



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International
Advanced Level In History (WHI01)

Paper 1A: France in Revolution, 1774-99

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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. Candidates were able to consider the importance of the two issues raised by the question and assess their relative merits as challenges to the ancien régime. Many saw the Enlightenment as significant but limited in its actual practical impact, with many suggesting that it was based on theoretical ideas and not necessarily the basis of the challenge that came from ordinary French people. Many discussed the actual significance and impact of the failure of the King and his ministers, particularly in relation economic policies. Some candidates saw the question as an opportunity to describe the various Estates in French society and narrate some reasons for the revolution. Those that concentrated on the issue in the question 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 the reforms of the National Assembly as a descriptive list. Others focused on the new constitution and then considered it against other consequences, particularly other areas of reform that came as a consequence of the revolution in the question time frame.

Question 3

This question was popular with candidates. The issue in the question was discussed and supported with precise knowledge and other features of the Terror were also considered. Many judged that controlling lives of French citizens was indeed the main feature, while also considering its significance in the formation of an army and its attack on the Catholic Church. Some candidates saw the question as an opportunity to describe the causes of the Terror. Those that concentrated on the issue in the question and made a criteria based judgement scored highly.

Question 4

There were some responses to this question. Some candidates gave very generalised answers with limited knowledge. There were also some answers that went to beyond 1799, when the question clearly stated 1799. Some candidates were more knowledgeable on how Napoleon maintained the principals and less so on how he destroyed them.

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.

