

2016 VCE History: Revolutions examination report

General comments

The 2016 History: Revolutions examination assessed the key knowledge and skills indicated in the *VCE History: Revolutions Study Design 2016–2020*. The examination consisted of two sections, and students were required to answer on a different Revolution in each section.

Most students utilised the answer space provided in the answer book. Extra space was provided at the end of both Section A and Section B for answers to each section. However, some parts of answers appeared in the incorrect spaces. Familiarity with the answer book would assist students to correctly sequence their answers. It is recommended that students become familiar with the criteria for the essay in Section B, which were published with the examination specifications and also printed on the last page of the examination question book.

In the highest-scoring answers, students used precise primary evidence such as statistics, legislation, quotations, correct names of social groups and events with dates. They were also able to differentiate between long-term causes and short-term trigger events. Answers were generally well organised, and high-scoring answers demonstrated a very good grasp of chronology. However, it was apparent that many answers included information that was outside the Area of Study. Judicial selection of evidence is necessary. It is preferable that answers be written in blue or black pen for online assessment.

Specific information

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

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

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Revolutions chosen Section A

Revolution chosen	none	America	France	Russia	China
%	0	15	35	35	15

Section B

Revolution chosen	none	America	France	Russia	China
%	0	7	25	52	16

Section A, Question 1 – Causes of the Revolution**Question 1a.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	1	8	35	37	15	3	2.7

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	10	38	36	11	2	2.5

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	6	5	9	16	18	18	14	9	4	1	0	4.2

Section B, Question 2 – Consequences of the Revolution**Question 2a.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	2	7	32	40	16	3	2.7

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	8	36	38	13	2	2.6

Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	9	5	10	15	16	16	14	9	4	1	0	4.2

Section A, Question 1 and Section B, Question 2 involved an analysis of visual and/or written sources.

Question a. 'Outline...' Answers that extracted all the main ideas from the source that were relevant to the question and quoted or paraphrased them achieved the demands of the question. High-scoring answers for Russia, for example, extracted information such as the competition that existed between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet created by Soviet Order No. 1, and the quarrelsome nature of the relationship as well as the fact that both aspired to a

national role and were self-constituted authorities. Many answers contained extra knowledge that the question did not require. Most answers displayed a very good strategy of writing the source number in brackets after quotes.

In Question b. effective answers referred to the source first by quoting, and students supplied their own knowledge in detail that was relevant to the question and context of the source. For example, for Question 1b. on the French Revolution about how actions of individuals escalated a tense situation in Paris in July 1789, students who scored highly extracted the actions of Louis and Camille Desmoulins from the source and applied their own knowledge to the actions of Louis and Camille Desmoulins that increased tension in July 1789. Some low-scoring answers referred to Camille Desmoulins as a female. Answers that discussed other individuals such as Sieyès and his writing or Lafayette and ideas from the American war or the actions of the parlements did not demonstrate a good ability to contextualise information with July 1789. Some answers included references to historians, which was not required. More than one piece of the student's own knowledge was required for a high-scoring answer. A structure that started with the source worked well in high-scoring answers. For the American Revolution, high-scoring answers recognised that developments after the Boston Tea Party were rapid and the situation irreconcilable. Answers for Russia noted that support grew steadily among workers and soldiers. They referred to the April Theses and the bourgeois composition of the Provisional Government. Some showed knowledge that the Petrograd Soviet was established in 1905 and used membership statistics to indicate growth. They were accurate with dates. Some answers for China showed attempts to provide both spellings of Jiang; however, this was not required. Many answers did not refer to Jiang Jieshi/Chiang Kai-Shek correctly as supplied in the glossing and incorrectly wrote 'Kai Shek'.

