

When the NEP failed to produce results within its own terms, Stalin's only remaining major rival, Bukharin, who was the chief supporter of NEP, was thereby undermined by circumstances as much as by Stalin.

The true heir?

In fact, Stalin's rise owes almost as much to luck and the mistakes of his opponents as it does to conscious manipulation and the supposed power-mania of Stalin himself. He seems to have believed that he, rather than they, knew what Lenin would have done had he lived. This does not mean that Stalin was necessarily the 'true' heir of Lenin but it does mean that one can only understand Stalin if one sees him, first and foremost, as a revolutionary and as a self-appointed acolyte of Lenin.

Once in power, by 1928–29, he set about turning what he saw as Lenin's vision into reality at any cost. In actuality, it was at a tragic cost which undermined the vision itself.

Further reading

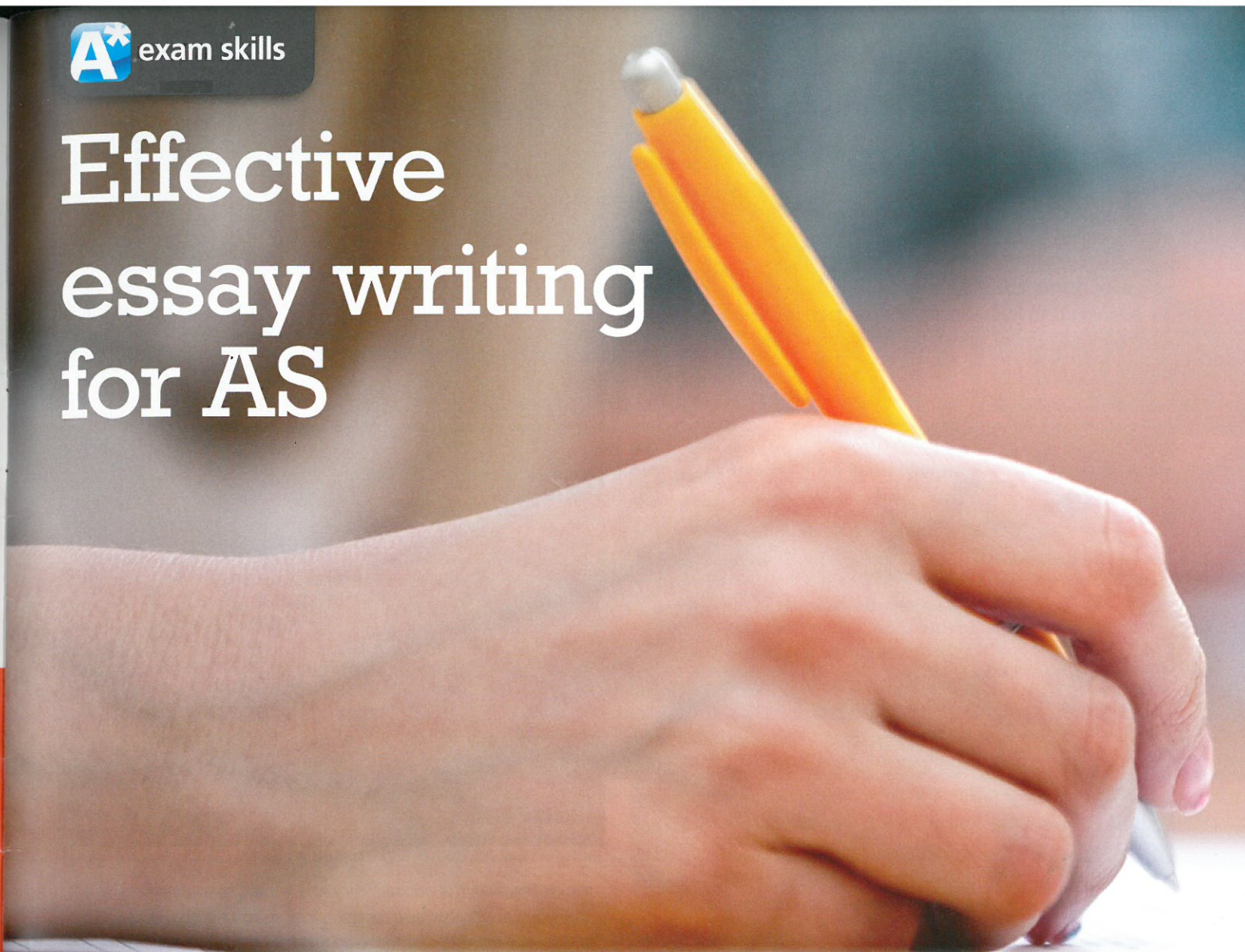
Rieber, A. J. (2001) 'Stalin, man of the borderlands', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 5, pp. 1651–91.

