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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level in
History (WHI01/1A)

Paper 1: Depth Study with Interpretations

Option 1A: France in Revolution, 1774-99

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WHI01 1A : France in Revolution, 1774-99

The entry for this paper was slightly increased compared to previous series.

Candidates chose two questions from four.

Question 1

This was generally well answered. Many candidates were able to consider the significance of the revolt of the aristocracy in relation to the onset of the revolution, however, there were some candidates who immediately dismissed it with little explanation and listed other factors such as poverty, economic problems and the storming of the Bastille. The Enlightenment was also a factor that featured in many responses. It is important to note that stated issue in the interpretations requires some consideration and is not simply ignored. Those candidates that concentrated on the issue in the question and balanced that with other factors and made a criteria based judgement scored highly.

Question 2

This question was popular, but some candidates saw the question as an opportunity to put down everything they knew about a range of individuals and their impact on driving the revolution. The issue raised by the question was that Brissot was more significant than Danton. Many candidates were knowledgeable about both and made a judgement based on comparing the two. Some candidates wanted to also add other, e.g. Robespierre, and while this did not invalidate their answer, conclusions that suggested a range of people were important as driving forces is not a judgement on the issue raised by the question.

Question 3

This question was popular with candidates. The issue in the question was discussed and supported with precise knowledge and other reasons for the emergence of the Terror were also considered. Some candidates saw the question as an opportunity to describe key features of the Terror or consider its consequences, including the end of Robespierre, the Directory and the White Terror, which were not relevant to the issue raised in the question. Many candidates balanced the issue with the war, Robespierre and the insecurities of the Jacobins and their desire to control people and power.

Question 4

There were some responses to this question. Some candidates gave very generalised answers with limited knowledge. Some saw this as an opportunity to describe who the Directory were, how they had come to power and how they were ended by Napoleon. Political violence was not understood by some candidates and, therefore, it was ignored. Those who understood the Jacobin issue, the Royalist threat and the issue in the Vendée scored well when they then considered other problems, e.g. economic problems, external threats.

Points to consider:

- This is a 'Depth study with Interpretations' which means that knowledge on its own is not enough. Knowledge needs to be applied to the interpretation that is raised by the question and judgements made.
- The time allowed for this examination is sufficient to allow a small amount of planning time for each answer.
- When judgments are made they need to be supported with criteria – it is not sufficient to state that a factor or consequence/effect/impact is the most 'important' or 'significant' without explaining the basis upon which that judgment has been made.

