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Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In History (WHI01)

Paper 1: Depth Study with Interpretations

Option 1A: France in Revolution, 1774–99

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Publications Code WHI01_1A_1906_ER

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Principal Examiner Report 2019

iA Level History (1A: France in Revolution 1774-99)

WHI01: International Advanced Subsidiary

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.
- 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 and 2 proved popular followed by question 3 and question 4.
- In question 1 many candidates were able to consider whether or not the Enlightenment posed little challenge, though some candidates choose to ignore the stated view and went straight into arguing that it was a major threat.
- In question 2 candidates were able to discuss the role of the war with Austria and Prussia as a driving force of the revolution, with many balancing it against factors such as the role of the Jacobins and sans-culottes, the actions of the King and the actions of the Legislative Assembly and the Convention.
- In question 3 candidates were able to discuss whether or not the Thermidorian government stabilised France. Many offered convincing arguments that they did, but were weaker in their arguments that would counter the view.
- In question 4 (which was the least popular) candidates were able to consider some aspects in relation to political problems and economic problems faced by the Directory, but rather than compare them they tended to describe them and reach unsupported judgements.