Historical sources

A historical sources book containing seen and unseen sources will be provided in the examination for Paper Two.

The seen sources are overleaf.

You must use a range of seen and unseen sources and reference them in your response.

Some of the sources will be printed in colour. Apply for special arrangements if you require a black-and-white version.

Enquiries

Telephone (07) 3864 0211 or email externalexams@qsa.qld.edu.au.

Jo-Anne Cooper
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Source A

The Proclamation of the People’s Republic of China, 1 October 1949

“We proclaim the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. Our nation will from now on enter the large family of peace-loving and freedom-loving nations of the world. It will work bravely and industriously to create its own civilisation and happiness and will, at the same time, promote world peace and freedom. Our nation will never again be an insulted nation. We have stood up. Our revolution has gained the sympathy and acclamation of the broad masses throughout the entire world. We have friends everywhere the world over.”

Zedong, M 1950, On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship
Source B

Mao’s legacy

Mao died in 1976, and with the years those adulatory cries of “Yes, yes!” have gradually faded. Leaders Mao trained, like Deng Xiaoping, were able to reverse Mao’s policies even as they claimed to revere them. They gave back to the Chinese people the opportunities to express their entrepreneurial skills, leading to astonishing rates of growth and a complete transformation of the face of Chinese cities.

Are these changes, these moves toward a new flexibility, somehow Mao’s legacy? … He learned as a youth not only how Shang Yang brought harsh laws to the Chinese people, even when they saw no need for them, but also how Shang Yang’s rigours helped lay the foundation in 221 BC of the fearsome centralising state of Qin. Mao knew too that the Qin rulers had been both hated and feared and that their dynasty was soon toppled, despite its monopoly of force and efficient use of terror. But in his final years, Mao seems to have welcomed the association of his own name with these distant Qin precursors. The Qin, after all, had established a united state from a universe in chaos. They represented, like Mao, not the best that China had to offer, but something ruthless yet canny, with the power briefly to impose a single will on the scattered emotions of the errant multitude. It is on that grimly structured foundation that Mao’s successors have been able to build, even as they struggle, with obvious nervousness, to contain the social pressures that their own more open policies are generating. Surely Mao’s simple words reverberate in their ears: As long as you are not afraid, you won’t sink.


Source C

Mao’s contribution

Mao Tse-tung’s great accomplishment has been to change Marxism from a European to an Asiatic form … China is a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country in which vast numbers of people live at the edge of starvation, tilling small bits of soil … In attempting the transition to a more industrial economy, China faces the pressures … of advanced industrial lands … There are similar conditions in other lands of South-East Asia — the course chosen by China will influence them all.

From an interview between Liu Shaosh, (PFC Head of State, 1959–68) and Anna Louise Strong in 1946


Source D

The contribution of Marxism–Leninism

Marxism–Leninism helped the Chinese for a number of reasons. In the pre-war period it gave them the confidence and moral support of belonging to a world movement; it claimed to be scientific and therefore modern; it was disliked by the Western countries and therefore acceptable to Chinese who felt let down by the West; it was optimistic in its assurance that the stage of feudalism must lead through capitalism to socialism, it provided a rationale and a programme for putting ordinary people in the centre of the picture while insisting that an elite group (the Communist Party) must always lead. Moreover, it fitted into the Chinese traditional pattern of an authority-centred society, dominated by an educated elite held together by a common philosophy and commitment to the service of the state.

Millston, G 1978, A Short History of China
Source E

Mao’s nationalism

Mao’s greatest service to China was to give his country what it longed for after a century of chaos and indecision — the revolutionary leadership, the strategy and the doctrine that could inspire its rebirth. Mao could never have done this simply as an importer of Marxism. Marxism had to be remade in a Chinese image before it could serve China’s cause, and it was Mao who did it.

All that he did for China he did as a nationalist. The old imperial system had disappeared in 1911. What had remained for Mao to attack was a social and economic order in which the hated class were not the capitalists but the landlords whose oppression of the peasants had fired Mao’s earliest sense of injustice. But Mao the nationalist was also Mao the revolutionary who believed that revolution should be continuous.

