



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2017

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

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iA Level History (1A France)

WHI01: International Advanced Subsidiary

WHI01 is a new International Advanced Subsidiary examination that is part of the new iA Level History qualification, WHI01 (unit 1) is a Depth Study with Interpretations, and comprises four options; 1A France in Revolution 1774-99, 1B Russia in Revolution 1881-1917, 1C Germany 1918-45, and 1D Britain 1964-90. The assessment criteria for all the options, and questions are AO1 and AO3, and all the options and questions, are covered by a generic mark scheme, based on Level descriptors.

It is important that centres take on board some generic comments which are based on the marking of this summer's cohort, and consider and apply these when preparing candidates for future examinations in these options.

- WHI01 is both a study in depth and a study of interpretations, and it is necessary for candidates to do both, at all levels in the mark scheme, in order to score marks. Ignoring the stated view in the question, and merely writing information that may be relevant to the general focus of the question does not fully meet the criteria for Level 1, and consequently none of the other levels. Even at Level 1 the mark scheme expects simple or generalised consideration of the stated view in the question. Some candidates paid very little attention to the stated view (ignoring it completely or sometimes only referring to it in the conclusion) and narrated or described other information that was either relevant or not to the actual question.
- Across all of the options, in candidate responses, there was very little evidence seen of planning. As the examination is two hours long, implying that candidates might divide that time equally between the two essays they choose, it would seem sensible to devote some time (possibly no more than 10 minutes per question) to planning the structure of the answer to each question. That would hopefully ensure that when the answer is written the stated view is considered (Level 2, 3 and 4 all require, to varying degrees, understanding, analysis and exploration of the given view) and then other factors/views can follow, which will then allow the candidate to establish some criteria by which they are able to consider the importance, or not, of the given view and make some judgements. Those candidates who planned (this appeared on their examination script before they answered the question) invariably scored better than candidates who had not planned. Planned answers tended to score at the top of Level 3 and into, and including the top of Level 4, whereas unplanned answers meandered and judgements tended to be stated, rather than supported by valid criteria, and often achieved marks at the Level 2 and Level 3 boundary or below.
- The need to stress to candidates that in examination situations they must read the question carefully, and not take the question as an opportunity to write all they know about the topic, or answer a question they would have preferred that is near to the actual question, but not the actual question.
- There was some evidence of candidates running out of time, but they were very few. Impressing the need to plan essays in the examination is surely the remedy to this problem.

Option 1A France in Revolution 1774-99

- Question 1 proved to be the most popular, followed by question 2, question 3 and question 4.
- In question 1 many candidates were able to consider the impact of the American Revolution on France, and then discuss other problems before making a judgement.
- The example below scored a high Level 3. The stated view is considered, other problems are also considered and judged against the stated view and a judgement is made. Knowledge is deployed but in places it lacks range and depth.

(This page is for your first answer) Historians differ in their opinions about the problems facing the ancien regime in the years before 1789.

The American Revolution had a substantial impact on France however, I believe that there were a great number of other issues facing France which are impossible to ignore, as France faced larger issues during this time. The ancien regime had many faults, such as the corrupt taxation system and the divisions between and within the three Estates. The leadership of Louis XVI also resulted in leading the country to economic, financial and political turmoil. Therefore, it is impossible to credit the American Revolution's impact as being the main issue facing France during the years of the Ancien Regime.

Firstly, ~~the~~ France faced numerous problems in terms of foreign affairs, such as the American revolution. Many French soldiers fought with the Americans and as a result, liberal and revolutionary ideas

(This page is for your first answer) were spread into the French army. France also spent vast amounts of money in what was arguably an unnecessary intervention, although they were already in debt. The loss France faced in the Seven Year war with Austria also had a significant impact as it cost vast amounts of money and humiliated France on a global scale.

Moreover, the structure of society in France was also an incredibly significant issue. Society was divided into three Estates, with the first two estates over burdening the third, which made up the majority of France, ~~with~~ but held far less privileges. There were also socioeconomic differences within the Estates, such as in the first Estate which was made up of the clergy and ranged from very wealthy bishops and poor parish priests. The Third Estate also ranged from lawyers and merchants to peasants and serfs. Plurality and absenteeism was also a large issue within the first Estate, many bishops held more than one post and some never even visited their diocese. This shows the deeply ingrained problems

(This page is for your first answer) in French society, which greatly contributed to the revolutionary ideals throughout France. Many historians credit the main issue of the ancien regime the major class struggle which existed.

Furthermore, the taxation system in France was corrupt and inefficient, posing a large problem. The government employed a company called the Farmers General to collect taxes, however they would only be inclined to give the King an agreed sum and keep the rest. Many officials had also bought their positions through venality, meaning that they could not be dismissed. The most burdensome tax, the taille, was exclusive to the Third Estate as the first two were exempt. This greatly increased the burden of taxation on the ~~first two estates~~ third Estate. As a result of the inefficient taxation system, the King was forced to borrow money from other countries and worsen the existing debt in France. This put a great burden on France throughout the years.

In addition, the impact of the 'Enlightenment' in France is also impossible to be ignored. Revolutionary ideas swept the country

(This page is for your first answer)

as concepts of liberty, equality and meritocracy swept over the country and threatened the system of the monarchy. The ideas of the Enlightenment were popular among the liberal nobility, which held danger as they held more influence.

Discussions about the ideas of the Enlightenment were commonplace and threatened the stability of the ancien regime.

What is more, France also faced an economic crisis within the years of the ancien regime. Failed harvests plagued France which led to grain shortages. This caused great discontent among the peasantry, and fuelled the existing revolutionary consensus.

In addition, France faced many financial difficulties as a result of the vast debt which accumulated ~~as a~~ due to the constant borrowing of money to fund wars, ~~to~~ and the lavish lifestyle of the nobility at Versailles. Louis XVI failed to appropriately deal with these issues as his reaction was to appoint a new finance minister, who also failed to combat the financial

(This page is for your first answer) crisis.

Finally, the King and Queen of France themselves were also a cause for discontent due to their unfavourable characteristics. Louis preferred home life over politics during an unstable time when France required a strong leader. ~~Also~~ Although he had inherited many problems from past rulers, he failed to create progress as a monarch. His marriage to his Austrian wife, Marie Antoinette, was also widely criticised due to her lavish lifestyle and gambling problem while France was in serious debt. France was also at a clash with Austria, increasing suspicions of treachery and Marie Antoinette broke a century long tradition of French Queens when she ~~decided~~ ^{second} to deliver her children in public. She also created a village at Versailles which was seen to be a mockery of peasant life. Thus, it is clear that ~~the~~ many French citizens would criticise their leaders, which was a large problem for them.

In conclusion, the ancien regime faced

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a large number of problems, and although the American revolution did have a substantial impact on France, it is impossible to say that this was the largest issue. ~~the cause~~ Many historians would argue that the cause for the French revolution in France was the major class struggle which existed and the influence of the bourgeoisie. There was, however, a combination of problems which existed in France, such as corruption, social inequality and, of course the revolutionary ideas of liberty which swept over the country.

- In question 2 candidates were able to discuss the impact of the flight of the king, but some described the flight rather than analysing and evaluating whether or not it was the main reason why France became a republic.
- In question 3 candidates were able to discuss the problems facing the National convention, which many decided that what to do with the King was not their main problem.
- In question 4 (which was the least popular) candidates were well versed in external threats facing the Directory, with some candidates considering other achievements, and balancing them against the threats.

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