Students demonstrated similar skill levels to the above on questions that involved using images and print sources. For example, in Section B, France, the comparison of the image of Louis using a pick-axe with the image of Louis as a pig and comprehension of the Townson extract, most answers showed good extraction of ideas. Answers needed to extract particular features from the image for discussion. High-scoring answers commented on the colours red, white and blue and the positivity of the colours showing Louis as a constitutional monarch in 1790 compared to the dull colours of the later source. They commented on the horns and Louis's facial expression as evidence. Yet the majority of answers did not select detailed visual features and simply generalised. Some misunderstood the image and said that Louis was using a pick-axe instead of a shovel, which made him a poor constitutional monarch. High-scoring answers for China selected details from the image such as increased leisure time shown by people playing cards and increased literacy shown by people reading, which they linked with information in Source 1. Answers to Question b. correctly extracted information from Source 3 by Li Cunxin, that women had not achieved equality, and answers applied evidence such as Mao saying 'women hold up half the sky'. They also correctly extracted information about the control exerted over what crops to plant and the points system used to determine food and payment to indicate the questionable success in improvement of living standards. Similarly, high-scoring answers on Russia extracted the information that the famine was ignored by the Bolsheviks. However, many answers did not demonstrate the connection between requisitioning and the loss of stocks of grain in communal barns.

Many answers were limited if they referred only to one piece of a student's own knowledge. This was apparent in the answers on France, which relied on the flight to Varennes. Students needed to go beyond this event to show a range of reasons for the changed opinions of Louis. The time frame 'after June 1791' indicated that the time up to Louis's death in January 1793 could be used. Answers should have made use of the whole Area of Study key knowledge as appropriate, when allowed by the question.

The following response extracted relevant information for an outline of the source and was relatively free of additional information from the student's own knowledge, except for 'Sons of Liberty' and '342' tea chests.

America, Section A, Question 1a.

One cause of the Boston Tea Party (1773) was Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson's insistence on 'the law requiring customs duty on the tea' as this angered many American colonists who were against taxation by the British. The situation was further fuelled by radicals such as the Sons of Liberty, forbidding the tea to be unloaded and who had 'forbade payment' of the Tea Tax. According to Source 1 an owner 'begged for permission to take the tea back to England' but Hutchinson 'adamantly refused'. This refusal led to radicals dumping around 342 tea chests into the harbour. Overall, British insistence on the tea tax being payed, forbidding of payment by the American colonists and Hutchinson's failure to control the situation and 'seize tea' all contributed to the Boston Tea Party.

The following answers adopted different strategies to deal with the question that required an understanding of the sources and the students' own knowledge. One starts with the source, which helps to focus the answer, and the additional precise knowledge is applied to support the understanding of the sources. The second answer starts with information but does not use the sources as well as the first answer.

France, Section A, Question 1b.

The 'foreign troops...stationed around Paris' denoted by de Staël imply that Louis XV1 heightened the already existing sizzling tension in Paris by moving soldiers to suppress the city's denizens. This was certainly true, as the decision of Louis XV1 to move 18,000 troops outside Paris (1st July 1789) created greater agitation inside the capital as the Gardes Française (National Guard) rushed to arm themselves against Royal Troops. Furthermore, Camille Desmoulins imagery of a call 'aux armes' implies that he was integral to sounding the clarion call to the Third Estate. Indeed Camille Desmoulins' speech 'Aux armes, aux armes' (12th July 1789) escalated the anti-autocratic sentiment in Paris as the previously disorganized mob coordinated the storming of the Hotel des Invalides (13th July 1789) in search of muskets and powder to repel what they saw as an impending attack, a notion reflected by de Staël in her statement that 'the whole of Paris took up arms'.

China, Section B, Question 2b.

The Revolution had varied success in improving standards due to economic benefits achieved but heavy financial burdens people were subjected to. In 1951 the Communists were able to reduce inflation to 15% relative to 85,000% experienced in 1949. Through a new bartering system and trade, people enjoyed vastly improved purchasing power. However as Source 3 notes the collective Cunxin lived in was subject to a central system of pay. For their exhausting labour in the field, the state would tax roughly 25% of all harvest and peasants were forced to divide the rest amongst themselves. In addition lowly pay of 'one yuan' for males and half for women vastly reduced living standards for the Chinese people.

