



2012

History: Revolutions GA 3: Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Advice to students

- It is important that answers to Section A, Questions 1 and 2 show factual knowledge; historiography is not relevant in these questions and cannot replace factual information. It is also not required in Section B, Question 2, where evidence in the form of detailed facts is preferred. Historiography is assessed in Section A, Question 3 and Section B, Question 1 where the instruction is given.
- Students should pay more attention to the time frame given in the question. They should include information about events that occurred across the whole time span including, but not beyond, the end date.
- Information is best presented in chronological order in Questions 1 and 2 where causal understanding is being tested, and the essay response.
- Some students presented their answers in dot-point form. This was not acceptable.
- Some students confused the Revolution they should have been addressing in each exam question and section. If students work through the question paper in the order given for their chosen Revolution, they will be less likely to make mistakes and potentially miss out on marks.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section A – Revolution one

Revolutionary ideas, leaders, movements and events

Revolution chosen	none	America	France	Russia	China
%	0	12	39	44	4

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	6	11	14	14	14	13	11	8	4	2	4.7

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	5	10	13	14	15	14	11	7	4	2	4.7

Questions 1 and 2

Questions 1 and 2 assess factual knowledge and causal understanding. Using quotations from historians does not demonstrate factual knowledge of the ideas, leaders, movements or events and wastes time and space. On the whole, students showed clear ability to handle this section of the exam. Answers were usually successfully signposted ‘firstly’, ‘secondly’, ‘thirdly’, which established a good structure for the answer. The most successful answers were in chronological order. Excellent responses used correct and specific historical terms, and included dates, places and names. The use of ‘in the development of the Revolution’ and ‘created a revolutionary situation’ in responses separated strong answers from weak ones. These phrases needed stronger focus than most students gave them. They should be integrated in the response with each piece of information rather than referred to at the end in an attempt to tie the answer to the question.

America

The first question focused on the Sons of Liberty and their contribution to the American Revolution between 1765 and 1776. The difference between basic answers and high-scoring answers was the range of factual knowledge. At the basic level, answers contained the leading members of the group (Sam Adams and John Hancock) and the key events in which the group participated (the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party). The more successful responses contained the origins of the group (the Loyal Nine) and explained that the Sons of Liberty arose in response to news of the



introduction of the Stamp Act in 1765. They also commented on the acts of civil disobedience and the fact that the Sons of Liberty sought to alter British legislation.

The second question asked students how the ideas ‘eventually’ contained in the Declaration of Independence contributed to a revolutionary situation. The distinguishing feature of the more successful answers was the ability to build a response that covered the period 1763–1776 to show how revolutionary leaders had crystallised a set of guiding principles and link them to key events in preceding years. For example, the inalienable ‘right to property’ was linked to the transgressions of the British Government, which had sought to impose taxes on the colonists without their direct representation in parliament, giving rise to the cry ‘no taxation without representation’. Another idea was an inalienable ‘right to life’, which was linked to occasions when British troops had threatened the sanctity of life such as in the Boston Massacre.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 2, although it tends to focus on the debate more than the ideas eventually contained in the Declaration, and more emphasis needs to be placed on the way the ideas contributed to a revolutionary situation.

The ideas contained in the Declaration of Independence had been brewing and growing amongst the colonies since 1763. Natural rights were a key pillar of American revolutionary ideology that had been borrowed from John Locke and the Enlightenment period of the 1600's. James Otis was quick to raise the rhetoric of 'no taxation without representation', as the Sugar Act (1764) was an imposition upon their economic liberties. This argument was expressed in 'the Rights of British Colonies Asserted and Proved' (1764). Here the notion that Britain was not granting them their natural right to liberty became increasingly evident through the Stamp Act (1765) and also the Townshend Duties (1767). The right to life was another key aspect of natural rights. Jefferson strongly argued that this right had been violated in the Boston Massacre (1770) and the Coercive Acts (1774). This very right was threatened simply from the mere presence of standing armies in the colonies. The Declaration of Independence also made sure to argue that the Quartering Act (1765) unlawfully abused the colonists' property. Hence, all these ideas culminated in the Declaration where they emerged as 'certain inalienable rights...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. American sovereignty was another emerging idea that formed a structural pillar of the Declaration of Independence. The suspension of the New York Assembly in 1765 for not complying with the Quartering Act symbolized how Britain was physically taking away the colonists' right to directly elect their leaders. Hence, Thomas Paine's 'Common Sense' (January 1776) consolidated the idea that America no longer Britain, could stand on its own two feet and that America was politically mature to govern itself. The popular desires for self-government and American sovereignty were formalized in the Declaration of Independence (1776).

Many students confused the Declaration of Independence with the American Constitution. The less successful students tended to look at the ‘mother-hood’ statements of the Declaration of Independence and generalise about the way in which they contributed to the Revolution.

