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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

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

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Publications Code WHI01\_1A\_2406

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## **Introduction**

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 absolutism of Louis XVI as a cause of discontent. Other causes of discontent were also considered, e.g. the Enlightenment, taxation, inequality between the Estates, involvement in the American War of Independence, national debt and poor harvests. Some candidates described the condition that France was in rather than consider the causes of discontent, and some described the Estate system.

### **Question 2**

This question was popular, but some candidates saw the question as an opportunity describe some of the things that the National Assembly did rather than consider what might have been the most significant reform. Those that did focus on the question tended to see the Declaration as important but saw it as theoretical and symbolic when set against some of the reforms that brought in significant tangible change, e.g. church reform, the constitution, economic reforms.

### **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. 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. Those who considered the economic difficulties and balance them against other difficulties, e.g. internal and external threats, war and revolt in the provinces produced the most convincing answers.

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.

