

# 2017 VCE History: Revolutions examination report

## General comments

The 2017 History: Revolutions examination assessed the key knowledge and key skills indicated in the *VCE History Study Design 2016–2020*. The questions for each of the Revolutions assessed a range of key knowledge and key skills of the study design. The examination consisted of two sections and students were required to answer on a different Revolution in each section. The criteria for assessment of the essay in Section B were printed on the last page of the question book. It is recommended that students become familiar with the criteria for the essay in Section B and pay careful attention to addressing the specific demands of the question.

Responses that scored well in both sections of the examination showed confidence in using a range of evidence, including primary sources and historical interpretations, and a clear grasp of the historical significance of ideas, events, individuals and popular movements. Students were able to prioritise the effects of long-term causes and short-term triggers of revolution and explore the significance of challenges in the consolidation of the new regime, changes to conditions, contribution of significant individuals and diverse revolutionary experiences. The responses that scored most highly demonstrated a careful and considered selection of both primary sources and historical interpretations. Most responses utilised the space provided for each response in the answer book. Extra space was provided at the end of both Section A and Section B for responses to each section. However, some parts of students' responses appeared in the incorrect spaces. Familiarity with the answer book would assist students to correctly sequence their responses.

## 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	19	34	31	16

#### Section B

Revolution chosen	none	America	France	Russia	China
%	0	4	25	56	15

## Section A, Question 1 – Causes of Revolution

### Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	1	5	30	41	19	4	3

### Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	2	6	30	40	18	4	3

### Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	3	4	10	16	17	17	15	10	6	2	1	5

## Section B, Question 2 – Consequences of Revolution

### Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	2	4	28	44	18	4	3

### Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	5	8	33	37	14	4	3

### Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	10	5	9	16	17	16	14	8	4	2	1	4

### Section A, Questions 1a., 1b. and 1c, and Section B, Questions 2a., 2b. and 2c.

Overall, responses to Questions 1a. and 1b. and 2a. and 2b. showed that most students understood the command words in each question ('outline', 'explain' or 'compare'), and were able to engage with the sources and apply their own knowledge, when applicable, to respond to the questions. The responses that scored most highly displayed explicit knowledge with precision and extracted all relevant ideas from the sources by quoting from them. These skills also applied to visual sources, where students were able to show a deep understanding of historical significance by referring to a range of relevant features displayed in the images. Students who scored highly also paid attention to the context of sources and were able to demonstrate skill in placing images in a historical context. High-scoring responses also demonstrated a clear understanding of source attributions.

In Section A, America, Question 1, students used the sources well to outline the tensions between Britain and the colonies. Responses that scored highly identified a range of causes from the source, including the Royal Proclamation that restricted movement across the Appalachian Mountains and disagreements over the Navigation Acts. Responses that scored less well

misinterpreted the source and did not understand inferences. There was also a tendency to generalise. For example, while the source mentioned 'smuggling', not every American merchant was a smuggler. Some responses displayed a lack of knowledge that the Stamp Act was nullified before it went into effect and was repealed by parliament in 1766. It was therefore incorrect to argue that the Stamp Act ruined the colonies financially.

Responses on France, Section A, Question 1, on the Great Fear, showed that most students were familiar with this event, although responses that did not score well showed confusion between this event and The Terror. Responses that scored highly distinguished correctly between popular movements and understood the inference that the Third Estate deputies in the National Assembly made use of peasant grievances. They also demonstrated an ability to contextualise. Responses that did not score well did not distinguish between peasant grievances and other members of the Third Estate, and showed a poor sense of chronology. For example, discussing the role of peasant grievances in the October march to Versailles and then quoting that the peasant action 'compelled the National Assembly to pay immediate attention to feudal privilege' on 4 August 1789 showed a poor sense of chronology. Overall, responses that scored well contained several relevant quotes from the source.