France

Many commendable answers to Question 1 included very detailed knowledge of events instigated by the nobility from 1787 to 1789, including rejection of Calonne and Brienne’s tax reform proposals, the Assembly of Notables, the Parlement of Paris, exile to Troyes, the Day of Tiles and the renunciation of privileges on 4 August 1789. However, many students wrote about the privileges of the nobility as a source of resentment for the third estate who bore the brunt of taxation. These students were therefore writing about how social structure contributed to Revolution rather than focusing on the nobility.

The majority of answers to Question 2 presented a narrative about events in the lead-up to the Tennis Court Oath and how it took place. Few answers understood the significance of why it was instrumental in creating a revolutionary situation. The most successful answers were able to show causal understanding by explaining the atmosphere of defiance, the members of the first and second estate joining the third, defiance of the King at the Séance Royal, the tension and fear caused by his reaction in calling up troops to Paris, the response by the people in the storming of the Bastille and the night of patriotic delirium on 4 August. Some excellent answers included the role of Mirabeau in defying the King and Camille Desmoulins in stirring up popular action. It was evident from responses that students need to engage more with the notion of a revolutionary situation and what this means in terms of human responses.

The following high-range answer to Question 1 starts with a clear statement of contention related to the question. It then presents detail upon detail, using the full time frame of events that are linked to the development of the Revolution in chronological order. This answer shows very detailed factual knowledge without quoting historians, which is not considered factual knowledge.

The nobility (or Second Estate) despite their financial privileges, as provided to them by the culture of deference – the foundation for the ancient regime – contributed to the development as the liberal noblemen kick started the Revolution through the first act



of formal disobedience and followed it through to the abolition of feudalism on 4 August 1789. Firstly, the Assembly of Notables called by King Louis XVI on 22 February 1787 was made up of purely nobility, including Marquis La Fayette, making the emergency body, a supposedly conservative group when it came to addressing the issue of implementing Calonne's fiscal reforms (replacing the corvée – direct tax of 14 days unpaid labour on roads). In refusing these suggested reforms, the nobility was standing up to the King, despite simultaneously preserving their privileges and maintaining their stance to the point they were dismissed in May 1787. Secondly this rebellion to the King was furthered by the new Comptroller General of finances. Brienne attempted to register the reforms by bypassing the stubborn Notables and getting them registered directly by the Parlement of Paris – a municipal governing body again made up of nobility. The Parlement's use of Remonstrance (delaying legislation) and the liberal Duc D'Orleans declaration that the King's decision to use a lit de justice (6 August 1787), forcible registration, presented the body as the people's voice, led to the revolutionary action by masses as early as 1788 on the Day of Tiles (10 June) as the Third Estate peasants attempted to protect the magistrates from punishment despite the Parlement's exile to Troyes on 15 August. Finally the Parlement's, thus the nobility's, demands for an Estates General led to the event on 5 May 1789 which led to the establishment of the National Assembly. In conclusion the nobility's brave acts of rebellion and strong demands for fair representation contributed greatly to the French Revolution of 1789.

Russia

The time frame in the question gave students plenty of scope to select information about the actions of industrial workers. However, too many answers ignored events from February to October 1917, and a large number confined their response to a discussion of Bloody Sunday 1905 and this was not satisfactory. The most successful answers included the 1905 General Strike, formation of the first Soviet under Trotsky, the Lena Goldfields massacre, the Putilov factory workers strike in February 1917 and the formation of the first Soviet in Petrograd and the July days of 1917. It was clear that most students needed to show the skill of explaining 'how' the workers contributed to the development of the Revolution.

Students wrote some good responses for Question 2 about the actions of the Tsar, yet many ignored the question dates (1914 to February 1917) and commenced the answer with Bloody Sunday 1905. Students need to be reminded that irrelevant information will not earn marks. Most answers contained information on the action of the Tsar in entering World War I, his taking command and going to the front, leaving Alexandra to govern (with Rasputin) and the 'ministerial leapfrogging' that took place. The more successful answers also included the Tsar's refusal to consult or consider the advice of ministers and the Dumas, and his effort to diminish their power.

The following high-range student response opens with a key statement that addresses the question directly. It contains precise information that is all relevant and contributes to the answer. The answer provides information across the whole of the time frame given in the question. A very important quality of a high-scoring answer is the constant linking of information to the development of the Revolution.