“Obituary of Mao Zedong” in The Times, 10 September 1976

Source F

Mao’s view on the role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

“The Chinese people, under the leadership of the Communist Party, are carrying out a vigorous rectification campaign in order to develop socialism in China rapidly and on a firmer basis. It is a campaign to resolve correctly the contradictions which actually exist among the people and which have to be resolved immediately, by means of a nation-wide debate which is both guided and free, carried out in the urban and rural areas on such questions as the socialist road and the capitalist road, the basic systems and major policies of the state, the working style of the Communist Party and government functionaries, and the welfare of the people. The debate is conducted by bringing out the facts and by argument. This is a socialist campaign of self-education and self-remoulding by the people and great successes have already been recorded in it. The socialist consciousness of the people has been rapidly raised, false ideas clarified, shortcomings in work overcome, unity within the ranks of the people strengthened, and labour discipline and productivity increased, wherever the campaign has been carried out.”

From Mao’s speech at the meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, 6 November 1957

Marxists Internet Archive
Source G

Cultural Revolution (1966–1968)

“Criticise the old world and build a new world with Mao Zedong. Thought as a weapon.”

Landsberger, SR and the International Institute of Social History

Source H

Official view of Mao, pre-Cultural Revolution

All the successes in these 10 years were achieved under the collective leadership of the Central Committee of the Party headed by Comrade Mao Zedong. Likewise, responsibility for the errors committed in the work of this period rested with the same collective leadership. Although Comrade Mao Zedong must be held chiefly responsible, the blame cannot be laid on him alone for all those errors. During this period, his theoretical and practical mistakes concerning class struggle in a socialist society became increasingly serious, his personal arbitrariness gradually undermined democratic centralism in Party life and the personality cult grew graver and graver. The Central Committee of the Party failed to rectify these mistakes in good time. Careerists like Lin Biao, Jiang Qing and Kang Sheng, harbouring ulterior motives, made use of these errors and inflated them. This led to the inauguration of the “cultural revolution.”

The Central People’s Government of The People’s Republic of China
Source I

Beginning of the Cultural Revolution (1966–68)

Chairman Mao put up his famous “Bombard the Headquarters” poster. He attacked the leaders from the top downwards. His main targets were Liu Shao-qi and Deng Xiaoping … Soon, lots of people in Changsha, some very important, were being accused and removed from office. It seemed that every day good people were being exposed as evil and only pretending to support the Revolution. Most felt that the Cultural Revolution was a wonderful thing because when our enemies were uncovered China would be much safer. So I felt excited and happy and I wished I could do something to help.

Liang Heng, who was 12 years old in 1966, describes the beginning of the Cultural Revolution
Walsh, B 1996, GCSE Modern World History: Mao’s China, c.1930–76

Source J

Cultural Revolution (1966–68)

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution now unfolding is a great revolution that touches people to their very souls and constitutes a new stage in the development of the socialist revolution in our country, a deeper and more extensive stage.

At the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Party, Comrade Mao Zedong said: To overthrow a political power, it is always necessary, first of all, to create public opinion, to do work in the ideological sphere. This is true for the revolutionary class as well as for the counter-revolutionary class. This thesis of Comrade Mao Zedong’s has been proved entirely correct in practice.

_Peking Review, Vol. 9, No. 33, 1966_

Source K

Mao Zedong on socialism

“The socialist system will eventually replace the capitalist system; this is an objective law independent of man’s will. However much the reactionaries try to hold back the wheel of history, eventually revolution will take place and will inevitably triumph.”

From a speech by Mao Zedong at the Meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, 6 November 1967
Marxists Internet Archive
**Source L**

“**The Chinese had stood up!**”

On the parapet of Tiananmen, Mao Zedong on 1 October 1949, declared: “The Chinese had stood up!”

Whereas others from Kang Youwei to Sun Yat-sen made attempts to reform China and make her take a pride of place as among the equals of the world, they never succeeded. Monarchist Kang Youwei failed miserably, leaving an intact and corrupt Qing to rule for a few more years before the republican Sun Yat-sen, together with the other, toppled the Manchu dynasty.

But the marauding Western nations and Japan still held sway in China, and there was no peace or pride left in the Chinese.