High-scoring responses on Russia, Section A, Question 1 showed knowledge about Russian policies regarding nationalism, the emergence of non-Russian nationalism and the position and role of ethnic minorities in the empire. The highest-scoring answers to Question 1c. began with the source information about non-Russian nationalism and then discussed other causes of the Revolution. The responses on Russia also showed the importance of selecting and quoting relevant information from the source to address the specific demands of the question.

The responses on China, Section A, Question 1 demonstrated that most students could outline some factors that Mao Zedong realised about the peasants. However, most responses seemed to miss the inference of 'Every revolutionary comrade must support it, or he will be taking the stand of counter-revolution' as a sign of Mao's ideological intransigence. Responses that scored most highly demonstrated an awareness of inferences in source material. A small number of students were able to accurately comment on the context and purpose of Mao's report on the peasant movement in Hunan and locate it within debates in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) about the degree to which peasants could be considered revolutionary. A small number of students identified that Mao's focus on the peasantry marked a departure from Orthodox Marxism–Leninism and the beginning of his sinification of Marxism. The factor of a 'workable program' as stated in the source was less well exemplified. Students need to understand that there was a variety of elements within Maoist ideology, including the Red Army, guerrilla warfare, the mass line, land redistribution, tax reform, Rectification, 'On New Democracy' and the three-thirds system. Responses needed to display more skill in demonstrating that slightly different aspects of Maoism were developed in Jiangxi and Yanan. Basic responses simply added the examples of the CCP (organisation) and Mao Zedong (leadership) to 'the conditions necessary to make Chinese peasants revolt'. Very few students seemed to acknowledge that the Red Army was an army made up of peasants and thus already felt an affinity with other peasants.

In Section B the sources presented were a combination of images and written extracts for each Revolution. The responses showed that most students were confident with making comparisons and extracting information from both types of sources. Generalised responses were not successful. It was necessary for students to select and comment on a range of precise features from the images and quote all relevant points from the extracts. A limitation of many responses was supplying only one piece of own knowledge or not supplying any own knowledge.

Responses on America, Section B, Question 2 presented some impressive knowledge about the consequences of the trying times at Valley Forge and recognition that this was a turning point for Washington and the Continental Army. The discipline imposed by Baron von Steuben and the

inspiration provided by Washington, including the order to read Tom Paine's 'The American Crisis' essay to the troops, were key points of discussion.

Only the highest-scoring responses on France, Section B, Question 2 placed the events with Lafayette at the Champ de Mars in context of the king's flight to Varennes and the Cordeliers' petition for a republic. Many students did not understand the La Fayette–Janus image and the implied criticism. Many responses revealed that it is important that students practise working with attributions. Some responses showed misunderstanding of the attributions, for example, by stating that Source 1, the image of the Marquis de Lafayette on his famous white charger, was painted in London in 1966 rather than being taken from a text published in London in 1966.

Students found Source 1 for Russia in Section B, the image of the female figure in front of buildings (described as a library, cafeteria, workers' club, school for adults, and house of mother and child) accessible, and responses showed that students extracted the visual features appropriately. However, most students missed the inference of 'no less beneficial to them than to capitalist society' in the written extract from Pipes (Source 3).

Source 1 for China, Section B, was an image of Liu Shaoqi, and students found both the image and written extracts accessible. Responses extracted the main visual features and quoted relevant written sections correctly. Students accurately compared depictions and explained the contribution of Liu Shaoqi.

The following response on France, Section A, Question 1a., demonstrates a successful strategy in referencing the sources first and quoting from the sources several times. It shows clear skill in using the sources and understanding the inference that it was not only the peasants' actions that were important. The added knowledge of the October women's march contributes to the success of the response.