Industrial workers played an integral role in the contribution to a revolutionary situation from 1905 to October 1917, owing to the increasing agitation over terrible working conditions in factories in 1905. Workers were crammed together all sharing the same ideas for reform. The Bloody Sunday protests, 9 January 1905, was a demonstration of the grievances felt by workers and resulted in a situation which diminished the reputation of the Tsar. Furthermore continued workers strikes in the period leading to WWI saw 900 strikes between 1912 and 1914. The Lena Goldfield massacre, was a demonstration over bad working conditions and was important in establishing anti Tsarist sentiment as the violent reaction of the Tsar was condemned. Moreover aggravation of workers leading to the February Revolution was exacerbated by the closure of the Putilov steel factory on 16 February 1917. This added to tensions leading to the Tsar's abdication at the end of February 1917. Moreover continued workers strikes following the February Revolution urged the Provisional Government to improve the economic situation so workers could afford bread. The Provisional Government's failure to address the needs of the workers resulted in them turning to the soviets and the Bolsheviks with the promise of 'Peace, Land, Bread'. The Bolsheviks gained much support from the industrial workers as they claimed to be the 'vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat'. Thus support from industrial workers enabled the Bolsheviks to gain enough support to overthrow the Provisional Government on 26 October 1917. Therefore the industrial workers played an important role in the developing revolution.

China

Students struggled to link the failure of the Hundred Days of Reform 1898 to the events of 1911. The most successful answers contained a clear sense of the chain of events that was started by the failure of the Hundred Days of Reform. Students often presented information that was outside the question time frame in an effort to explain why reform was necessary and mentioned irrelevant information about the Opium wars. The most successful answers contained information on the new ideas brought from overseas learning, modernisation of the armed forces, the Tongmenghui, the Railway Recovery movement and the event at Wuhan in 1911. Students found difficulty integrating the Boxer Rebellion and the effect of the Boxer protocols in furthering foreign control and being a source of frustration.

Answers to Question 2 on the contribution of Mao's ideas in developing the Revolution from 1934 to 1949 were also not generally successful. Answers should have had a strong focus on the 'mass line', but few showed strong knowledge



of the chronological development of Mao's ideology. The most successful answers began with the Jiangxi Soviet and extended to the period in Yenan when Mao wrote *On New Democracy*, a policy that embraced all classes in the struggle against Japan.

Too many answers focused on the Long March and described it in a narrative, as well as the Rules and Discipline of the Red Army. Weaker answers referred to Mao's reliance on the peasants but lacked specific information about how this was a deviation from classic Marxism and juxtaposition with the ideas emanating from the USSR that still espoused an urban-based revolution.

Creating a new society

Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	15	78	1.7

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	24	19	56	1.3

Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	6	11	20	24	20	13	6	3.1

Question 3d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	9	7	12	14	14	13	11	9	6	3	1	4.2

Most students were able to draw relevant information from the extract and use it in a meaningful way to support their response to Questions 3c. and 3d. The less successful answers relied too heavily on the information, with some merely paraphrasing it or copying it with minimal explanation. Careful reading of the question is required and further skill with historiography is needed. Some students simply labelled schools of thought rather than referring to specific historians. The most successful students showed excellent skill and confidence in making comparisons to specific views. There was improvement in the way students discussed the strengths and limitations of the extracts, but greater attention needs to be paid to the author of the extract and how the view may be slanted. It must be emphasised that students should not refer to historians' views, even in brackets, in Question c.

America

The extract focused on the debates concerning the new Constitution between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. It was evident that students were familiar with the views of both groups. Sections of Borden's extract were used effectively, with students confidently identifying that the key defining difference between the groups centered on the amount of power to be accorded the Federal Government. Question d. was not handled well, primarily because students did not read the question carefully. Students were required to comment on how useful Borden's extract was in understanding the debates over the Constitution in the new society, but too many focused on how the Constitution has been assessed by historians. The more successful responses recognised that Borden's commentary picks up the key aspects of debate and explained how the revolutionaries were trying to establish a strong government capable of uniting the founding states. Over the years, historians have not doubted the admirable intentions of the Founding Fathers, but they have discussed the other motivations they may have harboured, such as protection of their economic assets (Beard). The most successful students integrated this into their answer but only after they had discussed the contemporaneous debates that surrounded the new Constitution.

France

Responses to Questions a. and b. were often incorrect due to a lack of careful reading. Many students confused the question about the consequences of the rebellion and named causes.

Many students seemed familiar with McPhee and generated good answers to Question 3c. Most students were able to use the extract to find the origins of the rebellion in the Vendée. The most successful students understood the inference



from the 'region's distinctive characteristics' and showed excellent knowledge of the area being a centre for royalist sympathies as well as the dependence on the labour of farmers for survival rather than them being conscripted. Most students were able to refer to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and supply accurate dates. Question 3d. was less well done because students did not read the question carefully enough. It moved away from the opposition in the Vendée to the broader context of 'opposition to the Revolutionary government in French society'. The majority of students focused on the Vendée and repeated much of their response to the preceding question. Students need to be able to compare the possible reasons for opposition to the Revolutionary government within Paris and in other areas. The most successful answers noted the broader question and applied their knowledge to it very well, referring to Doyle and Schama. The less successful students labelled McPhee a 'Marxist' or a 'revisionist' and showed incomplete understanding of such terms. It is not worthwhile for students to apply labels to historians in their response.

