, in many cases, execution. Collectivisation provoked fierce peasant resistance, disrupted agricultural production, and, combined with continued state grain requisitioning to feed industrial workers and fund exports, produced a catastrophic famine across major grain-growing regions, especially Ukraine, in 1932–33 – the Holodomor. Death-toll estimates for the Holodomor vary considerably among historians, commonly ranging from roughly 3.5 to 5 million deaths, and a number of historians and governments classify it as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation specifically, given the concentration of the famine's impact and evidence of policies that worsened its severity there; this classification remains genuinely disputed, with other historians treating it primarily as a consequence of broader, ideologically driven agricultural policy applied across the whole Soviet Union rather than an act targeted at Ukrainians as an ethnic group.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Nạn đói Holodomor (1932–33) là một trong những chủ đề còn gây tranh cãi nhất trong lịch sử Liên Xô. Số liệu tử vong được các nhà sử học ước tính trong khoảng 3,5–5 triệu người, và một số chính phủ/nhà sử học xem đây là hành vi diệt chủng nhắm vào người Ukraine, trong khi số khác cho rằng đây là hậu quả của chính sách nông nghiệp áp dụng trên toàn Liên Xô chứ không nhắm riêng vào một dân tộc. Khi làm bài thi, học sinh nên trình bày đây là vấn đề *còn tranh luận* ("historians debate..."), không nên chọn một con số duy nhất và khẳng định chắc chắn.

4.4.3 Mao's Economic Policy

The Great Leap Forward (1958–62) was Mao's attempt to accelerate China's transformation into an industrial power within a few years, surpassing the industrial output of major Western economies through mass mobilisation rather than gradual, planned investment. Agriculture was forced into large People's Communes, collectivising not only land but daily life, while rural labour was diverted toward small-scale "backyard" steel furnaces intended to boost national steel production – production that was frequently of unusable quality and diverted labour away from agricultural work at a critical time. Local officials, under pressure to report success, routinely exaggerated grain output figures, leading to procurement quotas that stripped grain-producing regions of food they could not spare. The result was the Great Chinese Famine, one of the deadliest famines in recorded history; because reliable contemporary statistics were suppressed or distorted, historians' estimates of excess deaths vary very widely, commonly ranging from roughly 15 to 45 million, and remain a matter of ongoing historical and demographic research and debate.

4.4.4 Castro's Economic Policy

Cuban economic policy after 1959 centred on rapid nationalisation of major industries, agriculture and US-owned businesses across 1959–60, redistributing wealth and asserting Cuban economic sovereignty, but provoking a sharp reaction from Washington: the United States broke diplomatic relations with Cuba in January 1961, and in April 1961 backed a failed invasion of Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs, which the Castro government defeated and used thereafter as powerful evidence of the revolution's need for vigilance against foreign intervention. Cut off from its traditional trading partner, Cuba became economically dependent on the Soviet Union, which purchased Cuban sugar at preferential prices and supplied subsidised oil, sustaining the Cuban economy for decades despite the ongoing US embargo. This dependency became a severe vulnerability once the Soviet Union collapsed: the resulting loss of subsidies and trade produced the "Special Period" of the 1990s, a time of severe economic hardship, shortages and hunger across Cuba, starkly illustrating how thoroughly the Cuban economy had come to rely on Soviet support rather than achieving genuine self-sufficiency.

Leader	Programme	Key mechanism	Outcome
Hitler	Four Year Plan (1936, under Göring); Reichsarbeitsdienst	Rearmament, autarky, labour conscription, autobahn construction	War-oriented recovery; falling unemployment but an economy geared to conflict rather than sustainable civilian growth
Stalin	Five-Year Plans (from 1928); forced collectivisation (from 1929)	State-directed industrial targets; elimination of kulaks as a class	Rapid heavy-industry growth; the Holodomor famine, 1932–33 (roughly 3.5–5 million deaths, debated as genocide)
Mao	Great Leap Forward (1958–62)	People's Communes; backyard steel furnaces; inflated output reporting	Great Chinese Famine (excess-death estimates ranging roughly 15–45 million)
Castro	Nationalisation (1959–60); alignment with the USSR	State control of former US assets; Soviet sugar-for-oil trade	US embargo & Bay of Pigs failure (Apr 1961); severe hardship in the post-1991 Special Period

Table 4.2: Aims, mechanisms and results of economic policy compared.

Practice 4.10 – Examine essay

Examine the aims and results of Nazi economic policy in Germany, 1933–39.

Lời giải chi tiết

Aims: to eliminate mass unemployment, to demonstrate the superiority of National Socialist economic management, and, increasingly from 1936, to prepare Germany's economy and resource base for war. **Methods**: large-scale public-works programmes (notably the autobahns) organised partly through the Reichsarbeitsdienst; state direction of industry toward rearmament; and, from 1936, Göring's Four Year Plan, which pursued autarky in key strategic materials and set explicit targets for war-readiness within four years. **Results**: officially reported unemployment fell dramatically from its Depression-era peak, which the regime trumpeted as proof of economic success; however, the recovery depended heavily on state rearmament spending and labour conscription rather than sustainable private consumption or civilian industrial growth, and by the end of the 1930s the German economy was structurally oriented toward war rather than long-term prosperity, leaving it dangerously dependent on continued military expansion to sustain employment and output. A strong essay concludes that Nazi economic policy achieved its short-term political aim (visible recovery, full employment) but at the cost of long-term structural balance, subordinating the civilian economy entirely to military and ideological objectives.

Practice 4.11 – To what extent essay

To what extent did Stalin's Five-Year Plans and collectivisation achieve their stated aims?

Lời giải chi tiết

Stated aims: rapid industrialisation to transform the Soviet Union into a modern military-industrial power, and the consolidation of agriculture into large collective units to feed the growing urban workforce and fund industrial investment through grain exports. **Achievements**: the Five-Year Plans, beginning in 1928, produced substantial growth in heavy industrial output (coal, steel, machinery) within a remarkably short period, building an industrial base that later proved militarily significant. **Failures and costs**: collectivisation, beginning in 1929, provoked violent peasant resistance and the destruction of livestock and equipment rather than voluntary cooperation, and the policy of eliminating "kulaks" as a class removed many of the most experienced and productive farmers; continued grain requisitioning despite falling output produced the Holodomor famine of 1932–33, with death-toll estimates commonly ranging from roughly 3.5 to 5 million – a catastrophe some historians classify as genocide against Ukraine specifically, though this remains debated. A balanced judgement concludes that the Five-Year Plans substantially achieved their industrial aims, at least in terms of headline output figures, but that collectivisation was catastrophic in human terms and arguably counter-productive even by the regime's own economic logic, since it damaged agricultural productivity for years afterward.

Practice 4.12 – Source analysis (OPCVL)

Source: adapted description of a Chinese propaganda poster from the Great Leap Forward period, circa 1958. The poster shows smiling peasants standing beside mountains of grain taller than nearby houses, with a giant pig in the foreground and a caption reading: "One year of hard work, ten thousand years of happiness – surpass Britain, catch up with America!"

Evaluate the value and limitations of this source for a historian studying the Great Leap Forward.

Lời giải chi tiết

Value: the poster is valuable evidence of the propaganda climate and official targets of the period – the exaggerated imagery of impossibly large harvests directly illustrates the culture of inflated reporting and unrealistic output targets ("surpass Britain, catch up with America") that historians identify as a central cause of the Great Leap Forward's failure, since local officials faced strong incentives to report success rather than the true, often disastrous, harvest figures. It also shows how the regime used mass visual propaganda to sustain morale and mobilise the population toward the campaign's goals. **Limitations**: as propaganda, the poster necessarily conceals rather than reveals the reality of falling grain output, the diversion of labour to backyard steel furnaces, and the famine conditions developing in many rural areas; a historian cannot use it as evidence of actual agricultural output and must cross-reference it with demographic data, internal party reports, and survivor testimony to reconstruct the true scale of the Great Chinese Famine, generally estimated at somewhere between roughly 15 and 45 million excess deaths.

Practice 4.13 – Examine essay

Examine the results of Cuban economic policy between 1959 and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Lời giải chi tiết

Key points: nationalisation of US-owned businesses and major industries in 1959–60 redistributed wealth and asserted economic sovereignty, but triggered the US break in diplomatic relations (January 1961) and the failed Bay of Pigs invasion (April 1961), entrenching hostility between the two states and providing the Cuban government with a lasting justification for centralised control and vigilance against external threats. Cut off from US trade, Cuba became heavily dependent on the Soviet Union, which purchased Cuban sugar at preferential prices and supplied subsidised oil – a relationship that sustained relatively stable living standards, alongside the genuine social achievements of the literacy campaign and universal healthcare (Section 4.5), for roughly three decades. However, this dependency proved to be a fundamental structural weakness rather than genuine economic self-sufficiency: when the Soviet Union collapsed, Cuba lost its subsidies and preferential trade almost overnight, plunging the country into the severe hardship of the 1990s "Special Period." A strong essay concludes that Cuban economic policy achieved real redistributive and social goals in the short and medium term, but failed to build a resilient, self-sustaining economy, leaving Cuba acutely vulnerable to external shocks beyond its control.

4.5 Aims and Results of Social and Cultural Policies

Beyond the economy, each regime pursued deliberate social and cultural transformation, reflecting its underlying ideology. These policies ranged from the genocidal racial policy of Nazi Germany to campaigns intended, at least in part, to genuinely improve welfare – though even the most benevolent-seeming programmes typically also served to legitimise one-party rule.

4.5.1 Nazi Racial Policy and the Holocaust

Nazi ideology placed race at the centre of its worldview, and social policy in the 1930s systematically translated this ideology into law and, ultimately, into genocide. The Nuremberg Laws, passed on 15 September 1935, stripped German Jews of citizenship and prohibited marriage and sexual relations between Jews and other Germans, formally institutionalising racial discrimination that had already been widespread in practice. Persecution escalated sharply on the night of 9–10 November 1938 – Kristallnacht ("Night of Broken Glass") – when Nazi paramilitaries and civilians attacked Jewish businesses, synagogues and homes across Germany and Austria, a coordinated pogrom that marked a decisive turn from discriminatory legislation toward organised mass violence. These escalating policies culminated, during the Second World War, in the Holocaust: the systematic, state-organised mass murder of approximately six million European Jews, along with millions of Roma, disabled people, political prisoners and other groups the regime deemed undesirable, carried out through mass shootings, forced labour and purpose-built extermination camps. The Holocaust stands as the defining and most extreme outcome of any social policy examined in this chapter, and IB examiners expect candidates to treat it with historical precision and appropriate gravity rather than as one item in a simple list of "social policies."

4.5.2 Stalinist Social Engineering

Soviet social policy under Stalin combined genuine, if uneven, gains in formal legal equality with the imposition of a heavy "double burden" on women, who were expected both to participate fully in the industrial and agricultural workforce and to continue performing the great majority of domestic labour and childcare, often with little practical support from the state. Religion faced sustained hostility: the regime promoted state atheism as official doctrine, closed or repurposed churches, and persecuted clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church and other faiths, treating organised religion as a rival source of authority incompatible with loyalty to the party and the state.

4.5.3 Maoist Social and Cultural Campaigns

Mao's regime pursued the most sustained assault on traditional culture and religion of any regime examined in this chapter, particularly during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), when Red Guards attacked the "Four Olds" – old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas – destroying temples, religious artefacts, historical texts and monuments across the country in the name of revolutionary renewal. Traditional social hierarchies, Confucian family values, and religious practice were all targeted as obstacles to a fully revolutionary society, while the Little Red Book and the cult of personality surrounding Mao offered a substitute focus of loyalty and meaning.

4.5.4 Cuban Social Policy: Welfare and Legitimation

Cuban social policy after 1959 stands apart from the other three regimes in combining major, genuinely transformative welfare achievements with clear political function. The nationwide literacy campaign dramatically expanded basic education, and the construction of a universal healthcare system provided medical care to the entire population regardless of income, both widely regarded as substantial and durable social achievements of the revolution. At the same time, these programmes served an unmistakable legitimising function: they demonstrated the practical superiority of Cuban socialism to sceptical citizens and to an international audience, generated genuine popular loyalty that offset the absence of political pluralism, and were reinforced through the neighbourhood-level structures of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, which combined welfare delivery with political mobilisation and surveillance.

Core concept: welfare and control are not mutually exclusive

Students sometimes assume that if a policy delivered a genuine social benefit (literacy, healthcare) it cannot also have been a tool of authoritarian control, or vice versa. In practice, the same policy can do both simultaneously – Cuban healthcare and literacy programmes are the clearest example in this chapter, but Nazi and Soviet youth organisations also delivered real recreational and educational opportunities to millions of young people even as they served to displace family, church and independent civil society as competing sources of loyalty.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Một sai lầm phổ biến khi làm bài Paper 2 là cho rằng chính sách phúc lợi (y tế, giáo dục) và chính sách kiểm soát chính trị (tuyên truyền, giám sát) loại trừ lẫn nhau. Trên thực tế, cùng một chính sách có thể vừa mang lại lợi ích xã hội thật sự, vừa củng cố tính chính danh cho chế độ độc tài – ví dụ điển hình nhất trong chương này là chương trình xoá mù chữ và y tế toàn dân ở Cuba.

Practice 4.14 – Examine essay

Examine the nature and impact of Nazi racial policy between 1933 and 1939.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong response traces the escalation from discriminatory legislation to organised violence. Early Nazi rule saw boycotts of Jewish businesses and exclusion from public employment, formalised and extended by the Nuremberg Laws of 15 September 1935, which stripped Jews of German citizenship and banned intermarriage, embedding racial discrimination into the legal structure of the state. This legislative persecution turned into open, coordinated violence with Kristallnacht on 9–10 November 1938, when synagogues, homes and businesses were attacked across Germany and Austria and thousands of Jewish men were arrested – a pogrom that many historians treat as the decisive turning point after which the regime's antisemitic policy shifted from legal exclusion toward the trajectory that led, during the war, to the Holocaust and the murder of approximately six million European Jews alongside millions of other victims. The essay should note that this trajectory was not accidental or purely reactive but the logical extension of an ideology that had placed racial hierarchy and antisemitism at its core since the movement's origins, meaning that 1933–39 should be read as a sustained radicalisation rather than a series of disconnected episodes.

Practice 4.15 – To what extent essay

To what extent were Stalinist social policies transformative for the position of women in Soviet society?

Lời giải chi tiết

Transformative elements: Soviet ideology formally proclaimed the equality of women and men, and women were drawn into the industrial and agricultural workforce in large numbers as part of the drive to meet Five-Year Plan targets, gaining access to employment and education on a scale unmatched in many other contemporary societies. **Limits of transformation**: this formal equality was not matched by a corresponding transformation of domestic life – women were expected to continue performing the great majority of housework and childcare alongside full-time paid labour, producing what historians describe as a "double burden," with little practical state support such as adequate childcare provision to ease the load. A balanced judgement concludes that Stalinist policy transformed women's formal legal and economic status significantly, but fell well short of transforming underlying gender roles within the family and household, meaning "transformative" is only partially accurate and should be qualified rather than accepted at face value.

Practice 4.16 – Examine essay

Examine the impact of the Cultural Revolution on education and traditional culture in China.

Lời giải chi tiết

Key points: schools and universities were closed for extended periods as the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) mobilised students into Red Guard units rather than allowing normal instruction to continue, disrupting the education of an entire generation. Traditional culture was targeted directly through the campaign against the "Four Olds," resulting in the destruction of temples, religious sites, historical artefacts and texts across the country, as Red Guards treated traditional customs and beliefs as obstacles to revolutionary transformation. The Little Red Book of Mao's quotations effectively replaced other forms of textbook and moral instruction, reinforcing the cult of personality even as formal education collapsed. Later, the Down to the Countryside Movement sent large numbers of urban youth, including many former Red Guards, to work in rural areas, officially framed as revolutionary re-education but also serving to disperse a youth movement that had grown increasingly difficult for the party to control. A strong essay concludes that the Cultural Revolution's impact on education and culture was severely destructive in the short and medium term, producing a significant gap in formal schooling and inflicting lasting damage on China's historical and religious heritage, costs that later Chinese leaderships would spend decades trying to repair.

Practice 4.17 – Evaluate essay

Evaluate the extent to which Cuban social policy after 1959 should be understood as propaganda rather than genuine welfare provision.

Lời giải chi tiết

A balanced evaluation avoids treating "propaganda" and "genuine welfare" as mutually exclusive categories. **Evidence of genuine welfare**: the mass literacy campaign substantially expanded basic education across Cuba, and the universal healthcare system provided medical care regardless of income, both durable, structural achievements that outlasted the immediate revolutionary period and are widely acknowledged even by critics of the regime on other grounds. **Evidence of propaganda function**: these same programmes were prominently publicised domestically and internationally as proof of socialism's practical superiority over capitalism, and were administered alongside the neighbourhood-level Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, which combined welfare delivery with political surveillance and mobilisation, making participation in social programmes difficult to separate from demonstration of political loyalty. **Judgement**: the most defensible conclusion is that Cuban social policy was simultaneously genuine and instrumental – the welfare benefits were real and substantial, but the regime deliberately harnessed them to build legitimacy for one-party rule and to offset the absence of political pluralism, so evaluating the policy purely as either "propaganda" or "genuine welfare" misses the way authoritarian regimes typically use real achievements for political ends.

4.6 Nature and Extent of Authoritarian Control: A Comparison

Having examined each theme across all four regimes, this final section draws together the comparison IB Paper 2 questions most often require. Despite their sharply different ideological foundations – Hitler's racial fascism, Stalin's Marxism-Leninism as reshaped into Stalinism, Mao's distinctive adaptation of communism to a largely peasant society, and Castro's Cuban Marxism-Leninism forged through guerrilla struggle – a common structural sequence recurs across all four cases. First, each movement exploited a genuine political or economic crisis to gain a foothold, whether through legal politics (Hitler), bureaucratic manoeuvring within an existing one-party state (Stalin), protracted civil war (Mao), or guerrilla insurgency (Castro). Second, each leader moved quickly to eliminate legal or organised external opposition, whether through emergency decrees and enabling legislation (Hitler), the pre-existing one-party structure inherited from the Bolshevik revolution (Stalin), the military defeat of the Guomindang (Mao), or the dissolution of rival parties and the establishment of a single legal party (Castro). Third, each leader then turned inward, purging rivals within his own movement – Hitler's SA leadership, Stalin's former left and right allies, Mao's own senior party colleagues during the Cultural Revolution, though Castro's consolidation involved markedly less internal bloodletting than the other three. Fourth, each regime constructed a cult of personality and a propaganda apparatus to secure positive identification with the leader, reaching into education, youth organisations and daily cultural life. Fifth, each regime combined this propaganda with organised terror or, in Castro's case, comprehensive surveillance, to deter and punish dissent.

Core concept: ideology explains policy content, not the mechanism of control

A frequent examiner comment is that candidates conflate *what* a regime did with *why* it worked. Ideology (fascism, Stalinism, Maoism, Cuban socialism) largely explains the specific *content* of policy – racial genocide under Hitler, forced collectivisation under Stalin, permanent revolution under Mao, redistributive welfare under Castro – but the underlying *mechanisms* of consolidation (elimination of opposition, purge of internal rivals, cult of personality, terror or surveillance) are strikingly similar across all four regimes regardless of ideology. A top-band essay makes this distinction explicit.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Khi so sánh bốn chế độ, cần phân biệt rõ *hệ tư tưởng* (giải thích *nội dung* chính sách – ví dụ diệt chủng chủng tộc dưới Hitler, tập thể hoá cưỡng bức dưới Stalin) với *cơ chế duy trì quyền lực* (loại bỏ đối lập, thanh trừng nội bộ, sùng bái cá nhân, khủng bố/giám sát) – những cơ chế này lặp lại rất giống nhau ở cả bốn chế độ dù tư tưởng khác nhau hoàn toàn. Đây là luận điểm giúp bài luận đạt điểm cao nhất trong thang điểm IB Paper 2.

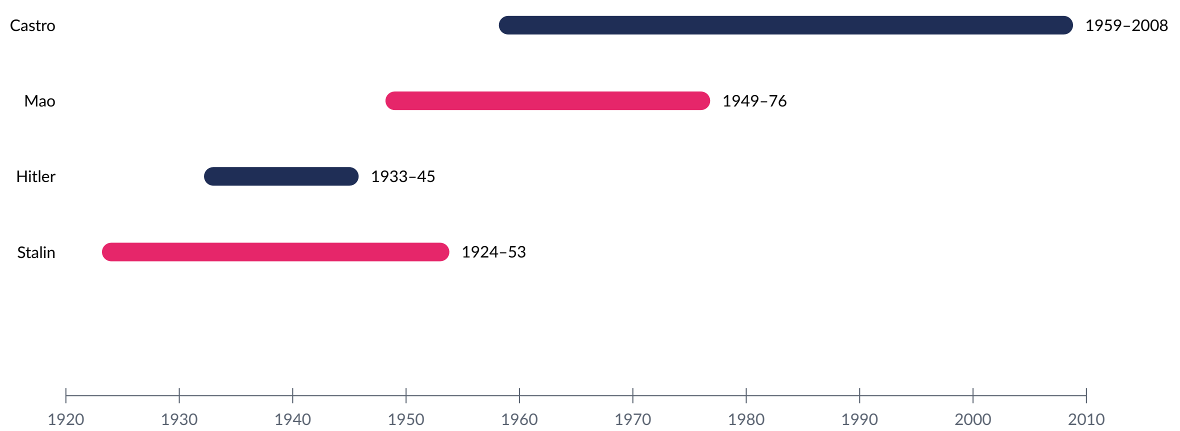

Figure 4.4 (recap of Figure 4.2): Comparative tenure – note that Stalin, Mao and Castro each governed for multiple decades, while Hitler's regime, though shorter in duration, was responsible for the war and genocide that make it a distinct case in the historiography of authoritarianism.

Leader	Path to power	Consolidation mechanism	Economic policy	Social control	Human cost / legacy
Hitler	Legal appointment as Chancellor (30 Jan 1933) after the failed 1923 putsch taught legal strategy; exploited Depression unemployment and Weimar instability	Reichstag Fire Decree & Enabling Act ended democracy; Night of the Long Knives purged the SA; Führer title after Hindenburg's death	Four Year Plan (1936); rearmament; autobahns; labour service	Gestapo/SS terror; Goebbels' propaganda; Hitler Youth/BDM; Concordat then persecution of clergy	The Holocaust (approx. six million Jews plus other victims); war across Europe
Stalin	General Secretary from 1922 built patronage; allied with Zinoviev/Kamenev against Trotsky, then turned on them and Bukharin; unchallenged by c. 1929	NKVD terror; show trials (1936, 1938); Great Purge 1936–38; military purge (Tukhachevsky, 1937); Gulag	Five-Year Plans (from 1928); forced collectivisation (from 1929); Holodomor 1932–33	Socialist realism; cult of personality; Komsomol/Young Pioneers; persecution of the Orthodox Church	Holodomor (roughly 3.5–5 million deaths, debated as genocide); Purge executions and Gulag deaths
Mao	CCP founded 1921; Long March 1934–35; Zunyi Conference 1935; defeated the Guomindang 1946–49; PRC proclaimed 1 Oct 1949	Land-reform violence; Hundred Flowers then Anti-Rightist Campaign; Cultural Revolution 1966–76 (Liu Shaoqi purged)	Great Leap Forward (1958–62); People's Communes; backyard furnaces	Little Red Book; cult of personality; closure of schools; Down to the Countryside Movement	Great Chinese Famine (excess deaths estimated roughly 15–45 million); Cultural Revolution disruption
Castro	26th of July Movement (named for the 1953 Moncada attack); Granma landing (Dec 1956) & Sierra Maestra campaign; Batista flees 1 Jan 1959	Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (1960); Communist Party of Cuba sole legal party (1965)	Nationalisation (1959–60); Soviet alignment; post-1991 Special Period	State media control; mass literacy campaign & universal healthcare as legitimation	Political prisoners & exile of opponents; long-term US embargo

Table 4.3: Comprehensive comparison of the four authoritarian regimes across all themes covered in this chapter.

Exam technique: planning a compare/contrast Paper 2 essay

For a question such as "Compare and contrast the methods used by two authoritarian leaders to consolidate power," plan using a thematic (not leader-by-leader) structure: (1) introduction naming both leaders and previewing your comparative line of argument; (2–4) one paragraph per theme (e.g. legal/institutional measures; terror; propaganda and cult of personality), each paragraph explicitly discussing *both* leaders and stating a similarity *and* a difference; (5) conclusion that weighs which similarities or differences matter most, rather than merely repeating the introduction. Avoid writing one long paragraph on Leader A followed by one long paragraph on Leader B – this "block" structure rarely scores in the top band because it fails to compare directly.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A very common error is treating "to what extent" questions as invitations to write a one-sided narrative. Every "to what extent" essay must present evidence *for* the proposition in the question, evidence *against or qualifying* it, and a final judgement that explicitly weighs the two – for example, stating not just that ideology mattered to Castro's rise, but *how much*, relative to military and circumstantial factors, and why.

Practice 4.18 – Source analysis (OPCVL)

Source: adapted from an obituary of Joseph Stalin published in a Soviet state newspaper, March 1953. "The great architect of socialism has fallen silent. Under his wise and steadfast leadership, our backward agricultural land was transformed into a mighty industrial power capable of defeating fascism. His genius guided the Party through every trial, and his memory will inspire the Soviet people for generations to come."

With reference to its origin, purpose, content, value and limitations, analyse this source for a historian studying the Soviet cult of personality.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: an obituary published in an official Soviet state newspaper immediately after Stalin's death, meaning it was produced by the very apparatus that had spent decades constructing his cult of personality. **Purpose**: to eulogise Stalin and to reinforce, at a moment of potential political uncertainty following his death, the legitimacy of the system and party he had led, discouraging any immediate questioning of his record. **Content**: it credits Stalin personally ("his genius," "his wise and steadfast leadership") with the Soviet Union's industrial transformation and its role in defeating fascism, entirely omitting any reference to collectivisation, the Holodomor, the Great Purge, or the Gulag system. **Value**: precisely because it is official propaganda, the source is highly valuable evidence of *how* the Soviet state wished Stalin to be remembered and of the vocabulary and imagery – "genius," "architect," fatherly "guidance" – through which the cult of personality operated, corroborating other evidence (socialist realist art, mass rallies) of how the regime manufactured legitimacy around a single leader. **Limitations**: it is entirely one-sided and cannot be used as evidence of Stalin's actual record; it says nothing of the millions who died in the Holodomor or the Purges, and a historian must cross-reference it with demographic data, archival party records (many only available after the collapse of the Soviet Union), and survivor testimony to construct a balanced account of Stalin's rule.

Practice 4.19 – Compare and contrast essay

Compare and contrast the rise to power of Mao Zedong and Fidel Castro.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: both rose to power through protracted armed struggle rather than electoral politics – Mao through the long civil war against the Guomindang, culminating in the Long March (1934–35) and victory in 1949, and Castro through the guerrilla campaign waged from the Sierra Maestra following the Granma landing (December 1956); both built a disciplined party or movement organisation with a core leadership group forged through shared hardship (the Long March survivors; Castro, Che Guevara and Raul Castro in the Sierra Maestra); both exploited the weakness and unpopularity of the government they replaced (the corrupt, war-weakened Guomindang; the corrupt, US-aligned Batista dictatorship). **Differences**: Mao's path to power took decades and involved a mass party with a substantial regular army, sustained rural land-reform organising, and eventual conventional victory in a large-scale civil war (1946–49); Castro's movement was far smaller in scale, relied on guerrilla rather than conventional warfare throughout, and achieved victory far more rapidly, within roughly two years of the Granma landing, aided by the sudden collapse of Batista's own regime rather than a decisive military defeat in open battle. **Conclusion**: both cases confirm that armed struggle against a discredited government was central to communist victory in the twentieth century, but the scale, duration and decisiveness of the military campaign differed enormously, reflecting the different sizes and levels of institutional development of China and Cuba.

Practice 4.20 – Evaluate essay

Evaluate the relative importance of terror and propaganda in maintaining authoritarian rule. Refer to **two** states you have studied.

Lời giải chi tiết

Using Stalin's USSR and Castro's Cuba as the two chosen states provides a useful contrast in the balance between terror and propaganda. **Terror as decisive (Stalin)**: the NKVD, the show trials of 1936 and 1938, the Great Purge of 1936–38, the destruction of the experienced military officer corps (Tukhachevsky executed 1937), and the vast Gulag system created a climate of pervasive fear that made organised opposition virtually impossible, arguably making terror the single most important instrument of Stalinist rule, with propaganda (socialist realism, the cult of personality) serving mainly to justify and sustain that terror rather than substituting for it. **Propaganda and legitimacy as decisive (Castro)**: Castro's Cuba, by contrast, relied far less on mass terror – there was no equivalent of the Gulag or the Great Purge – and instead achieved durable rule through a combination of neighbourhood surveillance (the CDRs, established 1960) and genuine popular legitimacy generated by the literacy campaign and universal healthcare, suggesting that propaganda and real welfare achievement could substitute for large-scale terror in maintaining one-party rule over decades. **Judgement**: the relative importance of terror versus propaganda depended significantly on the availability of alternative sources of legitimacy – where a regime could deliver credible, popular material improvements (Cuba), propaganda and moderate surveillance sufficed; where policy imposed severe suffering that undermined its own popularity (Soviet collectivisation and the Holodomor), the regime relied far more heavily on terror to prevent that suffering from translating into organised resistance.

Practice 4.21 – To what extent essay

To what extent was ideology, rather than personal or military power, the driving force behind Fidel Castro's rise to power in Cuba?

Lời giải chi tiết

Case for ideology: the 26th of July Movement drew its name and moral authority from the 1953 Moncada Barracks attack, framed from the outset as a struggle against dictatorship and social injustice, and the movement's programme of land reform and nationalisation, articulated well before 1959, provided a coherent ideological alternative to Batista's corrupt, US-aligned rule that attracted genuine popular and international sympathy. **Case for personal and military power**: Castro's rise depended heavily on the guerrilla campaign waged from the Sierra Maestra after the Granma landing (December 1956), on the personal military leadership of Castro, Che Guevara and Raul Castro, and on Batista's sudden loss of control over his own armed forces at the end of 1958 – a collapse driven as much by corruption and low morale within the regime as by any specifically ideological appeal of the guerrillas. It is also notable that Castro did not declare Cuba a socialist state until April 1961, well after taking power, suggesting that a fully formed communist ideology was not the primary mobilising force during the armed struggle itself, even though it became central to the regime once consolidated. **Judgement**: ideology (opposition to dictatorship, promises of land reform and social justice) was important in building the movement's early legitimacy and appeal, but the guerrilla campaign's military success and Batista's political and military collapse were the more immediate and decisive causes of Castro's actual seizure of power in January 1959; the explicitly Marxist-Leninist ideology that came to define the regime was substantially consolidated only afterward, making personal and military factors at least as significant as ideology in explaining the *rise* to power, even if ideology became paramount in explaining its subsequent *consolidation*.

Practice 4.22 – Compare and contrast essay

Compare and contrast the economic policies of Stalin and Mao and their human consequences.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: both leaders pursued rapid, state-directed transformation of a predominantly agrarian economy through forced collectivisation of agriculture and ambitious industrial targets pursued with limited regard for feasibility or human cost; both campaigns were undermined by local officials exaggerating output to satisfy political pressure from above, and both produced catastrophic famines as a direct consequence of state policy – the Holodomor (1932–33) and the Great Chinese Famine (1958–62 onward) respectively – rather than purely natural disasters. **Differences**: Stalin's Five-Year Plans concentrated primarily on heavy industry (steel, coal, machinery) built through conventional state planning and investment, whereas Mao's Great Leap Forward attempted a far more radical and improvised form of mass mobilisation, including small-scale "backyard" steel furnaces of little practical industrial value, reflecting Mao's greater emphasis on mass ideological mobilisation over technical planning; the death tolls, while both disputed and difficult to establish precisely, are generally estimated at a substantially larger scale for the Chinese famine (commonly cited in a range of roughly 15 to 45 million) than for the Holodomor (commonly cited in a range of roughly 3.5 to 5 million), reflecting both China's far larger population and the scale of the policy failure. **Conclusion**: both cases demonstrate the extreme human cost of forced collectivisation pursued without regard for agricultural reality, but they differed in industrial strategy and, according to most historical estimates, in the ultimate scale of the resulting famine.

Practice 4.23 – Discuss essay

"Authoritarian consolidation follows a common pattern regardless of ideology." Discuss this view with reference to at least two authoritarian states you have studied.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong "discuss" essay presents both supporting and challenging evidence before reaching a reasoned judgement. **Supporting evidence**: across Hitler's Germany, Stalin's USSR, Mao's China and Castro's Cuba, the same broad sequence recurs – exploitation of crisis to gain a foothold, elimination of legal or external opposition, purge or marginalisation of internal rivals, and the construction of a cult of personality and propaganda apparatus reinforced by terror or surveillance. This recurring structure, despite radically different ideological starting points (fascism, Stalinism, Maoism, Cuban socialism), supports the view that mechanisms of consolidation are substantially independent of ideological content. **Challenging evidence**: the specific *content* and *intensity* of consolidation varied enormously according to ideology and context – Nazi racial ideology produced the Holocaust, a form of violence with no direct equivalent in Cuba; Stalin's and Mao's internal purges reached a scale and violence (the Great Purge; the Cultural Revolution) that Castro's consolidation did not approach, reflecting both ideological differences and the different scale and maturity of each ruling movement; and Cuba's heavier reliance on genuine welfare provision (literacy, healthcare) alongside surveillance, rather than mass terror, suggests that ideology and material circumstance can meaningfully shape *which* instruments of control a regime relies on most heavily. **Judgement**: the underlying *structural sequence* of authoritarian consolidation – crisis exploitation, elimination of opposition, internal purge, cult of personality, terror or surveillance – does recur with striking consistency regardless of ideology, but ideology and specific national context strongly shape the intensity, targets and particular instruments used at each stage, so the view is broadly convincing as a description of *mechanism* but requires significant qualification when applied to the *scale and character* of what each regime actually did.

The Cold War: Superpower Tensions and Rivalries

Mục tiêu Unit: Trình bày được nguồn gốc tư tưởng và các cách diễn giải sử học (Chính thống, Xét lại, Hậu-xét lại) về Chiến tranh Lạnh; dựng lại trình tự sự kiện 1945–1991 (Yalta, Potsdam, Học thuyết Truman, Kế hoạch Marshall, phong toả Berlin, NATO, Chiến tranh Triều Tiên, Khủng hoảng tên lửa Cuba, Chiến tranh Việt Nam, chạy đua vũ trang, hoà hoãn, Gorbachev và sự sụp đổ của Liên Xô); phân tích nguồn sử liệu theo kỹ thuật OPCVL; và luyện viết các dạng bài Paper 2/3 (examine, evaluate, compare and contrast, to what extent).

The Cold War (c.1945–1991) was a prolonged state of geopolitical, ideological, economic and military rivalry between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies, characterised by proxy wars, an arms race, and competing spheres of influence, but without direct large-scale armed conflict between the two superpowers themselves.

5.1 Ideological origins and historiographical debate

5.1.1 Two incompatible systems

At the deepest level, the Cold War was a struggle between two visions of how society, the economy and government should be organised. The United States represented liberal capitalist democracy: private ownership of property, a market economy, competitive multi-party elections, and individual civil liberties protected from state interference. The Soviet Union represented Marxist-Leninist communism: state or collective ownership of the means of production, a centrally planned economy, a single-party political system directed by the Communist Party, and an ideology that regarded the ultimate victory of the working class over capitalism as historically inevitable. Each system regarded the other not merely as a rival but as an existential threat to its own survival and to the spread of its values worldwide.

These tensions did not begin in 1945. They stretched back to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, when Vladimir Lenin's Bolsheviks seized power in Russia and withdrew from the First World War, alarming the Western powers, who feared the spread of communist revolution across Europe. Britain, France, the United States, Japan and other powers subsequently intervened militarily in the Russian Civil War (1918–1920) in support of anti-Bolshevik "White" forces, an episode Soviet leaders never forgot and frequently invoked as evidence of inherent Western hostility toward the Soviet state. For the interwar period the two sides remained largely isolated from one another diplomatically and ideologically, brought together only by the shared emergency of fighting Nazi Germany after 1941. That wartime alliance was always a marriage of convenience rather than of trust, and the underlying ideological incompatibility resurfaced as soon as the common enemy was defeated.