*According to Source 2 the peasants "left a trail of châteaux and burning manor rolls in every part of the country", indicating the extent of their rebellions. Source 2 highlights how it was this movements of the peasantry, encouraged by the "fresh stimulus" achieved by the "news from Paris", which "compelled the National Assembly to pay immediate attention to feudal privilege and to the needs of the peasants" signifying how the peasant actions sparked the revolutionary change on the night of patriotic delirium (4 August 1789) where an abundance of nobles gave up their privileges. Source 1 supports this noting the peasant actions in that they "sacked the manor-houses and burnt manorial rolls". However Source 1 also highlights how the actions of "craftsmen, artisans, small shopkeepers" were necessary as they forced the King into concession when he ratified the August decrees which abolished the feudal system (11 August 1789), after the women's march to Versailles (5-6 October 1789).*

The following high-scoring response on Russia, Section A, Question 1a. uses relevant source information, and the student's own knowledge, to answer the question.

*As Source 1 highlights, at the turn of the twentieth century and in the late nineteenth century, the method of rule by the Russian officials "became especially severe". That the "iron hand" increased in repressiveness especially so with Tsar Nicholas' "obstinate refusal" (Figs) to reform, and instead advocating further repression. Further, the proliferation of ideas such as Marxism, democratic ideas (from western influences) and more led to the already disparate minorities within the Empire to seek independence. The Russification programs of the Tsarist regimes where they restricted the freedom of speech, rights and religions of 'non-Russians' only fuelled the tensions inherent within the regime, and the citizens of Russia. Moreover, the Tsarist regime's ineptitude to bring change to the country shown through the implementation of the Fundamental Laws (April 1906) after the promised reforms in the October Manifesto (Oct 1905) in essence had discredited the liberal cause (Lynch) and led to the people feeling only further embittered. The exacerbation of the already poor living conditions as a result of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) and the Tsarist regime's decision to participate in World War One (1914-18) only further discredited the regime, undermining its competence and authority in the eyes of the people. The regime's inability to address the concerns of the people thus led to a*

*“political situation turning into a revolutionary crisis” (Figes) that made the ‘national question’ so critical, as it was the only means by which the people felt they could achieve a better life for themselves.*

The following response on Russia, Section B, Question 2b., shows excellent skill in quoting from the source material and provides own knowledge that contributes to the response.

*Source 2 notes how Kollontai was a “member of the Soviet Executive Committee”, indicating her important position which she used to “make special efforts to find ways to involve women more in their work” and push the “nation to develop new measures to cut back on the unproductive labor of women”. Hence Kollontai had enormous impact in advocating for the demands of women. In 1919 she formed the women’s Department Secretariat with Inessa Arnaud and Nadezhda Krupskaya, which advocated for women’s rights forming public laundries and kitchens to relieve women of house work. Kollontai also advocated for an end to War Communism, leading the Worker’s Opposition movement with Alexander Shylapnikov, stating that the Bolsheviks had lost touch with the working class. This contributed to workers protests and rebellions including the Kronstadt Rebellion (7-17 March 1921).*

Another high-scoring example of the expected qualities in the analysis of sources is the following response on China, Section B, Question 2b., using Source 3 and the student’s own knowledge. In this response the student sets the context very well to begin with and quotes appropriately from the source, as well as supplying detailed and precise information.

*Liu Shaoqi contributed vastly to the improvement of conditions during the early 1960s. The failure of Mao’s ‘Great Leap Forward’ of 1958-61 saw the deaths of 30 million people due to the famine, only elevated by locust plagues and droughts of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Liu turned China’s situation around significantly by firstly admitting the party’s “disasters and errors of the past three years” in an “emotional plea” (Source 3). Liu transformed the Chinese Government’s humanitarian disaster by re-planting food crops, downsizing communes which had held approximately 5000 families each and through compromising Communist ideals in the process by reintroducing capitalist elements. These reforms saw bountiful harvests being produced by 1962 and a restoration to the previously terrible economy.*

### **Section A, Question 1c. and Section B, Question 2c.**

In both Section A and Section B the command word ‘analyse’ was used. The high-scoring responses showed that students analysed the sources by making comparisons to other views and evidence, including primary sources and/or historical interpretations as relevant to the question. Responses that scored highly usually started by extracting the viewpoint from the sources, quoting and then weighing the source viewpoint against other views and evidence. These responses used phrases such as: ‘Both sources agreed that’, ‘Whereas Sources 1 and 2 suggested ... Source 3 focused on ...’.

