

# Assessment guidance

This section provides guidance on how to answer the first assessment task in Part A of the controlled assessment which is worth 20 marks. This is the enquiry essay question and can be a causation, consequence, change or turning points question. The guidance below looks at a turning points question. Guidance on the causation and consequence questions is given on pages 15 and 32.

## Enquiry focus – turning points

Enquiry focus: Turning points in the war in Vietnam. The following bullet point should be the focus of the student's enquiry.

- The My Lai massacre of 1968. (20 marks)

## Preparation

- Research the My Lai massacre.
- Research its impact on the war in Vietnam. To what extent did it change the US conduct of the war?
- Try to use several resources in your research – one could be Chapter 2 from this textbook. Others could be visual and written sources from the time (including those in this textbook), other textbooks on the conflict in Vietnam, films such as *Platoon*.
- Make notes on the My Lai massacre and its impact on the US conduct of the war and other possible turning points.
- Make a plan of how to answer this question on one side of A4. You could follow the guidance on this page.

## How to answer

This is a turning points question. You are being asked to make judgements on the extent to which the enquiry focus was a turning point in the war. You will need an introduction and a conclusion.

- In your introduction, define the key feature named as a focus and suggest how you intend to organise your answer.

- Ensure you give a balanced answer that explains and evaluates the key feature but also other possible turning points.
- Ensure each paragraph focuses on the question – begin each paragraph with a reference to the significance of the key feature.
- Make links between each of your paragraphs. Use link words or phrases such as *therefore*, *as a result of*, *this meant that*, *consequently*, *however*, *moreover*.
- For your conclusion, make a final judgement on the significance of the key feature in relation to other possible turning points.
- Within your essay you should refer to several resources/sources that you have used in your research. The first time you refer to the resource, give the title and author(s), for example, *Vietnam 1960–75*, by S. Waugh and J. Wright.

The diagram on page 35 shows you the steps you should take to write a good essay answer. Use the steps and examples to complete the answer to the question by writing the paragraphs and linking them where possible. Alternatively, you could use the grid below to structure your answer to the question.

|  |
|--|
| <b>Introduction</b>  |
| Set the scene for your essay by explaining the key feature in the question and how you intend to structure your answer.  |
| <b>First paragraph – first significance of the key feature</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the feature.</li> <li>• Fully explain it. Refer to resources/sources you have used.</li> <li>• Make a link to the second paragraph.</li> </ul> Repeat the same process for all your paragraphs. |
| <b>Second paragraph – second significance of the named feature</b>   |
| <b>Third paragraph – limitations of the named feature</b>  |
| <b>Fourth paragraph – the significance of at least one other feature as a turning point</b>  |
| <b>Conclusion</b>  |
| Begin with 'Overall' and make a final judgement on the significance of the named feature relative to other turning points.   |

### STEP 1

Write an introduction that explains the key feature in the question and outlines how you will structure your answer.

#### Example:

In March 1968 during a Search and Destroy mission a US platoon wiped out the village of My Lai. When news of the massacre was made public nearly a year and a half later it led many to question US tactics in the war and increased opposition at home. This essay will evaluate the significance and limitations of the My Lai massacre as well as other important turning points, more especially the Tet Offensive of 1968.

### STEP 2

After your introduction, write at least four good length paragraphs that focus on the significance and limitations of the named feature and at least one other important turning point (Steps 2–6). The first two sentences of this paragraph have been done for you – complete it by fully explaining the significance of the massacre. Remember to refer to any resources/sources you have used.

#### Example:

According to S. Waugh and J. Wright in *Vietnam 1960–75* the My Lai massacre shocked US opinion and provided clear evidence that the war was going wrong. It led many to question the methods used by the USA in fighting the war, especially the Search and Destroy tactics.

### STEP 3

Make a link to the second paragraph. Remember the link words or phrases mentioned on the previous page.

#### Example:

Moreover, reactions to the massacre in November 1969 may well have strongly influenced Nixon's decision to introduce a policy of Vietnamisation which involved the gradual removal of US troops from Vietnam.

### STEP 4

Fully explain this second significance. Remember to refer to any resources/sources you have consulted. Link this to a third paragraph.

Have a go yourself

### STEP 5

Fully explain a limitation to the My Lai massacre as a turning point. This could be the delay in publishing details of the massacre until 1969, by which time there was extensive opposition to the war. Remember to refer to any resources/sources you have consulted. Link this third limitation to a fourth paragraph on an alternative turning point.

Have a go yourself

### STEP 6

Fully explain and evaluate an alternative turning point. This could be the Tet Offensive.

Have a go yourself

### STEP 7

Write your conclusion making your final judgement on the question. In other words, how significant was the feature as a turning point in the war. How important is it compared to other turning points? You could begin this final paragraph with the word 'overall'.

#### Example:

Overall, the My Lai massacre did influence changes in the war in Vietnam, more especially the tactics of Search and Destroy. However, other factors were of equal or greater importance, especially the impact of the Tet Offensive of 1968.