The practical differences between the two systems reached into almost every sphere of public and private life, which is part of why the rivalry proved so difficult to resolve through ordinary diplomacy. Where the American system prized private enterprise, competitive multi-party elections, a free press, and constitutional protection of individual rights against the state, the Soviet system subordinated individual rights to goals defined by the Communist Party leadership, treated private ownership of major industry as illegitimate, and relied on a state-controlled press and a single legal party to enforce ideological conformity. Because each side could present its rivalry with the other not as an ordinary contest between great powers pursuing national interest, but as a moral and civilisational struggle over the correct future organisation of human society, compromise could be made to appear, to committed believers on either side, as a form of betrayal rather than routine statecraft. This is one reason why Cold War disputes – over Poland's government, over Berlin, over Korea, over Cuba – so often escalated further and proved harder to settle than comparable territorial or strategic disputes between states that did not see themselves as representing rival universal ideologies.

Core concept: an ideological Cold War

Because the conflict was rooted in incompatible worldviews rather than a specific territorial dispute, it could not be resolved by a single treaty or border adjustment. Each side interpreted the other's actions through the lens of ideology: American policymakers tended to see Soviet moves as expressions of an expansionist, revolutionary communist ideology bent on world domination; Soviet policymakers tended to see American moves as expressions of an aggressive, encircling capitalist-imperialist system determined to destroy the first socialist state. This mutual ideological suspicion made compromise difficult even when concrete national interests might otherwise have allowed for it.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Chiến tranh Lạnh bắt nguồn sâu xa từ sự đối lập giữa hai hệ tư tưởng: dân chủ tư bản (Mỹ) và cộng sản (Liên Xô). Mâu thuẫn này đã tồn tại từ Cách mạng Nga 1917 và việc phương Tây can thiệp vào Nội chiến Nga, chứ không chỉ bắt đầu năm 1945. Vì là xung đột về ý thức hệ, hai bên luôn nhìn hành động của đối phương qua lăng kính nghi ngờ, khiến việc thoả hiệp trở nên rất khó khăn.

5.1.2 Three schools of historiography

Historians have long disagreed about where responsibility for the Cold War lies, and IB Paper 2/3 responses are expected to engage with this historiographical debate rather than present a single uncontested narrative. Three broad schools can be identified.

The Orthodox school

Dominant in the West during the 1950s, the Orthodox (or "traditionalist") interpretation places primary responsibility on Soviet expansionism. In this view, Stalin's imposition of communist governments across Eastern Europe, his violation of wartime promises of free elections, and the ideological drive to spread communism forced the United States into a defensive, reactive posture. Containment and the Truman Doctrine are presented as necessary responses to an aggressive, expansionist USSR rather than as provocations in their own right.

The Revisionist school

Emerging in the 1960s and 1970s amid disillusionment over the Vietnam War, Revisionist historians such as William Appleman Williams argued that US economic and strategic ambitions bore significant responsibility for the Cold War. In this reading, Washington's insistence on open markets and its atomic monopoly encouraged an assertive, even aggressive foreign policy, while the Soviet Union – devastated by the Second World War, having lost enormous numbers of people and much of its industrial base – was acting defensively to secure a buffer zone against a third invasion from the west, not pursuing world revolution. Revisionists therefore see the American response as an over-reaction to a USSR that was, in practical terms, far weaker and more cautious than Orthodox accounts suggested.

The Post-revisionist school

From the 1970s onward, Post-revisionist historians, most notably John Lewis Gaddis, sought a more balanced synthesis. Rather than assigning primary blame to either side, Post-revisionists emphasise mutual misperception and a "security dilemma" – a situation in which each side's genuinely defensive actions (securing borders, building alliances, developing weapons) were perceived by the other as offensive threats, provoking further defensive countermeasures in an escalating spiral. In this view, the Cold War arose less from deliberate aggression by either superpower than from an unavoidable clash of interests and fears operating within a new bipolar international system, compounded by poor communication and deep ideological distrust.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Ba trường phái sử học chính về Chiến tranh Lạnh: (1) Chính thống (Orthodox) đổ lỗi cho Liên Xô bành trướng; (2) Xét lại (Revisionist, tiêu biểu William Appleman Williams) cho rằng Mỹ theo đuổi lợi ích kinh tế/chiến lược và phản ứng thái quá trước một Liên Xô đã kiệt quệ sau chiến tranh; (3) Hậu-xét lại (Post-revisionist, tiêu biểu John Lewis Gaddis) nhấn mạnh sự hiểu lầm lẫn nhau và "thế lưỡng nan an ninh" – không bên nào hoàn toàn có lỗi. Khi viết luận Paper 2/3, học sinh nên thể hiện được cả ba góc nhìn này thay vì chỉ kể lại sự kiện.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Many students narrate the Cold War as a simple chronological list of events without engaging with historiography. A strong Paper 2/3 response on "origins" or "responsibility" should explicitly weigh Orthodox, Revisionist and Post-revisionist arguments against the evidence, rather than assuming that either the US or the USSR was simply "to blame."

Practice 5.1 – Compare and contrast essay planning

Compare and contrast the Orthodox and Revisionist interpretations of the origins of the Cold War. In your answer, refer to specific events from 1945–1949.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong compare-and-contrast response should be organised thematically (not "everything about A, then everything about B") and should use the same events to illustrate both interpretations.

Similarity: both schools agree that Soviet control over Eastern Europe was a central point of friction and that this control was established through the imposition of pro-Soviet governments in states such as Poland after 1945.

Difference in causation: the Orthodox school treats Stalin's actions in Eastern Europe as evidence of an expansionist ideological drive to spread communism, making Western responses such as the Truman Doctrine (1947) and NATO (1949) necessary and defensive. The Revisionist school treats the same Soviet actions as a defensive attempt to build a security buffer after suffering catastrophic wartime losses, and instead treats US policies – the atomic monopoly after 1945, the economic terms attached to the Marshall Plan (1947), and the rapid remilitarisation of West Germany – as the assertive, expansionist element requiring explanation.

Difference in emphasis: Orthodox historians foreground ideology and Stalin's personal ambitions; Revisionists foreground economic structures (the search for markets, the "open door" policy) and the material weakness of the postwar USSR.

Evaluation: a balanced conclusion should note that neither interpretation alone fully explains the period, and that Post-revisionist accounts (Gaddis) attempt to reconcile them through the concept of mutual insecurity.

Practice 5.2 – Evaluate

Evaluate the usefulness of the Post-revisionist interpretation for understanding the origins of the Cold War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Value: the Post-revisionist approach, associated with John Lewis Gaddis, is useful because it avoids the trap of assigning single-sided blame and instead explains the escalation of tension as a structural outcome of the new bipolar postwar system. The concept of a "security dilemma" helps explain why genuinely defensive actions (for example, the Soviet desire for a buffer zone in Eastern Europe, or the American desire to prevent any single power from dominating Europe as Germany once had) were read by the other side as aggressive, triggering countermeasures that then confirmed the original suspicion. This model fits well with the rapid, reciprocal escalation seen at Yalta, Potsdam, the Truman Doctrine, and the Berlin Blockade.
Limitation: critics argue that treating both sides symmetrically can understate real asymmetries of power and intention – for instance, Stalin's documented determination to install loyal communist governments in Poland went well beyond what a purely defensive buffer required, arguably lending some support to Orthodox arguments in specific cases.
Conclusion: Post-revisionism is most useful as a framework for explaining the general dynamic of escalation, but should be combined with attention to specific decisions and evidence (Stalin's actions in Poland, Truman's rhetoric) rather than applied mechanically as if both sides were equally responsible in every instance.

5.1.3 A global, not merely European, contest

Although the Cold War's opening disputes concerned the fate of Poland, Germany and the rest of Europe, the rivalry did not remain confined to that continent. The collapse of the European colonial empires across Asia and Africa in the decades after 1945 created dozens of newly independent states whose governments had to decide, often under great external pressure, which superpower's model of development, economic assistance and military partnership to align with – or whether to attempt genuine non-alignment. Both Washington and Moscow treated the allegiance of these new states as a meaningful measure of ideological victory, offering economic aid, military training and diplomatic support to governments and, at times, to rival factions within the same country. This global dimension of the rivalry is essential to understanding events covered later in this chapter: the Korean War (Section 5.3) and the Vietnam War (Section 5.4) both took place in Asia rather than Europe, and the domino theory that justified US intervention in both conflicts explicitly extended the logic of containment from its original European setting to a genuinely worldwide stage. The Cold War should therefore be understood not as a European conflict with occasional overseas extensions, but as a structurally global contest in which Europe, despite its symbolic and strategic importance, was only one of several major theatres.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Dù các tranh chấp mở đầu Chiến tranh Lạnh xoay quanh Ba Lan và nước Đức, cuộc đối đầu này nhanh chóng lan rộng ra toàn cầu. Làn sóng phi thực dân hoá ở châu Á và châu Phi sau 1945 tạo ra hàng chục quốc gia độc lập mới, và cả Mỹ lẫn Liên Xô đều tranh giành ảnh hưởng với các nước này qua viện trợ kinh tế, quân sự. Vì vậy, Chiến tranh Triều Tiên và Chiến tranh Việt Nam (ở châu Á) cũng là một phần không thể tách rời của Chiến tranh Lạnh toàn cầu, chứ không chỉ là các cuộc xung đột khu vực đơn lẻ.

5.1.4 Approaching Paper 2/3 command terms on the Cold War

Because the Cold War spans essay topics on causation, crisis diplomacy, ideology, and the role of individuals, it is worth clarifying at the outset exactly what each recurring command term in this chapter's practice questions requires, since a strong factual answer written to the wrong command term will still lose marks.

Command-term guide for Cold War essays

Examine: present a balanced investigation of multiple causes, factors or consequences, giving each due weight and showing how they relate to one another, before reaching a supported conclusion. Do not simply narrate events – explain why each factor mattered.
Evaluate: weigh the strengths and weaknesses, or the relative importance, of an argument, interpretation, policy or individual's contribution, arriving at a clear, substantiated judgement rather than a purely descriptive account.
Compare and contrast: identify genuine similarities and genuine differences between two events, policies or interpretations, organised thematically (not simply "everything about A, then everything about B"), and explain the significance of the similarities and differences identified.
To what extent: take a clear position on a given claim (for example, that a particular individual or event was primarily responsible for an outcome), weigh the evidence for and against that position, and reach a nuanced, defensible judgement – rarely a simple "entirely" or "not at all."

Across the practice items in this chapter, strong responses share several habits: they open with a clear thesis that directly answers the question; they use specific, dated evidence (rather than vague generalisation) to support each point; they explicitly engage with historiographical debate where relevant (Section 5.1); and they close with a genuine judgement rather than an inconclusive summary. These habits apply equally whether the topic is the origins of the Cold War in 1945–49, a single crisis such as Cuba or Korea, or the process by which the Cold War ended after 1985.

VN GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

Khi làm bài luận Paper 2/3, cần hiểu đúng yêu cầu của từng động từ chỉ dẫn: "examine" (phân tích cân bằng nhiều nguyên nhân/yếu tố), "evaluate" (đánh giá điểm mạnh/yếu, đưa ra nhận định), "compare and contrast" (so sánh điểm giống và khác theo chủ đề), "to what extent" (đưa ra lập trường rõ ràng, cân nhắc bằng chứng hai chiều rồi kết luận có sắc thái). Một bài làm tốt luôn có luận điểm rõ ràng ngay từ đầu, dẫn chứng cụ thể có ngày tháng, và kết luận thể hiện quan điểm riêng thay vì chỉ tóm tắt lại sự kiện.

5.2 Origins of the Cold War, 1945--1949

5.2.1 Yalta and Potsdam: wartime allies fall out

The wartime "Big Three" alliance of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union began to fracture even before the war against Germany had ended. At the **Yalta Conference** (February 1945), Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin met to plan the postwar order while Germany's defeat still appeared some months away. The conference produced agreements on the division of Germany into occupation zones, the structure of the new United Nations, and a Declaration on Liberated Europe promising free elections in states liberated from Nazi control – including Poland, where the Soviet Red Army was already installing a pro-communist provisional government. These promises of free elections proved to be the flashpoint of the subsequent breakdown, since the Western powers interpreted them as a firm commitment while Stalin, having already suffered two devastating invasions from the west within living memory, was determined that Poland's government would be friendly to Moscow regardless of the outcome of any election.

By the time of the **Potsdam Conference** (July–August 1945), circumstances had changed markedly:

Roosevelt had died and was replaced by Harry Truman, a president far more suspicious of Soviet intentions; Churchill was replaced mid-conference by the newly elected Clement Attlee; and the United States had successfully tested the atomic bomb, giving Truman a new source of confidence and leverage. Disputes at Potsdam again centred on Poland (whose new communist-dominated government and westward-shifted borders the Western Allies reluctantly accepted) and on the treatment of occupied Germany, where disagreements over reparations, demilitarisation and the pace of any eventual reunification could not be fully resolved. Germany was left divided into four occupation zones (American, British, French and Soviet) with no binding agreement on the country's long-term future – a division that would harden, rather than dissolve, over the following four years.

The failure to reach a binding agreement on Germany at Potsdam is best understood not as an oversight but as a reflection of genuinely irreconcilable strategic interests. For the Soviet Union, which had suffered catastrophic losses in two German invasions within a single generation, a weak, divided or at minimum firmly controlled Germany was a basic security requirement, and reparations extracted from the Soviet zone were treated as a matter of urgent economic necessity for postwar reconstruction. For the Western Allies, a economically prostrate and resentful Germany risked repeating the conditions that had contributed to the rise of Nazism after the First World War, and they increasingly favoured rebuilding German industry and, eventually, German self-government within their own zones. These two visions of Germany's future were not merely different negotiating positions but reflected fundamentally different assessments of where the greater danger lay – a revived Germany, or a permanently weakened one – and this disagreement, left unresolved at Potsdam, would resurface with full force in the Berlin crisis of 1948–49.

> Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July–August 1945) reveal the shift from wartime cooperation to postwar suspicion: disputes over the composition of Poland's government and over the fate of occupied Germany were never fully resolved and became the first flashpoints of the Cold War.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Hội nghị Yalta (2/1945) và Potsdam (7–8/1945) đánh dấu sự rạn nứt của liên minh "Tam cường" thời chiến. Bất đồng chính là về Ba Lan (bầu cử tự do theo lời hứa tại Yalta >< chính phủ thân Liên Xô do Stalin dựng lên) và về tương lai nước Đức bị chia thành 4 vùng chiếm đóng. Đến Potsdam, Truman đã thay Roosevelt và tỏ ra cứng rắn hơn nhiều, đặc biệt sau khi Mỹ thử thành công bom nguyên tử.

5.2.2 Containment: Churchill's warning, the Truman Doctrine, and NSC-68

On 5 March 1946, in a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, Winston Churchill – by then out of office but still hugely influential – warned that "from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent," describing how Eastern European capitals had fallen under increasing Soviet control and influence. The **"Iron Curtain" speech** did not by itself create American policy, but it crystallised for Western public opinion the sense that Europe was dividing into two opposing camps, and it is frequently cited as marking the moment the Cold War entered public consciousness.

The following year, in March 1947, President Truman articulated what became known as the **Truman Doctrine** in a speech to Congress, requesting aid for Greece (fighting a communist insurgency) and Turkey (under Soviet pressure over control of the Turkish Straits). Truman declared that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who were resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. Although framed around two specific countries, the doctrine's underlying logic – that the United States would support any government resisting communist subversion, anywhere – amounted to a global commitment and became the foundational statement of the policy of **containment**: the idea that communism should be prevented from expanding beyond its existing boundaries, even if it could not be rolled back where it already existed.

Containment was given a harder, more militarised form in 1950 with the drafting of **NSC-68**, a National Security Council policy paper that reinterpreted the Soviet threat in far starker terms than Truman's 1947 speech had done. NSC-68 argued that the Soviet Union was fundamentally and irreconcilably hostile to the United States and was pursuing world domination, and it called for a dramatic, sustained increase in US military spending to contain Soviet power globally rather than only in Europe. This shift underpinned the logic of the **domino theory** – the belief that if one state fell to communism, neighbouring states would fall in turn, like a row of dominoes – which would later justify US intervention far from Europe, most significantly in Korea and Vietnam.

It is worth noting how much containment's practical meaning changed between 1947 and 1950. Truman's original 1947 formulation was reactive and geographically limited, framed around specific, immediate requests for aid to Greece and Turkey. NSC-68, only three years later, transformed containment into a doctrine of permanent, worldwide military readiness, treating any and every advance of Soviet or communist influence, anywhere on the globe, as a direct threat to American security requiring a potential military response. Revisionist historians (Section 5.1) point to this transformation as evidence that containment's logic, once adopted, tended to expand well beyond its original, more modest justification, providing the intellectual foundation for interventions – including, eventually, Vietnam – whose connection to any direct threat to the United States itself was considerably more tenuous than the original 1947 case of Greece and Turkey.

Core concept: containment and the domino theory

Containment (1947) held that communist expansion, wherever it occurred, threatened American security and had to be stopped. NSC-68 (1950) escalated this into a militarised, global commitment backed by a permanently enlarged US defence budget. The domino theory extended the logic further: a single communist success anywhere could trigger a chain reaction of neighbouring dominoes falling, providing the rationale for US involvement in conflicts on the far side of the world from Washington.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Bài phát biểu "Bức màn sắt" của Churchill (3/1946) không tạo ra chính sách nhưng đã định hình nhận thức công chúng về sự chia cắt châu Âu. Học thuyết Truman (3/1947) – ban đầu chỉ nói về Hy Lạp và Thổ Nhĩ Kỳ – trở thành tuyên ngôn của chính sách "ngăn chặn" (containment): Mỹ sẽ hỗ trợ bất kỳ quốc gia nào chống lại chủ nghĩa cộng sản. Đến NSC-68 (1950), chính sách này được quân sự hoá mạnh mẽ, đặt nền móng cho "thuyết domino" – lý do biện minh cho sự can thiệp của Mỹ tại Triều Tiên và Việt Nam sau này.

OPCVL worked example – Churchill's Iron Curtain speech

Source: Winston Churchill, speech at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, 5 March 1946: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe... all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere."

Origin: delivered by Winston Churchill, former British prime minister, at an American college, with President Truman present on the platform.

Purpose: to alert Western, especially American, public opinion to what Churchill saw as the growing Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, and to advocate closer Anglo-American cooperation to resist it.

Content: vivid imagery of a continent physically and ideologically divided; explicit naming of Eastern European capitals as falling under Soviet influence.

Value: valuable as evidence of how quickly and starkly wartime allies came to be viewed as an opposing bloc by Western statesmen only months after the war's end; valuable for understanding how public opinion in the West was mobilised toward a more confrontational posture. **Limitation:** as a political speech by a partisan figure no longer in office, it should not be read as a neutral or complete factual record – Churchill had every incentive to dramatise the Soviet threat to encourage American commitment to Europe, and the speech reflects his own strategic viewpoint rather than an agreed Allied assessment.

Practice 5.3 – Source analysis, OPCVL

"I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." (Adapted excerpt, Harry Truman, address to Congress, March 1947.)
Using OPCVL, assess the value and limitations of this source for a historian studying the origins of the containment policy.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: President Harry Truman, addressing the US Congress in March 1947, requesting aid for Greece and Turkey.
Purpose: to persuade Congress and the American public to approve financial and military aid, and to articulate a broader principle justifying future US intervention against communism.
Content: a universal-sounding commitment to support "free peoples" against subjugation, framed in general terms rather than confined to Greece and Turkey alone.
Value: highly valuable as the founding statement of containment – it shows how a specific, limited request (aid to two Mediterranean states) was deliberately generalised into an open-ended global doctrine, explaining the ideological basis for later interventions far beyond Europe.
Limitation: as a speech intended to secure congressional funding, it necessarily simplifies a complex geopolitical situation into a moral binary of "free peoples" versus "armed minorities," and should not be taken as an objective description of conditions in Greece or Turkey; it reveals Truman's rhetorical strategy more reliably than it reveals the situation on the ground.

5.2.3 The Marshall Plan and the division of Europe

In June 1947, US Secretary of State George Marshall announced what became known as the **Marshall Plan**, formally the European Recovery Program: a large-scale programme of American economic assistance intended to help rebuild the shattered economies of Europe. The stated rationale was economic and humanitarian – preventing the kind of economic collapse and desperation that might otherwise drive war-weakened populations toward communism – but the plan also served clear strategic goals, binding Western European economies more closely to the United States and to one another. Although the offer was formally extended to all European states, including the Soviet Union and its satellites, Stalin refused to participate and forbade Eastern European states under Soviet influence from accepting the aid, viewing the plan as an instrument of American economic penetration into the Soviet sphere. The Soviet Union subsequently organised its own economic assistance mechanisms for its allies, cementing rather than bridging the emerging division of the continent into two economic as well as political blocs.

Key vocabulary: superpower and satellite state

A **superpower** is a state possessing such overwhelming military, economic and political strength that it can project decisive influence globally, not merely regionally – after 1945, only the United States and the Soviet Union qualified, replacing the older, more numerous category of "great powers" that had characterised international relations before the Second World War. A **satellite state** is a nominally independent country whose government is, in practice, closely controlled by a more powerful neighbouring state; the term is most often applied to the Eastern European states brought under Soviet political and military control after 1945, whose governments were expected to align closely with Moscow's foreign policy and economic preferences.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Kế hoạch Marshall (công bố 6/1947) là chương trình viện trợ kinh tế khổng lồ của Mỹ nhằm tái thiết châu Âu sau chiến tranh, vừa vì lý do nhân đạo vừa để ngăn các nước kiệt quệ ngả theo chủ nghĩa cộng sản. Stalin từ chối tham gia và cấm các nước vệ tinh Đông Âu nhận viện trợ, coi đây là công cụ xâm nhập kinh tế của Mỹ – qua đó càng làm sâu sắc thêm sự chia cắt châu Âu thành hai khối.

5.2.4 Berlin: blockade, airlift, and the birth of two Germanies

The unresolved status of occupied Germany produced the first major crisis of direct superpower confrontation. When the Western Allies moved in 1948 to introduce a new currency and closer economic cooperation among their occupation zones – steps toward eventually creating a self-sufficient West German state – Stalin responded in June 1948 by imposing the **Berlin Blockade**, cutting off all road, rail and canal access from the Western zones of Germany to the Western-occupied sectors of Berlin, an enclave lying deep within the Soviet zone. Stalin's evident aim was to force the Western powers either to abandon West Berlin or to abandon their plans for an independent West German state.

Rather than risk war by forcing the blockade with ground convoys, the United States and Britain responded with the **Berlin Airlift**, flying enormous quantities of food, fuel and other supplies into West Berlin around the clock for nearly a year. The airlift succeeded in sustaining the city's population and demonstrated Western resolve without provoking direct military conflict. Stalin lifted the blockade in May 1949, a clear propaganda and strategic defeat for Moscow. Later that same month, the Western occupation zones formally merged to create the **Federal Republic of Germany** (West Germany, May 1949); in October 1949, the Soviet zone responded in kind by creating the **German Democratic Republic** (East Germany). Germany, and Berlin within it, was now formally and durably divided – a division that would persist for the following four decades and that made Berlin, an island of Western presence deep inside communist territory, the single most sensitive flashpoint of the entire Cold War.

Berlin's peculiar position – a Western-aligned enclave surrounded entirely by Soviet-controlled territory – meant that almost any change in the wider Cold War relationship tended to be felt there first and most acutely. This chapter returns to Berlin repeatedly precisely for this reason: the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 (Section 5.3) arose from the same underlying vulnerability that the 1948–49 blockade had first exposed, namely that West Berlin's physical isolation made it simultaneously a powerful symbol of Western resolve and a standing invitation for Soviet-bloc pressure; and the fall of that same Wall in November 1989 (Section 5.7) would later serve as the single most recognisable symbolic marker of the Cold War's end. Few other locations illustrate as clearly how a single unresolved territorial dispute from 1945 could continue to shape events across the entire Cold War period.

> The Berlin Blockade (June 1948–May 1949) and the Berlin Airlift that defeated it produced the first permanent partition of Germany: the Federal Republic of Germany (West, May 1949) and the German Democratic Republic (East, October 1949).

5.2.5 1949: the year the balance of power shifted

Several developments converged in 1949 to transform the emerging Cold War rivalry. In April 1949, the United States, Canada and ten Western European states signed the North Atlantic Treaty, founding the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**, a mutual-defence alliance committing its members to treat an attack on any one member as an attack on all – the first peacetime military alliance the United States had joined, reflecting how far containment had already moved from Truman's 1947 rhetoric toward concrete military commitment. In August 1949, the Soviet Union successfully tested its first **atomic bomb**, years earlier than most Western analysts had expected, ending the brief American atomic monopoly and transforming the rivalry into a nuclear one. And in the same year, Mao Zedong's Chinese Communists won the **Chinese Civil War**, driving the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek into exile on Taiwan and creating the People's Republic of China – the largest addition yet to what Western observers now feared was a unified, expanding global communist bloc. Taken together, NATO's formation, the Soviet atomic test and the communist victory in China marked the definitive end of any expectation that the wartime alliance might be revived, and set the stage for the direct military crises of the 1950s.

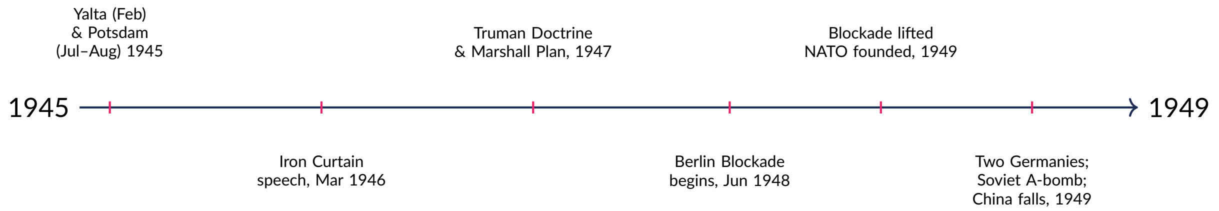

Figure 5.1 – Timeline of the origins of the Cold War, 1945–1949.

> **Chronology recap, 1945–1949:** Yalta (Feb 1945) · Potsdam (Jul–Aug 1945) · Iron Curtain speech (5 Mar 1946) · Truman Doctrine (Mar 1947) · Marshall Plan announced (Jun 1947) · Berlin Blockade begins (Jun 1948) · Berlin Blockade lifted (May 1949) · NATO founded (Apr 1949) · Federal Republic of Germany established (May 1949) · German Democratic Republic established (Oct 1949) · Soviet atomic bomb test (Aug 1949) · Chinese Communist victory (1949) · NSC-68 drafted (1950, reinterpreting containment).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Năm 1949 chứng kiến ba diễn biến làm thay đổi hẳn cán cân quyền lực: NATO ra đời (4/1949) – liên minh quân sự thời bình đầu tiên của Mỹ; Liên Xô thử thành công bom nguyên tử (8/1949), chấm dứt thế độc quyền hạt nhân của Mỹ; và phe Cộng sản Trung Quốc thắng lợi trong Nội chiến, lập ra nước Cộng hoà Nhân dân Trung Hoa. Ba sự kiện này khiến phương Tây càng tin rằng đang tồn tại một khối cộng sản thống nhất và đang mở rộng.

Practice 5.4 – Examine essay planning

Examine the causes of the Cold War in the period 1945–1949.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong "examine" response identifies multiple causal strands, explains how they interact, and reaches a substantiated judgement about their relative weight.
Ideological incompatibility (long-term/underlying cause): incompatible visions of economy and government made postwar cooperation inherently fragile regardless of specific policies (Section 5.1).
Breakdown of wartime diplomacy (immediate trigger): unresolved disputes over Poland's government and Germany's future at Yalta and Potsdam (1945) removed the framework for peaceful postwar cooperation and left both sides feeling betrayed by the other's conduct.
Soviet consolidation of Eastern Europe: the installation of pro-Soviet governments across Eastern Europe, culminating in Churchill's 1946 warning of an "iron curtain," convinced Western leaders that containment was necessary.
American containment policy: the Truman Doctrine (1947) and Marshall Plan (1947) committed the United States to actively resisting communist expansion and rebuilding Western Europe along capitalist lines, which the USSR read as an aggressive, encircling strategy.
Direct confrontation over Germany: the Berlin Blockade and Airlift (1948–49) turned an abstract rivalry into a concrete test of will in the heart of Europe.
Institutionalisation of the divide: NATO's founding, the creation of two German states, the Soviet atomic test, and the communist victory in China (all 1949) transformed a diplomatic rift into two rival, nuclear-armed blocs.
Judgement: while any one factor alone might have been contained diplomatically, the accumulation of ideological distrust, unresolved territorial disputes, and reciprocal policy escalation between 1945 and 1949 made a durable Cold War division of Europe and the wider world effectively unavoidable by decade's end.

Practice 5.5 – Short-answer, cross-referencing

Explain the connection between the Berlin Blockade (1948–49) and the formation of NATO (April 1949).

Lời giải chi tiết

The Berlin Blockade demonstrated to Western European states that the Soviet Union was willing to use direct pressure, even at the risk of confrontation, against Western positions in the heart of Europe. Although the crisis was resolved without war through the Berlin Airlift, it convinced Western governments that individual national defences were insufficient against Soviet power and that a formal collective-security guarantee was required. NATO, signed in April 1949 (before the blockade had even been fully resolved in spirit, though it was lifted that same May), institutionalised the principle that an attack on one Western state would be treated as an attack on all, directly addressing the vulnerability that the Berlin crisis had just exposed. In this sense the blockade acted as an accelerant, turning a general sense of Soviet threat into a concrete, binding military alliance.

Practice 5.6 – Evaluate

Evaluate the extent to which the Marshall Plan (1947) was primarily an economic, rather than a strategic, initiative.

Lời giải chi tiết

Case for "primarily economic": Western Europe's economies had been devastated by the war; the Marshall Plan's architects genuinely feared that continued poverty and food shortages could cause social collapse regardless of ideology, and the aid was, in principle, offered to all European states including the USSR and its satellites.
Case for "primarily strategic": the plan was administered in a way that required recipient economies to cooperate with one another and align with American-favoured trade and monetary policies, embedding Western Europe within a US-oriented economic order; Stalin's refusal to participate, and his ban on satellite states joining, shows that the plan was widely understood – by the Soviets at least – as a vehicle for extending American political and economic influence into regions the USSR regarded as within its own sphere.
Conclusion: the Marshall Plan is best understood as inseparably economic and strategic – genuine humanitarian and reconstruction motives coexisted with, and were reinforced by, the strategic goal of preventing communist advances by removing the economic desperation on which, containment theorists believed, communism thrived.

5.3 Crises of the Cold War in Europe and Asia

5.3.1 The Korean War, 1950–1953

The first large-scale "hot" conflict of the Cold War broke out in Asia. Korea, like Germany, had been divided at the end of the Second World War into a Soviet-backed North and a US-backed South, along the 38th parallel. On 25 June 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea in an attempt to reunify the peninsula under communist rule. The United Nations Security Council – with the Soviet Union then boycotting the Council over an unrelated dispute and therefore unable to exercise its veto – authorised a multinational force, overwhelmingly American in composition, to defend South Korea.

After early setbacks, UN forces under General Douglas MacArthur executed a daring amphibious landing at **Inchon** on 15 September 1950, cutting off North Korean forces and enabling a rapid advance northward. As UN and US forces pushed toward the **Yalu River**, the border with China, in October 1950, the newly established People's Republic of China intervened massively on the North Korean side, fearing a hostile, American-backed state on its border. Chinese intervention pushed UN forces back south, and the front eventually stabilised close to the original dividing line. Fighting continued for nearly three more years until an **armistice** was signed on 27 July 1953 near **Panmunjom**, close to the 38th parallel, establishing a demilitarised zone that still divides the Korean peninsula today. No formal peace treaty was ever concluded, and Korea remains divided.

The Korean War was significant for several reasons: it was the first time containment was extended by force outside Europe; it confirmed to Washington that communism was a global, not merely European, threat, reinforcing the logic that would later be applied in Vietnam; it drew China directly into the Cold War as an active military participant; and it demonstrated that limited, "hot" proxy wars could be fought between forces backed by the two superpowers without escalating into a direct US-Soviet war.

The war also had a lasting institutional effect on the United States itself. NSC-68 (Section 5.2), drafted only months before North Korea's invasion, had called for a dramatic and sustained increase in American military spending; the outbreak of actual fighting in Korea removed any remaining domestic political hesitation about funding such an increase, and US defence spending rose sharply and was subsequently sustained at a far higher level than before 1950 for the remainder of the Cold War. In this sense Korea did not simply illustrate containment in action – it was the war that made NSC-68's expensive, permanent, global military posture politically possible.

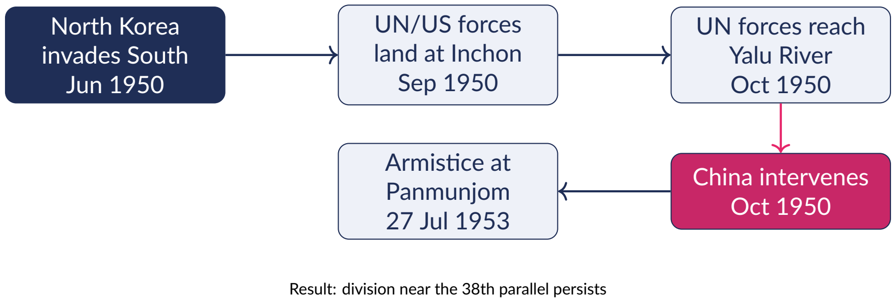

Figure 5.2 – The course of the Korean War, 1950–1953 (schematic, not a map).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Chiến tranh Triều Tiên (1950–53): Bắc Triều Tiên tấn công Nam Triều Tiên (6/1950) -> Liên Hợp Quốc (chủ yếu là Mỹ) can thiệp, đổ bộ Inchon (9/1950) -> quân Liên Hợp Quốc tiến sát sông Áp Lục (Yalu) giáp Trung Quốc -> Trung Quốc can thiệp (10/1950), đẩy lùi quân Liên Hợp Quốc -> đình chiến tại Bàn Môn Điếm gần vĩ tuyến 38 (27/7/1953). Bán đảo Triều Tiên vẫn còn chia cắt đến ngày nay vì chưa từng có hiệp ước hoà bình chính thức.

Practice 5.7 – Examine

Examine the causes and consequences of the Korean War (1950–1953).

Lời giải chi tiết

Causes: the prior division of Korea along the 38th parallel after 1945 left two rival, ideologically opposed states each claiming legitimacy over the whole peninsula; North Korea's leadership sought to reunify the country under communist rule by force in June 1950, likely believing (correctly, at first) that a swift invasion could succeed before outside powers could respond.
Consequences – military and diplomatic: UN intervention (enabled by the USSR's temporary Security Council boycott) internationalised what might otherwise have been a purely regional civil conflict; the Inchon landing (September 1950) reversed North Korean gains, but the advance to the Yalu River provoked Chinese intervention (October 1950), turning the war into a direct clash between UN/US and Chinese forces.
Consequences – strategic: the war confirmed containment as a global rather than purely European doctrine and vindicated the logic later embodied in NSC-68; it also demonstrated the pattern of limited proxy war that would recur throughout the Cold War, where the superpowers avoided direct combat with one another while backing opposing sides in a third country.
Consequences – long-term: the 1953 armistice left Korea divided near the 38th parallel with no formal peace treaty, a division that persists to the present day, and cemented deep and lasting hostility between the two Koreas and between China and the West.

5.3.2 From the Warsaw Pact to the Berlin Wall

West Germany's admission into NATO in 1955 alarmed Moscow, which responded in May 1955 by organising the Soviet Union's Eastern European allies into the **Warsaw Pact**, a mutual-defence alliance mirroring NATO and formalising Soviet military dominance over the region. Europe was now formally divided into two opposing, nuclear-armed alliance systems.