The highest-scoring responses met the demands of the question by weighing competing evidence in the sources or evidence that supported the claims made in the sources from primary sources and/or historical interpretations. They compared other views to the viewpoint of the sources. Responses that did not score well focused on presenting information. These responses did not show accurate knowledge of other views or presented quotations from historians, which had little relevance. Responses on America, Section A, Question 1c. often cited historians; however, there was often little relevance to the question asked. For example, to argue that Bailyn claimed that the American Revolution was ‘ideological’ had little meaning without directly addressing the question of the colonial response to British tax revenue Acts. The colonists were opposed to revenue-raising taxes because they were not directly represented in the British Parliament, and they therefore saw it as unconstitutional for their property to be taken without their consent. Bailyn’s quote only makes sense when it is discussed in this context or with this explanation. Many quotations appeared to have been rote-learned and used indiscriminately, rather than used to show an understanding that events had been interpreted differently. For example, in the American context there are debates

about whether the Revolution was driven by economic considerations or whether it was based on intellectual enlightenment philosophies. Richard Maxwell Brown is a historian who argues that the influence of the crowd in America was an important force and that they were motivated by economic concerns rather than ideological or Enlightenment ideals. Most responses on France, Section B, Question 2c. explored the way opinions changed with regard to Lafayette, Bailly, Robespierre and Danton. Responses that did not score well simply described the actions of each but did not connect to evidence of the increasing radicalisation of the Revolution and the pressure from sans-culottes or other views. Responses on Russia, Section B, Question 2c. often relied on information in the source material and showed limited knowledge of the new regime. Higher-scoring responses applied the experience of women to the broader social experience and included precise evidence of conditions through the civil war and New Economic Policy (NEP). Responses on China, Section A, Question 1c. needed to show Mao's connection with the peasants; however, few responses demonstrated this relationship well and connected it to the success of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from 1927 to 1949.

Connective phrases such as 'this reflects the view of historian ...' or 'historian ... argues that this was because' helped to form clear links between historical facts and historical interpretations, and thus in establishing how the views were relevant to the development of the student's argument.

The following response on France, Section B, Question 2c. demonstrates the expected qualities of an analysis that makes comparisons with other views and evidence. There is a small error in the date of the invasion of the Tuileries, but the way the response demonstrates the skills of analysis places it in the high-scoring range.

*Although Sources 1 and 2 claim that opinions about Lafayette were formed due to his "uprightness and honour" and reputation as "The Man of the People" respectively, Dowd in Source 3 is ultimately more accurate in suggesting that leader's "popularity would suffer" if they opposed the will of the people. Source 2 reveals that Lafayette became seen as a "Man of the Court", as his actions were depicted to literally step on the ideas of the Revolution, such as "liberty". Indeed, this view is corroborated by Source 3, which suggests that Lafayette's "ideals became clouded by ambition". Following his appointment as Commander of the National Guard (17 July 1789), Lafayette began to seek more influence. However, coinciding with this period McPhee notes that "between August 1782 and 1789 the political participation of the Parisian working people reached its zenith". The power of the Paris people is supported by Source 3 which acknowledges that Lafayette's order for the crowd to disperse "was greeted with abuse and laughter". Thus, Lefebvre's assertion that "despite [his] best efforts...Lafayette [was] not the master of Paris". Contravening the wishes of the people also significantly damaged opinions about Louis XVI, as shown by the first invasion of the Tuileries (12 June 1792). This was the response of the angered sans-culottes to the King's 3rd and 4th royal vetoes against laws on the clergy and nobility (early June 1792). By angering the sans-culottes, Louis permanently embedded the idea that he was unfaithful to the Revolution. Ultimately, the opinions about Lafayette and other leaders changed in line with the views of the people, particularly the sans-culottes.*

Likewise, the following response on China, Section B, Question 2c. shows high-level skills in analysis by comparing source evidence and other views. The response also demonstrates very good skills in placing the information in context. It loses a little question focus towards the end, where some information has less relevance and contains a small error in reference to the 'Four Olds'.

