

# The Success Criteria

To evaluate sources as evidence on a historical issue, I need to be able to:

1. ask relevant question(s) about a source's **creation**. E.g., By Whom? When? Why?
2. examine a source in its specific **historical context** E.g., What was going on at that time that may have influenced the content of the source?
3. use another **source** and **contextual knowledge** to support or challenge a source's views.
4. identify **supporting evidence** e.g., quotes and provide explanations that are clear and accurate, in order to answer the question directly and obviously

**1 (a) Compare and contrast the evidence provided in Source C and D on the impact of the Strategic Defensive Initiative (SDI) on the superpowers' negotiations. [10]**

## Similar View #1

Expected **valid** responses:

- **[Success Criterion #4]** Both Sources C and D agree that the SDI stalled the negotiations between the two superpowers and had a negative impact.
  - C: Gorbachev highlighted how the USSR 'had made real concessions to the US in a number of negotiations and sought to establish conditions for reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons' but 'the US was trying to drag things backwards' due to the apparent US intention of using Soviet amenability to arms reduction as 'leverage to force the Soviet Union to make concessions in certain areas'. This suggests that the issue of arms control, of which SDI was a major feature, had stalled negotiations to the point that they 'had reached a dead end'.
  - D: 'At the Reykjavik Summit, the sticking point was SDI, Gorbachev insisting that it be confined to the laboratory and Reagan refusing to give up testing.' This implies that SDI was an impediment to the two superpowers' making progress in their negotiations with each other due to their divergent views on the issue.
- Both Source C and D share this similar view because:
  - Evidence corroborates how SDI had indeed been a key impediment to the US and the USSR's efforts towards arms reductions up to 1986.
  - During the summit at Reykjavik in October 1986, Gorbachev offered comprehensive concessions to set nuclear disarmament into motion. He was prepared to remove all SS-20s from Europe and cut Soviet strategic weapons by 50%. Arms reduction talks, however, ended acrimoniously and little progress was made. **(#3)**
  - Although Reagan was interested in what Gorbachev had to offer, he was unwilling to compromise on SDI. Gorbachev, on the other hand, insisted that America's abandonment of SDI was a necessary condition for any arms reduction negotiations to be meaningful. **(#3)**

### Differing Views

Expected **valid** responses:

- **[Success Criterion #4]** While Source C presents primarily the view that SDI was an impediment to negotiations, Source D highlights how negotiations were ultimately not compromised by SDI.
  - C: Source C highlights the irreconcilable positions of the superpowers regarding SDI, suggesting it remained a major impediment to negotiations where Reagan 'had promised the American people he would not give up SDI' and 'could not confine its work to the laboratory' but Gorbachev insisted that 'he had to take a principled position that SDI-related work could only be in laboratories.'
  - D: The source observes that 'almost all the participants assessed Reykjavik retrospectively as, in Reagan's words, 'a major turning point in the quest for a safe and secure world' with George Shultz even describing the Summit as 'sensational' for establishing frameworks for disarmament. This implies that despite the initial barriers presented by SDI, negotiations ultimately bore fruit and the superpowers made significant progress towards de-escalating the arms race.
- Both sources offer differing views because:
  - Source C is a memorandum from 1986 and its primary goal is to offer an accurate recording of events where Gorbachev and Reagan indeed had divergent views on the issue of SDI (**#1**), and only in February 1987, after Reykjavik, Gorbachev discarded mutual agreement on SDI as a prerequisite for disarmament talks (**#3 - CK**).
  - Source D, being an academic article written in 2001, is well placed to access available evidence on how participants in the 1986 Reykjavik Summit ascertained that it was a resounding success and SDI was not a major impediment to negotiations. Significantly, in Source D, the academic is highlighting how the participants themselves assessed that the Reykjavik Summit was a stellar success despite disagreements over SDI and this is understandable given how individuals such as Reagan and George Shultz would have considerable incentive to highlight that the US played a key role in securing peace for the world through Summit diplomacy that paved the way for disarmament (**#1**).

