

Paper 2 - 20th Century World History Topics Past Essay Questions

**2 questions will be asked for each topic. You are required to answer 2 questions, one from each topic.

I. Topic 10: Authoritarian States - 20th Century

Emergence of Authoritarian States

1. "The rise to power of authoritarian leaders was the result of the failure of existing regimes to address the economic problems of the population." With reference from two leaders, each chosen from a different region, to what extent do you agree with this statement?
2. Assess the importance of each of the following in the rise to power of one authoritarian leader: errors made by rivals; the use of propaganda; popular support.
3. Evaluate the contribution of economic instability and lack of a united opposition to the rise to power of two authoritarian leaders, each chosen from a different region.
4. "The rise to power of authoritarian or single-party leaders depended upon the use of force rather than popular support." With reference to two leaders, each chosen from a different region, to what extent do you agree with this statement?
5. Analyse the importance of ideology in the rise to power of two authoritarian leaders, each chosen from a different region.
6. Assess the importance of the following conditions on the emergence of one authoritarian state: social divisions, the impact of war, and the weakness of the existing political system.
7. Compare and contrast the methods that helped the rise to power of authoritarian leaders.

Consolidation and Maintenance of Power

1. Analyse the importance of foreign policy on the maintenance of power for two authoritarian rulers, each chosen from a different region.
2. Assess the extent to which ideological appeal aided the rise and rule of one authoritarian leader.
3. "Successful economic and social policies were essential for an authoritarian leader's maintenance of power." To what extent do you agree with this statement?
4. "Authoritarian leaders use political policies to maintain power." With reference to one authoritarian ruler, to what extent do you agree with this statement?
5. Analyse the methods used to maintain power by two authoritarian rulers, each chosen from a different region.
6. Assess the importance of the use of legal methods, charismatic leadership and the dissemination of propaganda to consolidate and maintain an authoritarian state.
7. "In order to achieve and retain power a leader of an authoritarian state needed to be ruthless, blind to human suffering and yet charismatic." To what extent do you agree with this assertion?
8. To what extent was the use of legal methods the most important way for an authoritarian ruler to consolidate and maintain power?
9. Identify the nature and extent of opposition to one authoritarian ruler, and assess the methods used to deal with such opposition.
10. In what ways, and with what success, did one authoritarian ruler deal with internal opposition?

Aims and Results of Policies

1. How successfully did one authoritarian ruler implement his political policies?
2. Evaluate the impact of the economic and social policies of two authoritarian leaders, each chose from a different region.
3. Examine the successes and failures of two authoritarian leaders each chosen from a different region.
4. With reference to one authoritarian state, examine its impact on the lives of its citizens
5. To what extent did two authoritarian rulers, each chosen from a different region, fulfill the promises made during their rise to power?
6. How and why was propaganda used by *two* authoritarian leaders, each chosen from a different region?
7. In what ways, and with what success, did one authoritarian rule deal with domestic challenges after gaining power?
8. Compare and contrast the status and treatment of women or minorities in two authoritarian states, each chosen from a different region.
9. Assess the aims and impact of the cultural polices in two authoritarian states, each chosen from a different region.

10. To what extent did one leader achieve an authoritarian state?

II. Topic 12: The Cold War: Superpower Tensions and Rivalries – 20th Century

Origins of the Cold War

- 1 Evaluate the role of the policies of the United States in the origins of the Cold War between 1945 and 1949.
2. To what extent was Stalin responsible for causing the Cold War?
3. For what reasons, and to what extent, did the Yalta Conference of February 1945 contribute to the origins of the Cold War?
4. “The Potsdam Conference marked the end of the wartime alliance and laid the foundations for post-war hostility.” With reference to the period up to 1949, to what extent do you agree with this statement?
5. “Post war enmity was the product of longer term ideological differences.” To what extent do you agree with this statement on the origins of the Cold War up to 1949?
6. “The conferences of 1945 at Yalta and Potsdam marked both the high point and the breaking point of the wartime alliance of East and West.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?
7. Discuss the reasons for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance by 1949.
8. Assess the impact of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan on the emergence of the superpower rivalry up to 1949.
9. Examine the role of economic interests in causing the breakdown of the Grand Alliance.
10. To what extent was the collapse of the wartime alliances between the USA and the USSR inevitable after they had defeated their common enemies in World War Two?
11. “The sovietization of Eastern and Central Europe after the Second World War was undertaken as a defensive measure by the Soviet Union.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Role of Germany

1. In what ways, and with what results, was Germany the key focus of the early stages of the Cold War?
2. Discuss the factors that prevented an agreement on Germany taking place between the USSR and US.
3. For what reasons, and with what results, was Germany a centre of Cold War tension between 1945-61?
4. Analyse the importance of Germany with respect to superpower relations throughout the Cold War.