*Opinions surrounding Chairman Liu Shaoqi significantly shifted during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Liu Shaoqi, prior to Mao's resignation served as Vice-Chairman. As Source 1 depicts, in 1958 Liu was shown to be highly respected by the Chinese people as they watched him in awe laughing and respecting the leader. Liu implemented positive reforms of down sizing communes and replanting food crops which had China pulled from the economic rubble of the failed Great Leap Forward. According to Scar Literature historians Chang and Halliday, the "seeds of hate that Mao had sown were now ready for the reaping". Liu Shaoqi went from being*

a responsible leader who made an “emotional plea” of forgiveness as shown in Source 3 to being seen as a “big scab” as noted in Source 2. The distribution of Lin Biao’s Little Red Books, beginning in 1965, established the Chinese people’s obsession with “Chairman Mao’s great teachings” as described in Source 2. Liu was humiliated in public by the 10 million Red Guards, whose aims were to destroy the Four Olds of culture, ideas, culture and customs and whose activities reflected “violence and chaos” according to Historian Howard. Liu was openly denounced as “Capitalist Roader” and was sent under house arrest in 1967, was expelled from the Party in October 1968 and died brutally in prison the following year while his closest companion, leader Deng Xiaoping’s son was ‘suicided’ off a building and became a paraplegic signifying the brutal nature of the Chinese people during the GPCR. Liu Shaoqi’s demise was apparent as a once respected leader became nothing but a capitalist laughing stock to Mao and his semi religious cult of followers during the Cultural Revolution of 1966 – 76.

## Section A, Questions 2 and 3 – Consequences of revolution

### Question 2

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

### Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	17	7	9	12	11	12	12	9	6	3	2	4

Section A, Questions 2 and 3 were linked to the key knowledge and key skills in the study design for Area of Study 2. The questions began with the command word ‘explain’, and responses showed that students were generally confident with the task of explaining information; however, focus on the question requires improvement. The highest-scoring responses were correctly focused on the demands of the question, and were detailed, precise and supported by a range of points.

Responses should have included primary sources and historical interpretations as appropriate to support the explanation. Many higher-scoring responses adopted the structure of beginning with a contention rather than repeating the question words. Responses that did not score well were narrative in style, general and lacked focus on the demands of the question.

The responses to America, Question 2, on how economic conditions created challenges, were well supported with statistical information about the nature of American debt following the War of Independence. There was also reference to the effects of the revised Navigation Acts on the ability of the new United States to contract trade agreements and partnerships, as well as the constraints of the Articles of Confederation. These responses demonstrated clear understanding of the challenges that confronted the new regime. Question 3 on America, which related to divisions that arose over the ratification of the Constitution, was also well handled. The arguments of the Federalists and anti-Federalists were clearly explained, and the use of primary evidence from the writings of Publius (*The Federalist Papers*) and Brutus (anti-Federalist spokesperson) added depth. Some responses misunderstood the term ‘ratification’ and focused on the drafting process at the Philadelphia Convention without making reference to the debates that occurred once the Constitution was referred onto the state Constitutional Conventions.

Question 2 on France was on the responses of émigrés and of clergy to changes brought about by the Revolution, and many students did not focus on the ‘responses’ sufficiently. Many instead presented a background of events that were the changes rather than the responses by émigrés and clergy to the changes. Few responses demonstrated knowledge other than they fled France or refused the civil oath, and few mentioned the rebellion in the Vendée led by nobles or émigré



armies. There was also a weakness in responses that referred to events out of the time frame of Area of Study 2.

Similarly, with France, Question 3, on explaining internal divisions, many responses presented a lot of information that was not focused on internal divisions that arose from differing aims.

