

Edexcel – AS GCE Unit 1: Historical Themes in Breadth Option D	D4 Stalin's Russia, 1924–53	Essay Question
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Examiner's Specific Advice

Remember this is a breadth, not a depth, study. The specification gives you four points, but questions may well require the inclusion of material from more than one, so don't leave out any in your revision.

Typical question stems are 'To what extent?', 'How far?', 'How significant was?', 'How accurate is it to say that?' and 'Why?'

Of the 40 minutes spent on your chosen question, you should spend five minutes planning to organise the shape of your answer and to help you remember what each section will be about. Many good answers are accompanied by mind maps that candidates have drawn up.

Don't neglect the conclusion, where you should make it clear why you have argued the way you have and reinforce the evaluation of the relative importance of the various factors in the essay.

Exemplar Question

How significant were the personalities of the contenders to succeed Lenin in accounting for Stalin's defeat of his opponents in the years 1924–29?

(30 marks)

Planning Your Response

This is a common type of question where you are given one significant factor and are asked to assess its importance alongside other factors which you are expected to know about. Draw up a brief plan to remind yourself of the factors to be considered and jot down why each factor is relevant to the outcome – Stalin's victory by 1929.

Plan

Examiner's Exemplar Answer 1

In the years after Lenin's death, there was no clear successor to his leadership. This was the first time such an event had happened as the hierarchy of the Tsars before him was clear (1). There were many with high

(1) Good point.

aspirations in the communist party and this resulted in a power struggle between Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Rykov, Tomsy and Bukharin (2).

(2) There is no indication of how the answer will be argued.

The first opportunity to seize power was Lenin's funeral. During this time Stalin told Trotsky the wrong date for Lenin's funeral so Trotsky missed it. Stalin then used the funeral to his advantage, setting himself up as a disciple of Lenin and one who would carry on his ways. This shows that the personalities of Stalin's opponents were important because Trotsky did not think Stalin would deceive him in this way which clearly made him an idiot! It also shows that Stalin's cunning played a big part in the power struggle as he planned ways to make himself look good (3).

(3) This paragraph needs to be developed to explain how or with whom.

In May 1924, it was discovered that Lenin had written a last testament. In this he praised Trotsky and Bukharin but spoke badly of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev. When Stalin discovered this he wanted to keep it a secret. Zinoviev and Kamenev allowed this because they did not see Stalin as a threat and it would have made them look bad and Trotsky look good. This shows that the personalities of the opponents did play a part in Stalin's victory because Zinoviev and Kamenev were too trustworthy and underestimated Stalin (4).

(4) Relevant to given factor.

Later in 1924 was the thirteenth Party Congress. Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev announced their policies. Trotsky disagreed with them but would have easily lost out on votes as the party was full of Stalinists. He could have appealed to people inside and outside the party but didn't as he had approved the ban on factions in 1921. This shows that the personalities of Stalin's opponents played a part in his victory, because although Trotsky strongly opposed his ideas, he was not willing to act on it and attempt to prevent his leadership.

Zinoviev and Kamenev mounted a campaign against Trotsky questioning his loyalty to the party and highlighting his opposition towards Lenin previous to 1917. Trotsky responded by pointing out they had also been against Lenin. As this happened, Stalin was busy filling the party with his supporters so that he was able to assure victory. This shows that the personalities of Stalin's opponents did play a part in his victory because they weren't smart enough to see through him. It also shows that Stalin's cunning was responsible as he was able to play his opponents off against each other (5).

(5) This paragraph brings the given factor section to a close – plenty of valid knowledge is shown, but this is often being used descriptively.

Stalin then switched his alliances to Bukharin and the right wing. He supported the NEP. Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky formed the triumvirate against him but

were expelled from the party for factionalism. After this Stalin attacked the right, resulting in him expelling Bukharin, Rykov and Tomskey from the party. Stalin was now the undisputed leader of Russia.