Question c., the analysis or evaluation questions, involved weighing up the views contained in the sources against other competing evidence and views about the causes of the Revolution in Section A and the consequences of the Revolution in Section B. Other views may have included contemporary perceptions or comments from historians. A good strategy used in high-scoring answers was to quote from the sources at the start of the answer to begin discussion, and then develop information and weigh it against other information and views. High-scoring answers discussed the viewpoints rather than simply including a historian's name in sentences. Low-scoring answers ignored the instruction to refer to the sources and other views. Some students attributed views to the incorrect historians and some attempted to fit learned quotes that showed little

relevance to the argument. Some incorrect answers attempted to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the sources, which was not relevant to the questions.

The highest-scoring answers for Question 1c. in Section A for the American Revolution acknowledged the importance of acts of rebellion in propelling the Revolution forward, and they identified other rebellious acts – the tarring and feathering of tax officials in response to the Stamp Act, the non-importation agreements when the Townshend Duties were introduced and the targeting of British troops in incidents like the Boston Massacre. There was reference to historians such as Brown, Brogan and Cantwell, who have made the case for mob action as a driver of the Revolution. Yet, there was also acknowledgment that colonists such as Dickinson penned measured treatises about natural rights and implored the British Government to cease abuse of these. Historians such as Bailyn and Wood have used this evidence to argue that the Revolution was as much about evolving ideas as acts of violence. In fact, there were revolutionaries in the colonies like John Adams who abhorred violence. The highest-scoring answers were able to demonstrate competing viewpoints about the causes of Revolution.

When evaluating the contribution of Necker to the French Revolution of 1789 in Question 1c. on France, some very good answers used the account from Desmoulins to corroborate the view of Madame de Staël and point out that liberal-bourgeois opinion in Paris at least saw Necker's dismissal as significant. They were then able to make comparisons to the views of other historians who placed emphasis on other causes.

In Question 1c. on Russia, the answers about the Dual Authority demonstrated a good understanding from the sources of the 'quarrelsome' relationship between the Provisional Government and the Soviet to analyse the significance of the Dual Authority as a cause of the October Revolution. They showed good knowledge of the disharmony created by continuance in the War and the power held by the Soviet because of Soviet Order No. 1. Evidence from the July Days and the attempted Kornilov takeover were used. References to Lynch and Pipes were used appropriately in high-scoring answers.

Question 2c. in Section B contained visual sources as well as text extracts. The questions addressed the key knowledge from the study design on the diverse experiences of social groups and challenges to the consolidation of the Revolution. Answers on France showed a very good understanding of the challenge caused by the actions of Louis by using evidence in addition to the flight to Varennes (which was provided with the source attribution). The question was open and not bound by a time frame to allow answers a wide scope of information. Some responses were weakened because they included events outside the Area of Study. A further weakness of answers was that they did not focus on 'the challenge' brought about by Louis's actions.

Question 2c. on Russia focused on analysing the economic challenges faced by the new regime. There was poor attention given to 'economic challenges'. The weakness of many answers was that they discussed anything that presented a problem to the new regime. Students should have used the terms in the question to maintain question focus.

High-scoring answers to Question 2c. on China analysed the diverse experiences of peasants and workers, contained discussions of the 1950 Agrarian Land Law that gave peasants licence to claim and redistribute land, the speak bitterness campaigns, the Three-Antis (sanfan) and the Five-Antis (wufan), and the Great Leap Forward 1958. They referred to other views such as Fairbank, Chang and Halliday and Dikötter, using clear discursive phrases such as 'however', 'as argued by' and 'as described by'.

The highest-scoring strategies for the organisation of answers began with the source or a summative reference to the sources. For example, '*Both sources agreed that the famine of 1920/21 constituted a major economic challenge*' or '*Whereas Sources 1 and 2 suggested the experiences of workers and peasants were positive, Source 3 focused on the hardships of*

peasants'. Students then used this analytical statement to introduce the views of other historians as well as additional primary evidence.

The sample below begins with a clear contention, closely followed by skillful use of the source to begin discussion. The answer then moves into a wider discussion supported by additional evidence and other views that form part of the discussion.