The following high-scoring response to Question 3c. contains typical features of a very good answer. It begins with information from the extract and refers to the extract while also demonstrating wider knowledge.

The predominant cause for the uprising in the Vendee region appeared as the extract reflects the conscription of 300,000 men by the National Convention in February 1793. The conscription which appeared to exclude the representatives on mission and the members of the Committee of General Security (created 2nd October 1792) angered the civilians of the Vendee region, exasperated by the poor harvests of 1792 and 1793. The Vendee region and its rebellious uprising however, was also caused by the execution of Louis XVI on the 21st January 1793. Many within the region appeared as loyal Catholics who shared the King's disapproval of the reforms made on the Church by not only the National Convention, seen with their decrees against the émigrés and refractory priests in November 1792 but also of the Legislative Assembly actions against the clergy during the period of reform (1789-1791). The Civil Constitution of the Clergy (12th July 1790) in which the Pope was effectively removed as head of the Church and replacing him with the State proved to be the first mistake of the Revolution dividing many loyal Catholics and as the Vendee region uprising shows, created enemies to the new society.

Although the following response to Question 3d. is a little longer than required, it is an excellent example of the structure for discussion. By starting with an evaluative statement the answer begins with the extract. The response compares views of the Revolution and provides extensive detailed knowledge to continue the discussion of reliability.

The extract provides a reflection of how the reforms on the clergy and the Church led to the formation of opposition to the revolutionary government, however, ultimately it is only reliable to a certain extent as it fails to provide a depiction of the opposition that grew from within the government itself by 1795. The extract's reflection of the rising in the Vendee provides an insight into the war and how the effects of war lead to the growth of opposition. By the uprising in the Vendee the war had extended to a war on five fronts with the National Convention having declared war against Great Britain and the Dutch Republic on the 11th February 1793. Thus the exhaustion that this all consuming war caused France led to the growth of counter-revolution in areas such as the Vendee region and later Marseilles (although wanting more for a federal government rather than an end to war) whom the government's 'La Patrie en Danger' (11th July 1792) could no longer pacify into patriotic enthusiasm for protecting the nation and who opposed Robespierre's statement that the 'government must organise the despotism of democracy against the despotism of tyranny' in order to defeat the foreign forces. However the document omits any reference to the opposition to the government which grew from within the National Convention. This was seen through the purging of the Girondins on the 28th April – 2nd May 1793 after the disapproval of the Jacobins alliance with the sans culottes whom they referred to as the drinkers of blood as well as the Hebertists on the 24th March 1794 whom Robespierre feared were a threat from the far right and two weeks later the execution of Danton and the Indulgents. This occurred after the machinery of the terror had been established (Committee of Public Safety 6th April 1793 and the Law of 14 Frimaire constituting the Terror) which led to the Great Terror between June and July 1793 which had caused 59.3% of the deaths during the entirety of the terror. Many wanted an end to the revolutionary government which led to socialist historian Hippolyte Taine stating 'several million savages being propelled into action by a few thousand thinkers and radical dogma taking service under the banner of brute force'. Finally the extract fails to reflect upon the eventual opposition to the direction of the revolutionary Government leading to the overthrow of government on the 26th of July 1794.



Russia

Responses to the extract on the New Economic Policy were strong. Students had adequate knowledge of the topic and showed they understood the hardships of the Civil War period. However, many answers did not include the Kronstadt uprising, which should be included as part of the full range of events that led to the New Economic Policy. Careful consideration of Question 3c., which said 'the events that led to the introduction of the New Economic Policy', should have triggered the correct information. Most answers concentrated only on the brutality of War communism and did so in general terms. Stronger answers quoted death tolls, using dates and names of opposition groups such as the Tambov revolt, urban unrest, de-urbanisation and internal party factions. Many responses did not consider who Serge was, which could have been deduced from a careful reading of the extract. In Question 3d. many students simply restated why the New Economic Policy was introduced rather than discussing its impact. The more successful answers used statistics such as production improved with the annual grain harvest, rising to almost 60 million tons in 1923, and coal production and factory outputs also increasing proportionately. Reference to historians was not problematic for students who had researched this period carefully. They knew that historians acknowledge the improvement in economic conditions but also understood that such a policy had a negative impact on die-hard party members who lamented the retreat to communism. A small number of students discussed internal party factions and Lenin's On Party Unity. Some students responded poorly to this question and historians' views were often absent. When mentioned, they were Pipes, Fitzpatrick and Figes.

The following response to Question 3d. shows high-level skills of evaluation, evidence is integrated and historiography is used to build the answer. These skills are necessary for a successful result.