This shows that although the personalities of his opponents held some significance to his victory, the most important factors allowing Stalin to seize power were Stalin's tactics, ability to plan ahead and cunning.

Examiner's Assessment

This essay nearly stays in Level 3 because it is mainly on the given factor. However, it shows just enough awareness of other factors (Lenin's testament, the ban on factions) to merit a low Level 4 (20 marks).

Examiner's Exemplar Answer 2

After Lenin's death in 1924, a leadership struggle took place in which the main contenders for power (Stalin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin) each tried to take over the leadership of the Communist government. I believe that the personalities of the contenders were significant in this struggle. However, more important were the other factors involved such as ideological factors, institutional factors and tactical manoeuvring (6).

Personality factors were important as they contributed towards Stalin's eventual success. Stalin himself was a seemingly simple character, who had an aptitude for administrative tasks, and this led many to refer to him as the 'grey blur'. Consequently this led to Stalin being underestimated, and so he could manipulate other contenders without notice. The personalities of other contenders were also to prove significant as Stalin was able to play on their weaknesses and defeat them. Trotsky was arrogant, popular (which increased jealousy) and Jewish: all factors that Stalin manipulated to have him removed from the party. Also some people feared that he might use the Red Army to make himself a military dictator like Napoleon had done in France. All of the other Communist leaders were indecisive and weak compared to Stalin, who was motivated and ruthless. Zinoviev and Kamenev had both been against the October revolution and Bukharin was gullible. Overall, personality factors led to Stalin being able to manipulate his opponents. The personalities factor is therefore significant as it contributed towards Stalin's ability to alienate and eliminate the other contenders (7).

(6) This is a clear start, giving the basic context and hinting at an awareness of a range of factors going beyond the given one.

(7) This section on the given factor is accurate but does not explain the impact of these perceived weaknesses of Trotsky; and does not include much on the personalities of the others.

Another factor involved in the leadership struggle, which I believe to be the most significant in accounting for Stalin's defeat of his opponents, was institutional factors. Stalin had positions which enabled him to control the 'party machine' and ultimately secure his success in the leadership struggle. He had roles of great importance, such as being General Secretary and Head of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, which enabled him to promote his supporters or remove his opponents. This meant that at any of the Congress meetings or elections to the Politburo, Stalin could ensure that he would have a majority and consequently be supported on crucial decisions. Stalin thrived in the bureaucratic environment of the Communist Party, and created a large power base for himself. Many Communists owed their careers to Stalin so they supported him on crucial votes – for example on ending NEP in 1928. This power significantly contributed towards his removal of the other contenders as he was able to manipulate party members and get more support for himself (8).

(8) This is a useful section, but it does not fully develop why these posts gave Stalin such influence. Explanation of the Lenin Enrolment would help.

Another important factor which partly caused Stalin's success in defeating his opponents during the years 1924–29 was Stalin's 'tactical manoeuvring': shifting alliances in order to gain influence or power. This began when Stalin allied with Zinoviev and Kamenev in the triumvirate. In this position Stalin was able to prevent Lenin's Testament (which was highly critical of Stalin) being shown to the party, as Zinoviev and Kamenev claimed that Stalin had now changed. The testament was a major threat to Stalin; however, through the triumvirate, he was able to neutralise it. The triumvirate also defeated Trotsky and his Opposition by emphasising Trotsky's disagreements with Lenin and undermining his position in the party. Trotsky was subsequently removed from several party positions. Stalin later allied with Bukharin in the duumvirate in order to remove Kamenev and Zinoviev after the breakdown of the triumvirate. In a similar way to the removal of Trotsky, Stalin's alliance resulted in the defeat of his opponents (9).

(9) This is another valid section, but it is not made clear why these tactics worked. Links to changing the economic context – failure of NEP by 1928 – and mention of the issue of factionalism would help.