France, Section A, Question 1c.

Necker's dismissal on 11 July 1789 certainly acted as a catalyst for Revolution, however his departure from government was not necessarily a cause in itself. Indeed his dismissal certainly triggered angry outbursts from the Paris mob. As Necker's daughter notes in Source 1, a mere 'two days' after Necker's dismissal, the 'whole of Paris took up arms' as if it were some 'public disaster'. This sentiment is supported by Camille Desmoulins, who in source 2 notes he was 'immediately [joined by] six thousand people' as Parisians took to the streets in protest of Necker's dismissal. Desmoulins asserts that his 'enthusiasm' 'spread like wildfire' amongst the Paris population, as many resorted to violent rebellion in protest to Louis XV1's decision. However, whilst Necker's dismissal was certainly crucial in sparking these uprisings, tensions within French society had been growing for some time. French involvement in the American War of Independence contributed to financial a crisis, as Blanning notes that it cost more than France's previous three wars put together. Many Marxist historians such as Lefebvre insist that French society was 'based on the privilege of birth and wealth from land', which contributed to severe class divisions amongst the French population. Such a sentiment is supported by the political ambitions of the Bourgeoisie as demonstrated by Abbe Sieyes political pamphlet 'What is the Third Estate?' in January 1789. Peasants and workers resented the regime as they were forced to bear the brunt of the tax burden, with financial obligations in the taille, the Tithe and feudal dues. A series of poor harvests saw wheat prices rise by 60% between 1776-89, which aggravated starving rural Frenchmen. Francois Furet asserts that the 'driving force' behind the Revolution was in fact the democratic ideas of the Enlightenment. As such, whilst the dismissal of Necker certainly sparked the Revolution, there was a myriad of other factors that caused it. His dismissal catalyzed the Revolution.

The following is a high-scoring response because it develops a discussion that begins with the ideas from the sources and weighs them against detailed primary evidence and other views that are discussed, rather than appearing as names in brackets at the end of a sentence. It maintains focus on the economic challenges that created ideological challenges.

Russia, Section B, Question 2c.

Faced with a deadly "national famine" (source 2), the Bolsheviks sought to deliver an effective economic response, with this only resulting in further challenges in the long term. Through the "requisitioning of civil war" (source 3) carried out under the policy of War Communism between 1918 and 1921, all incentive for peasants to provide a surplus had been removed, thus encouraging the propaganda shown in source 1 where farmers are encouraged to "Remember about the starving". Historian Oxley writes that he believes "9.5 million out of 10 million deaths during the Civil War were caused by famine and disease, highlighting the enormous extent to which the Bolshevik regime was challenged by low supplies and a subsequent disastrous famine. In order to address these issues, Lenin introduced a form of "bridled capitalism" in the New Economic Policy at the Tenth Party Congress (March 1921), which was designed to raise the incentive of peasants to boost their agricultural production, while encouraging private investment in industry, where coal output had fallen to 30% of pre-war levels and electricity to 25%. This was described by Serge to have "in the space of a few months...giving marvellous results", backed by a 150% increase in the wage of factory workers but economic improvements such as this were soon offset by greater economic challenges. The "Scissors Crisis" of 1924, where industrial prices rose to 290% of 1913 levels whereas agricultural prices fell to 89%, saw peasant incomes fall dramatically, with many again returning to the subsistence farming that was part of the reason for Russia's "famine crisis" (source 3). The NEP, which Hill describes as a "large scale retreat" from Bolshevik ideology, ultimately only intensified the economic

challenges that were faced by the new regime, rather than enabling any improvements from the devastating period of famine.