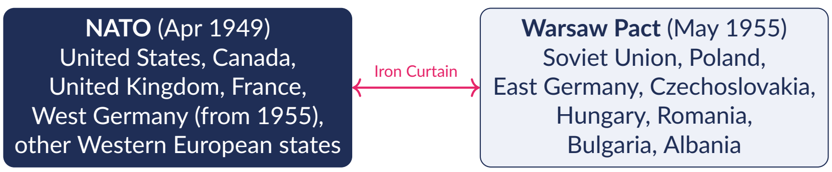

Figure 5.3 – The two opposing alliance blocs of the Cold War in Europe (schematic).

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A common factual slip is to assume NATO and the Warsaw Pact were founded at the same time, or to reverse their order. NATO (April 1949) predates the Warsaw Pact (May 1955) by six years; the Warsaw Pact was created specifically in reaction to West Germany's admission into NATO in 1955, not as a simultaneous, symmetrical response to NATO's original 1949 founding.

Within the Warsaw Pact, East Germany faced a particular and worsening problem: a continuous outflow of its population – often its most skilled and educated citizens – westward through Berlin, the one remaining crossing point between the Soviet and Western sectors of a divided city. To halt this haemorrhage, East German authorities, with Soviet approval, began construction of the **Berlin Wall** on 13 August 1961, a fortified barrier physically sealing the border between East and West Berlin. The Wall became the single most visible and enduring symbol of the Cold War's division of Europe, a stark, physical demonstration that the Iron Curtain was not merely a metaphor.

The Wall illustrates a broader pattern in how the Soviet Union maintained control over its Eastern European satellite states throughout the Cold War: a combination of physical barriers restricting movement, political structures ensuring loyal communist leadership remained in power, and, as the Warsaw Pact's founding charter made explicit, a standing military alliance whose forces could in practice be used to enforce internal political conformity as well as external defence. This same combination of physical, political and military control would be tested directly seven years later in Czechoslovakia, and would only finally be dismantled when Gorbachev chose, in the late 1980s, not to use the military option that had always underpinned it (Section 5.7).

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Sau khi Tây Đức gia nhập NATO (1955), Liên Xô lập ra Khối Warsaw (5/1955) gồm các nước vệ tinh Đông Âu, chính thức phân chia châu Âu thành hai khối quân sự đối đầu. Vì dòng người Đông Đức liên tục di cư sang phía Tây qua Berlin, chính quyền Đông Đức (được Liên Xô hậu thuẫn) xây Bức tường Berlin (13/8/1961) để chặn đứng làn sóng này – trở thành biểu tượng rõ ràng nhất của sự chia cắt Chiến tranh Lạnh.

5.3.3 The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962

The most dangerous single episode of the entire Cold War occurred in October 1962. Following Fidel Castro's communist revolution in Cuba and the failed, US-backed Bay of Pigs invasion, the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev secretly began installing nuclear-capable ballistic missiles in Cuba – within easy striking range of most of the continental United States. On 14 October 1962, an American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft photographed the missile sites under construction, providing Washington with unambiguous evidence of the Soviet deployment.

President John F. Kennedy convened his advisors and, rejecting both inaction and an immediate air strike, chose a middle path. On 22 October 1962, in a televised address, Kennedy announced a naval "quarantine" (a blockade in substance, though the softer term "quarantine" was used to avoid the legal implications of declaring war) around Cuba to prevent further Soviet military shipments from arriving, and demanded the removal of the missiles already in place. For thirteen tense days the world stood on the edge of nuclear war, as Soviet ships approached the quarantine line and both sides weighed their options.

Key vocabulary: brinkmanship and proxy war

Brinkmanship describes a deliberate strategy of pushing a confrontation to the very edge ("brink") of war in order to force an opponent to back down, calculating that the opponent's fear of actual conflict exceeds one's own. The Cuban Missile Crisis is the clearest example in

> this chapter of brinkmanship practised by both superpowers simultaneously, each calculating how far to press the other without triggering actual armed conflict. A **proxy war** is a conflict in which rival powers support opposing sides in a third country's conflict rather than fighting one another directly – Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan are the three clearest proxy-war examples in this chapter, each involving direct combat by forces aligned with, and substantially supplied by, one superpower against forces aligned with the other.

The crisis was resolved on 28 October 1962 through a combination of public and secret diplomacy. Publicly, Khrushchev agreed to remove the Soviet missiles from Cuba in exchange for a US pledge not to invade Cuba. Secretly – and not publicly acknowledged for many years afterward – the United States also agreed to remove its own Jupiter intermediate-range missiles from Turkey, which had similarly threatened Soviet territory. This parallel, hidden concession allowed Khrushchev to claim he had extracted a genuine reciprocal concession from Washington, while allowing Kennedy to present the outcome publicly as an unqualified American victory.

The crisis left a deep impression on both leaderships about how close the world had come to nuclear war, in part through avoidable failures of communication and slow, formal diplomatic channels during the tensest days of the standoff. In its aftermath, both governments placed a new priority on maintaining faster, more reliable direct communication and on approaching future confrontations with greater caution regarding the risk of unintended escalation. More broadly, the crisis is often treated by historians as the high-water mark of direct superpower nuclear brinkmanship: although rivalry and proxy conflict continued for decades afterward, neither Washington nor Moscow again allowed a confrontation to develop as directly and as rapidly toward the possibility of nuclear war as they did in October 1962, and the crisis is frequently cited as one of the underlying conditions that made the arms-control diplomacy of the following decade (Section 5.5) politically possible.

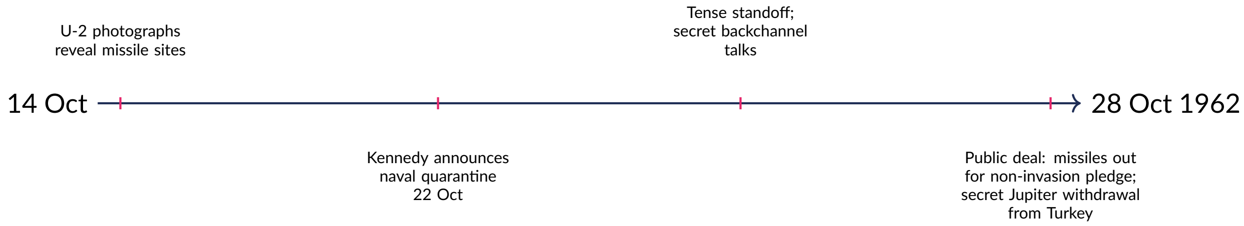

Figure 5.4 – The thirteen days of the Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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Khủng hoảng tên lửa Cuba (10/1962) là thời khắc nguy hiểm nhất của Chiến tranh Lạnh. Máy bay do thám U-2 phát hiện Liên Xô lắp tên lửa hạt nhân tại Cuba (14/10). Kennedy ra lệnh phong toả hải quân ("quarantine", 22/10) thay vì tấn công ngay. Khủng hoảng kết thúc (28/10) bằng thoả thuận công khai (Liên Xô rút tên lửa đổi lấy cam kết Mỹ không xâm lược Cuba) và thoả thuận bí mật (Mỹ rút tên lửa Jupiter khỏi Thổ Nhĩ Kỳ) – giúp cả hai lãnh đạo đều có thể tuyên bố mình đã "thắng" trước công chúng.

OPCVL worked example – Kennedy's Cuban Missile Crisis address

Source (adapted excerpt): John F. Kennedy, televised address to the nation, 22 October 1962: "...the purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere... this urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base... constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas."
Origin: President John F. Kennedy, addressing the American public directly via television, at the outset of the crisis after the missile sites had been confirmed but before the quarantine's

outcome was known.
Purpose: to justify the naval quarantine to the American public and to international opinion, to pressure the Soviet Union to withdraw the missiles, and to rally domestic and allied support for a firm but measured response.
Content: presents the Soviet missile deployment unambiguously as an offensive threat rather than a defensive measure, framing US action as a proportionate, necessary response.
Value: valuable as a first-hand statement of the American administration's public justification and strategic framing at a pivotal moment, useful for understanding how Kennedy sought to build domestic and international legitimacy for the quarantine.
Limitation: as a public, persuasive address rather than an internal policy document, it omits the administration's private deliberations (including consideration of a full invasion or air strikes) and gives no indication of the secret parallel negotiation over the Jupiter missiles in Turkey, which only came to light later; it should be read alongside internal record ("ExComm" discussions) for a fuller picture.

Practice 5.8 – Compare and contrast

Compare and contrast the Berlin Blockade (1948–49) and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) as Cold War crises.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: both crises were triggered by one superpower attempting to alter the status quo to its advantage (Stalin seeking to force the West out of Berlin; Khrushchev seeking to install missiles near the US mainland); both were resolved without direct armed conflict between the superpowers; both ended with the initiating side backing down from its original goal while receiving some face-saving concession (Stalin lifted the blockade without gaining control of Berlin; Khrushchev removed the missiles but secured the secret withdrawal of US Jupiter missiles from Turkey and a public US non-invasion pledge on Cuba).
Differences: the Berlin Blockade unfolded over almost a year and involved no direct military confrontation, being resolved through the non-violent Berlin Airlift; the Cuban Missile Crisis unfolded in a matter of days and involved a direct naval confrontation (the quarantine line) that carried immediate risk of shots being fired. The Cuban crisis also carried a far higher risk of nuclear war, since both sides already possessed large nuclear arsenals by 1962, whereas in 1948 the Soviet Union had not yet tested an atomic weapon.
Significance: both crises reinforced the pattern whereby superpowers competed intensely but avoided direct war with one another, but the far higher stakes of the 1962 crisis subsequently pushed both sides toward concrete crisis-management measures (such as the later establishment of direct communication and, more broadly, the arms-control agreements of the detente era).

5.3.4 The Prague Spring, 1968

Soviet control over Eastern Europe was periodically challenged from within. In January 1968, Alexander Dubcek became leader of Czechoslovakia's Communist Party and initiated a programme of liberalising reforms – greater freedom of the press, some market-oriented economic changes, and a general loosening of party control – known as the **Prague Spring**, under the slogan of "socialism with a human face." Moscow viewed these reforms as a dangerous precedent that, if tolerated, might encourage similar liberalisation elsewhere in the Warsaw Pact and ultimately threaten Soviet control over the entire bloc. On the night of 20–21 August 1968, Warsaw Pact forces (led by the Soviet Union, alongside troops from other Warsaw Pact states) invaded Czechoslovakia and crushed the reform movement, reinstalling hardline party control. The episode confirmed what became known as the **Brezhnev Doctrine**: the principle that the Soviet Union reserved the right to intervene militarily in any Warsaw Pact state where socialism, as defined by Moscow, appeared to be under threat.

The invasion of Czechoslovakia was, in one sense, a successful demonstration of Soviet power: the reform movement was suppressed with comparatively little bloodshed, and Warsaw Pact unity was outwardly preserved. In a deeper sense, however, the episode carried a heavy long-term cost. It confirmed to reform-minded communists throughout the bloc that meaningful internal change was impossible so long as Moscow retained both the will and the means to intervene militarily, discouraging further open reform efforts for two decades and pushing dissent underground or into exile rather than into official politics. It also damaged the international reputation of communism as a genuinely popular movement, reinforcing the impression – already present after the 1956 Hungarian Uprising – that Eastern European communist governments survived primarily through the threat of Soviet force rather than through the consent of their own populations. This impression would prove entirely accurate two decades later, in 1989, once that threat of force was finally withdrawn (Section 5.7).

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Mùa xuân Praha (từ 1/1968): Alexander Dubcek khởi xướng cải cách tự do hoá ("chủ nghĩa xã hội mang gương mặt con người") tại Tiệp Khắc. Lo ngại tiền lệ này lan rộng, Liên Xô đưa quân Khối Warsaw tấn công Tiệp Khắc (đêm 20–21/8/1968), dập tắt phong trào cải cách. Sự kiện này xác lập "Học thuyết Brezhnev" – Liên Xô có quyền can thiệp quân sự vào bất kỳ nước xã hội chủ nghĩa nào trong khối nếu thấy chủ nghĩa xã hội "bị đe doạ."

5.3.5 The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, 1979–1989

In December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to prop up a struggling, internally divided communist government against a growing insurgency. What Soviet leaders anticipated as a brief stabilising intervention instead became a costly, decade-long war against US-backed **mujahideen** guerrilla fighters, who received substantial covert American assistance, including weapons, funnelled largely through Pakistan. The war drained Soviet resources and manpower, damaged the USSR's international standing (leading, among other consequences, to a Western boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics), and became, for the Soviet Union, a demoralising and unwinnable conflict frequently compared by later commentators to the American experience in Vietnam. Soviet forces were withdrawn by February 1989, marking a rare and humiliating retreat, and the war's cost is widely regarded by historians as one of the significant factors weakening the Soviet system in the years immediately before its collapse.

The war in Afghanistan is instructive precisely because it mirrors, from the opposite side, many of the dynamics of the American experience in Vietnam (Section 5.4): a superpower intervening to prop up an unpopular, internally divided allied government; an insurgency sustained by covert external support and safe havens across an international border; and a slow, demoralising realisation at home that the war could not be won at an acceptable cost. Just as the Tet Offensive eroded American public confidence despite communist forces suffering heavy military losses, the prolonged, costly and ultimately unsuccessful Soviet campaign in Afghanistan eroded confidence in the Soviet system among both its own population and its Eastern European allies, feeding directly into the broader crisis of confidence that Gorbachev would inherit on taking power in March 1985 (Section 5.7).

Practice 5.9 – To what extent

To what extent was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) a turning point in the Cold War?

Lời giải chi tiết

Evidence for "turning point": the invasion definitively ended the era of detente, provoking a US grain and technology embargo, a Western boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, and a marked hardening of American policy that culminated in the confrontational posture of the Reagan administration from 1981; the resulting decade-long war drained Soviet military and economic resources and is widely cited as one of the structural weaknesses that later contributed to the Soviet Union's collapse; it also halted progress on arms control, contributing directly to the US Senate's refusal to ratify SALT II.
Evidence for continuity rather than sharp rupture: tensions had already been rising before 1979 over issues such as the "Euromissile" question (NATO's 1979 dual-track decision responding to Soviet SS-20 deployments predates the invasion), suggesting detente was already fraying rather than being ended solely by Afghanistan; superpower rivalry in the developing world (proxy conflicts, competing influence) had likewise continued steadily since the 1950s rather than beginning anew in 1979.
Judgement: Afghanistan is best understood as an accelerant and a clear symbolic marker of detente's collapse rather than its sole cause, but its long-term consequences – the drain on Soviet resources and the shift to Reagan-era confrontation – justify treating it as a genuine turning point in the trajectory of the wider Cold War.

Practice 5.10 – Examine

Examine the significance of the Brezhnev Doctrine, as demonstrated in 1968, for Soviet control over Eastern Europe.

Lời giải chi tiết

The Brezhnev Doctrine, articulated after the crushing of the Prague Spring in August 1968, formalised the principle that Moscow would use military force to prevent any Warsaw Pact state from abandoning Soviet-style socialism, effectively limiting the sovereignty of Eastern European states in matters of internal political reform. Its significance was twofold. First, in the short and medium term, it successfully deterred further major liberalisation movements within the bloc for two decades, since any reform-minded leadership had to reckon with the real possibility of Warsaw Pact invasion. Second, and more significant in the long run, the doctrine's eventual abandonment by Gorbachev in the late 1980s became the single clearest signal that Soviet control over Eastern Europe was ending, since without the threat of military intervention the 1989 revolutions were able to succeed peacefully where the 1956 Hungarian Uprising and the 1968 Prague Spring had been crushed. The Brezhnev Doctrine therefore illustrates both the mechanism that sustained Soviet dominance over Eastern Europe for two decades and, through its reversal, the mechanism of that dominance's collapse.

Chronology recap, 1950–1989 (Europe and Asia): Korean War begins (25 Jun 1950) · Inchon landing (15 Sep 1950) · Chinese intervention near the Yalu River (Oct 1950) · Korean armistice at Panmunjom (27 Jul 1953) · Warsaw Pact founded (May 1955) · Berlin Wall built (13 Aug 1961) · Cuban Missile Crisis (14–28 Oct 1962) · Prague Spring reforms begin (Jan 1968) and are crushed (20–21 Aug 1968) · Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Dec 1979) · Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan completed (Feb 1989).

5.4 The Vietnam War as a Cold War conflict

5.4.1 Domino theory and US intervention

American involvement in Vietnam must be understood within the broader logic of containment and the domino theory outlined in Section 5.2. Following the French defeat and withdrawal from Indochina in the mid-1950s, Vietnam was divided into a communist North and an anti-communist South, echoing the earlier partitions of Germany and Korea. US policymakers, having already applied the domino theory's logic in Korea, feared that a communist victory in South Vietnam would trigger the fall of neighbouring Southeast Asian states in turn, and progressively increased American military, financial and advisory support to the South Vietnamese government through the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Vietnam therefore represents the fullest practical application of the containment logic first articulated in the Truman Doctrine (1947) and hardened by NSC-68 (1950), discussed in Section 5.2. Where the Truman Doctrine had promised support to any people resisting subjugation "by armed minorities or by outside pressures," successive US administrations came to treat South Vietnam as exactly such a case, and treated the credibility of that broader global commitment – not merely the fate of Vietnam itself – as being at stake in the outcome of the conflict.

The domino theory applied

The domino theory held that the fall of one state to communism would destabilise and precipitate the fall of its neighbours in a chain reaction. Applied to Southeast Asia, this logic held that a communist victory in Vietnam threatened Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and beyond, providing successive US administrations with a strategic justification for escalating commitment to South Vietnam that went far beyond the country's intrinsic strategic value.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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Sự can dự của Mỹ tại Việt Nam bắt nguồn từ logic của thuyết domino: nếu Việt Nam rơi vào tay cộng sản, các nước láng giềng Đông Nam Á (Lào, Campuchia, Thái Lan...) cũng sẽ lần lượt sụp đổ theo. Đây là lý do các đời tổng thống Mỹ liên tục tăng viện trợ quân sự cho chính quyền Nam Việt Nam từ cuối thập niên 1950.

5.4.2 Escalation: the Gulf of Tonkin

Direct large-scale American military escalation followed the **Gulf of Tonkin incidents** of 2 and 4 August 1964, in which US naval vessels reported attacks by North Vietnamese torpedo boats (the second reported attack was later shown to be, at best, highly ambiguous). President Lyndon Johnson used these incidents to secure the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution** from Congress on 7 August 1964, which granted the president sweeping authority to use military force in Southeast Asia without a formal declaration of war. The resolution opened the way for a massive escalation of the American military commitment, including sustained bombing campaigns against North Vietnam and the large-scale deployment of US ground combat troops from 1965 onward.

5.4.3 The Tet Offensive and the turn of American opinion

In January–February 1968, communist forces (North Vietnamese regular units and the southern Viet Cong) launched the **Tet Offensive**, a coordinated series of surprise attacks on cities and military installations across South Vietnam, timed to coincide with the Tet lunar new year holiday. Militarily, the offensive was a serious setback for the communist side: attacking forces suffered very heavy losses and failed to hold any of their objectives or to trigger the general uprising among the South Vietnamese population that planners had hoped for. Politically, however, Tet proved to be a decisive turning point in the opposite direction. Televised images of intense urban fighting – including a brief communist assault on the grounds of the US embassy in Saigon – shocked an American public that had been repeatedly assured the war was being won and that enemy forces were nearly exhausted. Public and political support for continued large-scale US involvement declined sharply thereafter, and President Johnson, facing collapsing domestic support, announced he would not seek re-election and moved toward opening peace negotiations. Tet illustrates a recurring pattern in the Vietnam War: military outcomes and political/psychological outcomes did not always align, and it was the latter that ultimately proved decisive for the war's trajectory.

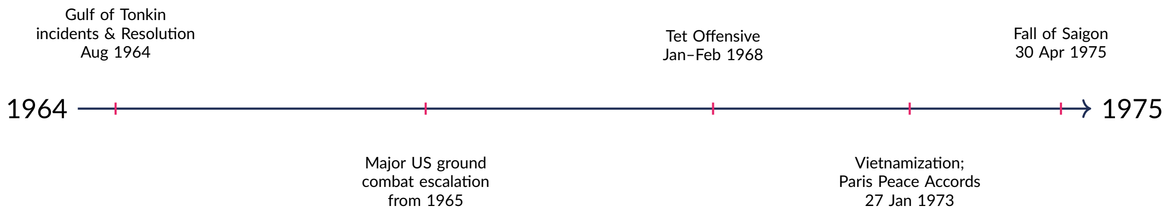

Figure 5.5 – Escalation and end of major US involvement in the Vietnam War, 1964–1975.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Sự kiện Vịnh Bắc Bộ (2 và 4/8/1964) dẫn đến Nghị quyết Vịnh Bắc Bộ (7/8/1964), trao cho Tổng thống Johnson quyền sử dụng vũ lực rộng rãi mà không cần Quốc hội tuyên chiến – mở đường cho leo thang quân sự. Cuộc Tổng tấn công Tết Mậu Thân (1–2/1968) tuy thất bại về mặt quân sự đối với phe cộng sản nhưng lại là bước ngoặt tâm lý-chính trị: công chúng Mỹ mất niềm tin vào khả năng "chiến thắng" của chính quyền, khiến sự ủng hộ cho chiến tranh sụt giảm mạnh.

5.4.4 Vietnamization, Paris, and the fall of Saigon

Under President Richard Nixon from 1969, US strategy shifted toward **Vietnamization**: the gradual withdrawal of American ground troops combined with increased training, equipment and support for South Vietnamese forces to assume the burden of combat themselves. This policy reflected both the domestic political imperative to reduce American casualties and the recognition that outright military victory, at an acceptable cost, was no longer a realistic goal. Negotiations between the United States, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the Viet Cong eventually produced the **Paris Peace Accords**, signed on 27 January 1973, which provided for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of remaining US forces. The accords did not, however, resolve the underlying conflict between North and South Vietnam, and fighting resumed between Vietnamese forces once American troops had departed. Without US combat support, South Vietnamese resistance collapsed rapidly, and North Vietnamese forces captured the southern capital, Saigon, on **30 April 1975**, ending the war and leading swiftly to the formal reunification of Vietnam under communist rule.

The war's domestic and international consequences extended well beyond Vietnam itself. Within the United States, the prolonged, costly and ultimately unsuccessful war produced deep public scepticism about open-ended military commitments justified by containment logic, a sentiment that shaped American foreign policy debate for years afterward and that helps explain why detente (Section 5.6) found genuine domestic political support in the early 1970s: a public exhausted by Vietnam was, for a time, considerably more receptive to a foreign policy of negotiated coexistence than to renewed confrontation. Internationally, the fall of Saigon in 1975 was read very differently by the two superpowers – as a significant setback for American credibility in Washington, and as vindication of continued support for revolutionary and anti-colonial movements in Moscow – a divergence in interpretation that would resurface only a few years later over Afghanistan (Section 5.3) and in the ideological framing of the Reagan Doctrine (Section 5.6).

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Students sometimes describe the Vietnam War purely as a civil war between North and South Vietnam, understating its Cold War dimension. For Paper 2/3 purposes, always situate Vietnam within the broader framework of containment, the domino theory, and US-Soviet-Chinese rivalry: this was a civil conflict fought within a global ideological contest, with each side receiving substantial material and political support from a rival superpower or communist ally.

Practice 5.11 – Evaluate

Evaluate the significance of the domino theory in shaping US policy toward Vietnam.

Lời giải chi tiết

Significance: the domino theory provided the central strategic justification for escalating and sustaining US involvement in Vietnam far beyond what the country's intrinsic economic or strategic value to the United States would otherwise have warranted; it linked Vietnam directly to the broader containment framework established after 1947 and reinforced by NSC-68 (1950) and the precedent of Korea, framing a distant civil conflict as a critical test of American credibility with global stakes.
Limitations of the theory in practice: subsequent events did not straightforwardly vindicate the theory – although Laos and Cambodia did experience communist takeovers linked to the wider Indochina conflict, other Southeast Asian states (such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia) did not fall to communism after 1975, suggesting the mechanical "falling dominoes" model oversimplified the diverse political and social conditions across the region.
Conclusion: the domino theory was highly significant as a driver of US decision-making and public justification for the war, even though its underlying predictive logic proved only partially accurate in the war's actual aftermath.

Practice 5.12 – Examine

Examine the significance of the Tet Offensive (1968) as a turning point in the Vietnam War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Military dimension: the Tet Offensive was, in narrow military terms, a defeat for the communist forces – attacking units suffered heavy casualties, failed to hold captured positions, and did not spark the hoped-for general uprising among South Vietnam's population.
Political and psychological dimension: the offensive nonetheless proved to be a decisive turning point because of its impact on American public and political opinion. Televised scenes of intense fighting in South Vietnamese cities, including within the grounds of the US embassy compound in Saigon, contradicted the optimistic assessments US officials had been giving about the war's progress, producing a sharp erosion of public confidence and a wave of political pressure for de-escalation.
Consequences: President Johnson's decision not to seek re-election and the eventual shift toward Vietnamization and negotiated withdrawal can both be traced directly to the political fallout from Tet, even though the offensive had failed on its own military terms.
Judgement: Tet demonstrates that in a war fought partly for public and political legitimacy, a tactical military defeat can nonetheless constitute a strategic and political turning point – arguably the single most consequential moment in shifting the trajectory of American involvement in Vietnam.

5.5 The arms race and nuclear diplomacy

5.5.1 Mutually Assured Destruction

As both superpowers built up ever larger nuclear arsenals through the 1950s and 1960s, a distinctive strategic logic emerged, known as **Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)**. The concept held that so long as each side possessed a nuclear arsenal large and survivable enough to guarantee a devastating retaliatory strike even after absorbing a surprise first strike, neither side could rationally initiate nuclear war, since doing so would guarantee its own destruction as well as its enemy's. Paradoxically, many strategists argued that this balance of terror actually stabilised the superpower relationship: precisely because nuclear war promised only mutual annihilation, both sides had an overwhelming incentive to avoid direct military conflict and to manage their rivalry through proxy wars, diplomacy, and competition in other arenas instead.

This logic helps to explain a pattern that runs through the whole of this chapter: direct combat between American and Soviet forces never occurred during the Cold War, even during the tensest moments covered in Section 5.3, yet both superpowers were willing to arm, train and finance opposing sides in conflicts fought by others, from Korea and Vietnam to Afghanistan. MAD did not eliminate superpower rivalry; it simply redirected it away from direct confrontation and toward competition conducted at one remove – through allied and client states, through propaganda and ideological appeal, and through the arms race itself, in which each side sought to maintain enough strength to deter the other without actually using it.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not present MAD as though it guaranteed peace in every respect. It discouraged direct war between the superpowers themselves, but it coexisted with, and arguably encouraged, continuous proxy conflict (Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan) and an expensive, dangerous arms race that consumed vast resources on both sides – MAD explains the *absence of direct US-Soviet war*, not the absence of Cold War conflict in general.

Core concept: Mutually Assured Destruction

MAD rested on the credibility of "second-strike capability" – the guaranteed ability to retaliate devastatingly even after suffering a first nuclear strike. This is why both superpowers invested heavily not only in the number of warheads they possessed but also in the diversity and survivability of their delivery systems (land-based missiles, submarine-launched missiles, and long-range bombers), so that no single strike by the other side could plausibly eliminate the ability to retaliate.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Khái niệm "Huỷ diệt lẫn nhau được đảm bảo" (Mutually Assured Destruction – MAD): nếu cả hai bên đều sở hữu kho vũ khí hạt nhân đủ lớn để đảm bảo đòn trả đũa huỷ diệt dù bị tấn công phủ đầu trước, thì không bên nào dám phát động chiến tranh hạt nhân vì sẽ tự huỷ diệt chính mình. Nghịch lý là chính sự cân bằng "khủng bố" này lại giúp ổn định quan hệ hai siêu cường, buộc họ cạnh tranh qua chiến tranh uỷ nhiệm và ngoại giao thay vì đối đầu trực tiếp.

5.5.2 The space race and missile technology

Nuclear rivalry was closely intertwined with the "space race." The Soviet Union's launch of **Sputnik**, the first artificial satellite, in 1957, shocked American opinion, demonstrating that Soviet rocket technology was, at least in some respects, ahead of the United States'. Because the same rocket technology used to launch satellites could also deliver nuclear warheads across intercontinental distances, Sputnik triggered a surge of American investment in missile technology, space exploration and science education, and accelerated the broader arms race as both superpowers raced to develop increasingly sophisticated **intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)**, submarine-launched missiles, and eventually multiple-warhead systems.

5.5.3 SALT I and the Helsinki Accords

By the late 1960s, both superpowers had strong incentives to manage the costs and dangers of the arms race through negotiation, contributing to the era of detente discussed further in Section 5.6.

The **Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I)** produced an agreement signed on 26 May 1972 by President Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, which included the **Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty**, limiting each side's deployment of missile-defence systems (on the logic that effective missile defences could undermine the stability of Mutually Assured Destruction by making a first strike seem more survivable), alongside limits on the number of offensive strategic missile launchers each side could deploy.

In 1975, the **Helsinki Accords** were signed by the United States, the Soviet Union, and other European states. The accords formally recognised the postwar borders of Europe, including the division of Germany, effectively securing long-sought Soviet acceptance of the territorial status quo established since 1945. In exchange, the Soviet Union and its allies agreed to a set of human-rights commitments, including respect for freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freer movement of people and information. Although Soviet authorities did not intend for these commitments to be taken seriously in practice, they nonetheless gave dissidents and human-rights activists across the Eastern Bloc a legitimate, internationally recognised standard against which to measure and criticise their own governments' conduct, and "Helsinki monitoring groups" that formed in various Eastern Bloc states in the following years played a meaningful role in the dissident movements that contributed to the events of 1989.

The Helsinki Accords therefore illustrate a recurring irony of Cold War diplomacy: an agreement negotiated by governments, for the immediate benefit of governments (in this case, Soviet-bloc recognition of the territorial status quo they had long sought), created legal and moral tools that ordinary citizens and dissidents then used against those same governments. Soviet and Eastern European leaders appear to have regarded the human-rights provisions of Helsinki as a diplomatic afterthought conceded in exchange for the border recognition they genuinely wanted; the accords' longer-term effect on internal dissent within the bloc was almost certainly unintended, but proved, over the following decade and a half, to be historically significant all the same.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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SALT I (ký 26/5/1972, gồm cả Hiệp ước ABM) giới hạn số lượng tên lửa tấn công chiến lược và hệ thống phòng thủ tên lửa của hai bên. Hiệp định Helsinki (1975) công nhận biên giới châu Âu sau chiến tranh (kể cả sự chia cắt nước Đức) đổi lại việc Liên Xô và khối Đông Âu cam kết tôn trọng nhân quyền – những cam kết này sau đó lại trở thành công cụ pháp lý quốc tế để các nhà bất đồng chính kiến Đông Âu đấu tranh, góp phần vào các cuộc cách mạng 1989.

5.5.4 SALT II, the Euromissile crisis, and the Strategic Defense Initiative

Negotiations continued into a second agreement, **SALT II**, signed in June 1979 by President Jimmy Carter and Brezhnev, setting further limits on strategic nuclear delivery systems. However, the treaty was never ratified by the US Senate: the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan later that same year (December 1979) destroyed the political climate needed for ratification, and although both sides subsequently observed many of its limits informally, SALT II never entered into force as binding law.

Tension also grew over intermediate-range nuclear forces stationed in Europe. The Soviet Union's deployment of new **SS-20** intermediate-range missiles, capable of striking Western European targets, prompted NATO's **"dual-track" decision** of 1979: a commitment to negotiate arms reductions with the Soviet Union, combined with a parallel commitment to deploy American **Pershing II** ballistic missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe from 1983 if negotiations failed. This so-called **Euromissile crisis** provoked large, sustained peace protests across Western Europe, as many citizens feared their countries were becoming a nuclear battleground for a superpower conflict not primarily of their own making, even as NATO governments proceeded with the planned deployments.

The arms race entered a new phase in March 1983, when President Ronald Reagan announced the **Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)**, a proposed space-based missile-defence system intended to intercept and destroy incoming Soviet nuclear missiles before they could reach their targets. Reagan appealed directly to the scientific community, calling on researchers who had given the world nuclear weapons to now turn their talents toward rendering such weapons "impotent and obsolete." Although SDI (nicknamed "Star Wars" by critics and the media, after the film franchise) faced serious doubts about its technical feasibility and was never fully built, it alarmed Soviet leaders, who feared it could upset the stability of Mutually Assured Destruction by giving the United States a credible shield against retaliation, and it placed enormous additional strain on an already struggling Soviet economy attempting to keep pace with a new and expensive technological front in the arms race.

Whatever its ultimate technical merits, SDI is best understood historically as much as an economic and psychological instrument of pressure as a literal weapons programme. Soviet planners, already managing a stagnant centrally planned economy (a structural weakness discussed further in Section 5.7), faced the prospect of an expensive new round of technological competition precisely at the moment they could least afford one. Some historians therefore treat SDI as one of the significant external pressures – alongside the ongoing war in Afghanistan and the accumulated cost of decades of military competition – that helped push the Soviet leadership toward the conclusion, reached decisively after Gorbachev's accession in March 1985, that continued unrestrained arms competition with the United States was no longer sustainable.

OPCVL worked example – Reagan's SDI announcement

Source (adapted excerpt): Ronald Reagan, televised address, 23 March 1983: "I call upon the scientific community who gave us nuclear weapons to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete."

Origin: President Ronald Reagan, in a televised address to the American public in March 1983, announcing what would become known as the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Purpose: to build public and scientific support for a large new defence research programme, and to present the initiative as a moral effort to move beyond reliance on the threat of mutual destruction.

Content: an appeal to scientists to develop defensive technology capable of neutralising nuclear missiles, framed as a humanitarian alternative to the existing doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction.

Value: valuable evidence of the ideological and rhetorical framing the Reagan administration used to justify a very costly new defence programme, and of the administration's more confrontational and technologically ambitious approach to the arms race compared with the detente era.

Limitation: as a public address designed to win support, it does not address the serious technical doubts many scientists held about SDI's feasibility, nor the strategic destabilisation Soviet planners feared it might cause; it reveals Reagan's public rationale rather than a neutral technical assessment of the programme's prospects.

5.5.5 The INF Treaty

Following Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power in 1985 (discussed fully in Section 5.7) and a marked improvement in superpower relations, Reagan and Gorbachev signed the **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty** in December 1987. The treaty was historically significant as the first agreement to eliminate an entire category of nuclear weapons – intermediate-range missiles, including the Pershing II, cruise missiles and SS-20s at the centre of the Euromissile crisis – rather than merely capping or limiting their numbers, and it included, for the first time, provisions for extensive on-site verification inspections by each side. The INF Treaty is widely regarded as a landmark moment demonstrating the rapid transformation of superpower relations under Gorbachev and Reagan, from the depths of renewed confrontation in the early 1980s to substantive, verifiable disarmament within just a few years.

The speed of this transformation is itself historically significant. Only four years separated Reagan's 1983 description of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" and his signing of a treaty eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons with that same Soviet Union's leader. This shift reflects both the change in Soviet leadership – Gorbachev proved a far more flexible negotiating partner than his immediate predecessors – and a broader recalculation on the American side that a Soviet Union willing to negotiate seriously on arms control should be met with matching flexibility rather than blanket suspicion. The INF Treaty accordingly serves as one of the clearest pieces of evidence that the Cold War's final years were shaped as much by changed leadership and genuine diplomatic engagement as by unilateral pressure from either side.

Practice 5.13 – Short answer

Explain how the concept of Mutually Assured Destruction affected superpower behaviour during the Cold War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) held that so long as both superpowers retained a guaranteed second-strike capability, any nuclear attack by one side would result in devastating retaliation, making nuclear war irrational for either party. This had two major behavioural consequences. First, it discouraged direct military confrontation between the US and USSR, channelling their rivalry instead into proxy wars (Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan), competition in technology and prestige (the space race), and diplomacy and propaganda, since direct war between the superpowers themselves risked mutual annihilation. Second, it made any development that threatened to undermine second-strike capability – such as effective missile defence systems – highly destabilising, which is why the ABM Treaty (part of SALT I, 1972) restricted missile defences, and why Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (1983) alarmed Soviet planners: an effective shield could, in theory, allow one side to strike first without fear of retaliation, undermining the logic that had kept the peace between the superpowers.

Practice 5.14 – Examine

Examine the impact of the Euromissile crisis (1979–1983) on relations between the United States and its Western European allies.