Suny, R. (1991) 'Beyond psychohistory: the young Stalin in Georgia', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 48–58.

Tucker, R.C. (1973) *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879–1929: A Study in History and Personality*, Norton.

Chris Read is professor of modern European history at The University of Warwick and chief editor of *MODERN HISTORY REVIEW*. His most recent books are *Lenin: A Revolutionary Life* (2005) and *War and Revolution in Russia 1914–22* (2013). His biography of Stalin will be published in 2016.

Effective essay writing for AS



Don't panic! We show you how to write great essays that meet the requirements of the new AS-level specification

The task of writing an essay worth 20 marks or more can seem a daunting experience for students commencing their sixth-form history studies. Just look at these potentially off-putting statements from an examination mark scheme:

- 'Consistent focus on the question'
- 'Accurate and detailed knowledge'
- 'Substantiated judgements'
- 'Well-developed line of reasoning'
- 'Communication with clarity'
- 'Clear and logically structured'
- 'Criteria against which to evaluate the factors'

But don't worry! Although every essay that you tackle will require a unique answer, there are a number of techniques that are common to all essays. With practice, you will be able to use those techniques when writing an essay for homework and also under timed examination conditions. This is important: you can take the *same* skills that you have refined and developed through all of those homework assignments into the exam with you.

Here you will find a step-by-step guide to planning and writing an AS-level history essay. Examples of each step are given for the following sample question:

Question

To what extent was Germany a parliamentary democracy in the period 1900–14?

Read the question

If there is one simple rule for effective essay writing in history, it is that you will do a lot better if you answer the question. Read the question *carefully*. Highlight the key words as a starting point, along with any time/date parameters given. For example:

To what extent was Germany a parliamentary democracy in the period 1900–14?

It is important to make a distinction between what the question is about and what the question is asking you to do, so analyse it carefully. For example, the question above is about the political situation in the Second Reich from 1900 to 1914. It is asking you to make a judgement about the extent to which this political situation could be deemed democratic.

Using this article in your exam

How could this article be useful for your exam?

AQA

Stalin features in AQA 1H, Tsarist and communist Russia, 1855–1964, and in option 2N, Revolution and dictatorship: Russia, 1917–1953. It is examined within both AS and A-level. Both options cover the growth of communist Russia from 1917, but option 1H also covers the collapse of tsarism from 1855 onwards. Chris Read's article covers the life of Joseph Stalin and is particularly useful for considering the role of Stalin in the revolutions of 1917 and his rise to power up to 1929.

Here is an example of an essay question you might be given:

To what extent can Stalin's rise to power be attributed to the weaknesses of his opponents?

You can download an essay plan for this sample question at: www.hoddereducation.co.uk/historyreviewextras

Edexcel

This topic features in the paper 1 topic Russia, 1917–1991, of both the AS and A-level qualifications. This option covers Russian history from the revolutions of 1917 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The topic also features in the paper 3 option The making of modern Russia, 1855–1991. Both of these options include large sections on Joseph Stalin, in which his rise to power is fundamental. Chris Read's article presents a variety of factors behind his rise to power, including the influence of his early life.

A sample paragraph and commentary on this topic are downloadable at: www.hoddereducation.co.uk/historyreviewextras

OCR

Stalin features in OCR option Y240/Y219: Russia 1894–1941. This option covers Russian history from Tsar Nicholas II to the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Chris Read's article is relevant to the section of the paper which considers Stalin's rise to power up to 1929.

Option Y318, Russia and its rulers 1855–1964, also features Stalin. This option includes a thematic essay, requiring consideration of developments over 100 years, and an in-depth interpretation element, where you will be required to evaluate historians' interpretations of events. A key component of this unit is the role of Russian leaders during this period and therefore Chris Read's article, which looks at the factors which brought Stalin to power, neatly fits in here.

An example of a historian's interpretation, with commentary, is provided at: www.hoddereducation.co.uk/historyreviewextras

Plan

Complete a brief plan to ensure you know exactly what you want to include in your response. This plan could be in the form of a simple mind map, a table or a bullet-point list. Table 1 gives a sample plan for the question above. Whatever format you choose, make sure you are clear on the key factors you are going to write about. If you write your plan properly you will know exactly what your answer is going to include. This is not something that you should be deciding as you are writing. I often tell my students that planning is about 'turning your skip into a library'...the organisation of a wealth of knowledge and points!

