**A2 Level Source Questions:**

Typical question: ‘How far could the historian make use of Sources 1 and 2 together to investigate…?’

**Essential:**

You must examine the sources as a pair and make a judgement about both sources, rather than simply making separate judgements about each source. Each paragraph you write must mention both sources.

**Must dos:**

Show the examiner that you are able to distinguish between information, opinions and argument.

Use your own knowledge to make inferences and to expand, support or challenge matters of detail within the sources (limitation). E.g. ‘we can infer from the sources that …..’

Use own knowledge to confirm accuracy/usefulness of information in the source.

Try to distinguish between the value of different aspects of the sources.

Consider the aspects of the sources that are useful for answering the question and the aspects of the sources that are less useful.

Always consider provenance (NOP) and tone. Consider the motives and purpose of the writer.

Consider accuracy, reliability, limitations, and knowledge of the author, special insights or valuable information provided by the sources.

Use specific references from the sources.

Pick out common themes between the sources to evaluate the sources as a pair (where do they both agree, disagree)

Consider whether one source provides evidence to support / undermine the claims made in the other one and vice versa.

Consider what is in one source and not in the other.

**Consider whether the historian could get anything from the sources together as a pair that they couldn’t get from examining only one or examining them separately.**

The highest level response (Level 5) should be able to use the relevant **criteria** to distinguish, where appropriate, the degree of certainty with which judgement can be made. For example, references to **reliability, accuracy and limitations**, which add an element of caution to the judgement.

**Suggested structure – See single page guide**

**Introduction:**

**Task:** **Highlight following key features of a good introduction in the 2 examples below (note not all of the features appear in each paragraph):**

Set the scene (Show the examiner you understand the enquiry focus)

Direct mention of the enquiry focus:

Set out explicit criteria (reasons) for judging how far the historian could make use of the sources together to investigate ……

Explanation of how the sources can be used to help investigate the enquiry focus:

An initial judgement with explanation on the extent to which the historian could make use of the sources together mentioning limitations if appropriate (strengths and weaknesses):

Comment on usefulness of each source to determine overall usefulness of sources as a pair.

Reference to the usefulness of NOP of each source picking out differences. E.g. they come from radically different perspectives.

**Example Introduction 1:**

Q: How far could the historian make use of sources 1 and 2 together to investigate whether Napoleon III was an obstacle to Italian unification in the years 1849-59?

It is reasonable to suggest that sources 1 and 2 could be used together to investigate whether Napoleon III was an obstacle to Italian unification (enquiry focus), *as they show the impacts of French intervention on the cause itself and demonstrate Napoleon’s change in foreign policy after the Orsini affair.* However, a historian could only make use of the sources together to a certain extent, as they contrast with each other in both reliability and implication. Overall, it could be argued that source 1 would be less useful to a historian than source 2, and therefore the extent to which they could be used together is limited.

**Example Introduction 2:**

Q: How far could the historian make use of Sources 1 and 2 together to investigate how far Mao was responsible for the Great Famine? (Hodder p252)

Both Sources 1 and 2 are useful to a historian investigating the extent to which Mao was personally responsible for the Great Famine. Both are useful as eyewitness perspectives on the Great Leap Forward. Source 1 is of particular value. As Mao’s personal doctor, Li would have had access to information and to areas of the country not available to ordinary Chinese citizens. While Source 1 provides a wider picture as the author has travelled across the country, in direct contrast Source 2 focuses on one area in which she and her family lived. However, there are problems with both sources. Source 1 relies too much on a personal experience while Source 2 offers a skewed picture from a young child whose experience of the Great Leap Forward and the famine that it caused may not have been very representative. Her family were Party cadres so their experience may not have been typical of all members of society.

**Main paragraphs – See essential guide on weebly**

**Conclusions:**

A conclusion which weighs up the extent to which the evidence of the sources is useful, and reaches an overall judgement. (Attention should be paid explicitly to ‘**how far’** the material can be used.)

Sum up by examining the **joint value** of the sources. Recognise similarities and differences, usefulness and limits of the sources for the specified enquiry.

Weigh the evidence - use words that help you to do that such as ‘clearly’, ‘however’, and ‘nonetheless’.

Make sure you focus directly on the question. E.g. opening sentence ‘Both sources are useful to some extent to a historian investigating …’

Include a final concluding sentence. E.g. ‘Overall, although their purposes are very difficult, both sources are of some use: one provides the perspectives of the communist regime, the other the viewpoint of the victims.’

You should try to specify how certain you are about your various concluding claims.

Uses phrases to convey the different levels of certainty with which the judgement can be made.