Lời giải chi tiết

NATO's 1979 dual-track decision – offering arms-control negotiations while simultaneously committing to deploy Pershing II and cruise missiles in Western Europe from 1983 in response to Soviet SS-20 deployments – exposed real strains within the Western alliance. On one hand, the decision demonstrated continued alliance cohesion and resolve: European NATO governments ultimately proceeded with the planned deployments despite domestic pressure, reaffirming their commitment to collective defence and to matching Soviet intermediate-range capabilities. On the other hand, the crisis provoked some of the largest peace protests seen in Western Europe during the Cold War, as many citizens feared their countries were being turned into the likely battleground and primary target of a superpower nuclear exchange, and some questioned whether Washington was adequately weighing European safety against American strategic interests. The crisis therefore reveals both the durability of the NATO alliance under strain and the genuine, sometimes divisive, domestic political costs that Cold War strategic commitments imposed on European member states.

Practice 5.15 – Evaluate

Evaluate the significance of arms-control agreements (SALT I, the Helsinki Accords, and the INF Treaty) in shaping the course of the Cold War.

Lời giải chi tiết

SALT I (1972): significant for formally acknowledging strategic nuclear parity between the superpowers and for constraining, through the ABM Treaty, developments that might otherwise have destabilised Mutually Assured Destruction; it marked the high point of early-1970s detente and demonstrated that adversaries with vast arsenals could nonetheless negotiate binding limits.
Helsinki Accords (1975): significant on two levels – immediately, for securing long-sought Soviet-bloc recognition of postwar European borders; in the longer term, for embedding human-rights language that dissident movements across Eastern Europe later invoked, contributing indirectly to the pressures that produced the 1989 revolutions.
INF Treaty (1987): significant as the first agreement to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons rather than merely limit numbers, and as concrete proof of the rapid transformation in superpower relations achieved under Gorbachev and Reagan, directly resolving the Euromissile crisis that had so alarmed Western European publics.
Overall judgement: taken together, these agreements did not by themselves end Cold War rivalry, but they progressively built mutual trust, established habits of negotiation and verification, and created the diplomatic infrastructure that made the rapid rapprochement of the late 1980s possible; their significance lies as much in the pattern of cooperation they established as in their specific technical provisions.

5.6 Detente and its collapse

5.6.1 The logic of detente, 1969–1979

The period from roughly 1969 to 1979, known as **detente**, saw a deliberate easing of superpower tensions through sustained diplomacy and arms control. Several factors drove this shift: the enormous and rising cost of the arms race strained both economies; the Vietnam War had damaged American confidence in confrontational containment policies and public appetite for further costly interventions; and both Nixon (advised closely by Henry Kissinger) and Brezhnev calculated that a more stable, negotiated relationship served their respective national interests better than continued open confrontation. Detente was expressed concretely through SALT I (1972) and the Helsinki Accords (1975), discussed in Section 5.5, as well as through expanded trade and diplomatic contact between the blocs, and through Nixon's parallel opening of relations with communist China (which itself altered the strategic triangle between Washington, Moscow and Beijing). This opening to China gave American diplomacy new leverage in its dealings with the Soviet Union: Moscow, wary of a closer relationship developing between its two major rivals, had additional incentive to pursue its own accommodation with Washington through arms control, reinforcing the broader logic of detente discussed above. The China opening is a useful reminder that the Cold War, although centred on the US-Soviet relationship, cannot be fully understood without accounting for the wider, shifting network of relationships among the major communist and non-communist powers. Detente did not end the underlying ideological rivalry or superpower competition in the developing world, but it substantially reduced the risk of direct confrontation and created a framework of negotiated coexistence.

Core concept: detente

Detente (from the French for a relaxing or easing) describes a period of reduced tension and increased negotiation between rival powers, without requiring the underlying causes of rivalry to be resolved. The Cold War's detente era (c.1969–1979) demonstrates that intense ideological rivals can nonetheless cooperate substantially on specific, mutually beneficial issues – particularly arms control – even while remaining fundamentally opposed on others.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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Giai đoạn "hoà hoãn" (detente, khoảng 1969–1979) là thời kỳ hai siêu cường chủ động giảm căng thẳng thông qua đàm phán kiểm soát vũ khí (SALT I, Helsinki) và mở rộng quan hệ ngoại giao-thương mại, dù mâu thuẫn ý thức hệ căn bản vẫn chưa được giải quyết. Đây là ví dụ cho thấy các đối thủ ý thức hệ gay gắt vẫn có thể hợp tác trên một số vấn đề cụ thể cùng có lợi.

5.6.2 Afghanistan and the Reagan Doctrine

Detente collapsed rapidly at the end of the 1970s. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (December 1979) was the clearest single trigger, provoking the US grain embargo, the Moscow Olympics boycott, and the effective death of SALT II's ratification prospects, as discussed in Section 5.3 and Section 5.5. This shift was reinforced and deepened by the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, who took office in January 1981 with an explicitly more confrontational view of the Soviet Union (famously describing it as an "evil empire" in a 1983 speech) and who pursued a substantial renewed military buildup alongside the Strategic Defense Initiative (Section 5.5). Reagan's approach also included what became known as the **Reagan Doctrine**: active US material and financial support for anti-communist insurgent movements fighting Soviet-aligned governments, most significantly the Afghan mujahideen resisting Soviet occupation and the Contra rebels fighting Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government. Where containment had traditionally been understood as defensive – preventing communism's further spread – the Reagan Doctrine represented a more assertive posture, actively supporting the rollback of existing communist or Soviet-aligned governments through proxy forces.

In Afghanistan, this support helped sustain a costly insurgency that, as discussed in Section 5.3, eventually forced a full Soviet military withdrawal by February 1989 – widely regarded as one of the clearest practical successes of the Reagan Doctrine's approach. In Nicaragua, US support for the Contras aimed to pressure the Sandinista government through prolonged armed conflict rather than direct American intervention, reflecting the same underlying preference for supporting local proxy forces over committing US combat troops directly – a lesson many in Washington had drawn from the costly experience of direct troop commitment in Vietnam. Taken together, these cases show how thoroughly the pattern of superpower rivalry conducted through proxy conflict, established from the earliest years of the Cold War (Section 5.3), persisted right through to its final decade.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not treat "detente" and "Cold War" as mutually exclusive terms, and do not assume detente meant the Cold War had effectively ended. Detente was a period of reduced tension *within* the ongoing Cold War, not a resolution of it – underlying rivalry, proxy conflicts, and ideological competition continued throughout the 1970s even as direct US-Soviet diplomacy improved.

Practice 5.16 – Examine

Examine the reasons for the collapse of detente after 1979.

Lời giải chi tiết

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (December 1979): widely regarded as the immediate trigger, the invasion was interpreted in Washington as a direct violation of the spirit of detente and evidence that the USSR remained committed to expanding its influence by force when opportunity allowed; it provoked concrete American countermeasures (grain embargo, Olympic boycott, the collapse of SALT II's ratification prospects) that ended the cooperative arms-control momentum of the 1970s.
Structural strains already present: the "Euromissile" dispute originated in 1979, before the Afghan invasion, showing that tensions over the military balance in Europe were already rising independently; detente had never resolved the underlying ideological rivalry or superpower competition for influence in the developing world, leaving it vulnerable to renewed confrontation once a sufficiently serious provocation occurred.
The Reagan administration's posture from 1981: Reagan's explicitly confrontational rhetoric, the substantial renewed military buildup, the Strategic Defense Initiative, and the Reagan Doctrine of actively supporting anti-communist insurgencies collectively marked a decisive shift away from negotiated coexistence toward renewed ideological and military competition.
Judgement: while Afghanistan provided the immediate trigger, detente's collapse reflected both this specific crisis and a broader shift in the American political mood – reinforced decisively by Reagan's election – toward viewing negotiated coexistence with the Soviet Union as having yielded insufficient results.

Practice 5.17 – Compare and contrast

Compare and contrast the foreign policy approaches of the detente era (1969–1979) and the early Reagan administration (1981–1985) toward the Soviet Union.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: both periods operated within the same fundamental Cold War framework of containment and both ultimately relied on negotiation as well as strength – even Reagan, after 1985, would pursue substantive arms-control agreements (the INF Treaty) once Gorbachev came to power, showing that even the more confrontational approach did not permanently exclude diplomacy.
Differences in method: the detente era prioritised sustained negotiation and mutual restraint, expressed through SALT I and the Helsinki Accords, and generally sought to manage rivalry through agreed rules rather than open confrontation; the early Reagan administration prioritised rebuilding military strength and applying pressure, expressed through a large defence budget increase, the Strategic Defense Initiative, and the Reagan Doctrine's active support for anti-communist insurgencies, treating negotiation from a position of demonstrated strength as more effective than negotiation for its own sake.
Differences in rhetoric: Nixon-era diplomacy, associated closely with Henry Kissinger, emphasised pragmatic coexistence between rival great powers; Reagan's rhetoric (including his description of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire") emphasised ideological confrontation and moral clarity.
Conclusion: the two approaches reflect different judgements about how best to manage the same underlying rivalry – detente through negotiated restraint, early Reagan-era policy through renewed strength and pressure – and both, in their own ways, eventually contributed to conditions (exhaustion of Soviet resources, and later genuine negotiation once Gorbachev emerged) that helped bring the Cold War to an end.

Chronology recap, arms control and detente: Sputnik launched (1957) · SALT I and the ABM Treaty signed (26 May 1972) · Helsinki Accords signed (1975) · SALT II signed but never ratified (Jun 1979) · NATO's Euromissile dual-track decision (1979) · Soviet invasion of Afghanistan ends detente (Dec 1979) · Pershing II and cruise missile deployment begins (1983) · Reagan announces SDI (Mar 1983) · INF Treaty signed (Dec 1987).

Practice 5.18 – Examine

Examine the reasons why detente (1969–1979) proved to be a temporary, rather than a permanent, easing of Cold War tensions.

Lời giải chi tiết

Detente addressed symptoms rather than underlying causes: arms-control agreements such as SALT I (1972) and the Helsinki Accords (1975) managed the risks and costs of rivalry – reducing the danger of accidental nuclear war and formalising the territorial status quo in Europe – without resolving the ideological incompatibility (Section 5.1) that had produced the Cold War in the first place; competition for influence in the developing world continued largely unabated throughout the detente era.
Domestic political vulnerability: detente depended on sustained political commitment in both Washington and Moscow; a change in leadership or in the domestic political mood on either side could therefore unravel it relatively quickly, as indeed occurred with the election of a more confrontational Reagan administration in 1980 following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the previous year.
A single unresolved crisis could overturn years of accumulated trust: the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (December 1979) demonstrated that so long as both superpowers retained the capacity and the willingness to use force to defend their interests and allies, any single major crisis could rapidly erase years of careful diplomatic progress.
Judgement: detente is best understood as a genuine but conditional easing of tension, dependent on continued restraint by both sides and vulnerable to reversal by any major provocation; it reduced risk and built valuable diplomatic infrastructure (Section 5.5) without ever addressing the deeper ideological rivalry that made a return to confrontation possible.

5.7 Gorbachev and the end of the Cold War

5.7.1 Glasnost and perestroika

Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March 1985, inheriting a system suffering from deep, longstanding structural problems: a stagnant, inefficient centrally planned economy; a costly and unwinnable war in Afghanistan; and a renewed, expensive arms race with a Reagan administration determined not to be out-competed. Between 1985 and 1987, Gorbachev introduced two signature reform policies. **Glasnost** ("openness") relaxed censorship and permitted far greater public discussion of the Soviet Union's problems, its history, and its government's shortcomings than had ever previously been tolerated. **Perestroika** ("restructuring") attempted to reform and partially liberalise the moribund Soviet economy, introducing limited market mechanisms and greater enterprise autonomy in an effort to revive stagnant growth. Neither policy was intended by Gorbachev to end Soviet communism or Soviet control over Eastern Europe; both were intended to save and strengthen the system by removing its worst inefficiencies and by restoring public trust and morale. In practice, however, glasnost's newfound openness rapidly exposed the depth of public discontent and the historical crimes of the Soviet system, while perestroika's economic reforms disrupted existing structures faster than they could generate real improvements, together unleashing forces of criticism and instability that Gorbachev had not anticipated and could not easily control.

This gap between Gorbachev's intentions and the actual consequences of his reforms is one of the central ironies of the Cold War's final years. Gorbachev repeatedly insisted that he sought to renew, not to dismantle, Soviet communism, and there is little reason to doubt his sincerity on this point. Yet by permitting open criticism of the Soviet system's past and present failings, and by loosening the centrally planned economy without a clear or fully worked-out alternative to replace it, Gorbachev inadvertently removed the very ideological discipline and central economic control that had underpinned Soviet power for decades. The reforms designed to save the system instead accelerated its unravelling – a pattern that recurs, at a smaller scale, in several of the Eastern European transitions discussed below, where limited, negotiated openings for reform likewise proved impossible for ruling communist parties to contain once begun.

Core concept: glasnost and perestroika

Glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) were reform policies intended to modernise and preserve the Soviet system, not to dismantle it. Their unintended consequence was to expose long-suppressed grievances and to weaken the very mechanisms of control – censorship, central planning, one-party discipline – that had previously held the Soviet system together, accelerating rather than managing its crisis.

VN GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

Gorbachev trở thành Tổng Bí thư (3/1985) và đưa ra hai chính sách cải cách lớn: glasnost (công khai/cởi mở – nới lỏng kiểm duyệt, cho phép thảo luận công khai về những vấn đề của Liên Xô) và perestroika (cải tổ kinh tế – đưa một số cơ chế thị trường vào nền kinh tế kế hoạch trì trệ). Mục tiêu ban đầu là cứu vãn và củng cố hệ thống Xô Viết, nhưng trên thực tế lại làm bộc lộ những bất mãn tiềm ẩn và làm suy yếu chính các cơ chế kiểm soát vốn giữ cho hệ thống này vận hành.

5.7.2 Abandoning the Brezhnev Doctrine

The single most consequential of Gorbachev's decisions for the end of the Cold War in Europe was his effective abandonment of the **Brezhnev Doctrine** (Section 5.3). Gorbachev made clear, through both statements and subsequent inaction, that the Soviet Union would no longer use military force to prop up unpopular communist governments in Eastern Europe, a sharp reversal of the precedents set in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968). This decision – sometimes referred to informally, in contrast to the Brezhnev Doctrine, as allowing Eastern European states to choose "their own way" – removed the threat of Soviet military intervention that had underpinned communist rule across the region for decades. Once Eastern European populations and, crucially, reform-minded elements within their own communist parties understood that Moscow would not send in tanks to save them, the way was open for the rapid, largely peaceful collapse of communist rule across the region in 1989.

It is difficult to overstate how sharp a departure this represented from established practice. For over three decades, the credible threat of Soviet military intervention – demonstrated concretely in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (Section 5.3) – had been the ultimate guarantee underpinning every communist government in Eastern Europe, regardless of how unpopular that government might otherwise have been. Gorbachev's decision to withdraw that guarantee did not, by itself, cause any single Eastern European government to fall; but it removed the one factor that had previously made the survival of unpopular communist governments possible even in the face of overwhelming domestic opposition, and it is this change of Soviet policy, more than any single event within an individual Eastern European state, that best explains why 1989 saw so many communist governments collapse within so short a span of time.

5.7.3 1989: the year of revolutions

Once it became clear that Soviet military intervention was no longer a serious threat, change swept across Eastern Europe with remarkable speed, country by country, through 1989.

Poland led the way. Facing economic crisis and sustained pressure from the independent trade union movement Solidarity, Poland's communist government agreed to **Round Table Talks** with opposition representatives between February and April 1989, resulting in an agreement to hold semi-free elections. In the elections of June 1989, Solidarity-backed candidates won an overwhelming victory in the seats open to genuine competition, leading to the formation of a Solidarity-led government – the first non-communist-led government in the Warsaw Pact. Poland's transition is historically significant precisely because it was negotiated rather than simply imposed by either side: the ruling communist party, recognising that it could no longer govern effectively amid economic crisis and organised opposition, chose to negotiate a controlled transfer of power rather than risk a more disorderly collapse, setting a template of negotiated change that several other Eastern European states would follow later the same year.

Hungary followed a parallel path. In May 1989, the Hungarian government began dismantling the fortified border fence separating Hungary from Austria, initially framed as a technical and economic measure but with enormous unintended consequences: it created the first significant gap in the Iron Curtain, and thousands of East German citizens, nominally on holiday in Hungary, seized the opportunity to cross into Austria and onward to West Germany, triggering a mass emigration crisis that East Germany's government proved unable to contain. Hungary's decision illustrates how, once Moscow had signalled that it would not intervene militarily to preserve orthodoxy across the bloc, even a single Warsaw Pact state acting largely in its own interest could produce consequences that cascaded across the entire region, since East Germany's government now faced a crisis that neither Hungarian nor Soviet policy had specifically intended to create.

East Germany was destabilised by this emigration crisis and by growing mass demonstrations demanding reform, particularly in Leipzig and Berlin. Under mounting pressure, and following a confused announcement by an East German official about new travel regulations, crowds gathered at the Berlin Wall, and on **9 November 1989** border guards, overwhelmed and lacking clear instructions, opened the crossings. The **Berlin Wall**, the Cold War's most potent symbol, fell that night, with jubilant crowds tearing down sections of the barrier – an event broadcast around the world and widely regarded as the symbolic end of the Cold War in Europe. Given Berlin's central place throughout this chapter – from the 1948–49 Blockade and Airlift, through the Wall's construction in 1961, to this moment – the opening of the Wall carries a symbolic weight matched by almost no other single event of the entire Cold War, since it visibly reversed, in a matter of hours, the physical division that had come to represent the whole conflict.

Czechoslovakia experienced what became known as the **Velvet Revolution**, beginning with student demonstrations on **17 November 1989** that were met with police violence, triggering a rapid escalation of mass protest and a general strike that the communist government proved unable to withstand. The transition was almost entirely peaceful, and the playwright and dissident **Vaclav Havel** became president by the end of the year. The speed of the Czechoslovak transition – from the first demonstrations to a new, dissident-led government within weeks – illustrates how thoroughly the removal of the Soviet military guarantee had already hollowed out the will and capacity of Eastern European communist governments to resist sustained popular pressure by late 1989, barely two decades after the same country's reform movement had been crushed by Warsaw Pact tanks in 1968.

Romania was the striking, violent exception to this pattern of largely peaceful transition. Longtime dictator **Nicolae Ceausescu** attempted to suppress protests by force, but the revolt spread rapidly and the army eventually turned against him. Ceausescu and his wife Elena were captured, given a summary trial, and executed on **25 December 1989**, the only Eastern European communist leader to meet such a violent end during the revolutions of that year. Romania's exception to the pattern of peaceful transition is a valuable reminder, for essay-writing purposes, that broad regional generalisations about "the revolutions of 1989" must still account for meaningful variation between individual countries – the same underlying condition (the removal of the Soviet military guarantee) produced strikingly different outcomes depending on the specific character of each national regime and its leadership's choices.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Avoid describing the events of 1989 as though every Eastern European state experienced an identical, uniform "revolution." Poland and Hungary saw negotiated transitions led substantially by existing opposition movements or reformist governments; East Germany and Czechoslovakia saw rapid, largely peaceful popular transitions; Romania alone saw a violent overthrow. A strong essay response should distinguish between these different national paths rather than treating 1989 as a single undifferentiated event.

Figure 5.6 – The "domino" sequence of the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe (schematic).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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Năm 1989 – năm của các cuộc cách mạng: Ba Lan (Hội nghị Bàn tròn 2–4/1989, Công đoàn Đoàn kết thắng cử 6/1989); Hungary (mở biên giới với Áo 5/1989, tạo lỗ hổng đầu tiên trên Bức màn sắt); Đông Đức (biểu tình lớn, Bức tường Berlin sụp đổ 9/11/1989); Tiệp Khắc ("Cách mạng Nhung" từ 17/11/1989, Havel làm tổng thống); Romania (ngoại lệ bạo lực – vợ chồng Ceausescu bị xử tử 25/12/1989). Vì Gorbachev từ bỏ Học thuyết Brezhnev, Liên Xô đã không đưa quân can thiệp như đã từng làm ở Hungary 1956 và Tiệp Khắc 1968.

5.7.4 Malta, reunification, and the dissolution of the USSR

At the **Malta Summit** (2–3 December 1989), held aboard ship amid stormy weather just weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall, US President George H. W. Bush and Gorbachev met and jointly declared, in effect, that the Cold War was over – a symbolic and diplomatic capstone to the extraordinary events of that year. Germany, divided since 1949, was formally reunified on **3 October 1990**, absorbing East Germany into the Federal Republic and removing, at last, the original territorial dispute that had done so much to launch the Cold War in 1945.

OPCVL worked example – the Malta Summit declaration

Source (paraphrased description): at a joint press conference following the Malta Summit, 2–3 December 1989, President George H. W. Bush and General Secretary Gorbachev each indicated that the two superpowers no longer regarded one another as enemies locked in the confrontation that had defined the postwar era, describing the meeting as marking the start of a new, more cooperative relationship.
Origin: a joint statement by the leaders of the two Cold War superpowers, delivered immediately after their first direct summit following the collapse of communist rule across most of Eastern Europe.
Purpose: to reassure world opinion, and each side's own domestic and allied audiences, that the extraordinary changes of the preceding months represented a genuine and durable shift in superpower relations rather than a temporary lull.
Content: an explicit, mutual acknowledgement that the confrontational relationship of the preceding decades had ended, without specifying in precise legal or military terms exactly

what would replace it.
Value: valuable as a clear, top-level marker of the moment both superpowers formally recognised that the Cold War, as a defining feature of international relations, was over, useful for dating the political and diplomatic conclusion of the rivalry described throughout this chapter.
Limitation: as a broad, forward-looking political statement rather than a binding treaty, it did not by itself resolve any specific outstanding issue (such as the terms of German reunification, finalised only the following year, or the still-unresolved internal crisis within the Soviet Union itself); it should be read as a symbolic capstone to a process already substantially completed on the ground, rather than as the cause of that process.

Within the Soviet Union itself, Gorbachev's reforms had by 1990–91 produced severe political and economic instability, alongside rising nationalist and independence movements among the Soviet Union's constituent republics. In a final, desperate attempt to reverse this trajectory, a group of hardline Communist Party and military officials attempted a **coup d'état** against Gorbachev between **19 and 21 August 1991**, placing him briefly under house arrest and attempting to seize control of the government. The coup collapsed within days, undermined by popular resistance (led prominently by Russian republic president Boris Yeltsin, who defied the plotters publicly in Moscow) and by the plotters' own disorganisation, but it fatally weakened Gorbachev's authority and accelerated the Soviet Union's disintegration, as constituent republics moved rapidly toward outright independence in the failed coup's aftermath. On **26 December 1991**, the Soviet Union was formally dissolved, replaced by fifteen independent states, bringing the Cold War – and the state that had been one of its two central protagonists throughout – to a definitive end.

The failed August 1991 coup deserves particular attention because of how directly it illustrates the themes running through this entire chapter. The coup plotters – hardline Communist Party and military officials – attempted, in effect, to reverse Gorbachev's entire reform programme and to restore the older model of centralised, disciplined Soviet control that had defined the state since its earliest years. Their failure, brought about through public resistance rather than a decisive military confrontation, demonstrated just how far the willingness of ordinary citizens, junior officers and even significant parts of the security apparatus to defend that older model of control had eroded after only a few years of glasnost. In this sense the coup functioned as a final, decisive test of whether the Soviet system that had shaped the entire Cold War could still command genuine loyalty when directly challenged – and the answer, delivered within only three days, was that it largely could not. The dissolution of the Soviet Union four months later removed, in the most literal sense possible, one of the two central protagonists whose rivalry had defined international relations since 1945, and its fifteen successor states – including the Russian Federation, which inherited the bulk of the former Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal and its permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council – entered the post-Cold War era facing the immense task of political and economic transition without the ideological and institutional framework that had structured their societies for generations.

The end of the Cold War in Europe unfolded with striking speed: the Berlin Wall fell (9 November 1989), the Malta Summit declared the Cold War over (2–3 December 1989), Germany reunified (3 October 1990), and the Soviet Union itself dissolved (26 December 1991) following a failed hardline coup against Gorbachev (August 1991) – a transformation of the entire postwar order completed in barely more than two years.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not conflate "the fall of the Berlin Wall" (9 November 1989, the symbolic end of the Cold War division of Europe), "the end of the Cold War" as declared at Malta (2–3 December 1989), German reunification (3 October 1990), and "the dissolution of the Soviet Union" (26 December 1991). These are four distinct events, separated by up to two years, and a precise essay response should distinguish clearly between them rather than treating them as simultaneous.

Practice 5.19 – Compare and contrast

Compare and contrast the events of 1989 in Poland and Hungary as examples of the collapse of communist rule in Eastern Europe.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: in both countries, change was negotiated rather than imposed by outright revolution, and in both cases the existing communist leadership played a role in managing (rather than simply resisting) the transition; both transitions were enabled by the same underlying condition – Gorbachev's abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine removed the threat of Soviet military intervention that had crushed earlier reform movements in 1956 and 1968.
Differences: Poland's transition was driven primarily by domestic political negotiation between the government and an organised, long-established opposition movement (Solidarity), culminating in the Round Table Talks (February–April 1989) and semi-free elections (June 1989) that produced a new, opposition-led government through the ballot box. Hungary's transformation began as a more technical policy decision – opening the border with Austria in May 1989 – that produced enormous unintended international consequences by enabling a mass emigration crisis that destabilised East Germany, rather than resulting primarily from Hungary's own internal opposition politics.
Significance: Poland demonstrates the power of sustained organised domestic opposition (Solidarity) once the threat of Soviet intervention was removed; Hungary demonstrates how a single policy decision in one state could have cascading, unintended regional consequences, directly precipitating the East German crisis that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Practice 5.20 – Evaluate

Evaluate the reasons why Romania's transition in 1989 was markedly more violent than transitions elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

Lời giải chi tiết

Nature of the regime: Nicolae Ceausescu's government was an unusually personalist, tightly controlled dictatorship, with a much smaller space for internal reformist elements within the ruling party compared with Poland's or Hungary's communist parties, which had already permitted some degree of internal debate before 1989.
Ceausescu's response: unlike the leaderships in Poland, Hungary, East Germany or Czechoslovakia, which either negotiated with opposition forces or simply stepped aside once popular protest became overwhelming, Ceausescu attempted to suppress the initial protests by force, which escalated rather than contained the unrest and directly provoked the violent confrontation that followed.
Role of the security forces: the eventual defection of the Romanian army to the side of the protesters removed Ceausescu's last means of control and left him without any avenue for a negotiated exit, unlike leaders elsewhere who retained enough standing (or pragmatism) to negotiate a peaceful transfer of power.
Conclusion: Romania's violent exception is best explained by the combination of an unusually rigid, personalist dictatorship and a leader's choice to meet protest with repression rather than negotiation, producing an escalatory spiral that other Eastern European regimes – whose

leaderships proved more willing to accommodate or step aside – avoided.

Practice 5.21 – Source analysis / Q2 cross-referencing

Explain the significance of the Malta Summit (2–3 December 1989) for the wider narrative of the Cold War's end, and connect it to at least one other event covered in this chapter.

Lời giải chi tiết

The Malta Summit, at which George H. W. Bush and Gorbachev jointly signalled that the Cold War was over, is significant primarily as a symbolic and diplomatic milestone rather than a moment that itself changed the underlying facts on the ground – by the time of the summit, the decisive transformations (the Polish and Hungarian transitions, the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989) had already occurred. Its importance lies in providing formal, top-level superpower acknowledgement that the confrontation defining international relations since 1945 had ended, comparable in symbolic weight to how the Yalta and Potsdam conferences (Section 5.2) had once set the terms of that confrontation at its outset. Cross-referencing: just as Yalta and Potsdam (1945) marked the diplomatic starting point of the Cold War through superpower summit diplomacy, Malta (1989) marked its diplomatic endpoint through the same mechanism – a reminder that superpower summits functioned throughout the period as the primary formal instrument through which the two sides communicated shifts in the fundamental state of their relationship.

Practice 5.22 – Short answer

Explain the significance of Gorbachev's abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine for the events of 1989.

Lời giải chi tiết

The Brezhnev Doctrine (Section 5.3) had, since 1968, committed the Soviet Union to using military force to preserve communist rule across the Warsaw Pact whenever it appeared threatened, as demonstrated in the crushing of the Prague Spring. Gorbachev's decision, from the mid-to-late 1980s, to abandon this doctrine removed the single greatest obstacle to peaceful reform movements succeeding in Eastern Europe: without the credible threat of Soviet tanks intervening, as they had in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, reform movements in Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia in 1989 were able to press their demands and, in most cases, negotiate a transition of power without triggering a violent Soviet response. This single strategic choice is therefore widely regarded by historians as the essential precondition that allowed the largely peaceful, rapid collapse of communist rule across the whole of Eastern Europe within a single remarkable year.

Model thesis and outline – Paper 2/3 essay

Question: To what extent was Mikhail Gorbachev responsible for the end of the Cold War?
Model thesis: While Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms and his abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine were the immediate and necessary catalyst that allowed the Cold War to end when and how it did, his role should be understood as accelerating and enabling a set of structural pressures – a stagnant Soviet economy, an unsustainable arms race, and mounting nationalist pressures within the Soviet bloc – that had been building for years, rather than as the sole or original cause of the Cold War's end.

Suggested paragraph structure:

1. Structural/long-term pressures predating Gorbachev: the cost of the arms race (including the pressure of SDI from 1983), the drain of the war in Afghanistan, and decades of inefficiency in the centrally planned Soviet economy.
2. Gorbachev's direct agency: glasnost and perestroika (1985–87), and, most decisively, the abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which directly enabled the 1989 revolutions to succeed peacefully.
3. Reagan's and Bush's contribution: the shift from confrontation (SDI, the Reagan Doctrine) to substantive negotiation (the INF Treaty, 1987; the Malta Summit, 1989) required a willing partner on the American side as well.
4. Contingency and unintended consequences: the East German emigration crisis triggered by Hungary's border opening, and the failed August 1991 coup, show that events also moved in directions no single leader planned or fully controlled.
5. Judgement: Gorbachev bears substantial, arguably decisive, responsibility for the timing, pace and largely peaceful character of the Cold War's end, but the underlying conditions that made some kind of resolution likely were the product of much longer-term structural pressures on the Soviet system.

Practice 5.23 – To what extent

To what extent was Mikhail Gorbachev responsible for the end of the Cold War?

Lời giải chi tiết

Case for substantial responsibility: Gorbachev's specific policy choices were decisive in both timing and character. Glasnost and perestroika (1985–87) opened space for criticism and reform that no previous Soviet leader had permitted; his abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine directly enabled the peaceful revolutions of 1989 to succeed where the 1956 Hungarian Uprising and 1968 Prague Spring had been crushed; and his willingness to negotiate substantively with Reagan produced the INF Treaty (1987) and set the stage for the Malta Summit declaration (1989).
Case for structural/long-term causes: by 1985, the Soviet Union already faced a stagnant, inefficient economy unable to sustain both consumer needs and a costly arms race intensified by SDI; the drawn-out, costly war in Afghanistan (1979–89) had already exposed the limits of Soviet military power and drained resources; and long-suppressed nationalist sentiment within Soviet republics and the wider Eastern Bloc provided the fuel that any relaxation of central control was likely to ignite. In this sense, Gorbachev inherited a system already approaching crisis rather than creating that crisis himself.
Role of contingency: several pivotal moments were not planned by Gorbachev at all – Hungary's decision to open its border in May 1989 triggered an emigration crisis with consequences (the fall of the Berlin Wall) far beyond what Hungarian or Soviet planners intended, and the failed August 1991 coup, mounted by hardliners against Gorbachev himself, accelerated the Soviet Union's collapse in a direction he had not sought.
Judgement: Gorbachev deserves substantial credit for the specific manner, pace and remarkably low level of violence with which the Cold War ended, particularly through his abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine; however, the underlying structural weaknesses of the Soviet system, built up over decades, made some kind of crisis likely with or without Gorbachev, meaning his responsibility is best understood as decisive for *how* the Cold War ended rather

than as the sole explanation for *why* it ended.

Practice 5.24 – Examine

Examine the role of economic factors in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Lời giải chi tiết

The Soviet centrally planned economy had exhibited chronic inefficiency, low consumer-goods production, and declining growth rates for years before Gorbachev came to power in 1985, providing the underlying structural weakness his reforms sought to address. The sustained cost of the arms race – compounded by the additional financial pressure of matching or responding to Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative from 1983 – diverted resources away from civilian economic needs. The war in Afghanistan (1979–89) added further, substantial economic strain without any offsetting benefit. Perestroika (from 1985) attempted to address these weaknesses through partial market reforms and greater enterprise autonomy, but in practice these changes dismantled elements of the old centrally planned system faster than functioning market mechanisms could be built to replace them, producing shortages and economic disruption that deepened public disillusionment with the Soviet system precisely at the moment glasnost was allowing that disillusionment to be openly expressed. Economic weakness therefore functioned as both a long-term structural cause of the Soviet Union's crisis and a proximate cause of the specific instability of 1989–91, reinforcing the argument that Gorbachev's political reforms and the USSR's economic troubles were mutually compounding rather than separate causes of collapse.

Practice 5.25 – Evaluate

Evaluate the view that the Cold War ended primarily because of Western pressure rather than internal Soviet weakness.

Lời giải chi tiết

Evidence supporting Western pressure as decisive: the sustained American arms buildup and the Strategic Defense Initiative under Reagan imposed real additional strategic and financial pressure on Moscow, arguably forcing Soviet leaders to seek accommodation from a position of relative weakness; NATO's resolve during the Euromissile crisis (1979–83), despite domestic protest, demonstrated Western willingness to match Soviet capabilities rather than concede ground.

Evidence supporting internal Soviet weakness as decisive: the Soviet economy's structural inefficiencies long predated Reagan's presidency and stemmed from decades of central planning rather than from any specific American policy; the costly, demoralising war in Afghanistan was a self-inflicted Soviet commitment rather than a Western-imposed one; and Gorbachev's own reform agenda (glasnost and perestroika) targeted internally recognised Soviet problems rather than responding directly to a specific American demand.

Synthesis: the two explanations are not mutually exclusive – Western pressure (the arms race, SDI) likely intensified and accelerated a crisis whose fundamental roots lay in longstanding internal Soviet economic and political weaknesses; the most persuasive position credits internal structural weakness as the necessary underlying condition, with external Western pressure acting as an aggravating and accelerating factor rather than the primary cause.

Practice 5.26 – Essay planning, synthesis

”The Cold War ended not with a single decisive event, but through the accumulation of many smaller ones.” Discuss this statement with reference to the period 1985–1991.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong response should resist treating any one date (the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Malta Summit, or the dissolution of the USSR) as a single, self-contained ”ending,” and instead trace an accumulating sequence.

1985–87: Gorbachev's rise, glasnost and perestroika, and the beginnings of renewed superpower dialogue culminating in the INF Treaty (December 1987) – none of these alone ended the Cold War, but together they reversed the trajectory of confrontation established after 1979.

1989: a rapid sequence of national transitions – Poland's Round Table Talks and elections, Hungary's border opening, East Germany's mass emigration crisis and the fall of the Berlin Wall, Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution, and Romania's violent exception – each event feeding into and accelerating the next, culminating symbolically in the Malta Summit's declaration that the Cold War was over.

1990–91: German reunification (October 1990) resolved the specific territorial dispute that had launched the Cold War in 1945; the failed August 1991 coup and the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union (December 1991) removed one of the Cold War's two central protagonists entirely.

Judgement: the statement is largely accurate – while the fall of the Berlin Wall (9 November 1989) carries the greatest symbolic weight, no single event was individually sufficient or necessary; the Cold War's end is best understood as an accumulating cascade of interconnected political, economic and diplomatic developments across 1985–1991, each making the next more likely, rather than the product of one decisive turning point.

