

# Commentary on candidate evidence

## Candidate 1

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for each element of the coursework assessment task.

**Dissertation title: To what extent did Stalin's role within the Party cause his emergence as leader in 1928?**

### Structure: Introduction

The candidate was awarded credit in the **40-44 mark range** because the question is clearly set in the context surrounding Lenin's death. The candidate uses primary evidence, by giving Sukhanov's 'grey blur' view to prioritise how unlikely Stalin was to be the leader in these initial stages of the leadership contest. The candidate then addresses the validity of other factors such as Stalin's power base and political ideology.

### Structure: Conclusion

The candidate was awarded credit in the **45-50 mark range** because the candidate addresses the isolated factor well (on page 14, lines 1-6). Then the main arguments are evaluated and synthesised (in lines 6-15). Finally an overall judgement is made but then synthesis is used again to set the question in its wider context (in lines 16-21).

### Thoroughness/ relevance of information and approach

The candidate was awarded credit in the **45-50 mark range** because all aspects of the question are considered in width and in depth. The evidence is clearly linked to historians' views and primary evidence to give it both width and depth. The candidate tackles the extent to which Stalin's role within the party contributes to securing power (page 3). Lenin is used as a primary source (in lines 4-5) to exemplify the extent of his powerbase. Then to add greater depth, the importance of the role of Party Secretary is developed (in lines 5-7). Another primary source is used to exemplify the point, using Trotsky (line 8). The candidate goes on to further develop the power base citing how Stalin used his followers to influence debates and votes at the Party Congress (lines 10-16). All of this demonstrates a wide range of serious reading and demonstrates a considerable width and depth of knowledge.

### Analysis, evaluation and line of argument

The candidate was awarded credit in the **45-50 mark range** because the candidate is fluent and insightful throughout the piece. We see consideration of a

range of possible interpretations on the importance of personality and ideology (pages 6 and 7). The candidate starts by addressing how Stalin used his personality to outmanoeuvre the other candidates, using an effective quote from Westwood (page 6, lines 1-7). However, from lines 8-14 the candidate turns his/her focus to how Stalin used opportunism as well as his personality to discredit his opponents and again a historian, this time Gordon, is used to reinforce the point. In lines 14-16 the candidate evaluates the importance of cunning verses opportunism. In the next paragraph the candidate changes focus and addresses a counter argument that Stalin was, in fact, a skilled politician and goes on to debate the importance of the events surrounding Trotsky's absence at Lenin's funeral. On page 7 (lines 1-9) we see how the candidate uses current historical ideas in the form of Thatcher's argument that in fact it was Trotsky himself who helped Stalin by choosing not to go the funeral. Finally on page 7 (lines 10-12), we see another sub-conclusion which evaluates the judgements made throughout this debate.

### **Historical sources/ interpretations**

The candidate was awarded credit in the **45-50 mark range** because there is a sound knowledge and understanding of historians' interpretations and arguments and engagement with current historiography. The candidate uses current historiography to debate the views around Stalin's control of the party (page 3). The candidate starts by using Ward (in lines 2-3) to support the view that the roles within the party that Stalin secured enabled him to take power. A primary source from Trotsky is used (in line 8) to reinforce this. However, Ward's view is questioned (in lines 17 to 21), when Carr argues it was Stalin's organisational skills and Hosking argues that Stalin was deceptive and hid behind his administrative roles. On page 3 alone the candidate uses a range of historians' views and primary evidence to examine the variations of interpretations on one area of Stalin's rise to power.