1 (b) How far do Source A-F support the view that the end of the Cold War seemed inevitable from 1985 onwards? [30]

### Classification of Sources

Support

Challenge

A, B,

F (with elements of Support) C, D, E

Treating Sources as a Set (Success Criterion #3) <sup>1</sup>
Evaluating Sources in Context (Success Criteria #1, #2, #3)
Identifying and explaining supporting evidence (Success Criterion #4)

### Suggested Approach

Sources A and B support the view while Sources C, D, E and F – with Source F containing elements of “support” – challenge the view.

Sources A and B **support** the view as they **highlight the 1985 Geneva Summit seemed to have broken new ground in superpower relations and set the US and the USSR on an upward trajectory towards cooperation**. Source A highlights how both Reagan and Gorbachev concurred that the 1985 Geneva Summit marked something akin to an unprecedented beginning of improved relations between the US and the USSR. This is seen where in Source A, Reagan ‘felt that these [Geneva] meetings expressed the will and desire of both sides to find answers that would benefit not only all the people of the world living, but also the yet unborn’ and Gorbachev agreed that they had ‘laid the first few bricks’ and ‘a new start, a new phase [had] begun.’ Source B reinforces Sources A’s optimistic assessment of the Geneva Summit’s positive impact on superpower relations when it notes how the Deputy Director of the CIA stated his belief that in intellectual terms, the Cold War ended for him in November of 1985 ‘when Gorbachev made his first 50 percent proposal’ as that was ‘serious stuff’. Thus, Source B suggests that the 1985 Geneva Summit meetings was perhaps momentous enough such that the end of the Cold War seemed inevitable from that juncture onwards, due in large part to the radical concessions that Gorbachev was willing to undertake.

**Overall, Sources A and B are more limited in their credibility and utility as sources that support the view that the end of the Cold War seemed inevitable from 1985 onwards.** Source A is a memorandum of a conversation between Gorbachev and Reagan and notes the overwhelmingly positive tone between the two leaders. While this is likely an accurate reflection of the conversations that took place between Gorbachev and Reagan, it is primarily an official record of the two leaders overtly stating that it is imperative that the US and the USSR work towards cooperation, but it is unclear if these intentions manifested in concrete outcomes that would make the end of the Cold War seem inevitable by 1985. While Source B may appear credible as it was from an academic book in 2016 that presumably would have more time and resources to offer a holistic assessment of whether the Cold War’s end seemed inevitable by 1985, the main “support” for the view stems from the opinion of the CIA’s Deputy Director who was offering his personal view on when the Cold War ended in his individual capacity as opposed to it being a factual observation that rested upon sturdy research. Critically, contextual knowledge reveals how this cordiality between them manifested in no

<sup>1</sup> It is imperative that candidates avoid isolating a source for analysis e.g., analysing Source F by itself, doing so confines the answer to **Level 3 (11-15)** where it “will begin to treat sources as a set”. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for answers that display exceptional quality of analysis overall.

concrete outcomes in 1985 due to Reagan's insistence on SDI. Furthermore, even in January 1986, Gorbachev proposed a 3-stage plan for complete nuclear disarmament by the year 2000, where Stage 1 involved the reduction of both sides' INF in Europe to zero, without similar reductions in British or French nuclear forces but the US was unprepared and could not respond to this radical proposal. Thus, **despite the overwhelming cordiality between Reagan and Gorbachev recorded in Source A and the CIA's Deputy Director personal opinion that the Cold War ended for him "intellectually" in 1985, existing evidence undermines Source A and B's claim that the Cold War's end seemed inevitable from 1985 onwards.**

Source F<sup>2</sup> appears to lend weight to Source B's view that the Cold War seemed inevitable from 1985 onwards as it notes how the 'rapid-fire series of events that transpired between 1985 and 1990 stunned governmental foreign policy experts', where 'Ronald Reagan, the most unequivocally anti-communist American leader of the entire Cold War era, suddenly found a Soviet leader saying yes to arms control faster than he could say no', thus reinforcing Source B's view that the 1985 Summit had been pivotal in significantly altering US perceptions of the Soviets for the better where George Shultz observed how Reagan 'changed his mind following personal talks with Gorbachev' and no longer saw the USSR's statements as 'blatant propaganda designed simply to mislead the West'. Thus, Source F appears to agree with Source B that 1985 was a landmark year for superpower negotiations, seemingly setting the US and the USSR on an inevitable path towards reconciliation and the end of the Cold War.