Independence Movements and Decolonization

Mục tiêu Unit: Hiểu nguyên nhân chung khiến các đế quốc thực dân châu Âu tan rã sau 1945; nắm vững diễn biến giành độc lập tại Nam Á (Ấn Độ – Pakistan), Trung Đông (Palestine – Israel – khủng hoảng Suez), châu Phi hạ Sahara (Ghana, Algeria, Kenya, Congo, Nigeria – Biafra, Rhodesia – Zimbabwe) và Đông Nam Á (Việt Nam, Indonesia, Malaya); so sánh hai con đường giành độc lập – đàm phán hoà bình và đấu tranh vũ trang – và giải thích tại sao mỗi thuộc địa đi theo con đường khác nhau; đánh giá vai trò của Chiến tranh Lạnh; phân tích những thách thức các quốc gia mới độc lập phải đối mặt (biên giới nhân tạo, chủ nghĩa thực dân kiểu mới, đảo chính, Phong trào Không liên kết); luyện kỹ năng OPCVL trên nguồn sử liệu về phi thực dân hoá và kỹ năng viết luận Paper 2 (examine, evaluate, compare and contrast, to what extent) tổng hợp toàn bộ giáo trình.

6.1 Causes of decolonization after 1945

In 1939 the European empires controlled roughly a third of the world's land surface and well over half of its population; by 1980 almost all of that territory had become independent states. This transformation happened within a single working lifetime, and it happened for a specific, identifiable set of reasons rather than through any single cause. A high-scoring Paper 2 essay on decolonization always opens by separating these causes analytically rather than listing them as an undifferentiated pile of background facts, because the command terms most often used for this topic – *examine*, *to what extent*, *evaluate* – all reward a ranked, weighted argument about which causes mattered most, not simply a description of what happened.

- This chapter examines four general causes of decolonization (this section), before moving region by region through South Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.
- Each regional section identifies the specific colonial power(s), key nationalist leaders or movements, method of transition, and precise independence date for every case study.
- Section 6.6 then examines the challenges newly independent states faced in common, and Section 6.7 draws every regional case study together into a single comparative framework built around three lenses: settler presence, strategic or economic value, and Cold War entanglement.

Decolonization and self-determination

Decolonization is the process by which colonial powers relinquished formal political control over their overseas territories, whether through negotiated transfer of sovereignty or through the territory's own armed struggle for independence. It is distinct from, but closely linked to, the principle of **self-determination** – the idea that a people has the right to determine its own political status and government without external control. Self-determination had circulated as a political principle since Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points (1918) and the interwar mandate system, but it was only after 1945 that it became an enforceable international expectation, embedded directly in the United Nations Charter.

VN GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

Phi thực dân hoá (decolonization) là quá trình các cường quốc thực dân trao trả chủ quyền chính trị cho các thuộc địa, có thể qua đàm phán hoà bình hoặc qua đấu tranh vũ trang. Khái niệm liên quan là **quyền tự quyết dân tộc (self-determination)** – quyền một dân tộc tự quyết định thể chế chính trị của mình mà không bị can thiệp từ bên ngoài. Ý tưởng này đã có từ Chương trình 14 điểm của Wilson (1918), nhưng chỉ sau 1945, khi được ghi vào Hiến chương Liên Hợp Quốc, nó mới trở thành một kỳ vọng có tính ràng buộc quốc tế thực sự.

6.1.1 The material and psychological exhaustion of the colonial powers

The most immediate cause of decolonization was that the Second World War (1939–45) left Britain, France, the Netherlands and Belgium financially exhausted and militarily overstretched at precisely the moment their colonial subjects were becoming harder, not easier, to govern. Britain emerged from the war deeply in debt to the United States and to its own colonies (through unpaid wartime requisitioning), and simply could not fund the garrisons, administrators and infrastructure needed to hold a global empire together indefinitely. France and the Netherlands, having themselves been militarily defeated and occupied during the war (mainland France by Germany, 1940–44; the Dutch East Indies by Japan, 1942–45), had lost the aura of invincibility that colonial rule had always partly depended upon – a European power that had just been defeated by an Asian power (Japan) could no longer straightforwardly claim inherent superiority over its own Asian and African subjects. Much of Britain's wartime debt to its own colonies took the specific form of blocked sterling balances – credit that Britain owed to India and other colonies for wartime supplies, labour and military service, which Britain could not repay quickly after 1945 – a concrete financial mechanism that turned the general idea of "imperial overstretch" into a specific, negotiable problem at exactly the moment Britain was also negotiating India's constitutional future.

A second, less material but equally important factor was the direct wartime experience of colonial troops and colonial subjects themselves. Well over two million Indian soldiers served in the British Indian Army during the war; West African and North African troops fought in Europe and the Middle East for France; colonial subjects across the empires had been directly exposed to Allied wartime propaganda promising a postwar world of freedom and self-government (the Atlantic Charter of August 1941, jointly issued by Churchill and Roosevelt, spoke explicitly of the right of all peoples to choose their own form of government). Soldiers who had fought and died for the colonial power, often experiencing far more equal treatment abroad than they had ever received at home, returned to their own countries asking an obvious question: if we have just fought to defeat racial tyranny and to restore the freedom of occupied European nations, why should our own nations remain unfree? This sense of a broken wartime promise, and of an intolerable double standard, radicalised veterans and civilians alike and fed directly into postwar nationalist organisation.

6.1.2 The United Nations Charter and the new international climate

The United Nations Charter, signed in San Francisco in 1945, formalised self-determination as an international principle for the first time in a document with near-universal state membership. Article 1(2) named "developing friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples" as one of the UN's core purposes, and Chapter XI of the Charter created a formal Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories, obliging colonial powers to report on conditions in their dependent territories and to develop them toward self-government. This did not, by itself, force any colonial power to withdraw – but it removed the previous international respectability of formal, permanent colonial rule, gave nationalist movements a legitimate international forum and vocabulary in which to press their case, and meant that colonial powers repressing independence movements after 1945 were doing so against the explicit grain of the new international order they themselves had just helped build.

- Chapter XI obliged colonial powers to recognise that the interests of the inhabitants of dependent territories were "paramount."

- It required regular reporting to the UN on social, economic and educational conditions in each dependent territory.
- It committed signatories to developing self-government, "with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned," in each territory over time.

6.1.3 Cold War pressure from both superpowers

Both emerging superpowers of the postwar era opposed old-style formal European colonialism, though for different and sometimes contradictory reasons, and this bipolar pressure forms one of the central analytical threads of this chapter (and is examined in depth, region by region, throughout the sections that follow).

- The **United States** had its own anti-colonial founding tradition (having itself won independence from Britain in 1776) and a practical Cold War interest in seeing colonial empires – viewed in Washington as closed, protected trading blocs – opened up to American trade and investment; Washington also worried that prolonged colonial wars (as in Indochina) would radicalise nationalist movements toward communism if the West did not support moderate, negotiated transitions.
- The **Soviet Union**, drawing on Marxist-Leninist theory that framed imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, presented itself internationally as the natural ally of anti-colonial movements everywhere, offering ideological solidarity, propaganda support, and in some cases material and military aid to nationalist and revolutionary movements, particularly where a colonial power was resisting by force (Vietnam is the clearest example, examined in Section 6.5).
- Both superpowers, despite this shared opposition to formal colonialism, competed directly with one another for the political alignment of each newly independent state once it emerged, turning "which side gets independence" into a secondary question behind "which side does the new government align with" – the pattern this chapter calls **neo-colonialism** once formal independence has already been achieved.

Crucially, however, this shared superpower disapproval of *old-style* colonialism did not mean either superpower was indifferent to what replaced it: both Washington and Moscow actively competed to shape the political alignment of newly independent states, which is precisely why so many decolonization struggles became entangled in Cold War proxy competition even when their original causes were purely domestic and nationalist. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of independent Ghana, later gave this pattern a name that has become the standard historical term for it: **neo-colonialism**, coined in the title of his 1965 book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, describing a state that is formally sovereign and independent but whose economic and political system is still directed from outside. Section 6.6 returns to this concept in detail, because it became one of the defining problems facing almost every newly independent state covered in this chapter.

6.1.4 Organised nationalist movements

None of the pressures above would have produced independence on their own without a fourth factor: by 1945, most colonies already possessed organised nationalist movements with experienced leadership, often built up over decades before the war and sharpened by wartime experience. The Indian National Congress had been agitating since the late nineteenth century and had already run mass civil disobedience campaigns in the 1930s (Section 6.2); the Viet Minh had fought the Japanese occupation directly and emerged in 1945 as an armed, disciplined political-military organisation (Section 6.5); African nationalist parties such as Nkrumah's Convention People's Party in the Gold Coast built on a tradition of educated elite protest going back to the early twentieth century. These movements gave colonial subjects the organisational capacity to convert general postwar discontent into a coherent, sustained political and sometimes military campaign for independence – without them, the structural pressures described above might have produced unrest, but not organised, successful independence movements.

> **Four causes, working together:** (1) the material and psychological exhaustion of the colonial powers themselves after 1939–45; (2) the new international norm of self-determination formalised in the UN Charter (1945); (3) Cold War pressure from both superpowers against *formal* colonialism, even as both competed to control what replaced it; (4) pre-existing, organised nationalist movements able to convert opportunity into actual independence. An *examine* or *to what extent* essay on this topic should rank these four causes against each other for the specific case(s) named in the question, not simply describe all four in sequence.

6.1.5 Two paths to independence

Across the case studies in this chapter, colonies reached independence by one of two broad routes, and distinguishing them precisely is essential vocabulary for every essay in this unit.

- **Negotiated transfer of power**: the colonial power agrees, through political negotiation rather than sustained armed conflict, to transfer sovereignty to local leaders, usually after a period of constitutional reform, elections, and a formal transfer ceremony. Ghana's independence on 6 March 1957 is the clearest example in this chapter (Section 6.4), as is Malaya's on 31 August 1957 (Section 6.5).
- **Armed struggle**: nationalist or revolutionary movements fight a sustained military and often guerrilla campaign against colonial or minority-settler rule, forcing withdrawal or a negotiated settlement only after significant violence. Algeria's war against France (1954–62) and Vietnam's war against France (1946–54) are the clearest examples in this chapter (Sections 6.4 and 6.5).
- **A hybrid or phased path**: armed resistance begins the process, but the conflict itself eventually forces a negotiated settlement rather than outright military victory for either side. Kenya's Mau Mau uprising followed by Kenyatta's negotiated transfer, and Rhodesia's guerrilla war followed by the Lancaster House Agreement (both Section 6.4), follow this hybrid pattern.

Most cases in this chapter, in fact, sit somewhere between these two poles rather than at a pure extreme, and Section 6.7 returns to this comparative question directly, asking what determined which path a given colony followed.

> **(!) Lỗi thường gặp:** Avoid writing that a colonial power simply "granted" independence in every case, as though every transition were a gift freely given. In Algeria, Vietnam, Kenya and Rhodesia, independence was achieved only after the colonial or settler authority had been militarily and politically forced into a position where continued resistance was no longer sustainable – language that credits the colonial power alone with "granting" independence erases the agency of the nationalist or guerrilla movements that made continued colonial or settler rule impossible.

Figure 6.1 — A skeleton timeline of decolonization, 1945–1980, showing selected independence dates covered in this chapter. Note that the pace was uneven: 1960 alone saw seventeen African states become independent, a year often called the "Year of Africa."

Practice 6.1 – Examine essay

Question: Examine the reasons why European colonial powers found it increasingly difficult to maintain their overseas empires after 1945.

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: While the material exhaustion of Britain, France, the Netherlands and Belgium after the Second World War created the immediate opportunity for decolonization, the single most decisive cause was the combination of a new, internationally sanctioned language of self-determination with pre-existing, organised nationalist movements able to exploit that opportunity – structural weakness alone rarely produced independence without organised local leadership to demand it.
Paragraph 1 (material/psychological exhaustion): Britain's massive wartime debt, France and the Netherlands' own wartime defeat and occupation (1940–45), and the shattering of the myth of European invincibility after Japan's rapid conquests in Southeast Asia (1941–42) all reduced both the capacity and the perceived legitimacy of continued colonial rule. This explains *timing* – why so much decolonization clustered in the fifteen years after 1945 rather than earlier or later – but by itself does not explain why some colonies (Algeria, Vietnam) required years of war while others (Ghana, Malaya) achieved independence through negotiation.
Paragraph 2 (the new international climate): The UN Charter's self-determination provisions (1945) and the wartime promises of documents such as the Atlantic Charter (1941) removed the previous international respectability of indefinite colonial rule and gave nationalist movements a legitimate vocabulary and forum. This mattered enormously for how colonial repression was perceived abroad (for instance, international criticism of French and British actions during the Suez Crisis, Section 6.3), but norms alone did not force any single power to withdraw from any single territory.
Paragraph 3 (Cold War pressure, ranked as significant but indirect): Both superpowers opposed old-style colonialism, for different reasons, and this added pressure – American concern about radicalisation in Indochina, Soviet ideological support for national liberation movements – but this pressure operated unevenly and was frequently secondary to superpower competition over what would replace colonial rule, not over whether it should end (developed fully in Sections 6.4–6.6).
Paragraph 4 (organised nationalist leadership, ranked highest): The decisive variable distinguishing successful, rapid independence from prolonged, violent struggle was the presence of a disciplined nationalist organisation capable of mobilising a colony's population and negotiating (or fighting) effectively – Nkrumah's CPP in the Gold Coast, the Indian National Congress, the FLN in Algeria, the Viet Minh in Vietnam. Without this fourth factor, the first three causes created only an opportunity, not an outcome.
Conclusion: All four causes were necessary, but the presence of organised, capable nationalist leadership was the factor that converted a general postwar climate favourable to independence into the actual, specific, dated transfers of sovereignty examined throughout this chapter.

6.1.6 Historiographical debate: metropolitan decision or colonial agency?

Historians studying decolonization have long debated where the primary driving force for the process actually sat. One line of explanation emphasises decisions taken in London, Paris, Brussels and The Hague, arguing that colonial governments, weighing the shrinking benefits of empire against its rising costs, made essentially top-down calculations about when and how to withdraw, so that the specific timing of each transfer of power reflected metropolitan political calculation as much as anything happening in the colony itself. A second line of explanation places the primary weight on colonial agency: the sustained pressure, organisation, and, where necessary, armed resistance mounted by nationalist movements themselves, arguing that colonial powers were pushed out rather than choosing to leave at a moment of their own convenience.

This chapter's case studies suggest that both forces were always present together, but in very different proportions from case to case. Ghana's negotiated transition (Section 6.4) sits closer to the metropolitan-decision model, since Britain retained real choice over the pace and structure of the handover once it decided negotiation was preferable to confrontation; Algeria's war (Section 6.4) and Vietnam's war (Section 6.5) sit far closer to the colonial-agency model, since France was ultimately compelled to leave both territories by years of costly, sustained resistance rather than by a calm metropolitan choice of timing. A strong Paper 2 answer to a question about the balance between metropolitan decision and colonial agency should therefore avoid selecting one single explanation for the whole process, and instead show, case by case, which explanation fits best and why.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Các nhà sử học tranh luận: phi thực dân hoá chủ yếu do CHÍNH QUỐC (Anh, Pháp, Bỉ, Hà Lan) chủ động cân nhắc chi phí – lợi ích rồi chọn thời điểm rút lui, hay do chính PHONG TRÀO DÂN TỘC THUỘC ĐỊA gây áp lực buộc chính quốc phải rút lui chứ không phải tự chọn? Ghana gần với mô hình "chính quốc chủ động" hơn; Algeria và Việt Nam gần với mô hình "thuộc địa buộc phải rút lui" hơn. Khi làm bài, không nên chọn một cách giải thích duy nhất cho toàn chương, mà nên phân tích riêng cho từng trường hợp cụ thể được hỏi.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A common weakness in decolonization essays is writing a purely chronological narrative – "first this happened, then this happened, then this happened" – instead of a thematic, ranked argument that directly answers the command term. Even when a question asks you to *examine* or *discuss*, the mark schemes reward an argument organised around causes ranked by significance, or factors compared against each other, not a simple retelling of events in date order. Use chronology as evidence *within* a thematic structure, never as the structure itself.

6.2 South Asia: India and Pakistan

British India was, in 1945, both the largest and the most politically developed of all European colonies, and its independence in 1947 became both the model and the warning that shaped how contemporaries thought about decolonization everywhere else: a model, because it demonstrated that a colonial power could negotiate a rapid transfer of sovereignty to an organised, popular nationalist movement; a warning, because the same process produced one of the largest and most violent forced population movements of the twentieth century.

6.2.1 The Indian National Congress and Gandhi's campaigns

The **Indian National Congress (INC)**, founded in 1885, had by the interwar period become a genuine mass movement under the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi, who developed a distinctive method of **nonviolent civil disobedience** (*satyagraha*) explicitly designed to make British rule morally and administratively unworkable without resorting to armed insurrection. Two Congress-led campaigns are essential exam knowledge.

- **The Salt March, March–April 1930**: Gandhi led a march of several hundred kilometres to the coastal town of Dandi to make salt from seawater in deliberate, public violation of the British salt tax and monopoly – a symbolic act chosen precisely because the salt tax touched every Indian household regardless of class or religion, making it an ideal focus for mass civil disobedience and generating enormous domestic and international press attention.
- **The Quit India Movement, August 1942**: Launched by Congress in the middle of the Second World War, this campaign demanded an immediate end to British rule and provoked the mass

arrest of the entire Congress leadership; the movement was suppressed, but it confirmed to the British government that Congress would not indefinitely cooperate with continued colonial rule even during a global war, hardening the political reality that postwar Britain would face.

6.2.2 The Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan

The **All-India Muslim League**, led from the 1930s onward by **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**, represented India's Muslim minority and grew increasingly convinced that an independent India dominated by the Hindu-majority Congress would not adequately protect Muslim political, cultural and religious interests. The League's central demand hardened over the 1940s into a call for a separate, independent Muslim-majority state to be carved out of British India – the demand that would become Pakistan. The fundamental disagreement between Congress (which wanted a single, unified, secular independent India) and the Muslim League (which wanted a separate Muslim state) became the central and ultimately unresolved political problem of the transfer of power, and it is essential for exam answers to state clearly that partition was not the original plan of either the British government or the Congress leadership, but the outcome of this unresolved conflict. The Muslim League's call for "Direct Action Day" in August 1946, intended as a mass demonstration of political support for Pakistan, instead triggered severe communal rioting in Calcutta and beyond, and is frequently cited by historians as the moment the possibility of a unified, negotiated single-state outcome effectively ended.

- Congress wanted a single, unified, secular independent India in which religious identity played no formal constitutional role.
- The Muslim League, by contrast, argued that a Hindu-majority-dominated single state could not be trusted to protect Muslim political representation, cultural institutions and religious practice in the long run.
- Repeated attempts at constitutional compromise, including the 1946 Cabinet Mission Plan's proposal for a loose, three-tier federal structure, failed to satisfy both sides simultaneously, leaving partition as the only outcome both major parties would ultimately accept.

Partition

Partition refers specifically to the division of a single colonial or national territory into two or more separate independent states along communal, religious or ethnic lines at the moment of independence. The partition of British India in 1947 is the case study most closely associated with the term, but the same underlying method (division along communal lines, in place of a single unified successor state) recurs in miniature in the UN Partition Plan for Palestine (Section 6.3) and, in territorial rather than communal form, in some African border disputes discussed in Section 6.6.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Đảng Quốc đại Ấn Độ (Indian National Congress) dưới sự lãnh đạo của Gandhi theo đuổi phương pháp **bất tuân dân sự bất bạo động** – tiêu biểu là cuộc Tuần hành Muối (tháng 3–4/1930) và Phong trào Quit India (tháng 8/1942). Trong khi đó, Liên đoàn Hồi giáo (Muslim League) dưới Jinnah ngày càng lo ngại một Ấn Độ độc lập do người Hindu chiếm đa số sẽ không bảo vệ được quyền lợi của người Hồi giáo, và đòi thành lập một quốc gia Hồi giáo riêng biệt – chính là Pakistan sau này. Mâu thuẫn không thể hoà giải giữa hai bên mới là nguyên nhân trực tiếp dẫn đến việc **chia cắt (partition)** Ấn Độ, chứ không phải là kế hoạch ban đầu của nước Anh hay của Quốc đại.

6.2.3 The postwar Labour government and the decision to withdraw

Britain's Labour government, elected in July 1945 under Clement Attlee, moved decisively toward rapid withdrawal from India, in sharp contrast to the more gradual, resistant approach of the wartime Churchill government. The financial exhaustion described in Section 6.1 applied to India with particular force: administering and, if necessary, militarily controlling India was simply unaffordable for a Britain still rationing food and rebuilding from the war, and continued unrest (including a naval mutiny by Indian ratings of the Royal Indian Navy in February 1946) suggested that the loyalty of India's own security forces, on which any continued British rule ultimately depended, could no longer be assumed. Lord Mountbatten was appointed as the final Viceroy in early 1947 with an explicit mandate to accelerate the transfer of power, and the timetable for withdrawal was in fact brought forward once it became clear that further delay would only worsen the growing communal violence between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

6.2.4 The Indian Independence Act and partition, 1947

The **Indian Independence Act**, passed by the British Parliament in **July 1947**, provided the legal mechanism for partition: it created two new, fully independent dominions – **India** and **Pakistan** – ended British paramountcy over the princely states (leaving each individual prince to decide, in principle, which dominion to accede to), and set an extremely compressed timetable. **Pakistan** became independent on **14 August 1947**, and **India** on **15 August 1947**. The precise boundary line dividing the Punjab and Bengal provinces between the two new states – the Radcliffe Line, drawn by a British barrister who had never previously visited India – was not published until two days after independence had already taken place, leaving millions of people uncertain, at the very moment of independence, which country their home would fall into.

Worked OPCVL: Nehru's "Tryst with Destiny" speech, 14/15 August 1947

Source: Extract from a speech by Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, delivered to India's Constituent Assembly at midnight on 14–15 August 1947: "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge …At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom …A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."

Origin: A speech delivered by the incoming Prime Minister of independent India to the Constituent Assembly at the precise midnight moment of transfer of power, 14–15 August 1947.

Purpose: To mark, in solemn and deliberately historic language, the formal moment of India's independence, and to frame the new nation's founding narrative for both the Assembly present and, through radio broadcast and the press, the wider Indian and international public.

Content: Nehru presents independence as the fulfilment of a long-promised destiny ("tryst with destiny"), emphasises the symbolic timing (midnight), and frames the moment as a historic rupture between an old, suppressed era and a new one.

Value: As the official founding statement of the new state, delivered by its first head of government at the exact constitutional moment of transfer, it is directly valuable as evidence of how India's new leadership wished the moment of independence to be understood and remembered – as a triumphant, historic culmination of decades of nationalist struggle rather than as the outcome of a hurried, difficult negotiation.

Limitations: As a deliberately celebratory, forward-looking rhetorical performance, the speech gives no indication of the immense communal violence and mass displacement that was already under way in the Punjab and Bengal at the very moment it was delivered, and cannot be used as evidence about the human costs of partition, which are addressed by very different categories of source (refugee testimony, administrative reports, later demographic studies).

6.2.5 The human cost of partition

Worked OPCVL: a statistical source

Source: A table published in a later demographic study, estimating cross-border population movements during the partition of India, presenting a range of 10–15 million people displaced and drawing on multiple official and refugee-agency records compiled after 1947.
Origin: A demographic estimate compiled well after the event itself, drawing on multiple original record sets rather than a single contemporary count.
Purpose: To provide historians and policymakers with the best available quantitative estimate of the scale of displacement, in the absence of any single reliable contemporary census covering the chaotic conditions of 1947.
Value: As a source that combines multiple original record sets rather than relying on any single, possibly incomplete contemporary count, it is valuable precisely because it reports a *range* rather than manufacturing false precision, modelling the responsible way historians should treat contested statistics.
Limitations: Because record-keeping collapsed amid the violence of 1947 itself, no total drawn from later compilation can be fully verified against a complete contemporary count, which is exactly why historians report a range (10–15 million) rather than a single figure, and why the accompanying death-toll estimates are reported as an even wider, more strongly disputed range, discussed immediately below.

Partition triggered one of the largest forced migrations in modern history: an estimated **10 to 15 million people** crossed the new India–Pakistan border in both directions within months, Hindus and Sikhs moving into India and Muslims moving into Pakistan, driven by communal violence, fear, and in many cases direct expulsion, concentrated overwhelmingly in the divided provinces of Punjab and Bengal. The death toll from the accompanying communal violence is genuinely and seriously disputed among historians and demographers, with estimates ranging from several hundred thousand at the lower end to approximately two million at the higher end; no single precise figure commands scholarly consensus, and any exam answer should present this as a disputed range rather than quoting one number as though it were an agreed fact.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not state a single precise death toll for partition (for example, do not write "partition killed exactly one million people"). Because primary-source record-keeping collapsed amid the violence and because estimates vary enormously depending on methodology, the honest and examinable answer is to give the *range* (several hundred thousand to around two million) and explicitly note that the figure is disputed. The same caution applies to the Nigeria–Biafra War casualty figures in Section 6.4.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Đạo luật Độc lập Ấn Độ (Indian Independence Act, tháng 7/1947) chia Ấn Độ thuộc Anh thành hai quốc gia độc lập: Pakistan (14/8/1947) và Ấn Độ (15/8/1947). Đường biên giới Radcliffe Line – do một luật sư Anh chưa từng đến Ấn Độ vẽ ra – chỉ được công bố hai ngày SAU khi độc lập đã diễn ra, khiến hàng triệu người không biết nhà mình sẽ thuộc quốc gia nào. Hậu quả là cuộc di dời cưỡng bức lớn nhất lịch sử hiện đại: 10–15 triệu người di chuyển qua biên giới mới, và số người chết vì bạo lực cộng đồng vẫn còn gây tranh cãi lớn giữa các nhà sử học (khoảng vài trăm nghìn đến gần hai triệu người) – KHÔNG nên trích một con số chính xác duy nhất trong bài thi.

1930, 1942 Congress campaigns (Salt March, Quit India) → 1940s Muslim League demands separate state → 1946 Cabinet Mission Plan fails; Direct Action Day → Jul 1947 Indian Independence Act → 14/15 Aug 1947 Pakistan / India independent

Figure 6.2 — The road to partition: from Congress and Muslim League mobilisation to the transfer of power.

6.2.6 Consequences: Kashmir and the unfinished business of partition

Partition left the two new states with an unresolved territorial dispute that neither the Indian Independence Act nor the Radcliffe Line had actually settled: the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, whose ruler governed a Muslim-majority population and whose accession to either India or Pakistan was contested by both new governments almost immediately after independence. Unlike the clear communal partition applied to Punjab and Bengal, Kashmir's status was left open by the general principle that individual princely rulers would choose their own accession, and the resulting dispute became the first, and most persistent, unresolved question inherited from the transfer of power, feeding a long-running India–Pakistan rivalry that shaped the security and foreign policy of both states for decades beyond the period covered in detail by this chapter.

Historians continue to debate whether the speed of British withdrawal made this outcome more or less likely: some argue that a faster withdrawal, however chaotic, avoided an even longer and more violent occupation as communal tension worsened through 1946–47; others argue that the same speed left no time to resolve exactly the kind of contested-accession problem that Kashmir represented, and that a more carefully sequenced transfer might have prevented the dispute from hardening into a permanent rivalry.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Tranh chấp Kashmir là "công việc dang dở" của quá trình chia cắt: bang Jammu và Kashmir có nhà vua cai trị nhưng dân số đa số theo Hồi giáo, và việc bang này gia nhập Ấn Độ hay Pakistan bị cả hai bên tranh chấp ngay sau độc lập. Đây trở thành nguồn gốc của mối quan hệ căng thẳng kéo dài giữa hai nước trong nhiều thập kỷ sau đó.

India's independence is widely regarded by historians as the single most symbolically important act of decolonization in this entire chapter, since British India had long been described as the "jewel in the crown" of the British Empire; its loss confirmed, more clearly than any other single event, that the age of large-scale formal European empire in Asia was ending, a conclusion reinforced a decade later by the Suez Crisis (Section 6.3) with respect to the Middle East.

In one line: Congress's nonviolent mass mobilisation and the Muslim League's hardening demand for a separate state made some form of division likely by the mid-1940s, but the catastrophic scale of violence – 10–15 million displaced, several hundred thousand to around two million dead (disputed) – resulted specifically from the compressed, poorly sequenced timetable of the 1947 transfer, not from partition itself being inevitable in that particular violent form.

Practice 6.2 – Evaluate essay

Question: Evaluate the reasons for the partition of British India in 1947 and assess its consequences.

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: Partition resulted from the interaction of an unresolved and deepening communal political conflict between the Congress and the Muslim League with a British government determined, for its own financial and strategic reasons, to withdraw extremely rapidly – and its human consequences (mass displacement and severe, though disputed, loss of life) were made significantly worse by the speed and poor preparation of that withdrawal.

Reason 1 – irreconcilable communal political demands: By the mid-1940s, Congress and the Muslim League had reached a genuine impasse: Congress wanted a single, unified independent India; the League, under Jinnah, insisted that Muslim interests could only be protected

in a separate state. Repeated constitutional negotiation attempts (including the 1946 Cabinet Mission Plan) failed to find a compromise acceptable to both sides.
Reason 2 – British urgency to withdraw: The postwar Attlee government judged continued British rule financially and militarily unsustainable, and growing communal violence and unreliable loyalty within Indian security forces (the February 1946 Royal Indian Navy mutiny is a specific, citable example) suggested that delay would only make an orderly transfer harder, not easier, pushing Mountbatten to accelerate rather than slow the timetable.
Reason 3 – the compressed, poorly prepared timetable: The interval between the Indian Independence Act (July 1947) and independence itself (14/15 August 1947) was only a matter of weeks, and the Radcliffe boundary line was not even published until after independence – an administrative failure that historians widely agree magnified, rather than merely accompanied, the violence that followed.
Consequences: An estimated 10–15 million people were displaced across the new Punjab and Bengal borders, and communal violence produced a death toll disputed between several hundred thousand and around two million; the two new states also inherited an unresolved territorial dispute over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, whose accession was contested by both India and Pakistan, seeding a rivalry between the two states that persisted for decades after 1947.
Conclusion: While British financial exhaustion (Section 6.1's general causes) explains why withdrawal happened when it did, the specific, catastrophic manner of partition is best explained by the combination of the Congress–League impasse and the compressed, underprepared British timetable – making this a case where the general causes of decolonization explain the "why" of independence but not the "how," and the "how" is what determined the scale of the human cost.

6.3 The Middle East: Palestine, Israel, and Suez

The Middle East after 1945 illustrates a decolonization story with an additional, distinctive complication not present in Sections 6.2, 6.4 or 6.5: two rival national movements – Zionism and Palestinian Arab nationalism – both claimed the same territory as the site of their own self-determination, and a wartime commitment made decades earlier by the withdrawing colonial power itself shaped the entire postwar outcome.

6.3.1 The Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate

On **2 November 1917**, in the midst of the First World War, the British government issued the **Balfour Declaration**, a public statement of support (in the form of a letter from Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to a prominent British Zionist leader) for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," while also stating that nothing should be done to prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine – a formulation that, from the outset, contained an unresolved internal tension between its two halves. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (which had ruled Palestine for centuries), the League of Nations formally awarded Britain the **Mandate for Palestine**, effective from 1922–23, under the postwar mandate system that placed former Ottoman and German territories under the "tutelage" of established powers pending eventual self-government. Britain thus governed Palestine for the following quarter-century under an international mandate that itself incorporated the Balfour Declaration's commitment to a Jewish national home, while simultaneously ruling over an Arab population that had received no comparable promise and increasingly viewed both British rule and Jewish immigration as a direct threat to their own claim to self-determination in the same territory.

6.3.2 The UN Partition Plan and the birth of Israel

By the end of the Second World War, Britain found the Mandate for Palestine ungovernable: Jewish immigration (driven partly by the catastrophe of the Holocaust in Europe), Arab resistance to that immigration, and armed conflict between Jewish and Arab paramilitary groups and against British forces had made continued British administration untenable, and Britain referred the problem to the newly formed United Nations. On **29 November 1947**, the UN General Assembly adopted **Resolution 181**, the **UN Partition Plan**, which proposed dividing Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, with the city of Jerusalem placed under a special international administration given its significance to three major religions. Jewish leaders in Palestine accepted the plan; Arab leaders in Palestine and the surrounding Arab states rejected it, viewing partition of Arab-majority territory as illegitimate.

As the British Mandate ended, Jewish leaders proclaimed the **State of Israel** on **14 May 1948**. The **1948 Arab-Israeli War** began immediately, as neighbouring Arab states invaded in support of Palestinian Arabs, and fighting continued until a series of **armistice agreements in 1949** left Israel in control of considerably more territory than the UN Partition Plan had originally allocated to it. The war produced an estimated **700,000 Palestinian Arabs** displaced from their homes, an event known in Palestinian and Arab historical memory as the **Nakba** ("catastrophe"), whose consequences – refugee status inherited across subsequent generations, and an unresolved territorial and political dispute – remained (and remain) at the centre of subsequent Arab-Israeli conflict for decades beyond the scope of this course.

6.3.3 Immediate consequences of the UN Partition Plan and the 1948 war

- **A different territorial outcome from the one the UN had proposed:** the armistice lines of 1949 left Israel in control of substantially more territory than Resolution 181 had allocated to the Jewish state, while no independent Arab Palestinian state was actually established in 1948 as the resolution had envisaged.
- **Mass Palestinian displacement (the Nakba):** an estimated 700,000 Palestinian Arabs became refugees, a displacement whose consequences – inherited refugee status across subsequent generations – remained unresolved for decades beyond the period covered in detail by this chapter.
- **An unresolved status for Jerusalem:** the city, which the UN Partition Plan had proposed placing under international administration given its significance to three major religions, instead ended the war divided between rival forces, with the internationalisation plan never implemented.

> **(!) Lỗi thường gặp:** Do not describe the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the 1956 Suez Crisis as though they were the same event. They are eight years apart, involve different combatants (1948: Israel against neighbouring Arab states; 1956: Israel, Britain and France against Egypt), and have different immediate causes (1948: the UN Partition Plan and rival national claims to Palestine; 1956: Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company). Keep the two crises, and their separate causes and consequences, clearly distinct in any essay.

Figure 6.3 — From the Balfour Declaration to the Suez Crisis: forty years of British involvement in Palestine and Egypt.

The mandate system

The **mandate system**, created after the First World War under the League of Nations, distributed the former colonial territories of the defeated Ottoman and German empires among the victorious Allied powers, ostensibly as a "sacred trust of civilisation" to prepare each territory for eventual self-government rather than as outright annexation. In practice, mandates (Palestine and Iraq under Britain; Syria and Lebanon under France, among others) functioned very similarly to conventional colonial rule, but the system's built-in promise of eventual self-government gave subsequent nationalist movements in these territories a specific, citable international legal argument for independence that colonies acquired by straightforward nineteenth-century conquest did not automatically possess in the same form.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Tuyên bố Balfour (2/11/1917) là văn kiện Anh ủng hộ việc thành lập "quê hương dân tộc" cho người Do Thái tại Palestine, đồng thời hứa không xâm phạm quyền của cộng đồng phi Do Thái tại đó – một mâu thuẫn nội tại xuất hiện ngay từ đầu. Anh cai trị Palestine theo chế độ Uỷ trị (Mandate) của Hội Quốc Liên từ 1922–23. Sau Thế chiến II, Liên Hợp Quốc thông qua Kế hoạch Phân chia Palestine (Nghị quyết 181, 29/11/1947), nhưng phía Ả Rập bác bỏ. Israel tuyên bố độc lập ngày 14/5/1948, dẫn đến Chiến tranh Ả Rập-Israel 1948 và khoảng 700.000 người Ả Rập Palestine phải di tản (sự kiện Nakba) – một trong những nguồn gốc sâu xa nhất của xung đột Trung Đông kéo dài đến ngày nay.

Practice 6.3 – OPCVL on the Balfour Declaration

Source (extract, 2 November 1917): "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." – Letter from British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to a prominent leader of the British Jewish community.

Identify the **Origin** and **Purpose** of this source, and discuss one **Value** and one **Limitation** it has for a historian studying the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: An official letter from the British Foreign Secretary, issued on behalf of the British government on 2 November 1917, during the First World War, addressed to a prominent leader of the British Jewish community.

Purpose: To publicly commit Britain to supporting the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, partly to secure Allied and Jewish diplomatic support during the ongoing war, while attempting simultaneously to reassure existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine that their rights would not be harmed.

Value: As the founding document of Britain's Palestine policy, later incorporated directly into the League of Nations Mandate (1922–23), it is of central value to a historian precisely because its own wording, and the wartime circumstances of its issue, directly shaped everything that followed – Jewish immigration under the Mandate, Arab objections, and the eventual UN Partition Plan of 1947 can each be traced back to the specific commitment made in this one document.

