



Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback  
January 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Level In History (WHI01 1A)  
Option 1A: France in Revolution, 1774–99

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## Principal Examiner Report

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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 the Enlightenment as a challenge faced by the ancient régime. Many considered how it was a challenge in that it questioned the role of absolutism and presented many new ideas about governance. Candidates then considered other challenges, particularly the financial crisis with the main focus being debt and taxation. It is important to note that the stated issue in the interpretation requires some consideration and is not simply ignored, which was the case with some candidates who saw the question as an opportunity to write generally about the nature of the three estates in France. Also, some candidates ignored '...in the years before 1789'. While this did not mean the rest of their answer was not relevant and credit worthy, time was wasted on material that was not relevant to the issue raised by the question. 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 and candidates were able to consider where the war with Austria and Prussia was the main reason for the emergence of Republicanism. Many saw how it created a sense of mistrust in the King, created economic issues which were not easily solved and it strengthening republican sentiment, particularly in Paris. Candidates also offered other reason, mostly focused around the King's flight to Varennes. There was a tendency to ignore to dates set in the question and go beyond to the execution of the King. There were also candidates that used generalised information from before 1791 as an explanation for emerging Republicanism. 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 3

This question was less popular with candidates and was answered with varying outcomes. Some candidates knew little about the Thermidorian government other than they ended the Terror. While this had some relevance and was creditworthy, on its own it did not fully address the issue in the question. Some candidates were aware of the attempts by the Thermidorean government to deal with economic problems, and some were able to make judgements about if this lead to stability or instability, which was the issue raised by the question. Higher scoring candidates considered a range of issues with some able to make judgements about the different issues rather than just decided between 'instability' or 'stability'.

#### Question 4

There were some responses to this question. Some candidates gave very generalised answers with limited knowledge. Some described the coup only. There was some understanding of the role Napoleon but there was limited understanding of the role of Sieyès.

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.