A final cause which contributed to Stalin's defeat of his rivals was the ideological factors involved. Due to his position in the ideological centre of the party, Stalin was able to adopt certain ideological standpoints at crucial points in the leadership struggle. For example, when he needed to strengthen his alliance with Bukharin, Stalin began opposing the idea of 'permanent revolution' (the proposal that the communist regime in Russia could only take place with the support of other socialist countries). Other ideological debates that Stalin used to

his advantage by adopting or discarding were the 'future of the revolution' debate (about whether the party was becoming too bureaucratic) and the 'great industrialisation' debate (about what the communist economic policy should be). By changing his opinion on ideological matters, Stalin was also able to gain support. For example after the removal of Kamenev and Zinoviev, Stalin took a stance on the ideological left wing of the party when trying to defeat Bukharin, because the former supporters of the left wing would then support Stalin (10).

In conclusion, I believe that the personalities of the contenders were quite significant when accounting for Stalin's defeat of his opponents in the power struggle. However, in my judgement other factors are more important. Personality factors allowed Stalin to manipulate the other contenders to achieve his own aims. However, I believe this is the least important cause – the most important cause of Stalin's success was institutional factors, as they allowed Stalin to gradually increase his support and expand his power base, which was crucial in communist party decisions. All the big decisions got taken by these party members and many owed loyalty to Stalin. Other important factors that contributed to Stalin's defeat of his rivals were his skill at tactical manoeuvring and his use of ideology.

Examiner's Assessment

This is a clear answer which is focused on the question throughout. Each paragraph targets a particular aspect of Stalin's victory. Supporting evidence is accurate. A reasonable effort has been made to evaluate the relative importance of the various factors in the conclusion.

However, opportunities to develop the points have been missed in many sections. There seems little recognition that between 1924 and 1929 contextual issues changed – this particularly would strengthen the economic and ideological sections. The given factor section is rather brief.

Overall, the essay merits a mid Level 5 (28 marks).

(10) This is an important section which needs linking to the previous one; a sentence explicitly explaining each issue would be advisable, as would some dates when changes occurred.

Edexcel – AS GCE Unit 1: Historical Themes in Breadth Option D	D4 Stalin's Russia, 1924–53	Mark Scheme
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How significant were the personalities of the contenders to succeed Lenin in accounting for Stalin's defeat of his opponents in the years 1924–29?

(30 marks)

Target: AO1a and AO1b

Level 1	<p>Candidates will produce mostly simple statements. These will be supported by limited factual material which has some accuracy and relevance, although not directed at the focus of the question. The material will be mostly generalised. There will be few, if any, links between the simple statements.</p> <p><i>The qualities of Level 1 are securely displayed; material is convincing in range and depth consistent with Level 1. The writing may have limited coherence and will be generally comprehensible, but passages will lack both clarity and organisation. The skills needed to produce effective writing will not normally be present. Frequent syntactical and/or spelling errors are likely to be present.</i></p> <p>Low Level 1: 1–2 marks The qualities of Level 1 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth and the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>Mid Level 1: 3–4 marks The qualities of Level 1 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth or the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>High Level 1: 5–6 marks The qualities of Level 1 are securely displayed.</p> <p>Specific to exemplar question Written in simple statements supported by material of limited accuracy and relevance, and not directed at reasons for Stalin's victory.</p>	(1–6)
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<p>Level 2</p>	<p>Candidates will produce a series of simple statements supported by some mostly accurate and relevant factual material. The analytical focus will be mostly implicit and there are likely to be only limited links between the simple statements. Material is unlikely to be developed very far.</p> <p><i>The writing will have some coherence and will be generally comprehensible, but passages will lack both clarity and organisation. Some of the skills needed to produce effective writing will be present. Frequent syntactical and/or spelling errors are likely to be present.</i></p> <p>Low Level 2: 7–8 marks The qualities of Level 2 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth and the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>Mid Level 2: 9–10 marks The qualities of Level 2 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth or the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>High Level 2: 11–12 marks The qualities of Level 2 are securely displayed.</p> <p>Specific to exemplar question Will contain more knowledge about Stalin than at Level 1 but still not targeting the question. Points that are made will not be developed.</p>	<p>(7–12)</p>
<p>Level 3</p>	<p>Candidates' answers will attempt analysis and will show some understanding of the focus of the question. They will, however, include material which is either descriptive, and thus only implicitly relevant to the question's focus, or which strays from that focus. Factual material will be accurate but it may lack depth and/or relevance in places.</p> <p><i>The writing will be coherent in places but there are likely to be passages which lack clarity and/or proper organisation. Only some of the skills needed to produce convincing extended writing are likely to be present. Syntactical and/or spelling errors are likely to be present.</i></p> <p>Low Level 3: 13–14 marks The qualities of Level 3 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth and the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>Mid Level 3: 15–16 marks The qualities of Level 3 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth or the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>High Level 3: 17–18 marks The qualities of Level 3 are securely displayed.</p>	<p>(13–18)</p>