Limitation: As a single-page diplomatic letter written to satisfy competing wartime interests, it cannot be read as a carefully worked-out plan for Palestine's political future – its brief, general language (a "national home," rather than a defined state, alongside an equally brief promise not to prejudice "civil and religious rights") left exactly the kind of unresolved tension between Jewish and Arab claims that later proved impossible to reconcile through diplomacy alone.

Practice 6.4 – Examine essay

Question: Examine the reasons for the partition of Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: The 1948 outcome resulted from the interaction of a decades-old British wartime commitment (the Balfour Declaration), an unworkable British Mandate administration facing two incompatible national movements, and the failure of the UN's proposed compromise to secure acceptance from both sides.
Reason 1 – the Balfour Declaration and Mandate framework (1917–1948): Britain's 1917 commitment to a Jewish national home in Palestine, embedded into the League of Nations Mandate from 1922–23, created an international-legal foundation for Jewish national claims to the territory that no comparable document created for Palestinian Arab national claims, shaping the entire subsequent diplomatic framework.
Reason 2 – the collapse of British Mandate administration: By the mid-1940s, Jewish immigration (intensified by the Holocaust), Arab resistance, and violence from paramilitary groups on multiple sides made the Mandate ungovernable, and Britain referred the problem to the newly formed United Nations rather than continue administering it directly.
Reason 3 – the UN Partition Plan and its rejection by one side: The UN Partition Plan (Resolution 181, 29 November 1947) proposed a two-state division that Jewish leaders accepted and Arab leaders rejected, meaning the plan's failure to secure agreement from both parties left the territory's future to be decided by force rather than by the UN's own proposed compromise.
Reason 4 – the declaration of independence and immediate war: Israel's declaration of independence (14 May 1948) was followed immediately by invasion from neighbouring Arab states, and the resulting war (ending in 1949 armistice agreements) determined Israel's actual borders and the displacement of an estimated 700,000 Palestinian Arabs (the Nakba) through military outcome rather than through the UN's original partition boundaries.
Conclusion: 1948's outcome was shaped less by any single cause than by a chain of unresolved commitments and failed compromises stretching back three decades, each step (1917, 1922–23, 1947, 1948–49) narrowing the range of peaceful outcomes still available by the time the next stage was reached.

6.3.4 The Suez Crisis, 1956

Egypt, though formally independent since 1922 and fully so after the British military withdrawal from the Suez Canal Zone completed in 1956, remained deeply entangled with British and French strategic interests because of the Suez Canal, the vital shipping route linking the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, which had been owned and operated since the nineteenth century by the Suez Canal Company, a jointly British- and French-controlled enterprise. In **July 1956**, Egyptian President **Gamal Abdel Nasser** announced the **nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company**, intending to use canal revenues to help fund Egypt's own development (including, prominently, the Aswan High Dam project) after Britain and the United States withdrew an earlier offer of funding.

Nasser's move alarmed Britain and France, who viewed continued control of the canal as strategically vital, and alarmed Israel, which had separate security concerns about Egypt. The three states secretly coordinated a joint military response: **Israel launched an offensive into the Sinai Peninsula**

on 29 October 1956, providing the pretext for Britain and France to intervene militarily shortly afterward, ostensibly to "separate" the combatants and secure the canal but in practice to reassert control over it and, many historians argue, to remove Nasser from power. This coordinated **Israeli-British-French invasion of Egypt (October–November 1956)** achieved rapid military success on the ground, but provoked intense international opposition.

Crucially, both the **United States** and the **Soviet Union** – for once acting in the same direction, though for different Cold War reasons of their own – applied severe diplomatic and financial pressure demanding immediate withdrawal: the US, angered at not having been consulted and worried about the crisis pushing Arab opinion toward the Soviet bloc, threatened to withdraw financial support for the British pound; the USSR issued threats referencing its own military capability. Under this combined pressure, Britain and France withdrew their forces by **December 1956**, and Israel withdrew from Sinai by **March 1957**, once a newly created **United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF)** had been deployed to the border area to help stabilise the situation.

6.3.5 Consequences of the Suez Crisis

- **Confirmation of American and Soviet dominance:** for the first time since 1945, two former great imperial powers were forced into a publicly visible retreat by direct pressure from Washington and Moscow acting, on this occasion, in the same direction.
- **A boost to Nasser's prestige across the Arab world:** although Egypt had been militarily defeated on the ground by the Israeli, British and French forces, the diplomatic outcome – a full withdrawal of all three invading states – allowed Nasser to present the crisis as a political victory, strengthening his standing as a leading voice of Arab nationalism.
- **A domestic political cost for Britain:** Prime Minister Anthony Eden resigned shortly after the crisis, a direct sign of how damaging the episode was judged to be within British politics itself.
- **A signal to other independence movements:** the crisis demonstrated, to movements still fighting for independence elsewhere in 1956 (including the FLN in Algeria and the Mau Mau movement in Kenya, both examined in Section 6.4), that European colonial and post-colonial military power could be successfully resisted or reversed under the right combination of international pressure.

Model paragraph: ranking the significance of the Suez Crisis

A strong *to what extent* paragraph on Suez does not merely narrate the invasion; it ranks the crisis's significance against a stated criterion. For example: "The Suez Crisis of 1956 is best understood not primarily as a Middle Eastern regional conflict but as the moment that publicly confirmed a shift in global power that had already been under way since 1945: Britain and France discovered that they could no longer conduct a major military operation, even one aimed at a former colonial dependency, without the consent of Washington and Moscow. This matters more for the wider pattern of decolonization than the crisis's immediate military outcome, because it demonstrated to every other colonial power and every other nationalist movement watching – including those in Algeria and Kenya, whose independence struggles were still under way in 1956 – that the age of unilateral European imperial action had ended."

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Khủng hoảng Suez (1956): Tổng thống Ai Cập Nasser quốc hữu hoá Kênh đào Suez (7/1956). Israel tấn công bán đảo Sinai (29/10/1956), sau đó Anh và Pháp can thiệp quân sự. Tuy nhiên cả Mỹ lẫn Liên Xô đều gây áp lực buộc rút quân: Anh và Pháp rút vào tháng 12/1956, Israel rút khỏi Sinai vào tháng 3/1957 sau khi lực lượng gìn giữ hoà bình Liên Hợp Quốc (UNEF) được triển khai. Khủng hoảng Suez được xem là dấu mốc cho thấy Anh và Pháp không còn là cường quốc toàn cầu độc lập – mọi hành động quân sự lớn của họ giờ đây phụ thuộc vào sự chấp thuận (hoặc phản đối) của Mỹ và Liên Xô.

Practice 6.5 – OPCVL on a Middle East source

Source (paraphrased): An extract from a statement by British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, broadcast to the British public in early November 1956, defending the Anglo-French intervention in Egypt: "All my life I have been a man of peace ...working for reconciliation between nations. But I am utterly convinced that the action we have taken is right ...we have intervened to separate the combatants, to prevent a wider war, and to protect a waterway vital to the trade of the whole world."
Identify the **Origin** and **Purpose** of this source, and discuss one **Value** and one **Limitation** it has for a historian studying the Suez Crisis.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: A public radio broadcast statement by the serving British Prime Minister, made in early November 1956, immediately following the joint Israeli-British-French intervention in Egypt during the Suez Crisis.
Purpose: To justify the Anglo-French military intervention to a domestic and international audience as a peacekeeping and protective measure, at a moment when the operation was already attracting fierce criticism both at home and from the United States and the United Nations.
Value: As the public justification offered by the head of the government that ordered the intervention, it is directly valuable as evidence of the official pretext (separating combatants, protecting an international waterway) that Britain used to justify its actions, distinct from the private, coordinated plan with France and Israel that was only confirmed by historians later.
Limitation: As a piece of political self-justification delivered under intense external pressure, the statement cannot be taken as an accurate or complete account of the operation's real origin and purpose – it does not mention the secret prior coordination with France and Israel, and within weeks Eden's government was forced into a withdrawal that directly contradicted the confident tone of this statement, showing the gap between public justification and the operation's actual outcome.

Practice 6.6 – To what extent essay

Question: To what extent did the Suez Crisis of 1956 mark the end of Britain and France as independent global powers?

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: The Suez Crisis did not by itself strip Britain and France of great-power status, since both retained nuclear weapons programmes, permanent UN Security Council seats and residual colonial possessions after 1956, but it was a highly significant turning point in that it publicly and unambiguously demonstrated, for the first time since 1945, that neither power could act militarily against the wishes of both superpowers simultaneously – making 1956 the moment the reality of reduced power became undeniable even to domestic public opinion.
Argument for high significance: The forced withdrawal, achieved through direct American financial pressure and Soviet threats, was a public humiliation precisely because it exposed a gap between the two countries' self-image as global powers and their actual freedom of action; Eden's resignation as Prime Minister shortly afterward is itself evidence of how damaging the episode was perceived to be domestically.
Argument for limited/qualified significance: Britain and France continued to hold empire and to act with real (if more constrained) military and diplomatic power for years afterward – France fought on in Algeria for six more years after Suez (Section 6.4), and Britain continued a phased,

largely negotiated withdrawal from the rest of its empire over the following two decades rather than an immediate collapse.
Conclusion: Suez is best ranked as a decisive symbolic and psychological turning point – the moment the underlying reality of superpower-dominated Cold War bipolarity became too visible to ignore – rather than the literal end of British or French power, which continued in a reduced, increasingly negotiated form for years afterward.

In one line: Britain's own 1917 wartime commitment (Balfour) collided with an incompatible Arab national claim to the same territory, and neither the British Mandate nor the UN's 1947 compromise could reconcile the two – so 1948's borders were set by war rather than diplomacy; a decade later, Suez showed that Britain and France could no longer act militarily in the region without superpower consent, marking a symbolic turning point distinct from, but connected to, the wider pattern of decolonization traced throughout this chapter.

6.4 Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa produced, within a single generation, the largest number of newly independent states of any world region, but the manner of independence varied dramatically across the continent – from the rapid, largely peaceful transfer achieved in Ghana to the prolonged, extremely violent war fought in Algeria, and from the carefully staged British withdrawal from Kenya to the almost complete absence of preparation before Belgian withdrawal from the Congo. This variation is itself the central analytical question of the section, and is returned to directly in Section 6.7.

6.4.1 Contrasting colonial approaches to preparation

Britain and France, whatever the very real differences in how violently each withdrew from a specific territory (compare Ghana with Kenya, or French West Africa with Algeria), had each administered their African territories for many decades and had, by the 1950s, begun at least some preparation of local administrators, legislative councils and elected local government, even where that preparation was partial or came late. Belgium's approach to the Congo was distinctive in the near-total absence of any such preparation: at independence in 1960, the Congo had almost no Congolese university graduates and effectively no Congolese officers in its own security forces, a specific institutional vacuum that goes a long way toward explaining why the Congo Crisis unfolded so much faster and so much more catastrophically than any comparable crisis in a British or French territory.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Anh và Pháp, dù có sự khác biệt lớn về mức độ bạo lực khi rút lui khỏi từng thuộc địa cụ thể, đều đã cai trị các thuộc địa châu Phi của mình trong nhiều thập kỷ và ít nhiều có sự chuẩn bị (dù muộn hoặc chưa đầy đủ) về đội ngũ quản lý địa phương. Bỉ lại hoàn toàn khác biệt: gần như không chuẩn bị gì cho Congo – đến năm 1960, Congo gần như không có sinh viên tốt nghiệp đại học người Congo và không có sĩ quan người Congo nào trong lực lượng an ninh. Sự thiếu chuẩn bị mang tính thể chế này giải thích phần lớn lý do vì sao Khủng hoảng Congo bùng nổ nhanh và thảm khốc hơn hẳn so với các thuộc địa Anh hoặc Pháp.

6.4.2 Ghana: the model of negotiated transfer

The **Gold Coast**, under the leadership of **Kwame Nkrumah** and his **Convention People's Party (CPP)**, became independent as **Ghana** on **6 March 1957**, the **first sub-Saharan African colony to achieve independence** from European rule. Nkrumah had built the CPP into a genuine mass political organisation through a strategy he termed "positive action" – organised strikes, boycotts and civil disobedience combined with participation in British-supervised elections – persuading Britain that a negotiated, phased transfer of power to an elected local government was preferable to continued direct rule or a violent confrontation. Ghana's independence became an immediate model and inspiration across the rest of the continent: if the Gold Coast, one of Britain's wealthier and more developed West African colonies, could achieve independence through negotiation within a single decade of sustained nationalist pressure, other African nationalist movements had a concrete precedent to point to in their own negotiations with their own colonial powers.

- Ghana's success demonstrated that sustained, disciplined political organisation – rather than armed uprising – could produce a rapid, internationally recognised transfer of power, a lesson other movements across the continent explicitly cited.
- Nkrumah became an influential advocate of pan-African unity, and Ghana's independence is widely regarded by historians as the symbolic opening of the wave of African decolonization that followed over the next decade.
- Ghana's rapid timetable, achieved within roughly a decade of the CPP's founding, set a practical benchmark against which the pace of other British colonies' negotiations (including Kenya's, examined below) was subsequently measured.

6.4.3 Algeria: armed struggle against settler colonialism

Algeria represents the sharpest possible contrast with Ghana within this chapter, and the reason for that contrast is itself an important analytical point: Algeria was not simply a colony administered from France, but was legally treated as an integral part of metropolitan France itself, and was home to a very large population of European settlers (the *pieds-noirs*), who had lived in Algeria for generations and had no intention of accepting rule by the Arab and Berber majority. This combination – formal legal incorporation into the colonial power's own territory, plus a large, politically powerful settler population determined to resist – made a negotiated transfer of the Ghanaian type essentially impossible.

The **Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)** launched a coordinated armed uprising across Algeria beginning **1 November 1954**, an event subsequently referred to in FLN commemoration as "Toussaint Rouge" ("Red All Saints' Day"). The conflict escalated into a brutal guerrilla and counter-insurgency war, most infamously concentrated in the **Battle of Algiers (1956–57)**, in which French paratroopers used systematic mass arrest, interrogation and torture to dismantle the FLN's urban network in the capital, provoking international condemnation even as it achieved a degree of short-term French military success. The war dragged on for years, destabilised French domestic politics so severely that it contributed directly to the collapse of the Fourth French Republic and the return to power of Charles de Gaulle in 1958, and was finally ended through negotiation: the **Evian Accords**, signed **18 March 1962**, provided for a ceasefire and a referendum on Algerian self-determination, and Algeria became fully independent on **5 July 1962**.

Algeria's war demonstrated, to other settler populations watching closely, both that prolonged violent resistance to majority rule was possible and that it carried an enormous human and political cost for the colonial power attempting to suppress it – a lesson observed, within a decade, by the settler governments of Kenya and Rhodesia examined below.

Settler colonialism

A **settler colony** is one in which the colonial power's own citizens migrated to the territory in large, permanent numbers, developing deep economic and political roots there, rather than the colony being administered chiefly by a smaller, temporary class of officials. Settler colonies (Algeria under France; Kenya and Rhodesia under Britain, both discussed below) consistently proved far harder to decolonize peacefully than non-settler colonies (Ghana, Malaya), because the settler population itself – not only the metropolitan government – had a direct and often violently defended stake in resisting majority rule, adding an entire additional political actor to the negotiation that non-settler colonies simply did not have to satisfy.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Ghana (dưới Nkrumah, đảng CPP) trở thành thuộc địa châu Phi hạ Sahara đầu tiên độc lập (6/3/1957) qua con đường đàm phán hoà bình, trở thành hình mẫu cho cả châu lục. Ngược lại, Algeria bị Pháp coi là một phần lãnh thổ chính quốc và có một cộng đồng người Pháp định cư (pieds-noirs) rất đông và kiên quyết chống lại độc lập – đây là lý do then chốt khiến Algeria phải trải qua cuộc chiến vũ trang kéo dài (Mặt trận Giải phóng Dân tộc FLN nổi dậy từ 1/11/1954, Trận Algiers 1956–57) trước khi giành độc lập qua Hiệp định Evian (18/3/1962) và độc lập chính thức ngày 5/7/1962. Khái niệm **thuộc địa định cư (settler colony)** giải thích vì sao một số thuộc địa khó giành độc lập hoà bình hơn nhiều so với các thuộc địa khác.

Counter-insurgency

Counter-insurgency refers to the combined military, political and administrative methods a government uses to defeat an armed guerrilla or insurgent movement without fighting a conventional war against another state's regular army. Common counter-insurgency methods appearing repeatedly in this chapter include population resettlement (used in both Kenya and Malaya, below), mass detention of suspected supporters (Kenya), targeted political and economic reform offered alongside continued military pressure (Malaya, Section 6.5), and, in its most extreme and internationally condemned form, mass arrest, interrogation and torture (the Battle of Algiers, above). Comparing counter-insurgency methods across Algeria, Kenya and Malaya is a rewarding compare-and-contrast essay angle.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Chống nổi dậy (counter-insurgency) là các biện pháp quân sự, chính trị và hành chính kết hợp mà một chính quyền sử dụng để đánh bại một phong trào du kích/nổi dậy vũ trang mà không cần một cuộc chiến tranh quy ước. Các phương pháp lặp lại trong chương này gồm: tái định cư dân số (Kenya và Malaya), giam giữ hàng loạt người bị tình nghi (Kenya), cải cách chính trị – kinh tế song song với áp lực quân sự (Malaya), và ở mức cực đoan nhất, bắt giữ – thẩm vấn – tra tấn hàng loạt (Trận Algiers). So sánh các phương pháp chống nổi dậy giữa Algeria, Kenya và Malaya là một góc độ viết luận so sánh rất hay.

6.4.4 Kenya: the Mau Mau uprising

Kenya was also a settler colony, with a smaller but politically and economically dominant British settler population that had taken over some of the colony's most productive agricultural land, particularly in the fertile highlands, at the direct expense of the Kikuyu people. Deep-rooted **Kikuyu grievances over land dispossession**, combined with restricted political rights and worsening economic conditions for the African population, fed into the **Mau Mau uprising**, an armed insurgency that broke out in **1952** and continued until **1960**. Britain declared a formal **state of emergency** and conducted a harsh counter-insurgency campaign – including mass detention of suspected Mau Mau supporters and sympathisers in detention camps, a policy for which Britain later formally expressed regret and paid compensation to surviving victims. Although the military uprising itself was largely suppressed by the late 1950s, it fatally undermined settler confidence that colonial rule could continue indefinitely and accelerated British political willingness to negotiate a transfer of power; Kenya became independent on **12 December 1963** under its first Prime Minister (and shortly afterward President), **Jomo Kenyatta**, a nationalist leader who had himself been imprisoned by the British during the emergency on charges of managing Mau Mau, despite his own Kenya African National Union pursuing an ultimately negotiated, constitutional path to the actual transfer of power.

Kenya's transition set an important precedent for other British settler colonies: it showed that even a numerically small but economically powerful settler community could not indefinitely rely on British military backing once the political and financial cost of suppressing sustained resistance grew too high – a lesson watched closely, within a few years, by Rhodesia's white-minority government (examined below), which chose confrontation with Britain rather than negotiated majority rule specifically to try to avoid Kenya's outcome.

6.4.5 The Belgian Congo and the Congo Crisis

The Belgian Congo represents the most poorly prepared and most immediately catastrophic case of decolonization covered in this chapter. Belgium had invested almost nothing in developing an educated African administrative or professional class capable of running an independent state, and then, facing sudden and unexpected nationalist unrest, granted independence with almost no transition period at all: the Congo became independent on **30 June 1960** under Prime Minister **Patrice Lumumba**.

Within days of independence, the new state began to collapse. The mineral-rich southeastern province of **Katanga**, under provincial leader **Moise Tshombe** and with covert support from Belgian business and military interests keen to protect their mining investments, declared secession from the Congo in **July 1960**. The United Nations authorised a large peacekeeping mission, **ONUC** (Opération des Nations Unies au Congo), to help restore order and Congolese territorial integrity, but the crisis rapidly became entangled in Cold War rivalry: Lumumba, frustrated by the slow pace of Western and UN support against the Katangan secession, appealed to the Soviet Union for assistance, immediately raising Western fears (particularly American fears) that the Congo – a territory of major strategic mineral wealth in the heart of Africa – might fall into the Soviet orbit. Lumumba was removed from office, taken into custody, and **assassinated on 17 January 1961**, in circumstances involving Congolese rival politicians, Katangan secessionist forces, and covert Belgian and Western intelligence involvement – a killing that has come to symbolise, for many historians, the direct, lethal cost that Cold War great-power interference could impose on newly independent states. The Katangan secession itself was ended by UN military action by **January 1963**, but the underlying instability persisted through further years of political crisis until army chief **Mobutu Sese Seko** seized power in a **coup in November 1965**, establishing a long authoritarian rule.

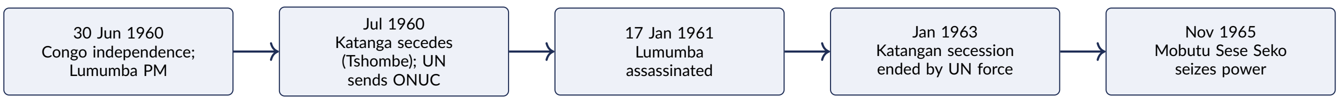


Figure 6.4 — The Congo Crisis, 1960–1965: from independence to Mobutu's coup, illustrating how quickly a poorly prepared transition collapsed into Cold War-entangled civil conflict.

- **A lasting precedent for UN peacekeeping:** ONUC was, at the time, one of the largest and most complex peacekeeping operations the UN had ever attempted, and the crisis shaped how the UN approached later peacekeeping missions involving fragile, newly independent states.
- **A stark demonstration of the Cold War proxy pattern:** the speed with which a purely domestic secession crisis became entangled with Belgian business interests, Soviet outreach and Western covert action made the Congo the clearest single illustration, in this chapter, of the neo-colonialism problem examined in full in Section 6.6.
- **Long-term authoritarian rule:** the instability that followed Lumumba's assassination was ultimately resolved not by a return to the pluralistic system envisaged at independence but by Mobutu's 1965 coup and the long, centralised rule that followed it.

Practice 6.7 – OPCVL / examine on the Congo Crisis

Source (paraphrased): An extract from a July 1960 telegram from Patrice Lumumba to the United Nations Secretary-General, appealing for urgent UN military assistance against Belgian troops that had re-intervened in the Congo and against the Katangan secession: "The Congo is the victim of external aggression ...I request the urgent dispatch by the United Nations of

military assistance ...this action is imperatively necessary ...not only to protect our national security but for the peace of the world."
Using this source and your own knowledge, examine the reasons why the Congo Crisis became entangled in Cold War rivalry so soon after independence.

Lời giải chi tiết

Using the source: Lumumba's telegram shows a Congolese leader, only weeks after independence, already forced to appeal to an international body for military help against both a former colonial power's continued interference (Belgian troops) and an internal secessionist movement (Katanga) – evidence that the new state lacked the internal capacity to manage its own crisis and was compelled to seek outside patrons almost immediately, precisely the vulnerability that let Cold War rivalry take hold so fast.
Own knowledge – reason 1 (institutional unpreparedness): Belgium's near-total failure to train a Congolese administrative, military or professional class before independence meant the new state had almost no capacity to respond to the Katangan secession or the accompanying army mutiny without outside assistance, creating an opening that outside powers were quick to exploit.
Own knowledge – reason 2 (Katanga's mineral wealth and Belgian/Western business interests): Katanga held the Congo's most valuable mineral deposits, and Belgian mining interests (with tacit Western support) had a direct financial stake in Katangan secession succeeding, immediately internationalising what might otherwise have been treated as a purely domestic constitutional dispute.
Own knowledge – reason 3 (Lumumba's appeal to the USSR and the resulting Western reaction): When UN and Western support against Katanga seemed too slow, Lumumba's approach to Moscow for assistance triggered exactly the fear – a Soviet foothold in the mineral-rich centre of Africa – that turned a domestic secession crisis into a Cold War flashpoint and, most historians agree, contributed directly to the Western and Congolese rival factions' decision to remove and then kill him in January 1961.
Conclusion: The Congo Crisis became a Cold War proxy conflict not because either superpower had originally sought a foothold there, but because Belgium's total lack of preparation created a power vacuum that domestic secessionists, foreign business interests and, ultimately, both superpowers rushed to fill – making the Congo the starkest illustration in this chapter of how quickly a newly independent state's *domestic* weakness could be converted into an *international* Cold War battleground.

6.4.6 The Nigeria–Biafra War, 1967–1970

Nigeria's independence in 1960 inherited, in an especially acute form, one of the central structural problems examined further in Section 6.6: colonial-era borders that grouped together major ethnic and regional communities (broadly, the Hausa-Fulani north, the Yoruba southwest, and the Igbo southeast) with very different political, religious and economic profiles, inside a single artificial state. Regional and ethnic tension, exacerbated by a series of military coups and a violent backlash against the Igbo community in the north, led the Igbo-majority southeastern region to declare independence as the **Republic of Biafra** under **Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu** in **May 1967**. The Nigerian federal government refused to accept the secession and fought a war to reunify the country; the resulting **Nigerian Civil War** lasted until **January 1970**, when Biafra surrendered. The human cost was severe, driven above all by a blockade that produced mass starvation in Biafran territory, but the precise death toll is another figure genuinely disputed among historians, with commonly cited estimates ranging from roughly **one to three million** deaths, the great majority attributed to starvation and disease rather than direct combat. The war's end in January 1970 was followed by a federal policy of reconciliation rather than reprisal, summarised at the time by the Nigerian government's own slogan of "no victor, no vanquished," aimed at reintegrating the defeated region into the federation rather than punishing it further – a marked contrast with the Congo's continued instability after its own 1960s crisis.

6.4.7 Rhodesia and Zimbabwe

Southern Rhodesia (a self-governing British colony with a substantial white settler population, though never formally annexed as an integral part of Britain in the way Algeria had been for France) followed a path that combined elements of both the negotiated and armed-struggle models. As Britain moved toward requiring Black-majority rule as a condition for full independence elsewhere in Africa, Rhodesia's white-minority government under Prime Minister **Ian Smith** rejected that condition outright and issued a **Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI)** on **11 November 1965**, explicitly to preserve white-minority rule rather than accept the principle of majority rule that Britain and the wider international community by then insisted on. Britain and the international community refused to recognise the Smith regime, and through the 1970s two rival African nationalist guerrilla movements – **ZANU**, led by **Robert Mugabe**, and **ZAPU**, led by **Joshua Nkomo** – fought an escalating guerrilla war against the Rhodesian government. International economic sanctions, the military and political costs of the guerrilla war, and shifting regional circumstances eventually forced the Smith government to the negotiating table: the **Lancaster House Agreement**, concluded in London in **December 1979**, established a new constitution and a transition to internationally supervised elections, and **Zimbabwe** became independent on **18 April 1980**, with **Robert Mugabe** as its first Prime Minister. Zimbabwe's independence ended the last major settler-colony conflict examined in this chapter, and Mugabe's initial government pursued a policy of reconciliation with both the white minority population and Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU movement, though later political developments in Zimbabwe lie beyond the scope of this course.

Country	Colonial power / context	Key leader(s) / movement	Method	Independence
Ghana	Britain (Gold Coast)	Kwame Nkrumah, CPP	Negotiated transfer	6 Mar 1957
Algeria	France (settler colony, legally part of France)	FLN	Armed struggle	5 Jul 1962
Kenya	Britain (settler colony)	Mau Mau; Jomo Kenyatta, KANU	Armed uprising, then negotiated transfer	12 Dec 1963
Congo	Belgium	Patrice Lumumba	Rapid, unprepared negotiated transfer, followed by crisis	30 Jun 1960
Nigeria (Biafra)	Britain	Odumegwu Ojukwu (Biafran secession)	Civil war within an already-independent state	War ended Jan 1970
Rhodesia / Zimbabwe	Britain (large settler population)	Ian Smith (UDI); ZANU (Mugabe), ZAPU (Nkomo)	Settler UDI, then guerrilla war, then negotiation	18 Apr 1980

Table 6.1 — Six African independence case studies compared: colonial context, method and date. Note that Kenya and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe each combine more than one method in sequence – a useful point for compare-and-contrast

essays.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not treat "settler colony" as applying to every African case in this chapter. Ghana, the Congo and Nigeria did *not* have large permanent European settler populations, and their transitions (and, in Nigeria's case, its subsequent civil war) must be explained by other factors – nationalist organisation, institutional preparation, and colonial-era borders, respectively – not by settler resistance, which is specific to Algeria, Kenya and Rhodesia only.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not confuse Kenya's Mau Mau uprising (1952–60, against British colonial rule, ending with a negotiated transfer to Kenyatta in 1963) with Rhodesia's guerrilla war (1970s, against a white-minority *settler* government that had itself unilaterally declared independence *from* Britain in 1965). In Kenya, Britain was still the colonial ruler being fought; in Rhodesia, Britain had refused to recognise the very regime the guerrillas were fighting. Getting the target of the armed struggle backwards is one of the most common errors in African decolonization essays.

Practice 6.8 – Compare and contrast essay

Question: Compare and contrast the methods used to achieve independence in Ghana and Algeria.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: Both Ghana and Algeria were led by organised nationalist parties (the CPP and the FLN respectively) that mobilised mass domestic support against continued European rule; both cases occurred within the broader postwar climate of colonial-power exhaustion and rising international pressure for self-determination described in Section 6.1; and both ultimately achieved formal, internationally recognised independence rather than being permanently suppressed.

Difference 1 – presence of a settler population: Ghana had no significant permanent European settler population with a rival claim to the territory, so British withdrawal chiefly required negotiating with a single local nationalist movement; Algeria's large *pieds-noirs* population, deeply entrenched and politically influential in France itself, meant French withdrawal required overcoming domestic French resistance as well as Algerian nationalist demands.

Difference 2 – legal and constitutional status: The Gold Coast was administered as an ordinary British colony, which Britain's own postwar policy already anticipated moving toward self-government; Algeria was legally treated as part of metropolitan France, making its "loss" politically comparable, in French domestic politics, to losing part of France itself, and therefore far harder for any French government to concede without a fight.

Difference 3 – method and cost: Ghana's independence followed a decade of largely peaceful "positive action" (strikes, boycotts, electoral participation) culminating in negotiated transfer with negligible loss of life; Algeria's independence followed nearly eight years of armed conflict (1954–62), including the Battle of Algiers, with a French domestic political crisis severe enough to topple the Fourth Republic, and a death toll vastly larger than Ghana's transition.

Conclusion: The decisive variable distinguishing the two cases is not the strength of nationalist organisation (both were highly organised) but the presence or absence of a large, entrenched settler population and the territory's legal status in the eyes of the colonial power – precisely the two factors identified as central in Section 6.7's comparative analysis of decolonization methods across this chapter.

Practice 6.9 – To what extent essay

Question: To what extent was the Nigeria–Biafra War (1967–1970) a direct consequence of colonial-era border-making?

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: Colonial-era borders created the underlying structural condition that made large-scale ethnic conflict possible in independent Nigeria, but the war itself was triggered by specific postcolonial political failures – military coups and violent ethnic backlash in the years immediately after independence – so colonial border-making should be ranked as a necessary background cause rather than the immediate, sufficient cause of the war.
Evidence for colonial borders as a major cause: British colonial administration grouped the Hausa-Fulani north, Yoruba southwest and Igbo southeast – communities with distinct religious, political and economic traditions and little history of shared self-government – into a single state purely for British administrative convenience, without regard to whether the resulting federation could function cohesively once colonial authority was removed (the same general problem discussed for the whole continent in Section 6.6).
Evidence for immediate postcolonial triggers: The war was directly triggered not by the borders themselves but by a sequence of specific postcolonial events – a series of military coups in the mid-1960s and a violent backlash against Igbo civilians living in northern Nigeria – that convinced Igbo political leaders under Ojukwu that federal Nigeria could no longer guarantee their safety, leading to the Biafran declaration of independence in May 1967.
Consequence: The federal government's determination to prevent secession, and the resulting war (ending in Biafran surrender, January 1970), produced a humanitarian catastrophe centred on starvation under blockade, with widely disputed estimates of between roughly one and three million deaths.
Conclusion: Colonial border-making is best ranked as the deep, structural precondition without which the specific 1966–67 political crisis could not have escalated into full civil war along these particular ethnic lines, but the war's actual outbreak depended on a distinct, more immediate chain of postcolonial political failures that colonial officials could not have directly controlled from decades earlier.

Practice 6.10 – OPCVL on Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence

Source (extract, 11 November 1965): "We have struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilization and Christianity ...I am confident that we will not be found wanting." – Radio broadcast by Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith, announcing the Unilateral Declaration of Independence.
Identify the **Origin** and **Purpose** of this source, and discuss one **Value** and one **Limitation** it has for a historian studying the causes of the Rhodesian conflict.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: A public radio broadcast by Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith, delivered on 11 November 1965, the same day his government unilaterally declared independence from Britain.
Purpose: To justify the UDI to Rhodesia's white-minority population and to the wider world as a principled, necessary act, framing continued white-minority rule as a defence of civilisation rather than as resistance to majority rule.
Value: As the public justification offered by the head of the government that issued the UDI, it is directly valuable as evidence of how Rhodesia's white-minority government wished its

own action to be understood – as a defensive, principled stand rather than as an act taken specifically to avoid the Black-majority rule that Britain and the wider international community had come to require as a condition of full independence elsewhere in Africa.
Limitation: As a piece of political self-justification aimed at a domestic settler audience, it says nothing about the perspective of Rhodesia's Black majority, whose exclusion from political power was the entire reason Britain refused to recognise the declaration, and cannot be used as evidence of the causes or conduct of the guerrilla war fought against the Smith government through the 1970s by ZANU and ZAPU.

In one line: Across all six African cases in this section, the single clearest predictor of a peaceful, negotiated transfer (Ghana) versus a prolonged armed struggle (Algeria, Kenya, Rhodesia) or an unprepared collapse (the Congo) was not British versus French versus Belgian colonial policy in general, but the specific combination of settler presence, strategic or economic value, and the depth of institutional preparation in each individual territory.

6.5 Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia offers a third distinctive regional pattern: in every case examined here, the Japanese wartime occupation (1941–45) itself, rather than only the postwar international climate described in Section 6.1, played a direct and immediate role in shaping how independence was declared and fought for, because Japan's occupation had already destroyed the prewar image of European colonial invincibility years before the war even ended.

6.5.1 Vietnam and the First Indochina War

Vietnam's nationalist movement, led by the communist Viet Minh under Ho Chi Minh, had organised resistance against both the wartime Japanese occupation and the returning French colonial administration, and declared Vietnamese independence in September 1945 – a declaration France refused to recognise. The resulting **First Indochina War (1946–1954)** pitted French colonial forces, seeking to restore full control over French Indochina, against the Viet Minh's increasingly capable regular and guerrilla forces. The war ended decisively with the French military defeat at the **Battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954**, in which a French garrison in a remote valley was surrounded, besieged and ultimately overwhelmed by Viet Minh forces – a defeat that shattered French political will to continue the war. The subsequent **Geneva Accords (July 1954)** ended direct French involvement and **temporarily divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel**, pending elections intended to reunify the country – elections that in fact never took place, setting the stage for the further, deeper Cold War conflict in Vietnam covered in the Cold War unit of this course.

- The 1954 division at the 17th parallel, intended by the Geneva Accords as strictly temporary, became the starting line for a much longer and more destructive war once the promised reunification elections failed to take place.
- France's withdrawal from Vietnam removed the original colonial power from the conflict but did not end outside involvement, since the vacuum it left was rapidly filled by growing American and Soviet-bloc support for the two rival Vietnamese governments.
- Dien Bien Phu became, alongside Suez two years later, one of the two clearest mid-1950s demonstrations that a European colonial power could be decisively defeated, reinforcing the wider pattern of accelerating decolonization traced throughout this chapter.

