
AS

HISTORY

France in Revolution, 1774–1815

7041/2H The end of Absolutism and the French Revolution, 1774–1795

Report on the Examination

7041

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General comments

It was clear to see that a large number of students had been able to get to grips with both the compulsory question and their choice of essay question. A large number of students used the time available to write some fairly substantial answers to both the compulsory question and in particular the latter of the essay questions, which was the most popular option for the students.

Section A

Question 01

The three strands of this question; an evaluation of content and argument (supported by the students own knowledge), an evaluation of tone, and provenance and a comparison were attempted with mixed degrees of success. There was a trend in students beginning to address the comparison between the sources as they progressed through their answers, although some students still dealt with the comparison in the conclusion. This method was less common than in previous years.

Many students were able to address the provenance of both sources. Particularly with a focus on the sans-culotte newspaper in Source A, with reference to the purpose of the author or mention of how the sans-culotte used propaganda, assisted by their own knowledge. Many were able to comment on the rousing tone of the source and relate its value as evidence, although some discussed the tone with few links to the question which weakened the response.

For many students in Source B, there was also some decent comment on the author of the source and a good number of students were able to link the patriotic tone of the speech to the purpose in writing. Some students resorted to basic evaluation, repeating generic comments about why speeches may be biased. More able students were able to link the relevance of Marseilles as a pivotal centre of the Federalist Revolt to explain the tone of the address or assess the date of the source in reference to the events which were unfolding.

With regards to the content, a large number of students recognised the events being referred to. However, there were a few who were confused with the ‘accomplices of Capet’ reference in Source A and responded with irrelevance about Louis involvement prior to the 1789 Estates General and the role of Marie Antoinette. The most sophisticated responses were those which identified the main points being made by the sources, rather than breaking down the sources ‘quote by quote’. The stronger contextual knowledge supported Source B, as students were able to discuss the Jacobin constitution, the role of Robespierre and the divisions between the Jacobins and Girondins. The stronger responses used appropriate contextual knowledge which linked with the sources in order to evaluate them. Less able students either focused on the provenance and tone of the sources, with generic statements of bias, or in other rare cases, largely wrote a narrative about the causes of the revolution. Although the date in the question isn’t as specific as the 2017 question, as it is a depth study, students should be aware of the events of the Federalist Revolt in 1793.

A larger number of students compared the two sources throughout the answer, using smaller judgements and in some cases, compared the sources in their introduction as well. In all methods, including at the end of the answer, there was a genuine attempt to compare their value, looking at the provenance and content.

Section B**Question 02**

This question was answered by a fewer number of students and the responses were weaker than in question 03. The less able students were able to give an overview of the different Estates in reference to their position in society, but without a focus on the divisive nature of the Third Estate. Therefore, many students answered this question in two ways. Firstly, a narrative of the different Estates, from First to Third, including their financial position, or secondly a discussion of the Estates-General and the events which followed, missing the date parameters of the question, which led to uncertainty about what happened up to May 1789 which led to lower marks. The more able students were able to differentiate between the different areas of the Third Estate and factors which led to divisions such as their wealth, education and status and also referred to the laws such as capital punishment which was a common factor amongst them. In summary, the higher level responses from students were less frequent on this question.

Question 03

This was the most popular question, answered by a large number of students and many responses sustained a specific focus on the question throughout their essays as they assessed whether crowd action was the most significant factor with strong reference to a variety of other factors including the role of Louis. Less able students tended to have less precise knowledge of a variety of events which involved crowd action and as a result, these answers were more focused on what the events were, rather than their impact. The more able students were able to demonstrate a cohesive argument with examples of crowd action from the Bastille, the Great Fear and the October Days and their impact on the political revolution. They were also able to argue that National Assembly, the Enlightenment and other factors were able to bring about the revolution. There were a few different responses with regards to the definition of crowd action, where a couple of students perceived that Louis brought about the revolution himself through his actions. Overall, the students who answered this question were able to provide more examples to discuss and substantially balanced arguments.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.