

A Level History Paper 2

Conformity and Challenge in the USA: 1955-1992

Year 12 Summer Workbook
Source Questions and Knowledge Essays

Source Question: Mark Scheme Breakdown

Band 3 (8-12)

- Identifies what the sources say/imply
- Explains some quotations
- Adds contextual knowledge
- Comments on provenance ("Kennedy was President therefore he knows...")
- Gives a judgement on usefulness

But it also:

- Treats everything in the source as fact
- Describes provenance rather than applying it
- Doesn't distinguish between claims and evidence
- Evaluation is often general

Band 4 (13-16)

- Explains **why** the source/author is implying this
- Distinguishes between **claims** and **evidence** (but not always)
- Uses **precise** contextual knowledge to support **OR** challenge
- **Evaluates** provenance and links it to usefulness
- Weighs up **how** useful **different** parts of the source are

Band 5 (17-20)

- Interrogates **BOTH** sources throughout (**multiple inferences** from each)
- **Constantly** distinguishes between fact, claim, opinion and interpretation.
- Uses contextual knowledge to support **AND** challenge
- Explains what the source **can** and **cannot prove**
- Evaluates the weight of evidence
- **Compares sources throughout**

Generic Level Descriptors: Section A

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–3	• Demonstrates surface level comprehension of the source material without analysis, selecting some material relevant to the question, but in the form of direct quotations or paraphrases. • Some relevant contextual knowledge is included, with limited linkage to the source material. • Evaluation of the source material is assertive with little or no supporting evidence. Concepts of reliability or utility may be addressed, but by making stereotypical judgements.
2	4–7	• Demonstrates some understanding and attempts analysis of the source material by selecting and summarising information and making undeveloped inferences relevant to the question. • Contextual knowledge is added to information from the source material to expand, confirm or challenge matters of detail. • Evaluation of the source material is related to the specified enquiry but with limited support for judgement. Concepts of reliability or utility are addressed mainly by noting aspects of source provenance and judgements may be based on questionable assumptions.
3	8–12	• Demonstrates understanding of the source material and shows some analysis by selecting key points relevant to the question, explaining their meaning and selecting material to support valid inferences. • Deploys knowledge of the historical context to explain or support inferences as well as to expand, confirm or challenge matters of detail. • Evaluation of the source material is related to the specified enquiry and explanation of utility takes into account relevant considerations such as nature or purpose of the source material or the position of the author. Judgements are based on valid criteria but with limited justification.
4	13–16	• Analyses the source material, interrogating the evidence to make reasoned inferences and to show a range of ways the material can be used, for example by distinguishing between information and claim or opinion, although treatment of the two sources may be uneven. • Deploys knowledge of the historical context to illuminate and/or discuss the limitations of what can be gained from the content of the source material, displaying some understanding of the need to interpret source material in the context of the values and concerns of the society from which it is drawn. • Evaluation of the source material uses valid criteria which are justified and applied, although some of the evaluation may be weakly substantiated. Evaluation takes into account the weight the evidence will bear as part of coming to a judgement.
5	17–20	• Interrogates the evidence of both sources with confidence and discrimination, making reasoned inferences and showing a range of ways the material can be used, for example by distinguishing between information and claim or opinion. • Deploys knowledge of the historical context to illuminate and/or discuss the limitations of what can be gained from the content of the source material, displaying secure understanding of the need to interpret source material in the context of the values and concerns of the society from which it is drawn. • Evaluation of the source material uses valid criteria which are justified and fully applied. Evaluation takes into account the weight the evidence will bear as part of coming to a judgement and, where appropriate, distinguishes between the degree of certainty with which aspects of it can be used as the basis for claims.

Structure for Source Question Essay

To write our source question essays, we are going to use a "Themed Couplet Structure". The answer is not organised source-by-source; instead it is organised by reason/theme/inference deduced from the sources, with both sources discussed in every paragraph. This is a much stronger approach because it naturally creates comparison and evaluation.

1. Introduction - Set out:

- the enquiry focus
- what each source broadly argues
- a judgement on overall usefulness

2. Paragraph 1: Theme/Argument 1 inferred

3. Paragraph 2: Theme/Argument 2 inferred

4. Paragraph 3: Theme/Argument 3 inferred

5. Conclusion

- Overall judgement of use of both sources.
- What each source is particularly good for and why
- Limitations of each source
- *Therefore, the sources are most valuable when used together and alongside wider contextual evidence.*

Writing Frame for Source Question Paragraph (EICEC)

Evidence -> Inference -> Context -> Evaluation (by using provenance or own knowledge) -> Comparison (Repeat steps E.I.C.E for other source)

For every theme/reason inferred, you must analyse:

- Evidence/quotation
- Inference ("This suggests...")
- Context ("This is supported/challenged by...")
- Nature/Purpose/Origin
- Claim or fact?
- How useful is this point?
- Comparison with the other source

As an example, you can refer to the model answer I provided last lesson on the reasons for Kennedy's Space Programme Question.

Q1) How far could the historian make use of Sources A and B together to investigate the role of television in promoting conformity in the years 1955–63?

Source A: From a speech delivered by Frank Stanton, President of CBS Television, to a National Association of Broadcasters conference in 1960. The speech was delivered to television industry representatives at a time when television ownership had expanded rapidly across the United States. Stanton was defending the social value of television and promoting its importance within American society.