The 'marvellous results' in the first few months of the NEP that Serge refers to is relatively accurate. The diminishment of 'famine and speculation' was evident as the Black Market and grain hoarding receded from prominence; the Black Market having supplied Petrograd with 60% of its bread in 1920 to almost none in 1921. It led to almost immediate improvements in grain production as peasants had the tangible incentive of private trade. The famine that killed 5 million people in the first two years of the NEP does detract from this view though. The fact that 'people were apt to talk about the return of capitalism' applies to the attitudes of peasants, however workers remained discontented, social historian Orlando Figes having asserted that 'it was popular pressure from below that instigated the policy of War Communism' in the first place. This view is supported where in the extract Serge refers to the 'confusion among the party rank-and-file'. This is also indicative of the internal dissent that the NEP gave rise to, including the workers' movement led by Alexandra Kollantai and the Democratic Centralists. In response to these challenges, Lenin issued the decrees on Party Unity and on the Anarcho Syndicalist deviation, which revisionist historian Sheila Fitzpatrick has asserted 'gave Politburo dictatorial powers'. This 'outright obliteration of every trace of democracy' was also evident in the persecution of Mensheviks and SRs sympathetic to workers' strikes, by 5000 show trials held between 1921 and 1924. Lenin himself acknowledged that the NEP made 'economic concessions to avoid political concessions'. Liberal historian Richard Pipes, in his portrayal of the Bolsheviks as a corrupt autocracy, contends that the NEP allowed for a 'dictatorship of privilege, not the Proletariat'. The 'party rank-and-file' confused by the transition into the NEP reflects the attitudes of the Bolsheviks such as Trotsky who viewed it as 'the first sign of degeneration of Bolshevism'. Indeed it reinstated many bourgeois factory managers and noble landowners for their economic expertise. The extract does not demonstrate issues that arose such as the Scissors Crisis of 1923, however it remains reliable as industrial growth had recovered by 1924, electricity produced had tripled since 1913 and agricultural production remained in incline.

China

Most students were able to identify the pro-Communist Party of China view expressed in the extract. In response to 'how Mao consolidated communist authority' (Question 3c.) strong answers showed a clear sense of what the 'authority' referred to – in this case a socialist society. Strong answers referred to Agrarian reform, social reforms, the First Five-Year Plan and the Three-Anti and Five-Anti campaigns. In Question 3d. the most successful answers identified that the extract omitted any reference to the use of coercion or terror. Strong answers identified that the date of the source, 1959, meant that it coincided with the consolidation of power and thus lacked the benefit of hindsight. Students were able to successfully contrast the source with examples of repression such as the Hundred Flowers Campaign. Many students were confidently able to use other views, although the comparisons were often simplistic. The most commonly quoted historians were Meisner, Fairbank, Chang and Halliday. Students should confine their answers to the dates specified in the question. Many students extended their discussion past 1957 and included the Great Leap Forward, which did not achieve any marks.



**Section B – Revolution two
Revolutionary ideas, leaders, movements and events**

Revolution chosen	none	America	France	Russia	China
%	0	5	23	45	26

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	6	36	58	1.5

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	4	20	76	1.7

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	7	16	24	24	17	10	3	2.7

Question 1d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	9	9	12	14	13	13	11	9	6	3	1	4.1

The questions on visual sources in Section B were done less well than the questions on print extracts in Section A. Students should ensure that they pay attention to the captions in order to place the source in context. Students did not identify groups in society with precision, particularly with French social groups, and misunderstood the literal and symbolic meaning of the image. In Question 1c., many students did not read the question carefully or supply precise factual knowledge. A useful structure for answers was to discuss the ideas of the image first and then present other knowledge. It was good to see that students were aware of and could quote historians' views in Question 1d., but often this was at the expense of a balanced response that answered the question. The most successful students were able to examine the graphic in the light of their own knowledge of events in the period. Weak answers relied on the graphic for information. Good answers signposted their use of the graphic by using the phrase 'as shown in the image' or 'seen here with ...', which was a useful strategy to build on with their own information. Students are reminded that reference to historians does not count as knowledge.

America

The caption explained that the graphic was Patrick Henry, a Virginian, delivering a speech against the *Stamp Act 1765*, and students needed to read this information carefully and use it to inform their answer. The revolutionary ideals expressed in the painting included opposition to Britain and the idea that there should be 'no taxation without representation'. When students are confronted with a more challenging question, such as eliciting revolutionary ideals from a visual representation, they need to look for helpful information such as was provided in the caption. Question c. was on the development of colonial opposition to Britain's authority to levy taxes. The key British legislation pertaining to taxes were the *Stamp Act 1765*, the *Townshend Duties (1767)* and the *Tea Act 1773*. The graphic provided rich opportunity to discuss the Stamp Act, while the question wording 'using your own knowledge' allowed students to explain the later Acts passed by parliament. Some students listed each piece of British legislation, which was irrelevant. Question d. asked how accurately the painting of Patrick Henry's speech reflected the tensions that contributed to a revolutionary situation between Britain and America from 1765 to 1774. The more successful answers referred to the cessation of the period of salutary neglect and the limitations placed on the search for new land under the *Proclamation Act 1763*; the increased regiments sent to the colonies to maintain control, which were seen as an affront to liberty and led to incidents like the Boston Massacre (1770); and the Coercive Acts (1774), which were inflammatory and punitive. Strong students also framed their answer in the context of the debate about whether the American Revolution was primarily ideological (Bailyn) or economic (Schlesinger and Zinn).