Section A, Questions 2 and 3 – Consequences of Revolution

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	8	6	9	14	15	17	15	10	5	2	1	4.3

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	21	8	9	12	12	12	11	7	4	2	1	3.5

Questions 2 and 3 were linked to the key knowledge and key skills in the study design for Outcome 2. Questions 2 and 3 linked to challenges in the new regime and changes and continuities. These questions began with the command word 'explain' and students should have focused on using primary sources and historical interpretations as evidence to support an argument about the consequences of the Revolution. The highest-scoring answers presented an array of detailed and precise evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations. Answers should always include dates for named legislation or events, and many students placed this in brackets. Some responses included evidence from historical interpretations, but this often disrupted the flow of a tightly controlled argument. The highest-scoring answers began with a one-sentence contention or outline. This helped to focus the response and keep the supporting details focused on the question. High-scoring answers also tended to either use paragraphs or signpost phrases to announce the start of each point and organise the steps in an argument.

American Revolution answers referring to Shays' Rebellion (Question 2) demonstrated the important point of the threat posed by armed rebellion to the new government. Responses to Question 3 on 'checks and balances' were very good. There was detailed knowledge about the separation of powers and the discrete powers held by each branch of government and how these powers were limited (checked) by other branches.

The answers on France explaining the challenges brought by the reorganisation of the Church were answered well when they focused on the challenges caused by legislation on the Church. There was less attention paid to 'the challenges' by low-scoring answers that provided knowledge of the legislation regarding the Church. More careful attention to the question wording is required so that the key knowledge from the study design is addressed. Most answers showed a good understanding of reasons for the creation of the Committee of Public Safety. They mentioned war, hysteria and enemies of the Revolution such as from counter-revolution and the King. Low-scoring answers focused on retelling the actions of the Committee of Public Safety.

Similarly, high-scoring answers for Russia addressed both the motives for the creation of the CHEKA and the way in which the CHEKA was used by using a clear structure that contained two parts. Answers that did not use paragraphs or signpost phrases did not give a balanced argument that addressed both parts of the question. A number of answers did not demonstrate knowledge of the Tenth Party Congress and lapsed into narrative about War Communism and Kronstadt. They did not address the notion of 'challenge' well, but rather saw the Congress as addressing challenges rather than creating them.

Generally, low-scoring responses failed to focus on the key words of the question. For example, Question 2 on China required a focus on agrarian reform, but many answers discussed industrial

policy during the First Five-Year Plan and Great Leap Forward. Answers to Question 3 on China about the way in which the Mao cult was used in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution generally revealed weak knowledge. High-scoring answers showed knowledge of the three loyalties to Chairman Mao and the way Mao used the cult to regain public support after the failures of the Great Leap Forward and his loss of status. Some misinterpreted the ‘cult’ of Mao to be a group rather than the cult of personality and conveyed the Red Guards incorrectly, as members of a cult rather than a group used by Mao that were significantly affected by the use of propaganda that focused on the glorification of Mao. Answers were often too general and only used evidence of Mao badges, the Little Red Book and the Great Swim.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response because it is focused on the question of ‘how’ the Congress ‘created challenges’ rather than generally explaining the legislation of NEP. Its strength is also the presentation of detailed evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations that is weighed carefully in the construction of the argument.

Russia, Section A, Question 3

The Tenth Party (March 1921) Congress introduced the New Economic Policy and banned factionalism which provoked opposition and was not entirely successful. Firstly the NEP represented a pragmatic retreat from the Marxist policy of War Communism which angered left wing Communists - like Nikolai Bukharin – and Trotsky who wrote that ‘it was the first sign of the degeneration of Bolshevism’. Indeed, the Nep ‘marked a severe setback in the hopes of Communism in Russia’ as historian Orlando Figes argues. This compromise - along with the Kronstadt uprising (March 1921) and Polish-Soviet war (1920-21) – contributed to Stalin’s policy of ‘Socialism in One Country’ saw the decline of Trotsky, Kamanev and Zinoviev by 1926. Furthermore, while the NEP did result in improvement in industry, as factory output in value of millions of roubles rose from 2000 in 1921 to 4600 in 1924, the NEP did not solve all economic problems. Thus although ‘production figures suggested that the situation had improved’, as historian Michael Lynch notes, by 1924 500,000 workers in heavy metal industry were unemployed. Indeed the success of NEP did not reach all members of society as the so-called ‘Nepmen’ gained the most. The Tenth Party Congress also compounded the totalitarian nature of the Bolshevik regime through the ban on ‘factionalism’ which suppressed groups such as the Democratic Centralists and the Workers Opposition. Indeed Trotsky wrote that ‘the political regime prevailing in the state was transferred to the inner life of the ruling party’ which led to an increased Communist dictatorship. Hence Stalin gained power by 1926 and the ideals of a Soviet democracy – as expressed in the March 1921 Kronstadt manifesto - were abandoned. Indeed historian Richard Pipes contends that ‘there could not be more conclusive proof that the Bolsheviks were tyrants’. Hence the Tenth Party Congress resulted in the New Economic Policy – which was moderately successful – and also heightened the authoritarian nature of the Bolshevik regime.