	<p>Specific to exemplar question Trying to explain Stalin's victory in a mainly analytical way, although the focus may occasionally stray and there may be some narrative patches – quite possibly when describing the shifting alliances.</p>	
Level 4	<p>Candidates offer an analytical response which relates well to the focus of the question and which shows some understanding of the key issues contained in it. The analysis will be supported by accurate factual material which will be mostly relevant to the question asked. The selection of material may lack balance in places.</p> <p><i>The answer will show some degree of direction and control but these attributes may not be sustained throughout the answer. The candidate will demonstrate the skills needed to produce convincing extended writing but there may be passages which lack clarity or coherence. The answer is likely to include some syntactical and/or spelling errors.</i></p> <p>Low Level 4: 19–20 marks The qualities of Level 4 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth and the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>Mid Level 4: 21–22 marks The qualities of Level 4 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth or the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>High Level 4: 23–24 marks The qualities of Level 4 are securely displayed.</p> <p>Specific to exemplar question Will make a clear attempt to analyse the different factors responsible for Stalin's success and will cover 'other' factors as well as personalities. Factual support will be accurate and relevant. Range may not cover all the potentially valid issues (personalities; ideology; institutional factors; the suppression of Lenin's testament; the ban on factions; the manipulation of Lenin's legacy; tactical plays).</p>	(19–24)

Level 5	<p>Candidates offer an analytical response which directly addresses the focus of the question and which demonstrates explicit understanding of the key issues contained in it. It will be broadly balanced in its treatment of these key issues. The analysis will be supported by accurate, relevant and appropriately selected factual material which demonstrates some range and depth.</p> <p><i>The exposition will be controlled and the deployment logical. Some syntactical and/or spelling errors may be found but the writing will be coherent overall. The skills required to produce convincing extended writing will be in place.</i></p> <p>Low Level 5: 25–26 marks The qualities of Level 5 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth and the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>Mid Level 5: 27–28 marks The qualities of Level 5 are displayed, but material is less convincing in its range/depth or the quality of written communication does not conform.</p> <p>High Level 5: 29–30 marks The qualities of Level 5 are securely displayed.</p> <p>Specific to exemplar question Sustains its focus on Stalin's victory and shows clear understanding of the key factors involved, dealing with them in a reasonably balanced way. Supporting evidence will be selected discriminatingly, and be accurate. Makes a valid effort to evaluate the importance of different factors so it will be much more than a 'list' of reasons.</p>	(25–30)
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Edexcel – AS GCE Unit 1: Historical Themes in Breadth Option D	D4 Stalin's Russia, 1924–53	Chronology
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Chronology: Key Events in *Stalin's Russia, 1924–53*

Year	Month	Event
1924	21 January	Lenin dies – subsequent funeral – not attended by Trotsky; Stalin delivers the oration
	May	CP Central Committee decides against publishing Lenin's testament Collective leadership begins with Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev forming unofficial triumvirate
	October	Ideological war of words begun by Trotsky ('Lessons of October')
1925		Trotsky loses position as Commissar for War

