

ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 12

The End of Bipolarity

Political Science · Chapter 2 · Use this with the Board Paper · Companion to Quick Drill

HOW TO USE

Attempt the Board Paper first (closed-book, full time). Then come here. For 2-mark+ questions, compare your answer to the model. For 3-4 mark questions, also consult the **Topper Templates** below — these show the exact step-by-step structure that scores full marks per CBSE marking-scheme conventions.

MODEL ANSWERS · BOARD PAPER**Section A — VSA (1 mark × 4)****Q1. In which year did the Soviet Union formally disintegrate? [1 mark]****| Ans:** December 1991.**Q2. What does 'perestroika' mean? [1 mark]****| Ans:** Restructuring (of the economy) — one of Gorbachev's two reform doctrines.**Q3. Which country is the successor state of the USSR? [1 mark]****| Ans:** Russia — it inherited the USSR's permanent UN Security Council seat and nuclear arsenal.**Q4. Under whose influence was 'shock therapy' administered? [1 mark]****| Ans:** The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).**Section B — SA-I (3 marks × 2)****Q5. What were Gorbachev's reforms (perestroika and glasnost)? Why did they backfire? [3 marks]****| Ans:** Mikhail Gorbachev, who became CPSU General Secretary in 1985, launched two reforms to SAVE the Soviet system: (1) PERESTROIKA ('restructuring') to reform the ECONOMY — introducing market mechanisms, cutting military spending and easing the arms race; (2) GLASNOST ('openness') to reform POLITICS — relaxing censorship and allowing freedom of expression and gradual democratisation. They BACKFIRED because openness EXPOSED the system's deep failures, RAISED expectations the system could not meet, and gave NATIONALIST movements in the republics the freedom to demand independence. Instead of strengthening the USSR, the reforms accelerated its collapse — intent and outcome were opposite.**Q6. Describe India's relations with Russia. [3 marks]****| Ans:** India and Russia share a 'SPECIAL AND PRIVILEGED STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP', rooted in the Cold-War-era Indo-Soviet friendship (the 1971 Treaty). The relationship is MULTIDIMENSIONAL: (1) DEFENCE — Russia is a major arms supplier and co-development partner (BrahMos, S-400, aircraft, submarines, licensed production); (2) ENERGY — cooperation in oil and nuclear power (the Kudankulam plant); (3) SPACE, SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY; (4) DIPLOMACY — Russia has consistently supported India on Kashmir in the UN and backs India's bid for a permanent UNSC seat. Both share a vision of a MULTIPOLAR world.

Q7. Explain the major causes of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. [5 marks]

Ans: The USSR, one of the two Cold War superpowers, disintegrated in December 1991 due to an accumulation of deep INTERNAL weaknesses that Gorbachev's reforms exposed rather than cured. **FOUR CORE CAUSES:** (1) **ECONOMIC STAGNATION** — the centrally-planned economy became inefficient, technologically backward and unable to satisfy consumer needs; chronic shortages and queues were normal. (2) **ARMS RACE + AFGHANISTAN** — maintaining military parity with the USA and the costly, unwinnable war in Afghanistan (1979-89) drained resources from the civilian economy. (3) **POLITICAL OVER-CENTRALISATION** — the authoritarian, unaccountable, corrupt one-party (CPSU) rule left citizens with no political voice, breeding deep discontent. (4) **RISE OF NATIONALISM** — the IMMEDIATE trigger: once glasnost loosened control, nationalist movements in the 15 republics (especially the Baltics, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia) demanded independence. Gorbachev's **PERESTROIKA + GLASNOST** (from 1985), meant to save the system, instead raised expectations and exposed its failures; the failed August 1991 hardliner coup discredited the centre. By December 1991 the republics declared independence, the CIS was formed, Gorbachev resigned and the USSR ceased to exist. The system collapsed from its own internal contradictions, not external attack.