Mao Zedong made the difference. From 1950 all vestiges of Western and Japanese past were laid to rest. China became the master of its destiny.

If Mao Zedong were to say to us now, he would want us to get on in life and not harp on the past with hatred and vengeance. He might add that we must make friends with the US, the West, Japan and the rest of the world.

Ever the champion of the underdogs, Mao Zedong would want us to respect and take care of our own compatriots, even if they are of different political hue.

So when Mao Zedong said, “The east is red!” he meant China heralded in an era of peace and tranquility, where the Chinese people are a red beacon to the rest of the world as a nation of equal rights and opportunities, and where everyone has his or her rights and freedom.

Mao Zedong erred in later life, but that is for the Chinese to accept and live with his errors. In the end, the legacy Mao Zedong left behind exonerates his frailties and foibles; and his mistakes, though gigantic, never diminish his stature.

That is how we would want to remember the great Mao Zedong.

*China Daily (Chinese newspaper), 19 January 2004*
Mao policies killed 80 million: report

WASHINGTON: As many as 80 million Chinese were killed by the repressive and radical economic policies pushed by Mao Tse-Tung in the decades before his death in 1976, the Washington Post reported yesterday.

The newspaper said documents unearthed by Western and Chinese scholars and its own investigators suggested the death toll from Mao’s 27-year rule could be millions more than previously estimated.

If confirmed, it would rank Mao ahead of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin as the most blood-stained leader of the 20th century, the Post said.

One government document said 80 million people died “unnatural deaths” under Mao, most of them because of the failed Great Leap Forward industrialisation programme launched in 1958, the Post said.

It said the internal document was seen by Chen Yizi, a former communist party official now at Princeton University.

The Post gave no precise breakdown on how all the 80 million alleged deaths occurred.

The newspaper quoted Chen as saying that 43 million people died in the famine of 1959–1961 that followed the Great Leap Forward.

A 1993 article in the Shanghai University journal Society reported at least 40 million deaths up from previous estimates in China of 10 million to 30 million.

China watchers say Mao’s ill-advised call for farmers to abandon their fields and melt them down for the iron and steel was responsible for 90 percent of the deaths wrought by the famine.

The Courier-Mail, 19 July 1994
Source N

The cult of Mao

Cult of the chairman

He presided over mass murder and cultural devastation. But 25 years after his death, Mao Zedong is a demigod with a lucrative line in merchandise.

A miracle happened in Shaoshan, birthplace of Mao Zedong, on December 20, 1993. President Jiang Zemin had come with an entourage of party grandees to unveil a 6 metre-high bronze statue of the late Chairman Mao, looking, as the guidebook has it, "firm and steady, and glowing with health". Anyone who sees it, the book continues, "can feel the magnetic power of a great leader, a victorious leader".

December in Hunan province is a cold, dark month, with constant rain or sleet. The freezing winds won't let up until the spring. But on that miraculous occasion, just as President Jiang was pulling the sheet off Mao's shining face, the sun came blazing through the clouds and, even stranger, the moon shone brightly.

I was shown photographs of the miracle when I visited Shaoshan recently, on a typically bleak, rainy day. You could buy the picture in all sizes, the most expensive ones framed in gold. You could also buy gold or marble busts of the chairman, tapes of his speeches, fine embroideries of his countenance, and coins, stamps, ballpoints, pencils, cigarette lighters, key rings, CDs, T-shirts and teacups, all with Mao's image on. Then there were the plastic domes with Mao inside that rained gold flakes when you shook them. And the golden amulets to bring good health and fortune with — instead of the more usual images of Buddhist or Taoist holy men — engraved portraits of the former Chinese leader.

Mao Zedong has clearly entered the pantheon of Chinese folk deities, along with the Yellow Emperor and other legendary sages and heroes in Chinese history. And Shaoshan, visited by millions over the years, is the Lourdes of his cult.

The Guardian (UK newspaper), 7 March 2001
Acknowledgments

Seen sources

Source A

Source B

Source C

Source D

Source E

Source F

Source G

Source H

Source I

Source J

Source K

Source L

Source M

Source N

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