However, Source F ultimately leans towards the "challenge" Sources C, D, and E as they all agree that there were still significantly divergent view and agendas between the two superpowers and the Cold War did not seem inevitable from 1985 onwards. Source C highlights how the "Geneva negotiations prior to the Reykjavik meeting had reached a dead end", clearly suggesting that there was a distinct lack of progress made in negotiations between the two superpowers since their meeting in 1985. Source D corroborates Source C's view that the momentum of improved relations had reached a point of inertia by 1986 where '[d]uring the first six months of 1986, negotiations for the next summit failed to prosper' and after Reagan responded favourably to Gorbachev's arms control initiatives in June 1986, 'Reagan showed no indication to abandon his dream of strategic defence.' This highlights how SDI was a stumbling block to negotiations between the two superpowers. Source E agrees with Sources C and D that underlying competition and tensions persisted between the two superpowers, and this was despite the outward projection of cooperation between the US and the USSR. In Source E, an American cartoonist depicts Reagan and Gorbachev as cordially conversing as they are broadcast on television to a wider audience but underlying the superficial pleasantries, the two superpowers are locked in an arm-wrestling match, and this suggests that they remained very much in competition with each other in 1986. Source F ultimately agrees with the "challenge sources" as it posits that the 1985 Geneva Summit had 'produced little of substance but marked improved the atmospherics of the Soviet-American relationship', thus echoing Source D's assessment of the situation in 1986 where the two superpowers appeared to be friendlier but there remained significant undercurrents of tensions that prevented them from achieving concrete outcomes in their negotiations in 1986. Although Source F concedes that 'the setback at Reykjavik' proved but temporary, this nonetheless challenges the view that the Cold War seemed inevitable by 1985 onwards as it

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<sup>2</sup> If the candidate did not deal with F as a "mixed" source, this would affect the higher levels e.g., Levels 5 ('make very good use of the sources') and 6 ('make excellent use of the sources') but it will not prevent the candidate from securing a passing grade. Source D is another possible "mixed" source.

suggests that only after 1986 did the two superpowers make significant headway in negotiations and cooperation.'