Q8. What was 'shock therapy'? Discuss its consequences for the post-communist economies. [5 marks]

Ans: **SHOCK THERAPY** was the model of transition from a centrally-planned (communist) economy to a capitalist market economy adopted by Russia, Central Asia and East Europe in the 1990s, under the influence of the **WORLD BANK** and the **IMF**. It required a **TOTAL** and **RAPID** switch, not a gradual one, and involved: (a) complete shift to **PRIVATE OWNERSHIP** and free-market capitalism with rapid **PRIVATISATION** of state industries and collective farms; (b) **FREE TRADE** and financial openness — opening to foreign investment and removing the controlled value of the rouble; (c) breaking up the old Soviet-bloc trade structure and reorienting toward Western markets. **CONSEQUENCES** were largely **DISASTROUS**: (1) the '**LARGEST GARAGE SALE** in history' — state assets sold off cheaply; (2) the rouble **COLLAPSED** and **INFLATION** soared, wiping out savings; (3) the welfare/public-distribution system **COLLAPSED**, pushing millions into **POVERTY**; (4) **GDP** and industry fell sharply (deindustrialisation); (5) a **MAFIA/OLIGARCH** class captured the privatised wealth; (6) inequality rose dramatically. Imposed as a one-size-fits-all Western model that ignored each country's own structures, shock therapy is widely judged a **FAILURE** for its severe human and economic cost in the 1990s.

Q9. Examine the consequences of the end of bipolarity / the disintegration of the Soviet Union. [5 marks]

Ans: The disintegration of the USSR in 1991 ended the **BIPOLAR** world order, restructuring global power for the first time since 1945. **MAJOR CONSEQUENCES:** (1) **END OF COLD WAR CONFRONTATIONS** — the ideological contest, the arms race and the threat of a third world war and nuclear holocaust receded. (2) **US UNIPOLARITY** — the USA became the **SOLE SUPERPOWER**; a unipolar world emerged in which the US-led capitalist and liberal-democratic model became globally dominant, and the **IMF** and **World Bank** gained influence over the transition economies. (3) **SPREAD OF CAPITALISM + LIBERAL DEMOCRACY** — former communist states abandoned central planning and one-party rule and moved toward markets and multiparty democracy. (4) **NEW STATES + NEW CONFLICTS** — 15 new states emerged (and Yugoslavia/Czechoslovakia broke up); but unipolarity was **NOT** peaceful: violent ethnic wars erupted in the Balkans and conflicts such as Chechnya and instability in the Caucasus/Central Asia followed. (5) **IMPACT ON INDIA + THE THIRD WORLD** — the **Non-Aligned Movement** lost its original purpose (no two blocs to be non-aligned between); many developing nations, including India (its 1991 liberalisation), adopted market reforms and multi-aligned foreign policies. In sum, the end of bipolarity ended a 45-year rivalry, created a US-dominated unipolar order, spread capitalism, but unleashed new ethnic and regional conflicts — with the world trending toward multipolarity over time.

★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark: 'Explain the causes of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.'

Annual

Step 1 [1 mark]	Set the frame	The Soviet Union (USSR), one of the two Cold War superpowers, disintegrated in December 1991. Its collapse was caused not by a single event but by an accumulation of deep INTERNAL WEAKNESSES that Gorbachev's reforms exposed rather than cured.
Step 2 [2 marks]	Four core causes	(1) ECONOMIC STAGNATION: The centrally-planned economy became inefficient, technologically backward, and unable to meet consumer needs; shortages and queues were chronic. (2) HUGE MILITARY + ARMS-RACE BURDEN: Maintaining nuclear parity with the USA and the costly war in AFGHANISTAN (1979-89) drained resources from the civilian economy. (3) POLITICAL STAGNATION + OVER-CENTRALISATION: The one-party CPSU rule was authoritarian, unaccountable, and corrupt; ordinary people had no political voice, breeding deep discontent. (4) RISE OF NATIONALISM in the 15 republics — especially the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Ukraine and Georgia — was the IMMEDIATE cause; once glasnost loosened control, demands for independence became unstoppable.
Step 3 [1 mark]	The trigger — Gorbachev's reforms	Gorbachev's PERESTROIKA (economic restructuring) and GLASNOST (political openness), begun in 1985 to reform the system, instead RAISED expectations he could not meet and EXPOSED the system's failures. People wanted reform faster; the old guard wanted it stopped (the failed August 1991 coup). Caught between the two, the centre lost authority.
Step 4 [1 mark]	Conclusion	By December 1991 the republics had declared independence; Russia, Ukraine and Belarus formed the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); Gorbachev resigned and the USSR ceased to exist on 26 December 1991. The deeper truth: the Soviet system collapsed under its own internal contradictions — economic, political, and national — not from external attack.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Listing only economic causes and forgetting the NATIONALISM of the republics (the immediate trigger).
- Confusing the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall with the 1991 disintegration.
- Not mentioning Afghanistan + the arms race as the resource drain.
- Treating Gorbachev's reforms as a cause without explaining they BACKFIRED.