Section B, Question 1 – Essay

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	4	2	2	2	3	3	4	6	7	8	11	9	10	9	8	5	4	2	1	0	0	9.9

High-scoring essays contained a range of precise pieces of primary evidence and historical interpretations as evidence, and low-scoring answers contained general information. Students with high-scoring answers also displayed ‘historical thinking concepts’ by demonstrating an ability to differentiate between long-term causes and trigger events, and to weigh up competing evidence. The criterion of ‘historical interpretations’ was poorly addressed or ignored. Many answers included quotes without attribution to the historian or the attribution appeared at the end of a sentence and served little useful purpose. Some otherwise highly competent essays ignored this criterion. The high-scoring essays contained very good chronology but there was a large number that had poor chronology of events. A clear sense of chronology assisted the development of a controlled

argument. Closer attention to question wording such as 'outweighs all other' or 'How important' was needed in many answers. These terms invited comparison of causes to display 'historical thinking concepts' and essays needed to discuss the event or issue named in the question before embarking on a discussion of other possible causes of the Revolution.

Essays responding to the question on the American Revolution were generally good. They established that this Revolution was ideological in nature and built in response to a misunderstanding about constitutional rights. The various acts of parliament were clearly identified, the nature of the colonial response was outlined and the contributions of individual revolutionaries via their papers or resolutions were spelt out. However, some essays focused on a timeline of events rather than on discussing the inevitability of the separation.

The essays on the French Revolution that addressed the term 'outweighs' in relation to the forces that drove France to revolution were able to compare competing primary evidence and historical interpretations successfully and examine the interplay of long-term causes with trigger causes of the Revolution. The answers took the approach that the financial collapse was only one factor driving Revolution. They confidently discussed financial collapse and a range of other factors leading to Revolution.

Some answers to the Russian Revolution essay question showed a lack of understanding of the term 'mutinies' and many were not confident discussing soldiers and sailors, instead arguing that other factors were more important and discussing only those. Too many answers adopted an approach of simply discussing any causes. The high-scoring responses focused on the mutinies and wrote about Potemkin, desertions in World War I, February 1917, Kornilov and Kronstadt in October 1917. Too many answers were limited to before February 1917 rather than addressing the time period for the whole Area of Study.

Few responses on the Chinese Revolution seemed familiar with the actions of Jiang Jieshi and his nationalist government. Rather, they looked at the actions of the Communists and discussed the reason for their success. While this implied that the GMD was lacking in policies to gain the support of the Chinese people, there was little in the essays that focused on what these were.

The example below is a high-scoring response that uses detailed primary evidence and supports the argument by quoting from historical interpretations. The answer displays a thorough historical understanding by demonstrating the interconnectedness of multiple events in causing change.

France, Essay

It is certainly true that the French debt was a major cause of the Revolution as it resulted in the Aristocratic revolt and the Estates General which 'facilitated the expression of tensions' according to historian William Doyle. However while the debt did have an effect on the radicalization of the popular movement it was mainly the economic conditions that provoked the 'major striking force of the Revolution' as historian EJ Hobsbawn notes, as well as the mistakes of King Louis XV1.

