**How to answer the A2 Mao source question (20 marks)**

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

**Example question**: ‘How far could the historian make use of Sources 1 and 2 together to investigate the impact of the campaign to eradicate religion after 1949?’

**General Tip:**

**Try to anticipate what the historian would want to find out about in relation to the specific enquiry. This will help you to reach an overall judgement on the extent of the coverage of the enquiry focus the sources together provide.**

**Introduction:**

1. Show the examiner you understand the **focus of the question** by briefly setting the scene in 1 or 2 sentences.

2. Give an **initial judgement** with explanation on the extent to which the historian could make use of the sources **together** for the specific enquiry.

Use clear **criteria (reasons)** to support initial judgement stating why the sources are **useful** **together** **(joint value)** as well as highlighting any **key** **limitations** (why they may not be useful)

Relevant criteria to help you make a judgement include:

* extent of coverage of enquiry focus (Do both sources provide the historian with everything they would want to know?)
* NOP and position of authors; Motive (Why was the source produced)
* Knowledge of the authors. E.g. How informed are they? Do they have any special insights into the issue?
* Accuracy and reliability – Can you confirm / challenge what the sources are saying with your own contextual knowledge? Are the sources trustworthy?
* Nature of language expressed in the source. E.g. Tone – emotional/ non emotional?; formal/ informal?

**Example Introduction:**

1. Mao regarded religion as a feudal superstition and sought to eradicate all forms of religion after 1949 as he viewed religion as a potential obstacle in the way of developing Communist rule. Mao sought to destroy both the physical infrastructure of China’s various religions as well as people’s personal religious beliefs. **2**The sources together would be of significant use to the historian as they are both well informed eyewitness accounts which together detail the attempts made to eradicate places of worship.However the sources treatment of the campaign against all of China’s religions is uneven and lacking in coverage and together both sources fail to provide the historian with a judgement on the overall success of the campaign.

**Main Section:**

**Note**: The number of paragraphs you write in the main section will vary depending on the question.

**1. Provenance section (likely to be 1 paragraph in length):**

**Tip: Always consider the nature, origin, purpose, motives & intended audience of both sources.**

Explain why the provenance of the sources **taken together** would be **useful** to the historian for the specific enquiry.

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Highlight any possible **limitations** the provenance of the sources have for the specific enquiry. (E.g. what makes them less useful? Is one source likely to be more useful than the other one?

**2. Contents section (Usefulness of sources)**

**Note:** Aim to write more than 1 paragraph. Both sources should be mentioned in each paragraph

Explain why the content of the sources taken **together** would be **useful** to the historian for the specific enquiry.

Try to give at least 3 clear reasons in this section why the sources taken **together** are **useful** in terms of content – make **reasoned** **inferences** using **short** **quotes** from the sources and **own knowledge** **to develop/confirm** why the sources together would be of use.

**Key phrases**:

Making inferences: Implies; infers; suggests

Using own knowledge: Indeed; This claim can be confirmed by …….; This is not suprising because…..

Using sources together: Likewise ……

**Tip**: Ask yourself what are the **strengths** of the sources taken together for this enquiry? (Which of the historian’s likely questions about the specific enquiry do they help you with?)

**3. Contents section (Limitations of sources)**

**Note:** 1 paragraph will usually be enough

Explain how and why aspects of the content of the sources taken together areof **limited use** to the historian for the specific enquiry – Use **own knowledge** to **challenge parts of the content; explain the limitations/ weaknesses of the sources;** **highlight omissions** of what can be gained from the content for the specific enquiry.

**Key phrases**:

Using own knowledge: In fact; Source X claim that … can be challenged by….; However source X omits …… This claim is surprising because …

**Tip**: Ask yourself where do they disagree with each other? Or one source only partially addresses while the other one doesn’t.

**Conclusion:**

Weigh up the **extent** to which the evidence of the sources taken together is useful. Reach an **overall judgement**.

**Tip**: Attention must be paid explicitly to ‘**how far’** the historian could make use of the sources to investigate the specific enquiry.

Sum up by examining the **joint value** of the sources (using relevant criteria to support judgement). Recognise similarities and differences, usefulness and limitations, strengths and weaknesses of the sources taken together for the specific enquiry.

Consider if the sources as a pair are very useful to help the historian investigate a particular aspect of the specific enquiry but not so helpful to help with a different aspect of the enquiry and/or if one source is more valuable/reliable about the enquiry than the other one.

**Example conclusion:**

E.g. In conclusion both sources would be of significant use to the historian investigating the impact of the campaign to eradicate religion. Source 1 would be of particular use to the historian by detailing the attempt to destroy the physical infrastructure of the religion, while source 2 would be of more use in helping the historian to understand the difficulty faced by the Communists in attempting to eradicate peoples’ religious beliefs. Therefore both sources although quite different in content and authorship taken together would enable the historian to gain a fairly complete picture of the impact of the Communist campaign. However both sources fail to provide the historian with a clear assessment of the overall success of the campaign which to an extent limits their use.