6.5.2 Indonesia and the National Revolution

Indonesian nationalist leaders **Sukarno** and **Mohammad Hatta** declared Indonesian independence on **17 August 1945**, within days of Japan's surrender and while the Dutch colonial authorities who had been displaced by Japan's 1942 occupation had not yet returned to reassert control. The Netherlands refused to accept this declaration and attempted to restore full colonial rule, leading to the **Indonesian National Revolution (1945–1949)**, a mixture of guerrilla warfare, conventional military campaigns (including two major Dutch "police actions" intended to crush the Republic) and, increasingly, international diplomatic pressure – including direct pressure from the United States, which threatened to withhold Marshall Plan aid from the Netherlands unless it ended the conflict. Following the **Round Table Conference**, the Netherlands formally recognised Indonesian sovereignty in **December 1949**, ending over three centuries of Dutch colonial presence in the archipelago. Indonesia's revolution left the new republic to build a single unified state out of an enormous and diverse archipelago of thousands of islands and hundreds of ethnic and linguistic groups, a challenge of national integration distinct from, but comparable in scale to, the challenges facing newly independent African states examined in Section 6.6.

6.5.3 Malaya and the Malayan Emergency

British Malaya presents a case that combines an armed insurgency with an ultimately negotiated, rather than revolutionary, transfer of power. The **Malayan Emergency (1948–1960)** was a communist insurgency led by the **Malayan Communist Party (MCP)** under **Chin Peng**, drawing chiefly on the ethnic Chinese community and on guerrilla fighters who had themselves gained combat experience resisting the wartime Japanese occupation; the insurgents aimed to overthrow British colonial rule and establish a communist state. Crucially, however, the MCP's goal of full-scale revolution was never the same movement that ultimately negotiated Malayan independence: Britain fought a sustained and eventually successful counter-insurgency campaign (combining military operations with population resettlement and political and economic reform) against the MCP, while simultaneously negotiating a separate, peaceful transfer of power with mainstream, non-communist Malayan nationalist politicians. **Malaya became independent on 31 August 1957** under its first Prime Minister, **Tunku Abdul Rahman**, even as the counter-insurgency campaign against the MCP continued for several more years until the Emergency was formally declared over in 1960. The combination of population resettlement, targeted reform and negotiated politics used in Malaya was later studied closely by other governments facing colonial-era insurgencies elsewhere, and Malaya's experience is frequently cited alongside Kenya's (Section 6.4) as an example of a counter-insurgency campaign that ran in parallel with, rather than against, an eventual negotiated transfer of sovereignty.

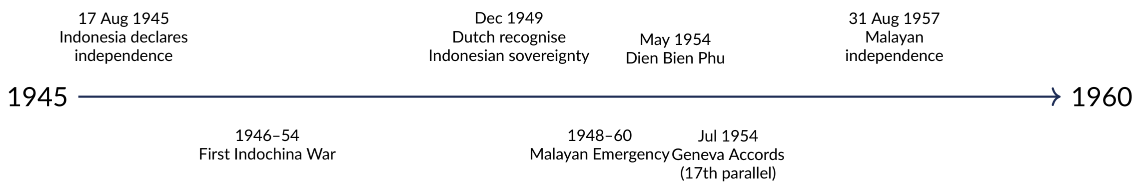


Figure 6.5 — Southeast Asian decolonization, 1945–1960: Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaya compared on a shared timeline.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Ba trường hợp Đông Nam Á cho thấy ba con đường khác nhau. Việt Nam: Việt Minh kháng chiến chống Pháp trong Chiến tranh Đông Dương lần 1 (1946–54), Pháp thua quyết định tại Điện Biên Phủ (5/1954), Hiệp định Geneva (7/1954) tạm thời chia Việt Nam tại vĩ tuyến 17. Indonesia: Sukarno và Hatta tuyên bố độc lập ngay sau khi Nhật đầu hàng (17/8/1945), trải qua Cách mạng Quốc gia Indonesia (1945–49) chống lại việc Hà Lan quay lại, Hà Lan công nhận chủ quyền Indonesia vào tháng 12/1949. Malaya: cuộc nổi dậy cộng sản của Đảng Cộng sản Malaya (dưới Chin Peng) trong Tình trạng Khẩn cấp Malaya (1948–60) diễn ra song song nhưng KHÔNG đồng nhất với quá trình đàm phán độc lập hoà bình dẫn đến độc lập ngày 31/8/1957 dưới Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Country	Colonial power	Key leader(s) / movement	Method	Independence
Vietnam	France	Ho Chi Minh, Viet Minh	Armed struggle	Divided 1954 (Geneva Accords)
Indonesia	Netherlands	Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta	Armed struggle + diplomacy	Recognised Dec 1949
Malaya	Britain	Tunku Abdul Rahman; MCP (Chin Peng) separately	Negotiated transfer, alongside a separate anti-communist war	31 Aug 1957

Table 6.2 — Three Southeast Asian independence case studies compared: colonial power, method and date.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not write that Vietnam's war was a Cold War proxy conflict from its very beginning. The First Indochina War (1946–1954) began as an anti-colonial war between the Viet Minh and France; deep Cold War-driven American and Soviet-bloc involvement developed alongside and after this conflict (Section 6.7 discusses exactly this distinction), not before it.

Practice 6.11 – OPCVL on Vietnam's Declaration of Independence

Source (extract, 2 September 1945): "All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness ...for more than eighty years, the French imperialists ...have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow-citizens." – Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, read publicly by Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi.
Identify the **Origin** and **Purpose** of this source, and discuss one **Value** and one **Limitation** it has for a historian studying the origins of the First Indochina War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: A public declaration read by Ho Chi Minh, leader of the Viet Minh, in Hanoi in September 1945, immediately after Japan's surrender ended its wartime occupation of Vietnam.
Purpose: To announce Vietnamese independence to a domestic and international audience, and to frame that independence in language deliberately borrowed from the American and French revolutionary traditions, in the hope of attracting international, and especially American, sympathy and recognition.
Value: As the founding statement of the movement that would go on to fight and win the First Indochina War, it is directly valuable as evidence of how the Viet Minh wished to present its cause internationally in 1945 – as a universal struggle for self-determination comparable to the American and French revolutions, rather than purely as a communist movement, broadening its potential appeal at the moment of Japan's surrender and France's uncertain return.
Limitation: As a declaration made unilaterally, without French agreement and before any negotiation had taken place, it cannot be read as evidence that France would accept Vietnamese independence – France's refusal to recognise this declaration is precisely what triggered the First Indochina War (1946–1954), showing the gap between a nationalist movement's own declared aspirations and the colonial power's actual response.

Practice 6.12 – Examine essay

Question: Examine the reasons for the French defeat in the First Indochina War (1946–1954).

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: While France's own political and military weaknesses contributed to the defeat, the decisive factor was the Viet Minh's combination of disciplined political organisation, effective guerrilla-to-conventional military transition, and an ability to sustain a long war of attrition that French domestic politics could not match.
Reason 1 – Viet Minh political organisation and legitimacy: The Viet Minh had already built genuine nationwide political infrastructure and popular legitimacy through its wartime resistance to Japanese occupation, giving it a head start in mobilising rural support that French colonial administration, freshly returned after the war, could not easily counter.
Reason 2 – military strategy and the battle of Dien Bien Phu: Viet Minh commander Vo Nguyen Giap's decision to mass conventional artillery and troops around the isolated French garrison at Dien Bien Phu, rather than relying solely on guerrilla tactics, directly produced the decisive French defeat of May 1954, showing the Viet Minh's capacity to shift successfully from irregular to conventional warfare when the moment was right.
Reason 3 – French domestic political will: France, still recovering from wartime occupation and facing separate colonial pressures elsewhere (including the developing crisis in Algeria after 1954), had limited domestic political appetite for an expensive, distant colonial war with no clear victory in sight, and Dien Bien Phu broke what political will remained.
Conclusion: Ranking these causes, the Viet Minh's organisational and military effectiveness should be placed above French domestic exhaustion, because a militarily weaker or less well-organised nationalist movement facing the same tired, overstretched French government would not have been able to inflict a defeat as total and decisive as Dien Bien Phu.

Practice 6.13 – Compare and contrast essay

Question: Compare and contrast the processes of decolonization in Indonesia and Malaya.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: Both territories experienced Japanese wartime occupation that undermined the prewar image of European colonial control; both saw armed movements (the Indonesian Republic's forces; the Malayan Communist Party) contest the colonial power's return or continuation of rule; and both processes concluded with the colonial power formally and peacefully transferring sovereignty rather than fighting to the complete military defeat of every nationalist actor.
Difference 1 – unity of the nationalist movement: In Indonesia, Sukarno and Hatta's declaration of independence (17 August 1945) represented a single, broadly unified nationalist leadership that the Netherlands ultimately had to negotiate with directly; in Malaya, the armed insurgency (the MCP under Chin Peng) and the movement that actually negotiated independence (mainstream Malayan nationalist politicians under Tunku Abdul Rahman) were two entirely separate and mutually hostile movements, so Britain fought one and negotiated with the other simultaneously.
Difference 2 – the colonial power's response: The Netherlands attempted outright military reconquest of Indonesia (the "police actions") before being forced by international and especially American pressure to recognise Indonesian sovereignty in December 1949; Britain in Malaya never attempted to deny independence itself, but instead fought a sustained counter-insurgency (1948–60) specifically against the communist insurgency while negotiating a sep-

arate constitutional path to independence, granted in 1957 while the Emergency was still technically continuing.
Difference 3 – international dimension: Indonesia's independence struggle was resolved chiefly through decolonization-era diplomatic pressure (the US threat to Marshall Plan aid); Malaya's Emergency was explicitly framed by Britain as a Cold War anti-communist campaign, linking it more directly to the broader Cold War containment framework than Indonesia's revolution.
Conclusion: Both achieved independence at a broadly similar point (1949 and 1957 respectively) and both combined force with diplomacy, but Indonesia's story is fundamentally one nationalist movement against one colonial power, while Malaya's is two entirely separate contests – an anti-communist war and a constitutional negotiation – running in parallel.

In one line: Japan's wartime occupation (1941–45) discredited European colonial rule across Southeast Asia before the Second World War had even ended, but the three colonial powers responded very differently – France fought and lost a war to reimpose control (Vietnam), the Netherlands fought and then negotiated under international pressure (Indonesia), and Britain negotiated a transfer of power while separately fighting a distinct communist insurgency (Malaya) – confirming, once again, that the specific response of the individual colonial power mattered more than any single regional pattern.

6.6 Challenges facing newly independent states

Achieving formal independence, as almost every case study in this chapter demonstrates, did not by itself resolve the underlying structural problems that colonial rule had created or left behind. This section examines four recurring challenges and the collective international response that many newly independent states pursued together.

6.6.1 Artificial colonial borders

Many of the boundaries inherited by newly independent African and Middle Eastern states were drawn not according to existing ethnic, linguistic or political communities, but according to the convenience and rival claims of the European powers that drew them – a pattern traceable directly to the **Berlin Conference of 1884–85**, at which European powers divided up claims to African territory among themselves with negligible regard for existing African political or ethnic boundaries. Nigeria's inheritance of this problem, and its direct contribution to the Nigeria–Biafra War, is examined in Section 6.4; the same underlying issue – a colonial border cutting across, rather than following, existing communities – recurs across the continent and helps explain why so many postcolonial states struggled with internal cohesion in their first decades of independence.

- Borders were drawn chiefly to settle rival European claims to territory, following rivers, latitude lines or negotiated compromises between colonial powers, rather than any survey of existing African political or linguistic communities.
- A single new colonial territory frequently contained multiple, sometimes historically rival, ethnic or linguistic groups with no prior tradition of shared self-government, as Nigeria's grouping of Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo communities illustrates (Section 6.4).
- Conversely, some existing pre-colonial political or ethnic communities were split across two or more different colonial territories, separating people who had previously shared a common political system under different post-independence governments entirely.

6.6.2 Economic dependency and neo-colonialism

Formal political independence frequently left the economic structures established under colonial rule largely intact: many newly independent states remained dependent on exporting a narrow range of raw materials or agricultural commodities to their former colonial ruler, on foreign-owned firms controlling key industries (mining in the case of Katanga's secession, discussed in Section 6.4, being an especially direct example), and on aid, loans and technical assistance from the same powers that had until recently ruled them directly. Kwame Nkrumah – the same leader whose Ghana had provided the model of negotiated independence in Section 6.4 – gave this problem its lasting name in his **1965 book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism***, arguing that a state could be formally sovereign, with its own flag, government and UN seat, while its economic and political direction remained effectively controlled from outside by former colonial powers or by new external actors (including the Cold War superpowers themselves).

Neo-colonialism

Neo-colonialism, a term coined by Kwame Nkrumah in his 1965 book of that subtitle, describes the continued economic and political domination of a formally independent state by external powers, exercised through economic dependency, foreign ownership of key industries and resources, conditional aid and loans, and foreign backing of favoured local political factions, rather than through direct colonial administration. It is the concept that connects Section 6.1's earlier point about both Cold War superpowers competing to control the political direction of newly independent states (rather than simply opposing colonialism outright) with the specific postcolonial economic and political vulnerabilities examined in this section.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Nhiều biên giới thuộc địa được vẽ ra tại Hội nghị Berlin (1884–85) mà không hề quan tâm đến ranh giới sắc tộc hay ngôn ngữ thực tế, để lại di sản chia rẽ nội bộ cho nhiều quốc gia châu Phi sau độc lập (ví dụ Nigeria, Mục 6.4). Bên cạnh đó, nhiều quốc gia mới độc lập vẫn phụ thuộc kinh tế vào cường quốc thực dân cũ – hiện tượng mà Nkrumah gọi là **chủ nghĩa thực dân kiểu mới (neo-colonialism)** trong cuốn sách năm 1965 của ông: độc lập về hình thức (có cờ, chính phủ, ghế tại Liên Hợp Quốc) nhưng vẫn bị chi phối về kinh tế và chính trị từ bên ngoài.

6.6.3 Mechanisms of neo-colonialism in practice

- **Trade dependency:** many newly independent states continued to export a narrow range of raw materials or agricultural commodities largely to their former colonial ruler, leaving export earnings vulnerable to price decisions made in foreign markets rather than at home.
- **Foreign ownership of key industries:** mining, plantation agriculture and other capital-intensive sectors often remained substantially foreign-owned even after political independence, meaning profits from a newly independent state's own natural resources frequently continued to flow abroad.
- **Conditional aid and loans:** development aid, loans and technical assistance from former colonial powers or new Cold War patrons often came with political or economic conditions attached, giving outside powers continued leverage over a formally sovereign government's policy choices.
- **External backing of favoured local factions:** as the Congo Crisis illustrates most starkly (Section 6.4), outside powers were often willing to support, fund or arm whichever local political faction best served their own strategic or economic interests, rather than treating a new state's internal politics as a purely domestic matter.

6.6.4 Cold War proxy conflicts and military coups

Proxy conflict

A **proxy conflict** is a conflict in which two or more outside powers pursue their own strategic rivalry indirectly, by supporting opposing local factions rather than fighting each other directly. The Congo Crisis (below) is the clearest proxy conflict examined in detail in this chapter, though the pattern recurred, beyond this chapter's detailed scope, in Cold War-era conflicts in Angola and Mozambique after 1975. A conflict only becomes a genuine Cold War proxy conflict once outside powers are actively backing rival local factions – simply happening *during* the Cold War is not, by itself, sufficient evidence of this.

VN GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

Xung đột uỷ nhiệm (proxy conflict) là xung đột mà các cường quốc bên ngoài theo đuổi sự cạnh tranh chiến lược của riêng họ một cách gián tiếp, bằng cách hậu thuẫn các phe phái địa phương đối lập thay vì trực tiếp giao chiến với nhau. Khủng hoảng Congo là ví dụ rõ ràng nhất trong chương này. Lưu ý: một xung đột chỉ thực sự là "xung đột uỷ nhiệm" khi có bằng chứng các cường quốc bên ngoài chủ động hậu thuẫn các phe phái địa phương đối lập – chỉ đơn thuần xảy ra TRONG thời kỳ Chiến tranh Lạnh không đủ để kết luận đó là xung đột uỷ nhiệm.

As the Congo Crisis (Section 6.4) demonstrates in unusually stark and rapid form, newly independent states' internal political weaknesses frequently created openings that Cold War rivalry then filled, converting domestic political disputes into superpower-backed proxy conflicts – a pattern that recurred, beyond the direct scope of this chapter's detailed case studies, in later conflicts such as the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique after their own independence from Portugal in 1975. Alongside this external vulnerability, the first decades of independence across much of Africa and parts of Asia were also marked by a strikingly high frequency of **military coups**, as newly created, often under-resourced political institutions – frequently inherited wholesale from colonial administrative structures never designed for genuine local self-government – struggled to manage the political, ethnic and economic tensions described above; Mobutu's 1965 seizure of power in the Congo (Section 6.4) is one specific, citable example of this wider pattern.

- **Institutions built for colonial control, not self-government:** civil services, armies and legal systems were typically designed by colonial administrations to maintain order and extract revenue, not to manage competitive democratic politics, leaving them poorly suited to the demands placed on them immediately after independence.
- **Economic strain feeding political instability:** the trade dependency and foreign ownership patterns described above left many governments with limited fiscal room to satisfy competing regional, ethnic or economic demands, increasing the pressure on fragile new political systems.
- **Ambitious military officers exploiting weak civilian institutions:** where civilian governments lacked either the popular legitimacy or the coercive capacity to respond effectively to crises, officers with direct control of the army were frequently in the best position to seize power, exactly as Mobutu did in the Congo in November 1965.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not assume every Cold War-era crisis in a newly independent state was caused by the Cold War from the outset. The Congo Crisis (Section 6.4) began as a purely domestic secession dispute (Katanga) rooted in Belgium's institutional unpreparedness; Cold War rivalry entered only once Lumumba appealed to Moscow for assistance. Get the sequence right in your answer: domestic weakness and institutional vacuum first, Cold War entanglement second.

6.6.5 The Non-Aligned Movement

Facing dependency, Cold War pressure and internal fragility together, many leaders of newly independent Asian and African states sought a collective diplomatic response: refusing to align formally with either the Western or Soviet Cold War bloc, and instead cultivating solidarity among newly independent and developing states as a distinct third force in international affairs.

The foundational gathering for this approach was the **Bandung Conference**, held in **April 1955** in Indonesia, an Asian-African conference of **29 states** that brought together leading figures including **Jawaharlal Nehru** (India), **Sukarno** (Indonesia, as host), **Zhou Enlai** (China) and **Gamal Abdel Nasser** (Egypt), and which articulated shared principles of anti-colonialism, respect for sovereignty and non-interference, and cooperation among Asian and African states regardless of Cold War alignment. These principles, sometimes referred to as the Bandung Ten Principles, included mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and settlement of international disputes by peaceful means. This cooperative spirit was formalised six years later into a permanent international grouping: the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**, formally founded at the **Belgrade Conference in September 1961**, whose founding leaders included **Nehru** (India), **Nasser** (Egypt), **Josip Broz Tito** (Yugoslavia), **Sukarno** (Indonesia) and **Kwame Nkrumah** (Ghana) – drawing directly together, in a single organisation, leaders from every region examined in this chapter.

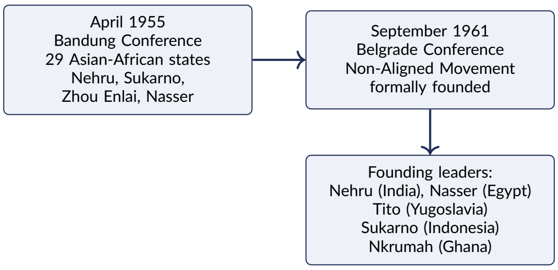


Figure 6.6 — From Bandung (1955) to Belgrade (1961): the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Trước những thách thức trên, nhiều lãnh đạo các quốc gia mới độc lập tìm cách hợp tác thay vì đứng về phe nào trong Chiến tranh Lạnh. Hội nghị Bandung (4/1955, 29 quốc gia Á-Phi, với Nehru, Sukarno, Chu Ân Lai, Nasser) là bước khởi đầu; đến Hội nghị Belgrade (9/1961), **Phong trào Không liên kết (Non-Aligned Movement)** chính thức ra đời, do Nehru (Ấn Độ), Nasser (Ai Cập), Tito (Nam Tư), Sukarno (Indonesia) và Nkrumah (Ghana) sáng lập – quy tụ các lãnh đạo từ mọi khu vực đã học trong chương này vào một tổ chức chung.

Practice 6.14 – OPCVL on a Non-Aligned Movement source

Source (paraphrased): An extract from the closing communiqué of the Bandung Conference, April 1955, signed by the representatives of 29 Asian and African states: "We are united in our support of self-determination for all peoples and nations ...we affirm that colonialism in all its manifestations is an evil which should speedily be brought to an end ...we resolve to promote economic and cultural cooperation among ourselves, refusing to be drawn into the rivalries of military blocs."

Identify the **Origin** and **Purpose** of this source, and discuss one **Value** and one **Limitation** it has for a historian studying decolonization.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: The formal closing communiqué of the Bandung Conference, a gathering of representatives from 29 newly independent or still-colonised Asian and African states held in Indonesia in April 1955.
Purpose: To publicly declare a shared set of principles among Asian and African states – opposition to colonialism, support for self-determination, and refusal to align with either Cold War bloc – and to project a unified diplomatic position to the wider world.
Value: As a jointly negotiated and formally agreed statement representing 29 governments, it is directly valuable as evidence of the emergence of a genuinely collective, cross-regional anti-colonial and non-aligned political identity among newly independent states in the mid-1950s, distinct from either superpower's own Cold War framing of decolonization.
Limitation: As a diplomatic communiqué representing a compromise text acceptable to 29 different governments with their own individual national interests, it necessarily smooths over real underlying disagreements between participating states (for example, over how strictly "non-alignment" would actually be practised by each state in later years, including states such as India and Egypt that in practice maintained closer ties to one bloc or the other at different points), and cannot be used as reliable evidence that all signatory states behaved identically in subsequent Cold War diplomacy.

Practice 6.15 – Examine essay

Question: Examine the challenges facing newly independent states in Africa and Asia after decolonization.

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: The challenges facing newly independent states were not accidental postcolonial misfortune but were structurally rooted in decisions made during the colonial period itself – borders, economic structures and weak local institutions – compounded by a Cold War international environment that frequently made those existing weaknesses worse rather than better.
Challenge 1 – artificial borders: Borders drawn largely at the Berlin Conference (1884–85) and in subsequent colonial-era treaties grouped together, or arbitrarily divided, ethnic and linguistic communities without regard for their own political coherence, a structural problem whose most severe consequence in this chapter was the Nigeria–Biafra War (1967–70, Section 6.4).
Challenge 2 – economic dependency (neo-colonialism): Colonial-era economic structures – narrow export commodities, foreign-owned key industries – persisted after formal independence, leaving states such as the Congo (whose Katangan mineral wealth directly fuelled the 1960s secession crisis, Section 6.4) economically vulnerable and politically exposed to external interference, the pattern Nkrumah named neo-colonialism in 1965.
Challenge 3 – Cold War proxy conflict: As the Congo Crisis shows most starkly, domestic political weakness could rapidly attract superpower intervention, converting an internal crisis into an internationalised Cold War conflict with lethal consequences for local leaders such as Lumumba.
Challenge 4 – military coups and weak institutions: Political institutions inherited from colonial administration were frequently designed for colonial control rather than genuine self-government, and proved fragile once tested by the pressures above, contributing to a wave of military coups across the first decades of independence (Mobutu's 1965 coup being one specific example already examined in this chapter).
Conclusion: These four challenges reinforced one another – artificial borders created internal division, which weak institutions could not manage, which created openings that economic

dependency and Cold War rivalry then exploited – making the postcolonial instability examined throughout this chapter best understood as a compounding structural legacy of colonial rule rather than a series of separate, unrelated postcolonial failures.

Practice 6.16 – To what extent essay

Question: To what extent did the Non-Aligned Movement succeed in protecting the interests of newly independent states during the Cold War?

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: The Non-Aligned Movement succeeded in giving newly independent states a genuine collective diplomatic voice and an alternative to automatic alignment with either Cold War bloc, but it had only limited success in actually protecting individual member states from Cold War interference in practice, as the Congo Crisis and other cases in this chapter demonstrate.
Evidence of success: The Bandung Conference (1955) and the Belgrade Conference founding NAM (1961) brought together leaders from every region studied in this chapter – Nehru, Nasser, Tito, Sukarno, Nkrumah – and gave newly independent states a shared platform to assert sovereignty, oppose colonialism collectively, and resist being treated merely as Cold War pawns, a meaningful diplomatic achievement in itself.
Evidence of limited practical success: NAM had no independent military or economic enforcement capacity, and could not prevent Cold War interference where a superpower judged its strategic interests to be at stake – the Congo Crisis (Section 6.4) unfolded and led to Lumumba's assassination in January 1961, the very same year NAM was formally founded, without NAM able to prevent or reverse that outcome; individual member states, moreover, did not always behave in a genuinely non-aligned way in practice, at times tilting toward one bloc or another depending on their own strategic needs.
Conclusion: NAM should be assessed as more successful as a diplomatic and symbolic achievement – establishing that newly independent states had interests of their own, separate from either Cold War bloc – than as a practical shield against superpower interference, which continued to affect individual member states throughout the period covered by this chapter.

In one line: Every challenge examined in this section – artificial borders, economic dependency, Cold War proxy conflict and military coups – traces back to a decision made *during*, not after, the colonial period, which is why questions on this topic reward answers that link postcolonial instability explicitly back to specific colonial-era causes (Berlin 1884–85; narrow colonial-era export economies; institutions built for control rather than self-government) rather than treating instability as an unexplained postcolonial misfortune.

6.7 Comparative conclusions

Having examined South Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia in turn, this final section draws the chapter's regional case studies together into the comparative argument that Paper 2 "compare and contrast" and "to what extent" questions on this topic most often require: what actually determined whether a given colony achieved independence through negotiation or through armed struggle, and how significant was the Cold War in shaping the outcome once independence was achieved.

6.7.1 What determined the path to independence

Across every case examined in this chapter, two factors recur as the clearest predictors of whether a colony achieved a largely negotiated transfer or was forced into a prolonged armed struggle.

- **The presence and size of a settler population.** Colonies without a large, entrenched population of the colonial power's own citizens (Ghana, Malaya's constitutional negotiation track, the Gold Coast generally) proved far easier to decolonize through negotiation, because the colonial government in the metropole faced no powerful domestic constituency demanding continued control. Colonies with large, politically influential settler populations (Algeria, Kenya, Rhodesia) required either sustained armed struggle or, in Rhodesia's case, an outright settler rebellion against the colonial power itself, because the settlers constituted an additional, often armed, political actor with a direct stake in resisting majority rule.
- **The strategic or economic value the colonial power attached to the territory.** Territories seen as strategically vital (the Suez Canal, prompting Britain and France's 1956 intervention even in a technically already-independent Egypt) or economically valuable (Katanga's minerals, fuelling Belgian-linked interference in the Congo Crisis) attracted far more determined resistance to relinquishing real control, even after formal independence, than territories of comparatively lower perceived value.

No significant settler population	Large, entrenched settler population
India/Pakistan (1947) Negotiated, catastrophic partition	Algeria (1962) Armed struggle
Ghana (1957) Negotiated	Kenya (1963) Uprising, then negotiated
Vietnam, Indonesia Armed struggle	Rhodesia/Zimbabwe (1980) Settler UDI, guerrilla war, then negotiated
Malaya, Congo Negotiated (separate insurgency; unprepared)	

Figure 6.7 — Classifying every case study in this chapter by settler presence and method of transition.

6.7.2 The Cold War's role: context and consequence more than original cause

A recurring theme across Sections 6.2 through 6.6 is that the Cold War rarely *caused* independence movements to begin – Congress, the Muslim League, the FLN, the Viet Minh, Nkrumah's CPP and the Zionist movement in Palestine all developed their core demands and organisational structures for reasons that were fundamentally domestic and nationalist, often predating the Cold War itself (the INC dates to 1885; the Balfour Declaration to 1917). What the Cold War did shape, decisively, was the *international context and consequences* of many of these movements once they were under way: superpower pressure helped force the end of the Suez intervention (Section 6.3); Cold War rivalry directly caused the internationalisation and Lumumba's assassination in the Congo Crisis (Section 6.4); American concern about radicalisation shaped Western policy toward Vietnam even before the deeper Cold War-era conflict of the 1960s (Section 6.5); and the Non-Aligned Movement (Section 6.6) was itself a direct, deliberate response by newly independent leaders to the pressure of being pulled into the Cold War's bipolar framework.

Three comparative lenses for this chapter's case studies: (1) *Settler presence* – did colonists of the ruling power itself live permanently in the territory in large numbers? (2) *Strategic or economic value* – did the colonial power see the territory as too valuable, economically or militarily, to relinquish real control over? (3) *Cold War entanglement* – did superpower rivalry become directly involved in the outcome, and if so, through which specific mechanism (financial pressure, covert action, military aid, ideological competition)? Any strong comparative essay on this topic should explicitly apply at least one of these three lenses to the specific cases named in the question.

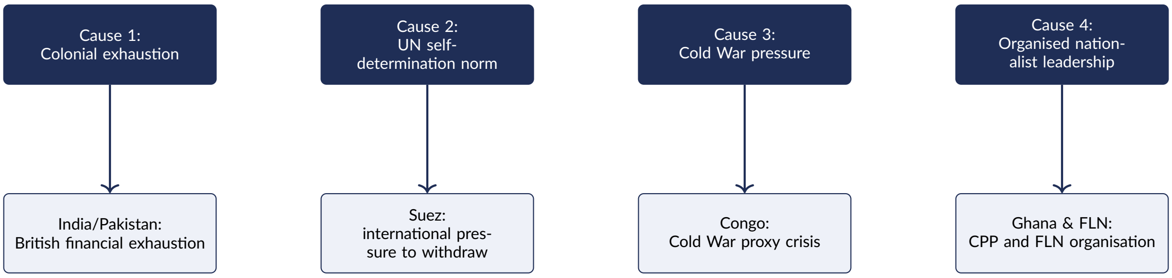


Figure 6.8 — The four causes identified in Section 6.1, each linked to one clear example case study from this chapter.

Case	Settler population?	Method	Independence date	Cold War role
India/Pakistan	No	Negotiated (with catastrophic partition violence)	14/15 Aug 1947	Minimal at the time
Israel	Yes (Jewish immigration)	UN partition, then war	14 May 1948	Superpower recognition, later proxy patronage
Ghana	No	Negotiated	6 Mar 1957	Minimal
Algeria	Yes (large)	Armed struggle	5 Jul 1962	Limited; mainly a France–FLN conflict
Congo	No	Rapid, unprepared transfer	30 Jun 1960	Central; direct Cold War proxy crisis
Vietnam	No	Armed struggle	Divided 1954	Growing; full Cold War conflict after 1954
Indonesia	No	Armed struggle + diplomacy	Recognised Dec 1949	Moderate (US pressure on the Netherlands)
Malaya	No	Negotiated (alongside separate anti-communist war)	31 Aug 1957	Direct (explicitly anti-communist Emergency)
Zimbabwe	Yes	Settler UDI, then guerrilla war	18 Apr 1980	Present but secondary to settler/majority-rule conflict

Table 6.3 — Nine cases from this chapter compared on settler presence, method, date and the Cold War's role – the comparative table most useful for planning a "to what extent" essay on the Cold War and decolonization.

Model thesis paragraph: to what extent did the Cold War shape independence movements after 1945?

"The Cold War should be ranked as a highly significant force shaping the *international context and outcomes* of decolonization after 1945, but not as the fundamental cause of independence movements themselves, which in almost every case examined in this course had domestic nationalist roots predating 1945. The clearest evidence for this ranking is comparative: movements with the least direct Cold War involvement (Ghana, and the initial phase of Indian independence) proceeded at a similar pace and on a similar negotiated model to movements where the Cold War was intensely present (Malaya's explicitly anti-communist Emergency, the Congo's proxy crisis), suggesting that the underlying decolonization process was driven primarily by the four causes identified in Section 6.1, while the Cold War instead determined *how violent, how internationalised, and how politically compromised* particular transitions became."

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not write an essay that treats "the Cold War" as a single undifferentiated cause of "decolonization" as a whole. Examiners consistently reward answers that specify exactly *which* Cold War mechanism was at work in a given case – American pressure on an ally (Suez, the Netherlands in Indonesia), Soviet support for an armed movement (Vietnam), or direct superpower proxy rivalry over a newly independent government (the Congo) – rather than a vague claim that "the Cold War caused decolonization."

6.7.3 Defining "success" in decolonization

Essay questions on this topic frequently ask candidates to judge how successful a given transfer of power was, and a common weakness is to answer using only one implicit definition of success without ever stating it. Two distinct criteria recur across the cases in this chapter, and a strong answer states explicitly which one (or both) it is using: **the human cost of the transition itself** (deaths and displacement caused directly by the process of achieving independence, as in the partition of India or the Algerian War), and **the stability of the state that resulted afterward** (whether the newly independent government could actually govern effectively, as the contrast between Ghana's negotiated and initially stable transition and the Congo's negotiated but immediately catastrophic transition demonstrates). These two criteria do not always move together, which is precisely why "success" cannot be judged by method of transition – negotiated versus armed struggle – alone, and why one of the practice essays later in this section asks you to evaluate exactly this claim directly.

Model paragraph: Ghana versus the Congo as two "negotiated" transitions

"Both Ghana (1957) and the Congo (1960) achieved independence through negotiation rather than armed struggle, yet the two cases could hardly have turned out more differently, which shows why method of transition alone cannot explain post-independence outcomes. Ghana's negotiation followed roughly a decade of sustained, disciplined political organisation by the CPP, during which Britain gradually transferred administrative responsibility to elected local government – so that by 1957, Ghana already possessed experienced local politicians and a functioning civil service. The Congo's negotiation, by contrast, followed almost no comparable preparation at all: Belgium had trained virtually no Congolese administrators, officers or professionals, so that independence in June 1960 handed formal sovereignty to a state with none of the institutional capacity Ghana had spent a decade building. The variable that actually explains the difference in outcome is not the method of transition (both were negotiated) but the depth of institutional preparation behind it."

6.7.4 Timing matters: early Cold War versus high Cold War

The intensity of Cold War involvement in decolonization was not constant across the period covered by this chapter, and a sophisticated answer notices this rather than treating ”the Cold War” as a single, unchanging background condition. In the immediate postwar years, roughly 1945–1955, Cold War involvement in most of the cases examined here was still comparatively limited: India and Pakistan's transfer of power (1947) attracted little direct superpower intervention, and even the escalating war in Vietnam (1946–54) only gradually attracted heavier outside involvement as it went on.

From the mid-1950s onward, involvement intensified sharply: the Suez Crisis (1956), the Congo Crisis (1960–65) and the Malayan Emergency (1948–60, intensifying through the 1950s) all show direct, explicit superpower engagement with decolonization-era conflicts. This timing pattern matters for essay-writing because the same broad topic can be argued to have a weak Cold War dimension in its earliest cases and a very strong one in its later cases, and a precise answer should specify which period of the chapter's timeline a given generalisation about the Cold War actually applies to.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Mức độ can thiệp của Chiến tranh Lạnh không đồng đều theo thời gian: giai đoạn 1945–1955 (Ấn Độ/Pakistan 1947, giai đoạn đầu Chiến tranh Đông Dương) có sự can thiệp của siêu cường khá hạn chế; từ giữa thập niên 1950 trở đi (Suez 1956, Khủng hoảng Congo 1960–65, Tình trạng Khẩn cấp Malaya) mức độ can thiệp tăng mạnh và rõ ràng hơn. Khi viết bài, nên nêu rõ giai đoạn thời gian cụ thể mà nhận định về Chiến tranh Lạnh đang áp dụng.

6.7.5 Comparing nationalist leadership across regions

Leader(s)	Movement	Primary method	Personal outcome
Gandhi & Nehru	Indian National Congress	Nonviolent civil disobedience	Nehru became independent India's first Prime Minister
Jinnah	Muslim League	Constitutional negotiation	Became Pakistan's first Governor-General
Nkrumah	Convention People's Party	”Positive action” (strikes, boycotts, elections)	Became Ghana's first Prime Minister and President
Ahmed Ben Bella and the FLN leadership	Front de Libération Nationale	Armed uprising	Ben Bella became independent Algeria's first President
Kenyatta	Kenya African National Union	Negotiation following the Mau Mau uprising	Became Kenya's first Prime Minister and President
Lumumba	Congolese nationalist movement	Negotiated transfer	Assassinated within seven months of independence
Ho Chi Minh	Viet Minh	Armed struggle	Led North Vietnam until his death, well beyond this chapter's period
Sukarno & Hatta	Indonesian Republic	Armed struggle and diplomacy	Sukarno became Indonesia's first President

Table 6.4 — Nationalist leaders across every region in this chapter, compared by movement, primary method and personal outcome.