		Zinoviev and Kamenev form 'United Opposition', calling for end to NEP – but defeated in CP Congress 'Socialism in one country' accepted as policy
1926		Trotsky joins United Opposition CP Congress votes against them, dismissing Zinoviev and Kamenev as party bosses and expelling Trotsky from Politburo and Central Committee
		Creation of Komsomol
1927		CP congress expels Trotsky from party
		War scare with Britain
1928		Grain procurement crisis – CP Congress supports Stalin in abandoning NEP and promoting rapid industrialisation – signals defeat of Bukharin and the right, and start of five-year plans and collectivisation
		Shakhty industrial trial sets tone for industrial managers
		Religious persecution stepped up
1929		Trotsky expelled from Soviet Union
		Mounting peasant resistance to collectivisation
		Stalin's 50th birthday celebrations mark the start of personality cult
1930		'Dizzy with Success' article by Stalin to temporarily slow down pace of collectivisation
1931		Cultural Revolution ends – drive to restore traditional educational standards begins
1932		Famine becomes really serious
		Trial of the Ryutin group
		Greater control of the arts becomes obvious with emphasis on Socialist Realism
		Suicide of Nadia, Stalin's second wife
1933		Famine at its height
		Second five-year plan begins
		Widespread purges within CP – card checks and expulsions
		Hitler comes to power in Germany
1934		Assassination of Kirov, and subsequent intensification of purges under Yagoda
		Union of Soviet Writers formed – power to ban or censor any writing not promoting Socialist Realism
1935		Start of Stakhanovite movement – incentives, as well as punishments, in the workplace
		Purges organised by Yezhov, Vyshinsky and Beria
1936		New Family Code introduced – restrictions on abortion, divorce and homosexuality
		'Great' purges begin – 'Trial of the Sixteen' on left of CP, including Zinoviev and Kamenev
		New Constitution published – claims to be that of a 'classless society'
		Anti-Comintern Pact of Germany, Italy and Japan
1937		'Trial of the Seventeen' on the right of CP Start of military purges – victims including Marshal Tukhachevsky

		Purging of lower ranks of CP in regions and of industrial managers – pace set by Yezhov ('Yezhovschina')
1938		Third five-year plan begins – emphasis back to rearmament, away from consumer goods
		'Trial of the Twenty', including Bukharin and Yagoda Continued purging of armed forces and of lower CP ranks Beria replaced Yezhov at end of year
		Munich Agreement shows that West unwilling to work with Russia against Hitler
1939		Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact buys time and divides Poland with Germany
		Invasion of East Poland, then Finland
		Stalin's 60th birthday celebrations – personality cult reaches new heights
1940		Assassination of Trotsky in Mexico
		Peace with Finland Annexation of Baltic States
		Absenteeism from work made a criminal offence
1941		Germany invades Russia – 'Great Patriotic War' begins
		Siege of Leningrad begins Germans thrown back from Moscow
1942		German Sixth Army encircled at Stalingrad
1943		Surrender of German Sixth Army
		Battle of Kursk
1944		Siege of Leningrad lifted Germans in retreat westwards Second front opened in France
1945		Yalta Conference Defeat of Germany Potsdam Conference
1946		Fourth five-year plan begins
		Communist control of East Europe becoming established
1951		Fifth five-year plan begins
1952		Death of Stalin

Teaching Activities

1. The power struggle lends itself well to a 'Top Trumps' type card game where each card can feature a category such as: contribution to the seizure of power; contribution to the party before 1917; relations with Lenin; roles in the government; roles in the CP; appeal inside the CP.
2. Take any essay question and construct an analytical grid that makes you categorise the content of the answer. For example, try this one:

How far did Stalin's social policies change the lives of women and children in the years to 1945?

	Brief description of policies with key dates	Impact on women or children	Extent of change (1–10)
Family issues (marriage, divorce, abortion, benefits)			
Employment			
Education			
Youth groups			

Adapt the column headings according to what the question is asking. This approach forces you to analyse and select what is relevant.