There were similar weaknesses in responses to the questions on Russia. Responses to Question 2, regarding dismissal of the Constituent Assembly and Question 3, regarding the consequences of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, explained the lead-up to both these events. They often did not demonstrate strong factual information and many mistook the Constituent Assembly for the Provisional Government. Many responses relating to Brest-Litovsk only acknowledged that Russia lost the 'bread basket'.

Similarly, in responses to China, Question 2, students showed knowledge of the Great Leap Forward but often went off-topic by describing its outcomes rather than Mao's motives for launching it. Overall improvement is needed in taking note of the requirements of the question.

The following is a high-scoring response on France, Question 2 that demonstrates the use of precise evidence to meet the demands of the question.

*Both the emigres and clergy responded to the changes of the Revolution with resistance and war. Emigres who fled France during the Revolution often came from the nobility, many of whom were officers. These Emigres aided the First Coalition (Spain, Prussia, Holland, England and Austria) especially the Prussian armies in their invasion of France. The clergy too responded with war after tensions rose after the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (12th July 1790) and were further heightened by what William Doyle denotes the "Constituent Assembly's most serious mistake", the Clerical Oath (27th November 1790). As many members of the clergy were unwilling to swear an oath to the Constituent Assembly and accept it as the head of the Church over the Pope, resistance permeated the clergy. In the Vendee region where the refusal to take the oath reached 90% and in Nantes where all 104 priests refused the oath, the clergy combined with royalists in the form of emigres, rebelled against the Constituent Assembly. In what was the "most dangerous example of the forms of resistance encountered by the Revolution" (Rude), the Vendee Rebellion attributed to 70% of all the deaths in the terror. As emigres aided the Prussian army and helped with the fall of Verdun (2nd September 1792) they also attributed to the violent civil war in the south-west of France, in the Vendee. Fearful and threatened by the changes brought about by the Revolution, both emigres and members of the clergy retaliated against the new regime with war.*

The following response to Question 3 on Russia also demonstrates a range of precise evidence.

*The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (January 1918) was justified according to Lenin as it threatened the existing democracy. Firstly, the outcome of voting in the Constituent Assembly elections highlighted the weakness of support for the Bolsheviks party. The voting which began in November 1917 saw the Socialist Revolutionaries win 370 of 707 seats, giving them a 52% majority; conversely the Bolsheviks won only 175 of the 707 seats. Thus, the Constituent Assembly presented the weakness of Bolshevik support. Having only risen to power a few months prior, the party was looking to consolidate power and would have faced a backlash from the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who had already vocalised their dislike of key Bolshevik decrees. Thus, Lenin decided to dissolve the Constituent Assembly. Secondly, Lenin argued representation already existed in the form of the Soviets. The Petrograd Soviet was Russia's first representative body and since its formation in February 1917 40 Soviets now existed across Russia. With 1000, a delegate for every 1500 workers the Soviet was an effectively functioning representative body, thus the Bolsheviks argued there was no need for the Constituent Assembly. Finally, the dissolution of the Constituent assembly prevented a return to the disastrous system of dual authority. As seen when the Provisional Government and the Soviet fought for executive rights (from February 1917 – October 1917), two rival governing bodies would not aid the effective ruling of Russia. Kerensky had said 'The Soviet had power without authority, the Provisional Government authority without power' which highlights the tumultuous struggle for control of Russia that was the direct result of having two forms of*



*government. Therefore Lenin and the Bolsheviks contended the Constituent Assembly was a barrier to the effective governing of Russia.*