There were a number of able students who focused their answer on the role played by individuals during the Revolution; however, the question was on the tensions that caused the development of the Revolution.



France

Identification of social groups was poorly done by many students, who could not place the figure in black as a member of the bourgeoisie and named him a noble. Most answers correctly identified a member of the clergy as the other figure and had little trouble identifying criticisms of the clergy. Many answers did not include a reference to a feature from the image and this needs to be more strongly emphasised in practice pieces. Responses to Question 1c. did not present a great array of additional knowledge. Most answers were too general about the high taxes collected by the clergy. Few could quote the percentage of land held by the Church or name the *don gratuit*. The more successful students were able to discuss the internal tensions within the clergy. Answers to Question 1d. often did not challenge the view contained in the image as a 'complete depiction of the cause of tension up to 1789'. Stronger students discussed the way the image depicted only one of many sources of tension and then elaborated on those not shown in the image. Some excellent answers contained debate about the influence of the enlightenment thinkers, the role of the King and finances.

Russia

Despite the error in the image* of the storming of the Winter Palace, students answered Questions 1a. and 1b. very well. However, answers to Question 1c. revealed that students need much more practice in the chronology of the Revolution. Despite the event being named and dated under the image, frequently students discussed the events of Bloody Sunday 1905, or focused on overthrowing the Tsar and mentioned him being in the palace. Many students made no mention of the Provisional Government. The question of the 'significance' of the event was not grasped very well. Instead of discussing the Bolshevik takeover and the end of the Provisional Government, students described the events leading to the storming of the Winter Palace. Responses to Question 1d. (the extent to which the image was 'a complete depiction of the revolutionary situation in Russia in 1917') discussed the palace door being open and Bolsheviks sneaking in; however, strong answers discussed the political situation of the tension with dual power, July, Kornilov, continuation of involvement in the war and the failure of the Provisional Government to address the land question as well as the growth in numbers of Bolshevik members. Historians were used confidently with this question but at times dominated the answer. Most students referred to Pipes' claim of a *coup d'état*, Ulam – 'did not seize power but picked it up' and Lynch – 'an open door'.

*The procedures applied by the VCAA as a result of the error in the image are outlined on page 11 of this report.

China

Good responses to the China graphic, *Peasant Sons*, were adept in referring to specific events that signified the importance of peasants in the Revolution. Strong answers accurately linked Mao's earlier focus on the peasantry to his later theories of New Democracy and the Mass Line at Yan'an, which gave the Communist Party of China a nationalist appeal and ensured that the Party seemed responsive to peasant grievances. The responses to 1d. were not as assured. Most students supplied only generic and unsuitable views. Many answers simply discussed the validity of the depiction of the Long March and compared it to Chang and Halliday's claim that the Long March was largely mythologised in retrospect, which did not answer the question of 'reasons for victory'. Some answers became involved in discussion of whether there was a battle at Luding Bridge, which was not relevant to the question. The more successful answers referred confidently to a range of views about the impacts of the Guomindang's (GMD) corruption and incompetence, the Japanese invasion and Mao's astute political acumen. Commonly cited historians were Fenby, Gray and Fairbank. The less successful students made generalised comments about Chang and Halliday, and Edgar Snow but did not demonstrate any understanding of their views. Many of the less successful students also failed to understand the citation of the poster and assumed it was produced in 2007 or that it depicted the Cultural Revolution. Improvement is needed in the precise use of terms like 'mass line', 'going down to the peasants', 'Yan'an Way' and 'Maoism'.

The following response to Question 1c. contains some knowledge but is a little repetitive. A better answer would have mentioned The Mass Line and the rules of discipline and attention, as well as land redistribution. The generalisation of ideas is typical of the characteristics of a medium answer.

The peasants are intrinsic to the Chinese Revolution because through Mao's interpretation of Marxism - Leninism to the Chinese conditions, they were to lead China to a communist utopia, not the proletariat. The peasants formed 85-90% of China's population as it was still an agrarian, feudal society not an industrially developed nation. Mao learnt from the Shanghai massacre that the proletariat could not be counted upon for the revolutionary process, especially as they made less than 0.5 of China's 500 million people. Mao was born into a peasantry family and had understood their importance, as demonstrated in the image, Mao was a peasant and the younger boys have revolutionary spirit. The boy's clothes demonstrate a life of poverty and they were the class most exploited in China. The signification of Marxist doctrine by Mao to have the peasants as the vanguard of the Revolution was extremely beneficial for CCP power. The peasants were the fundamental group to support Mao.

