

## Paper 2, Question 2

Write a narrative account analysing the key events leading to the break-up of the Warsaw Pact in the years 1985–91.

You may use the following in your answer:

- Gorbachev became leader of the Soviet Union in 1985
- the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

You **must** also use information of your own. (8 marks)

### Strong answer

The break-up of the Warsaw Pact probably started when Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union. Although he did not intend to end Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, Gorbachev decided that the Soviet Union could not continue to spend huge sums on the arms race and foreign policy. Because of this, in 1985 he announced that the Soviet Union was abandoning the Brezhnev Doctrine.

As a result, the members of the Warsaw Pact realised they could now introduce reforms in their countries, without fear of being invaded by Warsaw Pact forces like Hungary and Czechoslovakia were many years earlier. So when, in September 1989, East Germans started travelling to West Germany through Hungary and Austria little was done to stop them. The countries of Eastern and Western Europe were becoming more connected. In the same month, the communist government in Poland was replaced after earlier being defeated in free elections. In October, communist government came to an end in Hungary. Moscow made no attempt to prevent the Polish elections or get rid of the new non-communist leaders in either country. Since the Warsaw Pact existed mainly to protect its communist members from the West, the reasons for its existence were fading away.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 made it even clearer that East and West were not divided any more. Its fall was symbolic and encouraged further challenges to communist rule. Communist regimes in Czechoslovakia and Romania were also toppled shortly afterwards. By the summer of 1990 all the old communist governments of the satellite states were replaced by new governments that had been democratically elected. With most countries of Eastern Europe now being led by non-communist governments there was no need for the Warsaw Pact. As a result, it was dissolved in July 1991.

### Verdict

This is a strong answer because it organises the events described in a coherent sequence, highlighting the links between them, and relates them to the break-up of the Warsaw Pact.



This paragraph follows on neatly from the one before, explaining a link between events in the Soviet Union and events in Warsaw Pact countries.

This paragraph makes a clear link between events and the implications for the Warsaw Pact.