★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark: 'What was shock therapy? Discuss its consequences.'

Annual

Step 1 [1 mark]	Define shock therapy	SHOCK THERAPY was the model of transition from a centrally-planned (communist) economy to a capitalist market economy adopted by Russia, Central Asia and East Europe in the 1990s, under the influence of the World Bank and the IMF. It required a TOTAL and RAPID shift — not a gradual one.
Step 2 [1 mark]	What it involved	It involved: (a) complete switch to PRIVATE OWNERSHIP and free-market capitalism, with rapid PRIVATISATION of state assets and collective farms; (b) FREE TRADE — opening economies to foreign investment and trade, and ending the rouble's controlled value (financial openness); (c) breaking up the existing trade structure within the Soviet bloc and reorienting these economies toward Western markets and the capitalist world economy.
Step 3 [2 marks]	Consequences (the failure)	The consequences were largely DISASTROUS: (1) the 'LARGEST GARAGE SALE in history' — state industries were undervalued and sold off cheaply; (2) the value of the ROUBLE collapsed and INFLATION soared, wiping out people's savings; (3) the old welfare/social-security system (the public distribution system) collapsed, pushing large sections into POVERTY; (4) GDP and industrial output fell sharply (deindustrialisation); (5) a MAFIA / OLIGARCH class emerged that captured the privatised assets; (6) inequality rose dramatically and a small rich elite arose amid mass impoverishment.
Step 4 [1 mark]	Evaluation / conclusion	Shock therapy ignored each country's own social structures and was imposed as a one-size-fits-all Western model. It did NOT build democracy and capitalism organically; it caused economic ruin and social misery in the 1990s before any partial recovery. CBSE conclusion: the shock therapy model is widely judged a FAILURE in its human and economic cost.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Defining shock therapy but giving NO consequences (consequences carry the marks).
- Forgetting the World Bank / IMF role.
- Missing the 'largest garage sale' phrase and the oligarch class.
- Not stating that the welfare/PDS system collapsed.

★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark: 'Examine the consequences of the end of bipolarity / disintegration of the USSR.'

Most years

Step 1 [1 mark]	Frame the shift	The disintegration of the USSR in 1991 ended the BIPOLAR world order. With one of the two poles gone, the global power structure was fundamentally restructured for the first time since 1945.
Step 2 [2 marks]	Three big consequences	(1) END OF COLD WAR CONFRONTATIONS: the ideological arms race and proxy wars between capitalism and communism ended; the possibility of a third world war and nuclear holocaust receded. (2) US UNIPOLARITY: the USA became the SOLE SUPERPOWER, and a unipolar world emerged in which the US-led capitalist and liberal-democratic model became globally dominant; institutions like the IMF and World Bank gained influence over the transition economies. (3) NEW STATES + NEW CONFLICTS: 15 new states emerged from the USSR; many post-communist states (the Balkans, Chechnya, Central Asia, the Caucasus) saw ethnic and political conflict; the world map was redrawn.
Step 3 [1 mark]	For India + the Third World	The end of bipolarity changed the meaning of NON-ALIGNMENT (the two blocs to be non-aligned between no longer existed). Many developing countries, including India, shifted to market-oriented economic reforms (India's 1991 liberalisation) and adopted a more multi-aligned foreign policy.
Step 4 [1 mark]	Conclusion	In sum, the collapse ended a 45-year rivalry, created a unipolar US-dominated order, spread capitalism and liberal democracy, but also unleashed new ethnic and regional conflicts. Bipolarity gave way first to unipolarity and, over time, toward a more multipolar world.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Only saying 'Cold War ended' without naming US unipolarity + new conflicts.
- Forgetting the spread of capitalism/liberal democracy.
- Not linking to India / the changed meaning of non-alignment.
- No concluding line (worth 1 mark).

MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES

- Specific names + dates + republics are mandatory for full marks.
- Do NOT confuse the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall (East Europe) with the 1991 disintegration of the USSR itself.
- Causes answer MUST include nationalism in the republics (the immediate trigger) — omission caps the mark.
- Shock-therapy answers must give CONSEQUENCES, not just the definition (consequences carry the marks).
- Never write that Gorbachev intended to break up the USSR — he intended to save it.
- Concluding statement on 5-markers = 1 mark.