In responding to Question 1d., this student demonstrates a clear and confident approach by starting with the limited nature of the representation and a historian's view. It would be improved by reference to specific features of the poster.



There is a brief mention of other factors but more could have been developed on the GMD, war with Japan, harsh conditions of the Long March and the Mass Line. The information from Chang and Halliday is irrelevant and should have been linked to the question to assist the argument. Historians' views should be clearly relevant and linked to the question.

This artwork is clearly CCP propaganda and it is of significant limitation in explaining communist victory. Maoist historian Ho Kan-chih supports the artist's claims that Mao had let 'the Chinese people (to) become masters of their own destiny'. Maoist historians celebrate the triumphs of communism and comrade Mao's personality. It is limited insofar that it does not explain the backdrop of China at this time. Fundamentally it does not include the role of Chiang Kai-shek as part of the 'traitorous clique' (Ho Kan-chih) nor the Yan'an Rectification Campaign (1941-44) which purged intellectuals and non-party thinking. Almost 1 million people committed suicide and were denounced. Post Deng revisionist historians Chang and Halliday launch scathing attacks on Mao and his communist programme that he caused 'mass pain and suffering' and 'recklessness and violence were fundamental to Mao's personality'. They also highlight that he killed up to 70 million Chinese. These extreme views illustrate to a vast degree the different interpretations to communist victory but what they do share is that Mao was the figurehead and ideologue of Chinese communism. The propaganda romanticised Mao as the reason for communist victory, thus it is limited as it only shows a narrow aspect of victory.

Creating a new society

Question 2 – Essay response

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	5	3	3	3	4	4	4	7	5	5	8	6	8	10	8	7	5	3	2	1	1	10

Generally, in providing evidence for their essays, too many students are misusing historians' views and quotes and attributing views or quotes that are incorrect. Despite previous assessment reports discouraging students from using historians' views, some students are still using them instead of factual evidence. Excellent essays are impressive because of their command and range of factual evidence.

The majority of students provided only general knowledge of the new society and ignored the part of the question where there were two parts or terms to consider. Many answers consisted of simple narratives and gave simplistic evidence. By selecting judiciously from their range of knowledge, students will improve the quality of their essay response. Frequently answers contained information outside the dates set for the Area of Study. Most students were able to structure their answers with introductions and use topic sentences. However, there were too many attempts to tailor prepared essays to the question and this did not produce a meaningful result. Good preparation, including timelines and analysis of events by linking them to the original aims of the Revolution, and evaluating whether they were fulfilled or compromised, will prepare students for unseen essay prompts. Essays should be thoughtful and develop a personal view, showing reflection on the Revolution, not a listing of historian's views.

America

Essays responding to the question on the American Revolution varied in quality and approach. There were two parts in the essay: whether the American Revolution was a turning point and whether it was a fulfilment of its destiny. Too few responses addressed the issue of whether it was a turning point. Rather, students focused on the degree to which the ideals of the Revolution were reflected in the new society. There was evidence that students were reproducing prepared responses and generally there was a tendency to see the American Constitution as failing women, slaves and native Americans. While this is generally accepted as an interpretation, too often essays were short and lacking in supportive evidence. The most successful answers looked at success in the War of Independence providing the Founding Fathers with the opportunity to establish a republican form of government. They then developed an argument about whether the new society enshrined the ideal of freedom.

France

Students needed to consider the groups who rejected and supported the Revolution, and argue whether the Revolution satisfied anyone.

The overall structure of responses was very strong; however, student responses could have been improved by using the entire time frame: from August 5 1789 to 1795. Students must be more careful about selecting their information as too many essays referred to events prior to 4 August 1789. This information is irrelevant. Students needed to challenge the prompt and show recognition of the gains made in late 1789 to 1791: the moderate phase, defined by the work of the bourgeoisie and nobles. Too many answers were limited to the terror. Weak students seemed to only know the terror. Historiography should not have been used in this question and answers needed to refer only to events within the Area of Study.



The following extract from an essay offers a range of factual information from the Area of Study time frame, including information from the first few years of the Revolution and Thermidor, rather than merely focusing on the Terror. It addresses all the terms and ideas raised in the question.