Firstly French debt reached 112 million livres by 1786 due to the inequality of the taxation system, the Seven Years' War (1756-63), the War of American Independence (1778-83) which prompted France minister Calonne to propose taxation reforms. Indeed the American War had cost France 1.3 billion livres and Finance minister Jacques Necker funded this by raising 520 million livres in loans (1777-81). Thus Calonne realised it 'was ruinous to be always borrowing' and proposed taxation reforms which included a universal land tax known as the territorial subvention to the Assembly of Notables (February – May 1787). However, the 144 Notables led by the Marquis de Lafayette - influenced by Rousseau's enlightenment ideal of popular sovereignty and fear of losing privileges – refused to accept the reforms. Indeed Lafayette wrote 'we were not representatives of the nation'. Indeed as Doyle contends this refusal 'marked the beginning of a political crisis that was only to be resolved by revolution'. Thus as JFC Fuller notes it was financial collapse 'that precipitated the flood'.

The Aristocratic revolt set off by the Assembly of Notables further contributed to the Revolution through the Parlement of Paris – which rejected the reforms that had been issued due to the debt. The parlements were initially exiled to Troyes in August 1787 for refusing to register the reforms – and so King Louis XV1 used a lit de justice to force this action. This situation was worsened by the King's response at the Royal Session of November 1787 that the registration of new loans was 'legal because I will it'. As Doyle notes, the actions of the King thus created a 'quarrel between the ministry and magistrates that led to revolution', especially following the suspensions of the parlements in May 1788 – the 'May Edicts'. As a part of this chain of events catalysed by financial collapse, Louis XV1 further contributed to revolution as 'unrest...reached all towns with a parlement' according to Francois Furet. Indeed the May Edicts provoked the popular movement of sans-culottes into conflict as riots raged in Rennes and Grenoble (The Day of Tiles) in June 1788. Thus it was the actions of Louis that provoked the popular movement, along with the economic condition which enabled a 'particular intensity to public agitation' according to historian George Rudé. Indeed, by 1788 average workers were spending three quarters of their income on bread, and the Treaty of Eden (1786) damaged French industry such as the textile industry of Lyon where 20,000-30,000 workers were left unemployed. Thus following the debt crisis, the actions of King Louis XV1 extended the Revolution to the popular movement and magistrates, and as historian Peter McPhee contends, the monarchy's overthrow was the 'result of a contingent political crisis that the government failed to manage'.

The financial collapse, in conjunction with the aforementioned Aristocratic Revolt, also prompted Brienne (Calonne's successor) to call the Estates-General in August 1788 as the French treasury was bankrupt. As a result, the government ordered the creation of some 25,000 cahiers such as that of the Third Estate of Paris which asserted that 'All men are created equal in rights'. In addition around 4000 pamphlets – such as 'What is the Third Estate?' by Abbé Sièyes and La France Libre by Camille Desmoulins – appeared from October 1788 to July 1789. As Doyle notes such tracts made the ideas of the Third Estate 'more radical', as historian William Sewell contends that they 'harnessed the energies of the bourgeoisie'. The King further aided the revolution by refraining to decide on the issue of 'vote by head' which meant that political divisions were 'irreconcilable' at the Estates-General according to McPhee. As a result, the Third Estate refused to verify their credentials separately, proclaimed themselves the National Assembly (17 June) – in accordance with Sièyes idea that the Third Estate was 'Everything' and took the Tennis Court Oath (20 June) led by Jean-Sylvain Bailly. Furthermore, following the failed Royal Session of Louis XV1 (23 June) and the order of Louis for the three orders to come together (27 June), 'the Assembly became a constituent body' according to Furet. Thus, it was initially the debt which partially caused the Estates-General – which 'let the seeds sown over the previous century germinate' – as Doyle writes. However, the actions of Louis XV1 and economic conditions causing sans-culottes of Paris to storm the Bastille (14 July), the monastery of Saint Lazare (13 July) and Les Invalides (14 July) 'saved the Assembly' according to McPhee.

All considered, the debt was a major force which 'broke the back of the monarchy' according to historian DMG Sutherland, but it required the actions of Louis XV1 and economic conditions to achieve the Revolution of 1789. Thus as Doyle argues, the 'bankruptcy was not only financial, but also social and intellectual'.