US, USSR, and China

- 1.. “Although it began in Europe the spread of the Cold War to other regions was a much more dangerous development.” To what extent do you agree with this judgment?
2. For what reason, and with what success did the Soviet Union adopt a policy of peaceful coexistence between 1956 and 1962?
3. To what extent did Khrushchev’s policy of peaceful coexistence bring about a change in superpower relations between 1956 and 1962.
4. Examine the importance of “peaceful coexistence” in the development of Sino-Soviet relations?
- 5.. To what extent was the US policy of containment successful in Asia?
6. Analyse the successes and failures of the United States policy of containment.
7. In what ways, and with what success, did the US attempt to prevent the global spread of Soviet influence between 1945 and 1962?
8. Discuss the impact of events in Asia on the development of the Cold War.
9. To what extent was there a thaw in the Cold War between 1953 and 1962?
10. In what ways, and with what success, did the US and the USSR attempt to reduce Cold War tensions between 1956 and 1979?
11. Analyse the reasons for, and consequences of, the breakdown of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1950s and 1960s.
12. Account for the change in Sino-Soviet relations after the death of Stalin in 1953.
13. Examine the changing nature of US-Sino relations between 1949 and 1972.
14. Discuss the reasons for hostility between the USSR and the PRC between 1956-1989.
- 15 Analyse the following reasons for the hostility between the USSR and the PRC between 1947 and 1979: ideological differences, self-interest, and the personality clashes of Mao and Khrushchev.
16. Compare and contrast Sino-Soviet relations and Sino-US relations between 1949-1979.
17. Assess the role of China in the Cold War.

18. How and why did the policies of either the USA or the USSR affect superpower rivalry between 1950 and 1970?
19. Evaluate the role of one superpower in the Cold War after 1970.
20. In what ways, and to what extent, did relations between East and West change in the period 1960-1970?
21. Analyse the nature of the Cold War and explain why, in spite of serious crises, it did not turn into a Third World War.

Détente

1. To what extent did Détente result in fundamental changes in the attitudes the US and SU had towards each other?
2. "Détente meant not friendship, but a strategy for relationship among enemies." Examine the reasons for Détente and what changes, if any, it brought to East-West relations.
3. "Despite the claims of those who promoted détente, its achievements were limited." To what extent do you agree with this statement?
4. To what extent did Détente improve relations between the superpowers
5. In what ways, and to what extent, did the Cold War become less confrontational after 1970?

End of the Cold War

1. Why was Soviet control over East European satellite states successful in the period 1945-1968 and why did it collapse between 1988 and 1991?
2. Assess the importance of détente and internal opposition to Communist rule in Communist countries, in ending the Cold War.
3. To what extent did economic problems in the Communist bloc bring about the end of the Cold War?
4. To what extent was Gorbachev responsible for bringing about the end of the Cold War?
5. Economic problems within the USSR and its sphere of influence dictated change in policy under Gorbachev." To what extent do you agree with this statement?
6. Assess the importance of ideological challenges, economic problems, and dissent in ending the Cold War in 1991.

Leaders and Nations

1. Analyse the impact of two leaders, each chosen from a different region, on the development of the Cold War.
2. Superpower rivalries did not remain static, but changed according to the beliefs of the leaders in charge. Making specific reference to two Cold War leaders, each chosen from a different region, to what extent do you agree with this statement?
3. Assess the impact of Cold War tensions on two countries (other than the US and USSR), each chosen from a different region.

Cold War Crises

1. Compare and contrast the causes and significance of two Cold War crises, each chosen from a different region.
 2. Analyse the impact of any two Cold War crises, each chosen from a different region.
 3. Superpower rivalries did not remain static, but changed according to the crises involving client states. Making specific reference to two Cold War crises, each chosen from a different region, to what extent do you agree with this statement?
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