**Overall, Sources C, D, E and F are more credible as sources that challenge the view that the end of the Cold War seemed inevitable from 1985 onwards.** Source C is a memorandum like Source A and it being an official record lends weight to its credibility as it offers an accurate depiction of the talks that took place between Reagan and Gorbachev at Reykjavik in 1986. However, Source C is better placed than Source A to ascertain whether the Cold War seemed inevitable by 1985 as by virtue of recording post-1985 discussions, it accurately captured how the progress made at the 1985 Geneva Summit yielded little concrete progress due in large part to the two leaders disagreeing on SDI. Source C's credibility is further enhanced when an academic in Source D, writing in the post-Cold War era in 2001, similarly notes that SDI was a major impediment to negotiations. Also, **while Source D notes that some participants retrospectively provided glowing appraisals of Reykjavik as a turning point, Source D highlights it is 'somewhat surprising' they did so – suggesting that evidence ran contrary to their effusive praise of the Reykjavik Summit and furthermore, this underscores how even by 1986, it remained debatable as to whether the end of the Cold War was imminent let alone inevitable.** Source E may appear less credible at first glance due its exaggerated depiction of Gorbachev and Reagan being locked in an arm-wrestling match – however, the American cartoonist's impression of the two superpowers being locked in battle despite Reagan and Gorbachev's overt appearance to the media of cordial relations is backed up by the American academic in Source F who highlights that the 1985 Geneva summit 'produced little of substance' and in 1986, 'Reagan's insistence on continuing with the SDI initiative' led Gorbachev to back down on his offers for arms reduction. **Like Source D, Source F is from an academic who would presumably be afforded more time and resources than for example, Source A – memorandum from 1985, to assess whether the end of the Cold War seemed inevitable by 1985.** Crucially, contextual knowledge corroborates the views of the "challenge" sources that by 1986, the two superpowers were hardly down a path towards inevitable reconciliation and SDI was a major impediment to progress in arms reduction talks. Available evidence tells us that at Reykjavik in October 1986, Gorbachev once more offered comprehensive concessions to set nuclear disarmament into motion, where he was prepared to remove all SS-20s from Europe and cut Soviet strategic weapons by 50%. Arms reduction talks, however, ended acrimoniously and little progress was made. This was because, although Reagan was interested in what Gorbachev had to offer, he was unwilling to compromise on SDI. Gorbachev, on the other hand, insisted that America's abandonment of SDI was a necessary condition for any arms reduction negotiations to be meaningful. In addition, it would not be until December 1987 that both superpowers would sign the landmark INF Treaty at the Washington Summit, where they agreed on Gorbachev's 'double zero option' proposal that apart from Intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), the superpowers would also work towards eliminating shorter range missiles.

Overall, the "challenge: sources are preferred as they provide a more accurate assessment – that is, the Cold War did not seem inevitable from 1985 onwards. Source C, as a memorandum like Source A, is better placed to observe the genuine obstacles that SDI continued to present to progress in negotiations in 1986. Furthermore, in the "support" set, Source B's main basis for the view that the Cold War's end seemed inevitable from 1985 onwards stems from the opinion of an individual – the CIA Deputy Director – rather than a carefully researched and holistic assessment of the view. In contrast, there are academic sources in the "challenge" set that would presumably have sufficient time and resources to accurately point out that issues such as SDI remained a stumbling block for negotiations even up to 1986 and furthermore, contextual knowledge strongly corroborates how Reagan's refusal to confine SDI to the laboratory indeed stalled progress towards arms reduction between the two superpowers.

Thus, the hypothesis should be modified to read, ‘While the Cold War’s end may have seemed inevitable from 1985 onwards due to Reagan and Gorbachev’s displaying an apparent cordiality that was unprecedented between Soviet and American leaders, disagreement over key issues such as SDI meant that it was only after 1986 that the two superpowers moved closer towards ending the Cold War.’

**Important notes:**

- Several candidates classified Source D as a “support” source and did the same for Source F using the wrong portion of that source (‘Yet the setback at Reykjavik proved but temporary. Shortly thereafter, Gorbachev dropped his insistence that America’s abandonment of SDI must be prerequisite for progress...’). In both instances, candidates failed to recognise that the content selected for Sources D and F challenged the view as they reflect that there was a major hiccup in negotiations in 1985 and up to 1986 – it was only **after 1986** that progress was made, thus undermining the view that the end of the Cold War seemed inevitable from 1985 onwards.
- To adequately explain Source E, candidates needed to use sufficient source detail and acknowledge what Reagan and Gorbachev were depicted as appearing to convey (cooperation) versus what was supposedly “really” going on beneath the façade of cooperation, where the arm-wrestling represented ongoing tensions and competition.
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Essay Success Criteria	
Students are able to:	
#1	be consistently analytical or explanatory, rather than descriptive or narrative in approaching the essay, to answer the question directly and obviously.
#2	demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of historical concepts relevant to the analysis and to the topic, to answer the question directly and obviously.
#3	exercise full control over the argument, where the thinking is consistently logical - with no contradictions - and all parts make a coherent whole, to answer the question directly and obviously.
#4	identify supporting evidence and provide explanations that are clear and accurate, to answer the question directly and obviously.

