2.2 Paper 2: Cuba under Castro and comparing authoritarian states

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 30 marks**

KEY WORDS compare and contrast • authoritarian state • propaganda • consolidation

Objective

Build the Paper 2 skills on a second authoritarian state from a different region, **Cuba under Castro** (1953–1970s): why Castro won power, how he consolidated it, his social and economic policies, and how to **compare and contrast** two authoritarian states.

You must be able to:

- explain why Batista lost power and Castro won it
- explain how Castro consolidated power
- assess Castro's social and economic policies with evidence
- write a comparative paragraph that links two states on one point
- plan and write a compare-and-contrast essay

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

Emergence and consolidation

date	event
1952	Fulgencio Batista takes power in a military coup
26 Jul 1953	Castro's failed attack on the Moncada barracks
1956–58	guerrilla war from the Sierra Maestra mountains
1 Jan 1959	Batista flees; Castro's forces take power
1959	land reform: large estates broken up
1960	Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) in every street; US businesses nationalized; US trade embargo begins
1961	the Bay of Pigs invasion fails; the literacy campaign
1962	the Cuban Missile Crisis
1965	the Communist Party of Cuba becomes the only party

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Why Castro won: Batista's regime was corrupt, brutal and unpopular; many resented US economic control; the guerrillas won support in the countryside; Castro was a skilled speaker and used the media.

Consolidation: trials and executions of Batista officials; opposition newspapers closed; opponents jailed or driven into exile; the CDRs watched every street; the Bay of Pigs (1961) rallied Cubans behind him against the US; a single party (1965).

Policies

- **Social**: the 1961 literacy campaign sent about 250,000 teachers and volunteers into the countryside; official figures show illiteracy falling from about 24 % to about 4 %. Free health care and schooling.
- **Economic**: land reform and nationalization; dependence on sugar and on the Soviet Union; the 1970 target of a 10-million-ton sugar harvest was not met.

Comparing two states

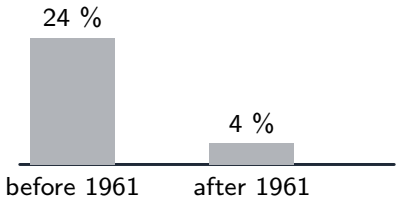
Never write about one state and then the other. Each paragraph compares both on **one** point, with *whereas*, *similarly*, *in both cases*.

Worked comparison. "Whereas Hitler's regime won support mainly through propaganda and economic recovery, Castro's relied more on real social reforms such as the literacy campaign. In both states, however, force set the limits: the Gestapo in Germany and the CDRs in Cuba made opposition dangerous."

2 Practice

2.1 State **two** reasons why Batista lost support in Cuba in the 1950s. [2]

2.2 Official figures show illiteracy in Cuba falling from about 24 % to about 4 % after the 1961 literacy campaign. Calculate the fall in percentage points, and give **one** reason why a historian should treat the figures with care. [3]



2.3 Explain **two** methods Castro used to consolidate his power, 1959–1965. [4]

2.4 Write **one** comparative paragraph on the use of propaganda in Germany under Hitler and Cuba under Castro. [6]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 *(Paper 2 style.)* Compare and contrast the ways in which **two** authoritarian states, each from a different region, consolidated their power. [15]

point	Germany	Cuba
force	?	?
propaganda	?	?
policies	?	?

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Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

any two: corruption and brutality of his regime, e.g. torture and killing of opponents; he took power in a coup (1952), so he had no democratic legitimacy; resentment of US control of the economy, e.g. sugar and land; poverty and inequality in the countryside

2.2

$24 - 4 =$ **20** percentage points; they are official government figures, and the regime used the campaign as propaganda; "literacy" may have been measured with a simple test, so the real level of reading may be lower

2.3

any two, explained: the CDRs (1960) watched every street, so opposition was reported and dangerous; control of the media: opposition newspapers were closed, so only the revolution's view was heard; social reforms: land reform, literacy and free health care won the loyalty of the poor; using the US threat: the Bay of Pigs (1961) let Castro present opponents as traitors and rally Cubans; a single party: from 1965 the Communist Party was the only legal party

2.4

a clear comparative point in the first sentence; evidence for Germany, e.g. Goebbels, radio, rallies, the Hitler Youth; evidence for Cuba, e.g. Castro's long televised speeches, the literacy campaign's message, posters of the revolution; a similarity explained, e.g. both built a cult of the leader; a difference explained, e.g. Nazi propaganda built hatred of Jewish people, whereas Cuban propaganda focused on the US as the enemy and on social progress; linking words used throughout (whereas, similarly, in both cases)

3.1

Mark with the markbands: [13-15] clearly focused on the question, accurate and relevant knowledge used as evidence, well-developed critical analysis, different perspectives evaluated, a reasoned conclusion; [10-12] focused, mostly accurate knowledge, analysis with some evaluation; [7-9] some focus, relevant knowledge, mostly narrative or description with limited analysis; [4-6] little focus, limited knowledge, mostly narrative; [1-3] little understanding of the question. Points that may be included: structure: a comparative essay with both states in every paragraph, not one after the other; similarities: both used force: the Gestapo and camps in Germany; the CDRs, prison and exile in Cuba; both controlled the media: Goebbels in Germany; closed opposition newspapers in Cuba; both banned other parties: Germany July 1933, Cuba 1965; both built a cult of the leader; differences: Hitler used legal methods (the Enabling Act, 1933) while Castro came to power by revolution and ruled through revolutionary bodies; Castro's social reforms (literacy, free health care) won consent more than Hitler's, which relied on jobs from rearmament and on national pride; targets differed: Nazi terror focused on Jewish people and political opponents; Cuban repression on opponents of the revolution, many of whom left the country; external enemy: Castro used the US threat (Bay of Pigs) more directly;

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conclusion: a judgement on whether force or consent mattered more, and how the two states differ