Table 1 A sample plan

Section	Key points to include
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make argument clear • Define parliamentary democracy • State that Germany was only an emerging parliamentary democracy and still had some entrenched authoritarianism • Make reference to the role of the Kaiser as an example of authoritarianism and the Constitution as an example of democracy
Arguments for a parliamentary democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Reich Constitution – changes since 1871, Germany evolving • Parliament elected on wide franchise • Power of Reichstag • Not officially an autocracy • Rise of the SPD – largest party in 1912 • Constitutional change • Kaiser followed the advice of the chancellor Bethmann Hollweg (moderate) and took a lower profile after 1908 • German elites influenced rather than the Kaiser • Role of pressure groups
Arguments against a parliamentary democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chancellor answerable to the Kaiser not the Reichstag • Daily Telegraph Affair 1908 • Zabern Affair 1913 • Prussian voting system • Role of the Bundesrat
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany only an emerging parliamentary democracy, not to be considered a full parliamentary democracy • Reiterate the role of the Kaiser and undemocratic nature of the voting system

Introduction

The introduction should show the examiner that you know what you are talking about. You should know from the outset what your judgement is on the question being asked and therefore your introduction should mirror your conclusion. Use your introduction to state what your answer is and then go on and prove it in the rest of the essay. Your introduction should be short: no more than a third of a page. For example:



Kaiser Wilhelm II

It is clear that in the period 1900–14 Germany was an emerging parliamentary democracy, meaning a governmental system in which laws are made by representatives elected to a parliament. The Constitution of the Second Reich had provided for some rights for the German people and there was an emerging system of accountability. However, it would be inaccurate to describe Germany by 1914 as fully democratic as power still lay very much in the hands of the Kaiser and the elites. It is therefore important to consider not only the arguments for a parliamentary democracy in this period but also factors which would suggest Germany was an entrenched authoritarian regime.

Main body

The main body of the essay is where you prove the line of argument you have taken in your introduction. Your starting paragraph should address the stated factor from the question, followed by a series of paragraphs addressing the other factors relevant to the question. Use the wording of the question to show the examiner very explicitly that your points are linked to the question being asked.

Follow the PHEEL rule to help you structure each paragraph.

P – Point

Your opening point should make a clear link to the question:

- During the period 1900–14 it can be argued that Germany was not a parliamentary democracy because the structure of the Constitution meant that the chancellor was answerable to the Kaiser.



The Reichstag building in Berlin, c.1910

H – Hierarchy

Show why one factor might be more or less important than another:

- This demonstrates the fact that power very much lay in the hands of the Kaiser. However, it is not as crucial in this argument as the Zabern Affair of 1913, in which it became clear that the views of the chancellor and Reichstag were very different, and that the Kaiser was only interested in the military viewpoint on the course of events, eventually leading to a vote of no confidence in Bethmann Hollweg.

E – Evidence

Keep it focused and accurate:

- The Constitution was not democratic as the Kaiser had unrivalled power, with total control of the army and more importantly the power to appoint and dismiss chancellors. This meant that for a chancellor to be successful they had to be in favour with Kaiser Wilhelm II. There were five chancellors from 1870 to 1917.

E – Explain

Show why the information is relevant and develop the detail:

- The Kaiser used his power over the chancellor on a number of occasions, demonstrating that Germany had not yet become a parliamentary democracy. For example, the Daily Telegraph Affair of 1908 demonstrated that the Kaiser could do as he pleased, making uncensored and off-the-cuff remarks about foreign policy, and offending the British. While this somewhat discredited his own position, it was in fact his chancellor, Bulow, who was forced to resign.

L – Link

Finally, make a clear link back to the question to round off the paragraph:

- This demonstrates how Germany in the period 1900–14 could more accurately be described as an emerging parliamentary democracy.

Conclusion

Your conclusion should clearly and succinctly sum up what you have said in your essay. The conclusion should not be a surprise to you and is an opportunity to draw all your points together and leave the examiner in no doubt as to your answer. For instance:

- In conclusion it can be said that during the period 1900–14 Germany was not a parliamentary democracy. It is clear that the structure of the Constitution still promoted the power of the Kaiser, as he had the power to appoint and dismiss chancellors as well as control over foreign policy and the army. Incidents such as the Zabern Affair and the Daily Telegraph Affair only served to further demonstrate that Germany was not yet a parliamentary democracy. While there were elements of democracy, and the rise of the SPD to 1912 showed that there were traces of it, it would not be accurate to describe Germany as a parliamentary democracy by 1914.

Try these tips as you approach your first essay assignments. And remember to shape your knowledge as a library...not a skip.

Elizabeth Francis is an experienced history teacher.