...In the first phase of revolution of liberal bourgeois reform, the deputies of the National Assembly achieved substantial social, political and economic reform without too much contention. Those who rejected the Revolution were forced to flee, and these émigré nobles' land was sold for assignats, allowing wealthy bourgeoisie to buy land previously unavailable to them due to the system of privilege. Economic reform including uniform weights and measures, replacement of indirect taxes with a proportional direct tax and the Le Chapelier Law all provided immense benefits to the bourgeoisie. At this stage of the Revolution, most of the population were also in support with the popular movement asserting its political power and solidarity with the National Assembly in the October Days. The first crisis of the new society was Clerical reform, with the Clerical Oath alienating over half the population as it infringed on spiritual not just civil aspects of life... The Thermidorian reaction saw a return to moderation. It ultimately achieved many of the aims of the early revolutionaries by its separation of judicial, executive and legislative powers, separation of Church and State, direct, rather than indirect tax, democracy for active citizens and meritocracy. This satisfied the bourgeoisie and nobles who remained in France as shown by the jeunesse d'oree. The poorest classes still suffered though once the insurrections of Germinal and Prairial had been crushed, the sans culottes attempts to assert direct democracy and universal suffrage were crushed with them.

Russia

Students needed to evaluate whether the new society brought 'power to the working class' or brought only terror to the people of Russia. However, too many answers consisted of a narrative of the terror, discussed details of torture methods and lacked analysis. It is clear that students need to improve topic sentences that link to the question. Students should also stick to either the Gregorian calendar or the Julian. Many students mixed dates, which affected the chronology of their answer, and they appeared not to be critically aware of it. Too many students used historiography rather than factual information. This must be discouraged, as frequently there was little of the student's own interpretation and responses contained whole paragraphs of quotes and no factual information. This sort of response does not meet the demands of the task. Students also used information outside the dates of the Area of Study, which did not earn any marks.

The following is an extract from an excellent response. The essay covers a wide range of factual information and considers all parts of the question.

Upon seizing power in October 1917, the Bolsheviks promised to usher in a classless utopia with a dictatorship of the proletariat. Despite carrying through some elements of their promises, the new regime brought chiefly terror to the people of Russia. Elements of the classless utopia were visible in the advancements of education, women's rights and electrification but they were ultimately lost amidst the violence and authoritarianism that prevailed under the 'Red Terror'... The establishment of the Cheka in 1917 under Felix Derzhinsky would see 140,000 people killed in the space of three years. This is staggering when compared to the 14,000 people killed over fifty years under the Tsarist Okhrana. Articles 57 and 58 of the 1921 Soviet Law Code contained an 'omnibus clause' that could be used to prosecute anyone with little justification. Hence there was certainly no sphere of life exempt from Cheka coverage. It is this oppressive and terrible violence that prompted Volkogenov to say 'the Cheka gunned its way through the population'. The 1918 Kulak Laws exhibited a bloodthirsty and murderous ambition of the new regime as Lenin gave the order to 'kill, (kill without fail so the people can see) no fewer than one hundred known kulaks, rich men bloodsuckers...find some truly hard people'.

China

The prompt asked whether Mao's 'earlier contributions outweighed the serious errors of his later years'. The key words must have been given consideration in framing the argument; however, these terms were often ignored and instead essays focused on 'more harm than good', 'Mao brought terrible consequences' and 'Mao made significant errors', so that they appeared as prepared essays for slightly different topics. Dates for events were often missing and many essays referred to events outside the time frame for the Area of Study. Too many essays used weak information such as 'sparrocide', 'women got the right to divorce' and 'all the money going into industrialisation'. There was also a lot of variation between quoted figures of the deaths caused by the Great Leap Forward, to the extent that they were not acceptable.



Appendix 1 – Procedures applied by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) in Section B, Russia, Question 1

A total of 5738 students sat the VCAA's VCE History: Revolutions examination. The paper was found to contain a robot in the background of a modified image of *Storming the Winter Palace on 25th October 1917* by Nikolai M Kochergin.

The VCAA analysed Section B, Russia, Question 1 and found that the results were normal in comparison with all other questions on the paper. The question was found not to be excessively easy or difficult compared to the rest of the paper. The VCAA determined that the question was fair for the group who answered it.

Two additional checks were made to ensure that individual students were not disadvantaged. Firstly, the VCAA instructed its assessors to forward any answers that referred to the robot image to the Chief Assessor for review. As a result, 27 students had a Derived Examination Score (DES) applied.

Secondly, the VCAA conducted a statistical analysis of all student responses to the question. This check ensured that students' answers were not negatively affected, even though they may not have mentioned the robot in the image. As a result, 130 out of the 2379 students (5.5%) who did Section B, Russia received an adjusted score. The average adjustment for these students was 1.25 marks out of 20.

To determine an adjusted score, the VCAA looks at every student's answer to the question in relation to their marks on the rest of the paper. This provides an accurate estimate of what the student could reasonably be expected to have achieved for that question. Where an actual score is significantly lower than the projected score, the score is adjusted up to the expected range.

Of the 5738 students who sat the paper, only three students asked for an inspection of scripts.

The VCAA is satisfied that the question worked well for the group as a whole and that no individual student was disadvantaged.