6.7.6 The United Nations as a recurring actor across this chapter

Although the United Nations plays a very different role in each region, some form of UN involvement recurs across three of this chapter's four regional sections, and tracing this thread is a useful synthesis exercise in its own right.

- **The UN Partition Plan for Palestine (Resolution 181, November 1947):** the UN's first attempt in this chapter to design a territorial settlement directly, a plan accepted by only one of the two parties involved and therefore never implemented in the form proposed (Section 6.3).
- **The UN Emergency Force after Suez (1956–57):** the first large UN peacekeeping force of its kind, deployed to help supervise the withdrawal of Israeli, British and French forces from Egyptian territory (Section 6.3).
- **ONUC in the Congo (1960–64):** one of the largest and most complex UN peacekeeping operations attempted up to that time, deployed to help hold together a state on the verge of total collapse (Section 6.4).

Across all three interventions, the same underlying limitation recurs: the UN could deploy observers, forces or proposed settlements, but it possessed no independent enforcement capacity of its own, and its effectiveness in each case depended entirely on whether the relevant regional actors and superpowers chose to cooperate with it.

6.7.7 The limits of comparison across such different contexts

A final methodological caution belongs in any chapter that compares as many different regions as this one does: India, Algeria, the Congo and Vietnam differ enormously in geography, colonial administration, religious and ethnic composition, and economic structure, and a strong essay never implies that these cases are simply interchangeable examples of one single process. Comparison in this chapter has been most useful when applied narrowly and explicitly – comparing a specific factor (settler presence, strategic value, Cold War timing) across two or three named cases – rather than when used to claim that "decolonization" happened everywhere for identical reasons or in an identical way.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Liên Hợp Quốc xuất hiện trở đi trở lại trong chương này (Kế hoạch Phân chia Palestine 1947, Lực lượng Khẩn cấp UNEF sau Suez 1956–57, ONUC tại Congo 1960–64) nhưng luôn có cùng một giới hạn: Liên Hợp Quốc không có khả năng cưỡng chế độc lập, hiệu quả của tổ chức này phụ thuộc hoàn toàn vào việc các bên liên quan và các siêu cường có sẵn lòng hợp tác hay không. Ngoài ra, cần thận trọng khi so sánh: Ấn Độ, Algeria, Congo và Việt Nam khác nhau rất nhiều về địa lý, cách quản lý thuộc địa, thành phần tôn giáo – sắc tộc và cấu trúc kinh tế; nên so sánh một yếu tố cụ thể (dân định cư, giá trị chiến lược, thời điểm Chiến tranh Lạnh) giữa hai hoặc ba trường hợp cụ thể, thay vì khẳng định "phi thực dân hoá diễn ra giống nhau ở mọi nơi."

Practice 6.17 – To what extent essay

Question: To what extent did the Cold War shape independence movements after 1945?

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: The Cold War significantly shaped the international context, methods and consequences of decolonization, but it was not the fundamental cause of independence movements, which in almost every case in this chapter had domestic nationalist origins that predated or

developed independently of Cold War rivalry.
Evidence against the Cold War as fundamental cause: The Indian National Congress (founded 1885), the Balfour Declaration and Zionist movement (1917 onward), and Nkrumah's CPP in the Gold Coast all developed their core demands for reasons rooted in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century nationalism, colonial grievance, and (in Palestine's case) a specific wartime promise – none of which required Cold War bipolarity to exist, and several of which predate the Cold War altogether.
Evidence for significant Cold War shaping of context and outcome: The Cold War directly determined how several transitions unfolded: superpower financial and diplomatic pressure ended the Suez intervention (1956); Cold War-driven fear of Soviet influence directly caused the internationalisation of the Congo Crisis and contributed to Lumumba's assassination (1961); the Malayan Emergency was explicitly framed and fought by Britain as anti-communist containment; and the war in Vietnam, beginning as an anti-colonial struggle against France, became a central full-scale Cold War conflict after the 1954 division.
Evidence of a deliberate response to Cold War pressure: The Non-Aligned Movement (Bandung 1955, Belgrade 1961) was itself created specifically because newly independent leaders wished to resist exactly this kind of Cold War entanglement, further confirming that the Cold War's role was experienced by contemporaries as an external pressure to be managed, rather than as the root cause of their own independence movements.
Conclusion: The Cold War is best ranked as the dominant force shaping the *manner, violence and international consequences* of decolonization once it was under way, while the movements' fundamental causes remain best explained by the four factors set out in Section 6.1 – colonial exhaustion, the new international norm of self-determination, and pre-existing organised nationalist leadership, with Cold War superpower pressure as a fourth, real but secondary, accelerant.

Practice 6.18 – Compare and contrast essay

Question: Compare and contrast the independence movements of India and one African country you have studied.

Lời giải chi tiết

Choice of comparator: Kenya (though Ghana or Algeria could equally be used, depending on which comparison the question rewards more directly).
Similarities: Both India and Kenya were led by organised nationalist movements (the INC under Gandhi and Nehru; the Kenya African National Union under Kenyatta) that combined mass mobilisation with eventual negotiation; both movements achieved independence within the broader postwar wave described in Section 6.1; and both new states inherited serious unresolved internal divisions from the colonial period (India's Hindu–Muslim partition crisis; Kenya's land grievances rooted in settler dispossession of the Kikuyu).
Difference 1 – the presence of a settler class: British India had British administrators and a military presence, but no large permanent settler population competing for the same land as the majority population; Kenya's British settlers had taken over the colony's most productive agricultural highlands, creating a direct land-based grievance (chiefly for the Kikuyu) that had no real parallel in the Indian case.
Difference 2 – method: India's transition was achieved almost entirely through political negotiation following decades of nonviolent civil disobedience (the Salt March, 1930; Quit India, 1942), while Kenya's transition to independence in 1963 followed a violent armed uprising, the Mau Mau rebellion (1952–60), and a harsh British counter-insurgency campaign, before the actual transfer of power was itself negotiated.

Difference 3 – the nature of the postcolonial crisis: India's central postcolonial crisis was religious/communal partition, producing immediate, catastrophic mass displacement and violence at the very moment of independence (1947); Kenya's central postcolonial tensions (over land redistribution and ethnic political balance) developed more gradually over subsequent decades rather than exploding at the instant of the transfer of power itself.
Conclusion: India and Kenya both illustrate that organised nationalist leadership was necessary for successful independence, but Kenya's settler-colony status forced an armed phase that India's non-settler status did not require – directly confirming the comparative pattern (settler presence predicting armed struggle) argued for the whole chapter in Section 6.7.

Practice 6.19 – Evaluate essay

Question: Evaluate the view that negotiated settlement was always a more successful method of decolonization than armed struggle.

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: Negotiated settlement generally produced a lower immediate human cost than armed struggle, but "success" should be judged by post-independence stability as well as by the transition's own cost, and by that broader measure several negotiated transitions (the Congo) proved far less successful than several armed struggles (Vietnam's Viet Minh, Algeria's FLN) that at least left a coherent, battle-tested political and military organisation in place to govern afterward.
Evidence for negotiated settlement's advantages: Ghana's negotiated transition (1957) and Malaya's negotiated transition (1957) both avoided the scale of bloodshed seen in Algeria (1954–62) or the Nigeria–Biafra War (1967–70), and both produced reasonably orderly initial transfers of governing authority to an already-organised, experienced local leadership.
Evidence complicating this view – the Congo: The Belgian Congo's transition (30 June 1960) was technically "negotiated" rather than fought for, yet it produced one of the most catastrophic post-independence collapses examined in this chapter – Katangan secession, UN military intervention, and Lumumba's assassination within seven months of independence – precisely because the "negotiation" involved almost no preparation of local institutions, showing that the negotiated/armed-struggle distinction alone does not determine success; the quality and thoroughness of preparation for the transition matters at least as much as which method was used.
Evidence complicating this view – Algeria and Vietnam: Although both required years of costly armed struggle, the FLN and the Viet Minh each emerged from their wars with a disciplined, experienced governing organisation already in place, arguably leaving them, immediately after independence, with stronger institutional capacity than the Congo's negotiated but unprepared transition possessed.
Conclusion: Negotiated settlement should be judged more successful than armed struggle specifically in minimising the human cost of the transition itself, but not automatically more successful in producing stable, well-governed post-independence states – the deciding factor for long-term outcomes was less the method of transition than the depth of institutional preparation behind it, a point the Congo illustrates more sharply than any other case in this chapter.

Practice 6.20 – Examine essay

Question: Examine the reasons why some colonial powers withdrew from their colonies relatively peacefully while others fought prolonged wars to retain them.

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: The decisive variables were the presence of an entrenched settler population and the strategic or economic value the colonial power attached to the specific territory, more than any general difference in colonial policy between Britain, France, the Netherlands and Belgium.
Reason 1 – settler populations: Britain withdrew relatively peacefully from Ghana and Malaya (no large settler class) but fought or tolerated prolonged conflict in Kenya and Rhodesia (both settler colonies); France withdrew with comparative speed from most of its African possessions but fought an eight-year war specifically in Algeria, its one African colony with a very large settler population.
Reason 2 – strategic or economic value: Territories of unusually high strategic or economic value attracted disproportionate resistance to relinquishing real control regardless of settler presence – Britain and France's willingness to invade Egypt over the Suez Canal in 1956, and Belgian business interests' role in encouraging Katanga's secession in 1960, both show resistance to losing control over a specific valuable asset even after (or, in Egypt's case, entirely separate from) formal political independence.
Reason 3 – legal/constitutional status of the territory: Algeria's formal legal status as part of metropolitan France (unlike ordinary colonies) made its independence uniquely difficult for any French government to concede, contributing directly to the intensity and duration of the war there compared with France's generally faster withdrawal from West and Equatorial Africa.
Conclusion: No single colonial power was consistently "peaceful" or "violent" in its decolonization policy across all of its territories – Britain and France each produced both negotiated and armed-struggle cases – which strongly suggests that the specific characteristics of each territory (settler presence, strategic/economic value, legal status) explain the variation far better than any generalisation about national colonial policy or temperament.

Practice 6.21 – To what extent essay

Question: To what extent was decolonization after 1945 inevitable?

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: Some form of eventual decolonization was highly likely given the structural pressures in place by 1945, but neither its precise timing, nor its specific methods, nor its human cost in any individual territory was inevitable – these were shaped by contingent local decisions (Britain's compressed partition timetable in India; Belgium's total lack of preparation in the Congo; France's choice to fight rather than negotiate in Algeria) that could plausibly have gone differently.
Evidence for inevitability (the general trend): By 1945, colonial powers faced simultaneous financial exhaustion, a new international self-determination norm embedded in the UN Charter, Cold War pressure from both superpowers against formal colonialism, and, in almost every territory examined in this chapter, an already-organised nationalist movement – a combination strong enough that some form of eventual independence for nearly all major colonies looks, in retrospect, very difficult to have avoided entirely.
Evidence against inevitability of specific outcomes: The catastrophic scale of partition violence in India (1947) was not inevitable but resulted from specific, contingent British decisions about timetable and boundary-drawing; the Congo Crisis (1960–65) resulted from Belgium's specific choice to prepare almost no local administrative capacity before independence, a choice other colonial powers (Britain in Ghana and Malaya) did not make in comparable circumstances; and Algeria's eight-year war, rather than a Ghana-style negotiation, resulted from France's specific political decision to treat Algeria as inseparable from metropolitan France it-

self.
Conclusion: Decolonization as a general historical process was close to inevitable given the structural pressures of the postwar world, but the specific manner, timing and human cost of each individual case remained highly contingent on the particular decisions of colonial governments and nationalist movements – meaning a strong answer must distinguish carefully between the inevitability of the general trend and the total absence of inevitability in its specific, catastrophic or peaceful details.

Practice 6.22 – OPCVL on a final synthesis source

Source (paraphrased): An extract from a 1965 speech by Kwame Nkrumah, drawing on the argument of his book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*: "The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside ...the struggle against neo-colonialism is not aimed at excluding the capital of the developed world from operating in less developed countries. It is aimed at preventing the financial power of the developed countries being used in such a way as to impoverish the less developed."
Identify the **Origin** and **Purpose** of this source, and discuss one **Value** and one **Limitation** it has for a historian studying the challenges facing newly independent states.

Lời giải chi tiết

Origin: A 1965 speech by Kwame Nkrumah, then President of Ghana, drawing directly on the argument of his own book published the same year, which coined the term "neo-colonialism."
Purpose: To articulate and popularise, as a political leader speaking to both domestic and international audiences, a critique of the continued economic dependency of formally independent states on their former colonial rulers and other outside powers, and to frame this dependency as the central postcolonial challenge facing states such as his own Ghana.
Value: As the source that directly coined and defined the term "neo-colonialism," it is of central value to a historian precisely because it captures, in the words of a leading contemporary African statesman with direct first-hand experience of both anti-colonial struggle (Section 6.4) and post-independence governance, the specific vocabulary and framework that became the standard historical description of the challenge examined throughout Section 6.6.
Limitation: As a political speech delivered by the leader of one specific state at a specific moment (1965, only months before a coup would remove Nkrumah himself from power, illustrating the coup pattern discussed in Section 6.6), it presents Nkrumah's own particular ideological perspective on the causes and solutions to economic dependency, and cannot be taken as a neutral or universally agreed description applicable in identical form to every newly independent state's very different individual economic circumstances.

Practice 6.23 – Compare and contrast essay

Question: Compare and contrast the roles played by the Cold War superpowers in the Congo Crisis and in the Vietnam War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: In both cases, a newly independent or newly contested state (the Congo from 1960; Vietnam following the 1954 division) became a site of superpower competition once one side feared the other gaining influence there; in both cases, Cold War intervention fol-

lowed rather than caused the original nationalist or anti-colonial movement (the Congo's independence movement predated any Soviet involvement; the Viet Minh's anti-colonial struggle against France predated the deeper US-Soviet Cold War phase of the conflict).
Difference 1 – scale and duration of superpower involvement: Superpower involvement in the Congo Crisis, while lethal in its consequences (Lumumba's assassination, January 1961), was comparatively contained and resolved within a few years through UN intervention (ONUC) and Mobutu's 1965 consolidation of power; Cold War-driven conflict in Vietnam escalated over a much longer period into one of the largest and most prolonged conflicts of the entire Cold War, well beyond the scope of decolonization covered in this chapter.
Difference 2 – the mechanism of intervention: In the Congo, Cold War competition operated chiefly through covert political and intelligence action (backing rival domestic factions, alleged involvement in Lumumba's removal) rather than large-scale direct foreign combat deployment; in Vietnam, Cold War competition eventually involved massive direct military commitment.
Difference 3 – the international institutional response: The Congo Crisis saw direct large-scale UN peacekeeping intervention (ONUC) attempting to hold the state together; no comparable UN peacekeeping force was deployed in Vietnam, where the conflict instead proceeded largely outside effective UN mediation.
Conclusion: Both cases confirm the broader pattern argued in Section 6.7 – that the Cold War shaped the international consequences of decolonization-era conflicts more than it caused their original nationalist origins – but they differ sharply in scale, mechanism and institutional response, with the Congo representing a contained, UN-mediated proxy crisis and Vietnam representing an escalation into full-scale, prolonged Cold War conflict.

Practice 6.24 – Evaluate essay

Question: Evaluate the impact of settler populations on the process of decolonization, using at least two case studies from this chapter.

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: Settler populations consistently made decolonization slower, more violent and more politically complex than in non-settler colonies, because settlers constituted an additional political actor with a direct material stake in resisting majority rule, distinct from both the metropolitan government and the nationalist movement.
Case study 1 – Algeria: France's willingness to fight an eight-year war (1954–62) rather than negotiate, in sharp contrast to its comparatively rapid withdrawal from most of the rest of its African empire, is best explained by the political power of Algeria's large *pieds-noirs* settler population and Algeria's unique legal status as part of metropolitan France – a combination not present in France's other African colonies.
Case study 2 – Rhodesia: Rhodesia's white-minority settler government under Ian Smith went further than any other case in this chapter, unilaterally declaring independence *from* its own colonial power (Britain) specifically to preserve settler minority rule, precipitating a fifteen-year guerrilla war (through the 1970s) before the Lancaster House Agreement (December 1979) finally produced majority-rule independence in 1980 – an outcome only reached because international sanctions and prolonged guerrilla pressure eventually made settler rule militarily and economically unsustainable.
Comparative point: Kenya's smaller but still economically dominant settler population produced a similar, if less extreme, pattern – the Mau Mau uprising (1952–60) followed by a negotiated transfer only once settler confidence in indefinite British protection had been broken.

Conclusion: In every settler-colony case in this chapter, the presence of settlers changed decolonization from a negotiation between two parties (colonial government and nationalist movement) into a three-way conflict involving the settlers' own separate interests, consistently producing longer, more violent transitions than the non-settler cases (Ghana, Malaya, the Congo) examined elsewhere in this chapter.

6.7.8 Applying the four causes across every region

Cause (Section 6.1)	South Asia	Middle East	Africa	Southeast Asia
Colonial exhaustion	British wartime debt, sterling balances	Britain's postwar withdrawal from the Mandate	Belgium's rapid, unprepared Congo withdrawal	French wartime defeat and occupation, 1940–45
UN self-determination norm	Cited by Congress and the League alike	UN Partition Plan (1947) directly applied it	Cited at Bandung (1955) and by the NAM	Invoked in Vietnam's 1945 declaration
Cold War pressure	Minimal in 1947 itself	Central to the Suez withdrawal (1956)	Central to the Congo Crisis (1960–65)	Central to Vietnam and Malaya
Nationalist leadership	INC and Muslim League	Zionist movement; Nasser's Free Officers	CPP, FLN, KANU, ZANU/ZAPU	Viet Minh, Indonesian Republic, MCP

Table 6.5 — The four causes of decolonization identified in Section 6.1, applied case by case across every region studied in this chapter – a template for planning any essay that must compare causes across regions.

Practice 6.25 – Examine essay

Question: Examine the reasons why Vietnam's First Indochina War (1946–1954), which began as an anti-colonial struggle, became linked to the wider Cold War.

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis: The war's origins lay entirely in Vietnamese nationalist opposition to the restoration of French colonial rule, but its international significance shifted once the Viet Minh's communist leadership and France's need for Western support drew both superpowers into what had begun as a purely colonial conflict.
Reason 1 – domestic and anti-colonial origins: Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh had already organised resistance to Japanese occupation and declared independence in September 1945 for reasons rooted entirely in Vietnamese nationalism, not in any Cold War calculation, exactly as Section 6.1's fourth cause (organised nationalist leadership) predicts.
Reason 2 – the Viet Minh's communist leadership attracted Soviet and Chinese sympathy: once the People's Republic of China was established next door in 1949, the Viet Minh's communist orientation gave it a natural external source of ideological and material support, internationalising a conflict that had begun as a purely local anti-colonial struggle.
Reason 3 – French appeals for Western support: France increasingly presented its war effort to Washington not as a colonial war but as a front-line struggle against communist expansion in Asia, successfully attracting growing American financial and military assistance well before the war's end at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

Conclusion: Vietnam confirms the pattern argued throughout Section 6.7: the war's cause was a wholly domestic anti-colonial movement, but the Cold War rapidly reshaped its international context and consequences, turning a French colonial war into a preview of the far larger Cold War conflict that followed the 1954 division.

Practice 6.26 – Compare and contrast essay

Question: Compare and contrast Gamal Abdel Nasser and Kwame Nkrumah as nationalist leaders who each also became prominent critics of continued Western influence over newly independent states.

Lời giải chi tiết

Similarities: Both Nasser and Nkrumah led their countries to genuine independence from direct foreign control (Nasser through the Egyptian revolution and the 1956 confrontation over Suez; Nkrumah through the CPP's negotiated transfer to Ghanaian independence in 1957), both became leading founding figures of the Non-Aligned Movement (Belgrade, 1961), and both used their standing to warn other newly independent states against continued economic and political dependency on former colonial powers.
Difference 1 – the nature of their defining confrontation: Nasser's international reputation was built on successfully resisting a direct military invasion (the Suez Crisis, 1956), a dramatic and highly visible act of defiance against three foreign powers simultaneously; Nkrumah's reputation rested instead on the quieter, negotiated achievement of being first to lead a sub-Saharan African colony to independence (1957), followed by his intellectual leadership in naming and analysing neo-colonialism (1965).
Difference 2 – geographic and organisational role: Nasser's influence centred on Arab nationalism and Egypt's leadership role in the Middle East and North Africa; Nkrumah's influence centred on pan-African unity and Ghana's role as an early meeting point for sub-Saharan African nationalist movements.
Conclusion: Nasser and Nkrumah illustrate two different routes to the same broader status – leading voices against continued Western and colonial influence over newly independent states – one earned through dramatic confrontation and international crisis, the other through patient negotiation followed by influential written analysis.

6.7.9 Consolidated reference: disputed statistics in this chapter

Event	Displacement / casualty range	Why the figure is disputed
Partition of India (1947)	10–15 million displaced; deaths several hundred thousand to around two million	Record-keeping collapsed amid the violence itself; no reliable contemporary census exists
The Nakba (1948)	An estimated 700,000 Palestinian Arabs displaced	Estimates vary depending on which population registers and refugee-agency records are used as a baseline
Nigeria–Biafra War (1967–1970)	Commonly cited estimates of roughly one to three million deaths	Most deaths resulted from starvation under blockade rather than direct combat, making precise counting especially difficult

Table 6.6 — Every genuinely disputed casualty or displacement figure in this chapter, presented as a range with the reason for the dispute stated – the responsible way to cite each figure in an exam answer.

VN **GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT**

Bảng tổng hợp tất cả các số liệu còn gây tranh cãi trong chương này: Chia cắt Ấn Độ 1947 (10–15 triệu người di dời; vài trăm nghìn đến khoảng hai triệu người chết), sự kiện Nakba 1948 (khoảng 700.000 người Ả Rập Palestine di tản), Chiến tranh Nigeria–Biafra 1967–70 (khoảng một đến ba triệu người chết, chủ yếu do đói). Khi trích dẫn các số liệu này trong bài thi, LUÔN nêu khoảng số liệu và lý do gây tranh cãi, KHÔNG bao giờ chỉ nêu một con số duy nhất như thể đó là sự thật tuyệt đối.

Ôn tập nhanh

1. Kỹ năng OPCVL (Paper 1 và mọi nguồn sử liệu trong Paper 2/3): luôn đi đủ 5 bước – Origin (ai, khi nào, loại nguồn) → Purpose (viết cho ai, để làm gì) → Content (tóm tắt chính xác) → Value (giá trị PHẢI xuất phát trực tiếp từ Origin/Purpose cụ thể, không viết chung chung) → Limitations (hạn chế cũng PHẢI xuất phát từ chính Origin/Purpose đó). Không bao giờ viết "nguồn này có thể có định kiến" mà không giải thích tại sao dựa trên Origin/Purpose cụ thể.

2. Luận đề xếp hạng nguyên nhân (thesis-ranking) cho mọi dạng "examine" / "to what extent" / "evaluate": không liệt kê nguyên nhân theo thứ tự ngẫu nhiên – luôn XẾP HẠNG nguyên nhân nào quan trọng nhất và giải thích tại sao, dùng công thức: nguyên nhân cấu trúc/lâu dài (structural) so với nguyên nhân trực tiếp/châm ngòi (immediate trigger). Ví dụ trong chương này: biên giới thuộc địa (Berlin 1884–85) là nguyên nhân cấu trúc của Chiến tranh Nigeria–Biafra, nhưng đảo chính quân sự và bạo lực sắc tộc giữa thập niên 1960 mới là nguyên nhân trực tiếp châm ngòi chiến tranh.

3. Chuỗi nhân quả xuyên suốt cả cuốn sách, từ Versailles đến Chiến tranh Lạnh đến phi thực dân hoá: Hoà ước Versailles (1919) gây bất mãn ở Đức → tạo điều kiện cho các nhà nước độc tài/toàn trị trỗi dậy (Đức Quốc xã, Ý Phát xít) → chính sách bành trướng của các nhà nước đó dẫn đến Thế chiến II (1939–45) → Thế chiến II làm kiệt quệ các đế quốc thực dân châu Âu VÀ tạo ra thế đối đầu hai siêu cường Mỹ–Liên Xô (Chiến tranh Lạnh) → cả hai siêu cường đều phản đối chủ nghĩa thực dân kiểu cũ (vì lý do khác nhau) nhưng cạnh tranh giành ảnh hưởng tại các quốc gia mới độc lập (chủ nghĩa thực dân kiểu mới) → phong trào phi thực dân hoá 1945–1980 diễn ra trong bối cảnh Chiến tranh Lạnh đó, khiến nhiều cuộc khủng hoảng hậu độc lập (Congo, Việt Nam) trở thành xung đột uỷ nhiệm. Khi làm bài, luôn có thể trích dẫn chuỗi nhân quả này để nối các Unit lại với nhau.

4. So sánh các nhà độc tài/lãnh đạo theo CƠ CHẾ cụ thể, không so sánh chung chung: khi so sánh hai nhân vật (ví dụ Nkrumah và Kenyatta; Ojukwu và Ian Smith; Hitler và Stalin ở các Unit trước), luôn so sánh theo từng cơ chế cụ thể – cách lên nắm quyền, cách duy trì quyền lực (đàn áp, tuyên truyền, kiểm soát kinh tế), và hậu quả cụ thể có ngày tháng – thay vì chỉ nói "cả hai đều là nhà độc tài."

5. Hai con đường phi thực dân hoá và biến số quyết định: đàm phán hoà bình (Ghana 6/3/1957, Malaya 31/8/1957) so với đấu tranh vũ trang (Algeria 1954–62, Việt Nam 1946–54); biến số quyết định con đường nào được chọn là (a) có cộng đồng người định cư (settler) lớn hay không, và (b) giá trị chiến lược/kinh tế của lãnh thổ đó đối với chính quốc. Chiến tranh Lạnh định hình BỐI CẢNH và HẬU QUẢ của phi thực dân hoá nhiều hơn là NGUYÊN NHÂN gốc rễ của nó.

6. Luôn dùng ngày tháng chính xác làm bằng chứng (evidence), không viết mơ hồ: ví dụ thay vì viết "Ấn Độ độc lập vào cuối thập niên 1940," hãy viết chính xác "Pakistan độc lập 14/8/1947, Ấn Độ độc lập 15/8/1947, theo Đạo luật Độc lập Ấn Độ tháng 7/1947." Giám khảo IB luôn chấm điểm cao hơn cho câu trả lời có tên riêng, ngày tháng và số liệu cụ thể (kèm ghi chú nếu số liệu đó còn gây tranh cãi, như số người chết trong Partition 1947 hay cuộc chiến Nigeria–Biafra 1967–70) so với câu trả lời chỉ mô tả chung chung.

7. Luôn phân biệt nguyên nhân "structural" (điều kiện nền tảng lâu dài) và "immediate/trigger" (sự kiện châm ngòi trực tiếp) trong mọi bài luận Paper 2 của toàn bộ chương trình – từ nguyên nhân Thế chiến I/II, sự trỗi dậy của các nhà nước độc tài, cho đến phi thực dân hoá: đây là kỹ thuật lập luận duy nhất áp dụng nhất quán cho MỌI World History Topic trong kỳ thi IB History Paper 2.

Đồng hành cùng 8020 English

Cảm ơn bạn đã học cùng bộ giáo trình quốc tế 8020. **Điểm thật · Thầy thật · Kết quả thật** — nhiều học viên chỉ cần 1–2 khoá để đạt kết quả mong muốn.

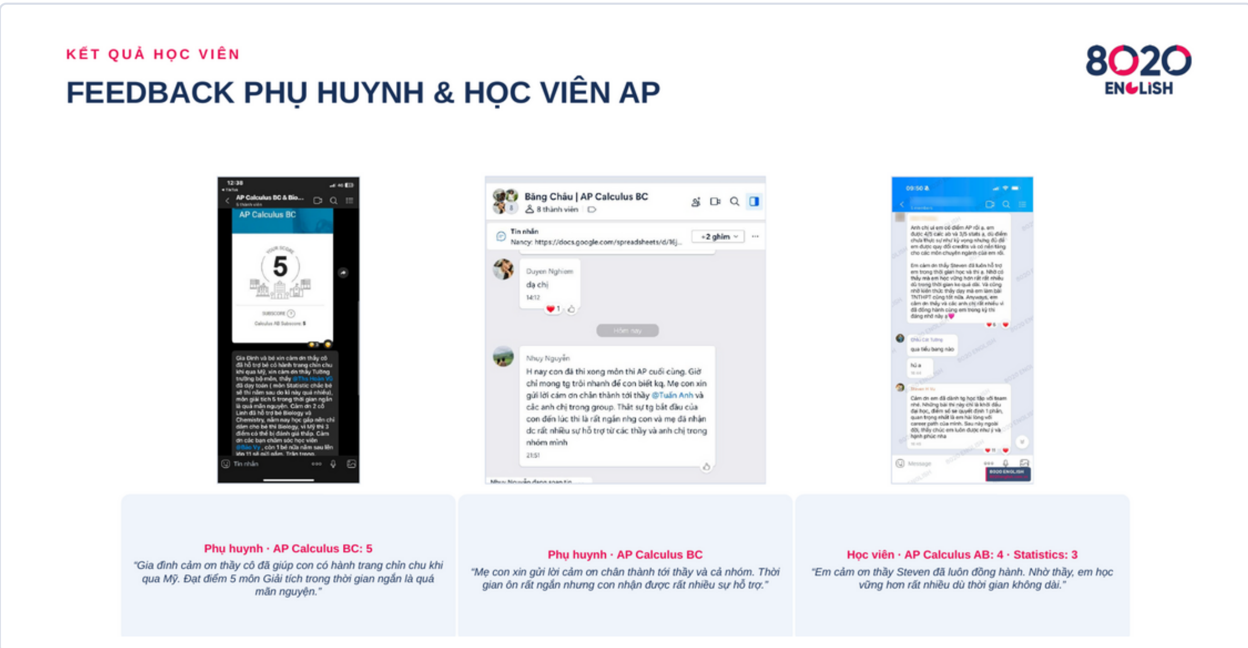
Cảm nhận học viên & phụ huynh

> *"Bạn đã cải thiện được tư duy Writing — kỹ năng từng là nỗi sợ lớn nhất — và cuối cùng đã đậu vào trường top như mong muốn. Thái độ học tập cực kỳ nghiêm túc; ngay cả khi nằm viện vẫn cố gắng học đều đặn."*
>
> — Phan Thị Thanh Hằng · IELTS Overall 8.5

> *"Cần tất cả kỹ năng trên 7.5 để xét vào trường top 1 Anh Quốc về Y học (chương trình UKFPO của NHS) — và đã đạt mục tiêu sau khi học Writing 1–1."*
>
> — Trần Hoàng Bảo Ngọc · IELTS Overall 8.0 (Writing 6.0 → 7.5)

> *"Gia đình và bé xin cảm ơn thầy cô đã giúp con có hành trang chỉn chu khi qua Mỹ. Đạt điểm 5 môn Giải tích trong thời gian ngắn là quá mãn nguyện."*
>
> — Phụ huynh · AP Calculus BC 5/5

> *"Em cảm ơn thầy đã luôn đồng hành. Nhờ thầy, em học vững hơn rất nhiều dù thời gian ôn không dài."*
>
> — Học viên · AP Calculus AB 4



Feedback phụ huynh & học viên AP — nhiều môn đạt điểm 4 & 5

Điểm thi thật của học viên

KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

ĐIỂM SỐ AP

8020 ENGLISH

AP Biology: 4 · AP Chemistry: 4

AP Calculus AB: 5

AP Calculus BC: 5

AP Chemistry: 5

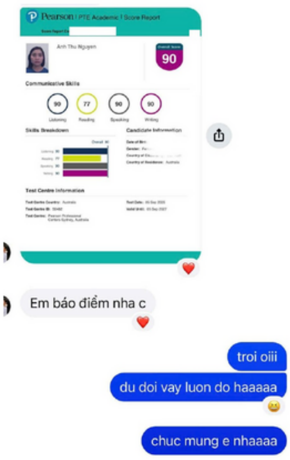
Bảng điểm AP thật của học viên – nhiều môn đạt điểm 4 & 5

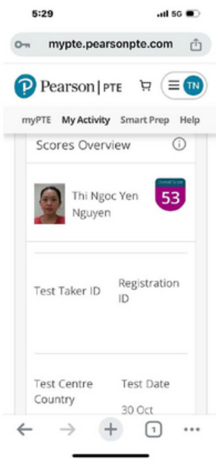
Bảng điểm AP thật — Calculus AB/BC 5/5 · Biology & Chemistry 4–5 (College Board)

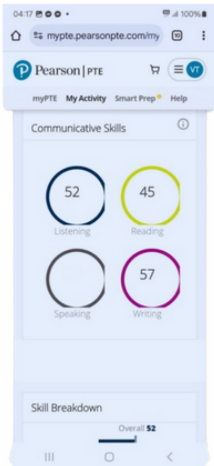
KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

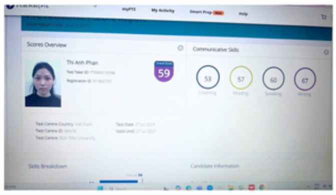
ĐIỂM SỐ PTE

8020 ENGLISH









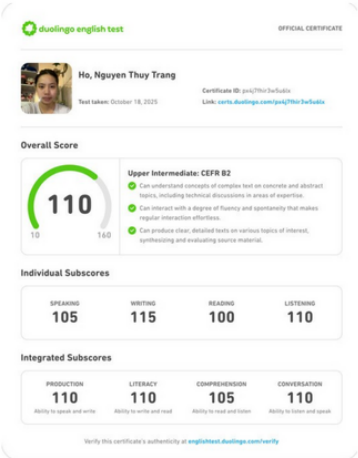
Bảng điểm PTE thật của học viên

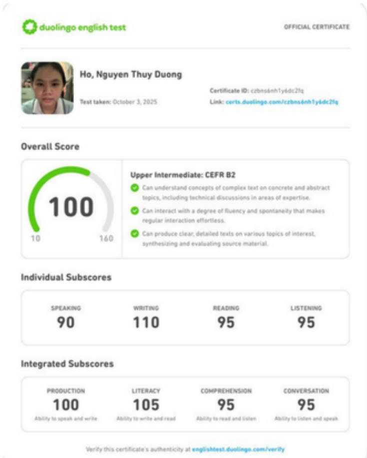
Học viên 8020 — PTE Academic 90

KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

ĐIỂM SỐ DUOLINGO

8020 ENGLISH





Duolingo English Test – 110 & 100

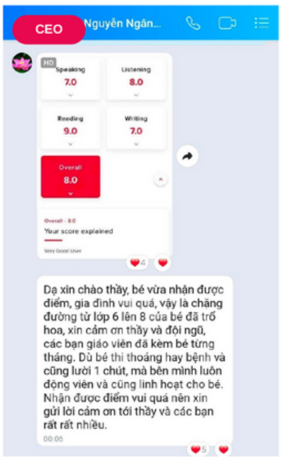
Học viên 8020 — Duolingo English Test 110 & 100

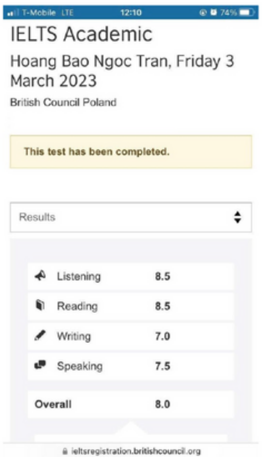
KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

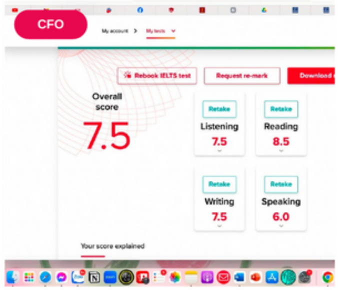
THÀNH TÍCH HỌC VIÊN

8020 ENGLISH

Bảng điểm thi thật – chất lượng được giám sát nghiêm ngặt. Một số học viên chỉ cần 1–2 khóa để đạt kết quả mong muốn.







Học viên 8020 — IELTS 8.0 / 7.5 / 8.5 (báo điểm thật)