## 2 To what extent was the prioritisation of national interest the underlying cause for the “Crisis Decades” from 1973 to 2000? [30]

This question is based on the syllabus learning outcome that requires students to ‘analyse the causal relationships that underpinned the growth of the global economy, and evaluate the challenges that affected it’. Specifically, the focus here is whether countries prioritising their national interests – whether it was in the form of the US embarking on measures that undermined international trade and cooperation to address its “twin deficits” or the rise of “new” protectionism – constituted the root cause of the “Crisis Decades” from 1973 to 2000. Candidates are to utilise evidence relevant to the period of 1973 to 2000 and ensure that seminal causes pertinent to the entire period are included in the discussion e.g., collapse of

the Bretton Woods system; the 1973 and 1979 Oil Crises; the rise of “new” protectionism; the Debt Crisis.

In terms of defining the ‘prioritisation of national interests’, it would be ideal for candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the term, whereby it is **broad**er than a narrower and a phrase more laden with value judgement e.g., ‘the selfish pursuit of national interests. Thus, stronger answers would minimally consider the US’s relinquishment of its role of leading the global economy via institutions such as the BWS and the rise of “new” protectionism within the ambit of the ‘prioritisation of national interests’. In addition, candidates should avoid arguing that the term ‘prioritisation of national interests’ imposes the same value judgement as ‘the selfish pursuit of national interests’ and in doing so, allow their essay to become unfocused and distracted by arguing whether it was within the rights of, for example, the US to prioritise national interests in view of the genuine challenges it faced due to the “twin deficits”. Stronger answers would also clearly articulate what alternative factors constituted if they were not deemed to be the ‘prioritisation of national interests’ e.g., geopolitical issues that transcended purely national interests (Oil Crises); systemic issues resulting in the overall lack of regulation in lending and borrowing practices (Debt Crisis).

Stronger answers would anchor their analysis upon the concept of ‘cause and effect’ (**#2**) and establish a clear set of criteria or a criterion that enables them to weigh causes against one another to argue that there was a hierarchy of causes and to ascertain where the ‘prioritisation of national interests’ resides within that hierarchy. Critically, candidates should be able to highlight how there are both merits and limitations to proposing that the rise of “new” protectionism was the underlying cause of the “Crisis Decades” and how it is imperative to clarify whether a cause can better explain, for example, the longer-term impact of the developed economies vis-à-vis that of the developing ones. In this regard, candidates may wish to argue that the most plausible candidates for an “underlying cause” would be ones that had impact on a larger scale – affecting both developed and developing economies – and over a longer period – where the impact spanned considerably over the years from 1973 to 2000.

Stronger answers would avoid primarily listing plausible causes for the “Crisis Decades” without overt weighing of factors using a set of criteria or a criterion and instead, analyse available evidence (**#1**) to address the question directly and obviously (**#1**). For instance, instead of narrating how the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the 1973 Oil Crisis played a part and implicitly suggest that both were important, a stronger answer would argue that the former’s importance exceeded that of the latter as it was the former that gave rise to the latter. Alternatively, a stronger answer may wish to argue that the 1973 Oil Crisis was likelier to be an underlying cause as it not only exacerbated the impact of the collapse of the Bretton Woods system but its longer-term impact, when coupled with that of the 1979 Oil Crisis, could be seen in the Debt Crisis that plagued especially the Third World countries from the 1980s.

In terms of the structure, stronger answers would display coherence (**#3**) from the Introduction through to the Conclusion, demonstrating control of the argument and avoiding situations where the answers may fail to articulate the overall direction of the argument in the Introduction, treat paragraphs as distinct silos from each other, and/or contain paragraphs that contradict each other.

