**History: Sample A**

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| **Extended Essay: Exemplar Commentary** | | | |
| Subject | History | If applicable, theme for WSEE |  |
| If applicable, category for language essays |  | If applicable, subjects used for WSEE |  |
| Title of essay | To what extent was Molotov a driving force behind Stalin’s foreign and domestic policies in the 1930s? | | | |
| Essay number | A | Examination session | May 2018 |  |
| **Assessment of extended essay** | | | |  |
| Criteria | Mark awarded | Commentary | | |
| A: Focus and method  [6] | 6 | The topic is communicated accurately and effectively along with the purpose of the research. The research question is clearly stated and appropriately focused. The methodology is mentioned in the introduction and is complete, with an appropriate range of relevant sources. The methods outlined are applied consistently and arguments are posited with frequent references to the research question.  The mark band 5-6 (upper end) is the best fit for this criterion as the essay meets all the requirements. | |  |
| B: Knowledge and understanding  [6] | 5 | Good knowledge is demonstrated throughout, but there are some lapses of understanding. The use of appropriate terminology and concepts is good. The topic is placed within the broader historical context of Stalin’s rule. Overall, the level of knowledge is borderline good/excellent, but understanding best reflects the indicators in the 3-4 mark band (upper end). The use of terminology and concepts is sufficient for the 5-6 band. The best fit would be the lower end of the 5-6 band. | |  |
| C: Critical thinking  [12] | 8 | The level of research is good and clearly relevant to the research question and so meets the indicators of the 7-9 band. Analysis is adequate/good with individual points partially supported by the evidence, so this strand barely meets the 7-9 band indicators. There is some evaluation, but this is insufficient to go beyond the upper end of the 4-6 band. Overall, the level of research and analysis brings this essay to the 7-9 mark band, but at mid-range. | |  |
| D: Presentation  [4] | 4 | This is well presented. There is clear structure. Referencing is appropriate with footnotes used for citing sources correctly and consistently. The layout is clear and supports the reading, understanding and evaluation of the essay. It meets all the indicators for this 3-4 mark band. | |  |
| E: Engagement  [6]  (not included) |  | The assessment of an accompanying RPPF will affect the overall mark awarded and the grade achieved. | |  |
| Total marks awarded | 23/28 | The topic is identified and the research question is appropriate and stated clearly. Context is given and its significance explained. A focus on the research question is maintained effectively throughout the essay with frequent linkage to the topic. The structure is clear and, for the most part, each argument is explained and supported with sources used effectively, as indicated in the introduction. The knowledge demonstrated is relevant and of a good standard, but not always as thorough as it might be given the quantity of material that has been published on this period of Soviet history. Molotov’s adherence to ideology, for example, could be better explained and more fully supported. Similarly, a better understanding of Stalin’s inner circle (not just Molotov) would have been useful, to add further context. Appropriate terminology is used accurately and effectively. The level of research carried out is good and the material is analysed in a way that is clearly relevant to the question. Conclusions for individual points of analysis are stated, but not always effectively with some assertions rather weakly supported. There is an effective and reasoned argument attempted throughout, but the evaluation of sources is somewhat neglected. Several opportunities to strengthen analysis are missed. The formal presentation is very good and the layout supports the reading and understanding of the essay.  **Please note: as a result of modifying existing extended essays for illustrative purposes, not all exemplars have an accompanying RPPF for assessment under criterion E (this is a mandatory element for all essays as of 2018). As a result, this essay has been marked out of 28 rather than 34.** | |  |