- Convert the following essay into a higher-level answer. Keep the same paragraph structure, but respond to the comments on the right, making any extra improvements you can. Try to improve the writing style.

How far was the dramatic development of a war economy responsible for the USSR's victory in the Second World War?

<p><u>The dramatic development of the war economy was definitely important and was key to helping Russia gain victory in the war; however, this was not the sole reason. For example, they also won because of Russian soldiers and the fighting they did, also the Lend Lease agreement Russia made with the USA. In addition to this the planning already made by Gosplan and other agreements made were vital. But the main responsibility lay on the Germans because the mistakes they made allowed Russia to win the war (1).</u></p> <p><u>To some extent the war economy was the most important reason for Russia's victory. This is because all Russia's money was put into industry, the industry that made and supplied all the weapons needed to fight. The people in the factories at this time were mostly women as men were conscripted into the army. These women worked seven days a week for up to fourteen hours with no time off. So in the factories they were making all they could for the army at the front. So yes, the war economy was key to victory because without it the soldiers would not have had anything to fight with, allowing them to be beaten easily (2).</u></p> <p><u>However, there were more important events and agreements that</u></p>	<p>(1) Good range of factors hinted at and some sense of where answer is going.</p> <p>(2) Basic detail supplied on given factor, but not developed. What were they producing? How much? etc.</p>
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<p><u>allowed for victory. First there were the soldiers themselves who took their orders and fought well and this was because of the morale Stalin had given them. In order to boost the soldiers Stalin told them to fight for the motherland, so the soldiers then took this on board and fought for their country and families. The soldiers were also well equipped and trained properly, as the third five-year plan catered for this as they had always thought the Germans might invade. The Nazi-Soviet pact that Stalin and Hitler had previously made also had allowed the time for them to prepare. So the soldiers themselves were vital in the victory because of the good morale they had which allowed them to be capable of beating the Germans (3).</u></p>	<p>(3) Valid reason – but what about earlier five-year plans? How had this morale been instilled?</p>
<p><u>Moreover, another important reason for victory was the Lend-Lease agreement that Russia had with the USA. It was key as it gave Russia another boost as it involved a sum of money. But this agreement allowed the soldiers fighting for Russia to eat, as the USA supplied them with food (4). So without the Lend-Lease the Russians would not have got victory as the soldiers would have starved to death. Therefore, there would have been no one to fight the Germans.</u></p>	<p>(4) What food? Needs details.</p>
<p><u>Finally the most important reason was the tactical mistakes the Germans made allowing Russia to gain victory. For example, because the Germans did not force Leningrad to give in, they did not get control of all of Russia's industry. Also the Germans failed to destroy Russia's infrastructure unlike the Russians themselves who destroyed everything they could in their scorched earth policy. The Germans did not destroy Russia when they had the chance (5).</u></p>	<p>(5) Valid reason, but the whole paragraph lacks clarity and detail.</p>
<p>To conclude, the dramatic development of Russia's war economy was to a small extent responsible because it gave Russia's army the materials to fight effectively. However, to a larger extent the mistakes of the Germans allowed Russia's victory as they did not take over properly when they had the chance. Along with other reasons this was the most important. For example, with the soldiers themselves and high morale and with supplies from the USA.</p>	
<p>Overall comments Focused on the question, with good range of reasons but very little depth of explanation. This essay achieves mid Level 4 (21 marks).</p>	

Resources

Jonathan Davis, *Stalin – from Grey Blur to Great Terror* (Philip Allan, 2008)

Terry Fiehn and Chris Corin, *Communist Russia under Lenin and Stalin* (Hodder Education, 2002)

Michael Lynch, *Stalin's Russia 1924–53* (Hodder, 2008)

David McGill, *Stalin – the Five Year Plans and Collectivisation* (Philip Allan, 2008)

Chris Ward, *Stalin's Russia* (Hodder Arnold, 2005)

Websites

www.SchoolHistory.co.uk

www.learningcurve.gov.uk/heroesvillains/g4/

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/RUSstalin.htm