**3      ‘Built upon Confucian values.’ How far do you agree with this statement regarding Taiwan’s economic success from the 1970s to 1990? [30]**

This question is based on the syllabus learning outcome that requires students to ‘analyse the causal relationships that underpinned the economic transformation in South Korea and Taiwan over time’. Specifically, the focus here is whether Confucian values were the underlying cause for Taiwan’s economic success from the 1970s to 1990. Candidates are to utilise evidence relevant to the period of the 1970s to 1990 and ensure that seminal causes pertinent to the entire period are included in the discussion – for example, they should also address the role of significant pre-1970 causes such as US aid within the context of the Cold War as this would help explain the growth seen in the 1970s.

A clear definition of ‘Confucian values’ is integral to facilitate well-rounded analysis. Here, candidates could define ‘Confucian values’ as embodying and emphasising the following: high savings; valuing education; strong familial ties, and so on. Weaker answers would treat the term as self-explanatory, or simply define it as “culture”, and make implicit connections between Confucian values and other phenomenon in Taiwan that contributed to economic success e.g., the proliferation of SMEs and their concrete impact on Taiwan’s economy.

Stronger answers would anchor their analysis upon the concept of ‘cause and effect’ (#2) and establish a clear set of criteria or a criterion that enables them to weigh causes against one another to argue that there was a hierarchy of causes and to ascertain where the ‘Confucian values’ resides within that hierarchy to clearly address what constituted an underlying / foundational cause (corresponding to the notion of “built upon”). Critically, candidates would avoid simply taking economic success to be synonymous with economic growth and confine their evidence to a hodgepodge of statistics that reflect ad hoc growth and allude to economic success. Stronger answers would demonstrate a clear understanding of the key economic phases that Taiwan underwent from the 1970s to 1990 and assess the extent to which, for example, a particular cause contributed to the ability of Taiwan to modernise agriculture and move towards import-substitution industrialisation.

Stronger answers would avoid primarily listing events and instead, analyse available evidence (#1) to address the question directly and obviously. For instance, instead of narrating what happened in each decade or primarily describing how each factor contributed to success, candidates should minimally be able to highlight how Confucian values were in terms of the propensity to save and the strong work ethic, actors – such as the government and private businesses – had to enact policies to capitalise upon these favourable conditions. Thus, conceptually, candidates would also need to foreground another aspect of ‘cause and effect’ where stronger answers would assess how it was the interplay of actors and conditions that perhaps better explain Taiwan’s prolonged economic success during the period.

In terms of the structure, stronger answers would display coherence (#3) from the Introduction through to the Conclusion, demonstrating control of the argument and avoiding situations where the answers may fail to articulate the overall direction of the argument in the Introduction, treat paragraphs as distinct silos from each other, and/or contain paragraphs that contradict each other.

**4 To what extent did the UN Charter's empowerment of the Security Council's Permanent Five members render the UN powerless to achieve its aims? [30]**

This question is based on the syllabus learning outcomes that require students to 'analyse the causal relationships that underpinned the extent of effectiveness of the UN, and evaluate the extent to which this contributed to maintaining international security and safeguarding international law across different contexts, and over time' and 'analyse the diverse interests and perspectives of member-states and principal organs, which influenced decision-making in the UN'. Specifically, the focus here is on whether the UN's structural design where it afforded significant power to the P5 was ultimately more of a boon or a bane for its aims. Candidates would need to pay particular attention to the impact of the diverse interests within the P5 itself and in the larger context, the P5's interests vis-à-vis that of other member states and organs. Stronger answers would provide sufficient breadth of analysis – assessing a range of examples spanning from 1945 to 2000.

While the veto power granted to the P5 via Article 27 is a critical component of the UN's empowerment of the P5, stronger answers would note how "did the UN Charter's empowerment of the Security Council's Permanent Five members" can also apply to broader powers granted to the Security Council. These include, but are not limited to:

- The General Assembly appointing the Secretary-General upon the recommendation of the Security Council (Article 97);
- The Security Council's, and especially the P5's, votes are needed to push through resolutions (this can include but is different from the veto e.g., the USSR's boycott of the UN during the Korean War that threatened to undermine the SC's ability to pass a resolution on and intervene in Korea) (Articles 27(1) to 27(3)).