**Task:** **Pick out 3 strong features of each of the conclusions below (Use the list above).**

**Example conclusion 1:**

Overall, both sources are useful as they provide evidence from differing perspectives as to why Mao launched the CR. However, source 1 provides only a superficial analysis, and is essentially propaganda to hide Mao’s true political motivations. It should not be dismissed, though: Mao did want to ‘transform China’s customs and habits’ but this was not his overriding motivation. Source 2 is a viable, personal perspective, but from a doctor rather than somebody closely involved in the decision making process. Finally, both sources are limited because they fail to sufficiently address the most important motivation for Mao’s launching of the CR: namely his jealous desire to remove his opponents and return once against to political power.

**Strong features:**

**1:**

**2:**

**3:**

**Example Conclusion 2:**

In conclusion, sources 1 and 2 could be used by a historian together to investigate whether Napoleon was an obstacle to Italian unification in the given years to a certain extent, as they demonstrate how he was an obstacle at the beginning of the period, but that his change in policy helped to unify Italy in the second war of Italian independence, which began in 1859. Source 1 on its own could be used only to a small extent to convey the impacts on Italian unification of the Roman Republic, and that Napoleon III clearly was an obstacle at that point, but this is limited due to its lack of factual evidence. Source 2, however, could be used to a greater extent to suggest that Napoleon wasn’t an obstacle because he agreed to support the creation of a Kingdom of Northern Italy. So, used alone, the sources provide different conclusions, but used together, can make inferences about his motives. Therefore, he was an obstacle up the point where he agreed to help Piedmont.

**Strong features:**

**1:**

**2:**

**3:**

**Example Conclusion 3 (Extract):**

‘Taken together, the two sources do provide some useful evidence about the anti-religious  
campaigns, although they only cover two elements of the campaign which was also waged more widely against Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism and the Protestant Church. They show some similarities, in that both come from reasonably reliable and observant eyewitnesses. The fact that one (Source 14) comes from a victim of the campaign, while the other was written by a spectator adds something to their overall value.

**Strong features:**

**1:**

**2:**

**3:**

**Level 5 mark scheme:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **L5** | **17-20** | • Confident interrogation of both sources demonstrated by reasoned inferences. The answer shows a range of ways the sources can be used, making valid distinctions between information and opinion.  • Relevant knowledge of the historical context to reveal and 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.  • An overall judgement regarding the interpretation is presented which is supported by valid criteria (reasons). Evaluation of the sources reflects how much weight the evidence of the sources can bear and may distinguish between the degrees to which aspects of the sources can be useful. |

**Useful phrases for A2 source questions:**

**Introducing own knowledge to develop/confirm/challenge what a source is saying:**

Indeed [insert own knowledge to support/challenge claims]

These claims can be verified by the fact that [insert own knowledge to support claims]

These claims are less plausible as [insert own knowledge to challenge claims]

The source asserts that ‘[insert quote]’. This is correct: [insert own knowledge]

It is an eyewitness account that can be verified by evidence that …

**Making inferences:**

Source one refers to [insert quote] from this we can infer that …

(High level inferences avoid excessive summarising or paraphrasing of the sources.)

**Highlighting what the sources omit / limitations:**

The sources are limited as neither explicitly deals with...

Neither source deals explicitly with …

However neither sources refers specifically to the fact that …

Therefore there are limits as to how much a historian could uncover about…

Both sources are limited because they fail to sufficiently address …

**Stating differences in viewpoints:**

Both sources come from radically different perspectives. Source 1 is from pro Communist viewpoint while source 2 is from an opponent in exile.

They are written from starkly different perspectives and with very different objectives.

**Questioning reliability:**

The reliability of source 1 might be questioned as the author’s purpose was to ……..

The utility of source 1 might also be questioned…

However this does not mean we should reject his/her/their interpretation as [insert own supporting knowledge]

**Using sources together:**

Source 1 refers to ‘[insert quote’]. This is clearly supported by source 2 … These claims are plausible as [insert own knowledge]

Both sources are useful to a historian because they address a range of different motives for …

In this sense, the two sources combine to help us understand …

Finally both sources are of limited value because neither of them deals with …

**Challenging a source:**

However source 1 does present difficulties for the historian because …

The author of the source would not necessarily possess detailed insight into … because …

Source 2 does address … more than source 1 does, but neither source sufficiently addresses …

**Sentences for Conclusions:**

Overall both sources were useful as they provide plausible evidence that…

Overall both sources are useful as they provide evidence from differing perspectives as to why Mao launched …

**More phrases to use:**

Both sources…;

Sources 1 and 2 agree / disagree …

Both sources are useful in that they indicate …

Both sources are of limited value because neither of them deals with…

Source 1 refers to ‘[insert quote]. This is clearly supported by source 2 which …

Both sources 1 and 2 analyse and identify …

Sources 1 and 2 in combination show …

The usefulness of sources 1 and 2 in combination is increased / limited because …..

However neither source deals adequately with …

Neither sources sufficiently addresses ……

Both sources omit …

Overall it could be argued that source 1 would be less useful to a historian than source 2, and therefore the extent to which they could be used together is limited.