Television has become one of the greatest educational and cultural forces in American life. Through television, millions of Americans share the same news, entertainment and national experiences. Families gather together every evening to enjoy programmes that celebrate responsible citizenship, family values and the opportunities available in American society.

Television has strengthened the bonds that connect Americans across regions and social backgrounds. It has brought national events into the living room and helped create a shared understanding of our democratic values. In a fast-changing world, television provides stability and reinforces the principles that have made America successful.

Furthermore, television advertising allows consumers to learn about new products and improvements in technology that continue to improve the quality of life enjoyed by ordinary American families.

Source B: From Vance Packard, 'The Status Seekers' (1960). Packard was a journalist and social critic who became well known for criticising advertising, consumer culture and conformity in post-war America. The book was written for a mass audience and sought to encourage readers to question the effects of modern consumer society.

Television does far more than entertain. It encourages viewers to accept common ideas about success, family life and social behaviour. Night after night, millions of Americans watch the same programmes and absorb the same messages about how they should live.

Television advertising tells Americans what to buy and what standards they should aspire to. Increasingly, citizens judge themselves according to images presented on their television screens. Consumer goods are presented not simply as useful products but as symbols of status and acceptance.

There is a danger that television is reducing diversity of thought and encouraging individuals to conform to a narrow vision of what it means to be successful in America.

Q2) How far could the historian make use of Sources A and B together to investigate challenges to conformity in the years 1955–63?

Source A: From a newspaper editorial discussing the impact of rock and roll music on young Americans, 1956. The editorial was written for a largely adult readership during a period of growing concern about youth culture and social change.

The popularity of rock and roll among young Americans represents a worrying development. Many parents and educators believe that this new music encourages behaviour that challenges traditional standards of respectability and discipline.

The influence of performers such as Elvis Presley has created a youth culture that increasingly distances itself from established social values. Schools report growing concerns about behaviour, appearance and attitudes among students.

At a time when national unity is essential, many fear that the spread of rock and roll is encouraging rebellion rather than responsibility.

Source B: From an interview with a college student conducted for a youth magazine in California, 1960. The interview was published at a time when growing numbers of young Americans were becoming interested in rock and roll, Beat literature and alternative cultural movements.

Older generations often fail to understand why young people are attracted to new forms of music, literature and culture. For many students, these developments represent freedom and self-expression rather than rebellion.

We do not necessarily reject American society, but we do question whether conformity should be expected from everyone. Rock and roll, Beat literature and new cultural movements encourage individuals to think independently rather than simply accept the assumptions of previous generations.

Many young people believe that creativity and individuality are essential parts of a healthy society, even if this makes some adults uncomfortable.

Q3) How far could the historian make use of Sources A and B together to investigate the reasons for the introduction of Johnson's Great Society programme in the years 1964–68?

Source A: From a speech delivered by President Lyndon B. Johnson at the University of Michigan commencement ceremony, May 1964. Johnson was outlining his vision for what became known as the Great Society programme. The speech was delivered during a presidential election year to a university audience and was intended to build public support for future reforms.

The challenge facing America today is not simply to produce more wealth, but to ensure that prosperity improves the quality of life for every citizen. We have the opportunity to build not merely a richer nation, but a Great Society. A Great Society is a place where every child receives a quality education, where disease and poverty are no longer barriers to opportunity, and where all citizens are able to enjoy the benefits of freedom and progress.

The wealth of this nation has given us unprecedented possibilities. Yet too many Americans remain trapped in poverty despite the abundance around them. Too many communities lack decent schools, adequate healthcare and opportunities for advancement. Economic growth alone will not solve these problems. Government must take action to ensure that prosperity is shared more widely.

We must also recognise that progress is measured not only in economic terms. The quality of our cities, the beauty of our environment and the strength of our democratic institutions are equally important. The purpose of the Great Society is to create opportunities for all Americans and ensure that no citizen is excluded from the promise of this nation.

Future generations will judge us not simply by the size of our economy, but by whether we used our wealth and power to improve the lives of those most in need.

Source B: From an article written by a political commentator in 1968, the final year of Johnson's presidency. The article evaluates the Great Society after many of its programmes had been implemented and during a period of growing criticism of Johnson's leadership because of Vietnam and urban unrest.

President Johnson has presented the Great Society as a moral crusade against poverty and inequality. However, there are important political reasons behind the programme that should not be ignored. Johnson inherited the presidency following the assassination of John Kennedy and was determined to establish his own legacy. The Great Society provided an opportunity to demonstrate that the federal government could tackle social problems on an unprecedented scale.

The programme has undoubtedly been helped by a period of economic prosperity which has provided the government with the resources required to expand spending. Yet the timing of the reforms cannot be separated from the wider political circumstances of the 1960s. Growing civil rights protests, urban unrest and increasing criticism of inequality created pressure on politicians to act.

Johnson recognised that poverty and racial discrimination threatened the image of the United States as a modern and successful society. Measures such as Medicare, Medicaid and federal education funding were designed not only to improve living standards but also to strengthen confidence in government and reduce growing social tensions.

While supporters portray the Great Society as a humanitarian project, it can also be seen as an attempt to preserve social stability and increase public support for liberal government at a time of significant political and social change.

Historical Knowledge Essays

Please write an answer to **two** of these three essays:

1. *How far did affluence strengthen conformity in the years 1955–63?*
2. *To what extent was Johnson responsible for improving civil rights in the years 1963–68?*
3. *How significant was the student movement in challenging conformity?*