Stronger answers would anchor their analysis of the question upon the concept of 'cause and effect' (#2) and assess how causes and consequences were complex in nature, where they were often intertwined. In doing so, these stronger answers would likely arrive at least two conclusions: (1) one must avoid descending into mono-causal analysis and instead, consider how the UN Charter's empowerment of the P5 yielded both negative (e.g., veto undermining UN aims) and positive (e.g., significant powers afforded by the Charter provided P5 with incentive to pursue UN's aims) consequences for the UN; and (2) the UN's effectiveness was not predicated solely upon the powers it afforded the P5 where, for example, prevailing conditions – such as the Cold War – or the willingness of host parties to consent to UN intervention could aid its effectiveness even when any members of the P5 acted in ways that potentially undermined the UN's goals. Critically, candidates must avoid agreeing at any juncture that the UN was genuinely 'powerless' to achieve its aims. Instead, when analysing salient examples, they should note that no UN mission for example was either entirely a failure or an unqualified success.

Stronger answers would avoid primarily listing events and instead, analyse available evidence (#1) to address the question directly and obviously. For instance, instead of narrating what happened across different case studies e.g., Suez, Congo, etc, candidates would focus on utilising key details pertinent to the UN Charter's empowerment of the P5 and perhaps adjudge the UN's empowerment of the P5 to be a short-term impediment in the cause of the Suez Crisis (with the British and French vetoes) but this was eventually overcome because the Cold War afforded the US significant incentive to circumvent these vetoes, suggesting then that the given claim is largely problematic.

In terms of the structure, stronger answers would display coherence (#3) from the Introduction through to the Conclusion, demonstrating control of the argument and avoiding situations

where the answers may fail to articulate the overall direction of the argument in the Introduction, treat paragraphs as distinct silos from each other, and/or contain paragraphs that contradict each other.

**5      ‘The end of the Cold War was the perfect antidote to the UN’s problems.’ How far do you agree with this description of UN efforts to maintain peace and security from 1945 to 2000? [30]**

This question is based on the syllabus learning outcomes that require students to ‘analyse the causal relationships that underpinned the extent of effectiveness of the UN, and evaluate the extent to which this contributed to maintaining international security and safeguarding international law across different contexts, and over time’. Specifically, the focus here is whether the end of the Cold War removed all obstacles for the UN and provided it prevailing conditions conducive for unparalleled success. Candidates are to utilise evidence from 1945 to 2000 and to ensure the full requirements of the question are met, stronger answers would ensure every decade from that period is addressed.

Stronger answers would anchor their analysis of the question upon the concept of ‘change and continuity’ (#2) and conclude that changes and continuities could co-exist alongside each other where, for example, the end of the Cold War saw significant changes – such as the decline of superpower rivalry – that facilitated greater UN effectiveness (e.g., Persian Gulf War) but there were also continuities (e.g., the imperative of securing host party consent by virtue of the UN needing to uphold the sovereignty of nations) that could persist in undermining the UN’s effectiveness even in the post-Cold War period.

Stronger answers would avoid primarily listing events and instead, analyse available evidence (#1) to address the question directly and obviously. Ideally, stronger answers would be able to identify an overarching argument in each paragraph e.g., Cold War politics and compare a case study from the Cold War period against that of the post-Cold War period. For example, a candidate could highlight how the end of the Cold War was far from the ‘perfect antidote’ to the UN’s problems because, as long as it relied heavily on the political will of the US, it might see greater success where the US was incentivised to align itself with the UN’s aims (e.g., Suez Crisis) but witness significant failure where the US was disincentivised to do so (e.g., Somalia).

In terms of the structure, stronger answers would display coherence (#3) from the Introduction through to the Conclusion, demonstrating control of the argument and avoiding situations where the answers may fail to articulate the overall direction of the argument in the Introduction, treat paragraphs as distinct silos from each other, and/or contain paragraphs that contradict each other.