## 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
%	3	1	1	2	2	3	4	6	7	7	11	9	10	9	9	6	4	2	2	1	0	10

The assessment criteria for the essays were printed on the last page of the examination. The topics required careful dissection and analysis to meet their specific requirements. Many responses, regardless of the Revolution chosen, did not firstly discuss the contribution of the significant ideas, events, individual or popular movements in the question as a possible cause of the Revolution before embarking on a discussion of other possible causes. Students should not be dismissive of a portion of the question nor rewrite the topic to fit a pre-conceived approach. Students should ensure that they are well acquainted with the demands of all types of questions. Different question types were presented, including propositions using the words ‘outweighs’, ‘the most important cause’ or ‘the key reason’, followed by ‘To what extent do you agree?’ or ‘Discuss’. The question terms invited comparison of causes and allowed students to display their skill in historical thinking concepts. The responses showed that, overall, further attention needs to be paid to the criterion of using primary sources and/or historical interpretations as evidence. The criteria of primary sources, historical interpretations and historical thinking in essays that scored well were met by the inclusion of a range of precise information from primary sources and by displaying an excellent grasp of chronology. Historical interpretations were also provided where relevant to support the student’s development of an argument.

In the following response on America, primary sources are used effectively, and in the response on France, historical interpretations are used very well. The short statements of analysis demonstrate clear historical thinking concepts.

### America

*Issues of Representative Government began primarily from an economically driven perspective. The French and Indian War from 1754-1763, left Britain with a national debt of £140 million. Thus since Parliament was investing over £308,000 per annum into the colonies with only a £2,000 return, they turned to increasing taxation upon their American subjects...It also sparked the question of Representative Government with colonists like James Otis arguing “no taxation without representation” and the Virginia Resolves on May 29 1765 asserting “the general assembly of this colony have the only and exclusive right to lay taxes”. Such a vehement colonial response led to Parliament eventually repealing the Stamp Act on March 18 1766, though simultaneously issuing the Declaratory Act.*

### France

*JFC Fuller argues that fiscal woes “precipitated the flood”, as social issues such as 30,000 unemployed in Lyon (1788) resulted as a consequence of the crisis. This period of economic frailty directly contributed to an increase in the relevance of the ideas of the Enlightenment...Rudé asserts that the “works of the Enlightenment...were widely absorbed by an eager reading public” which is supported by newspaper sales which reached 100,000 French people by 1780.*

Skill in historical thinking concepts was displayed in responses that showed a clear ability to prioritise causes of the Revolution and demonstrate the significance of long-term causes or short-term triggers as well as discuss the merits of competing pieces of evidence. In higher-scoring essays the relevance of historical interpretations to the argument was made clear, historians’ names were accurate and interpretations were integrated into the argument. However, the majority of responses showed difficulty with these criteria. Many low-scoring responses contained a

reference to a historian, which was presented as a name in brackets, often at the end of a sentence. Very low-scoring responses lacked primary source evidence and were general and narrative, although most contained a point of view.

Essays responding to the question set for the American Revolution were generally good. They established that this Revolution was ideological in nature and gathered momentum in response to issues of representative government. This became a crucial aspect in the decision to separate, but it was one that evolved after the end of 'salutary neglect' and with the advent of revenue-raising legislation passed in Britain but with application to the colonies. Higher-scoring responses traced the development of the arguments surrounding the constitutional right of Britain to legislate with the purpose of raising revenue from the colonies right through to the issue of colonial sovereignty. Other forces at play were discussed, including the role of British troops being stationed in the colonies in peacetime and the affront this presented to personal liberty. This was coupled with the angst caused by revisions of the Quartering Act. It is important that students think carefully about the logic in their arguments. Many responses discussed the idea of representative government as a cause of the American Revolution but then went on to say that Enlightenment ideas were another and separate cause. Rather, the idea of representative government emanated from the Enlightenment philosophies and thinking about the rights of the individual.

The higher-scoring essays on France that addressed the terms 'outweighs all others' discussed the notion of 'privilege' first and then moved into weighing it against other possible causes of the Revolution. Some took the view that 'privilege' was connected to all problems, which led France to revolution and demonstrated that view effectively.

The essay on the Russian Revolution required students to address both the February and the October Revolutions and to address the contribution of both the 'workers' and the 'peasants' to both Revolutions in 1917. Many essays ignored the precise demands of the question and focused on events from 1905. These responses were largely not satisfactory. Attention to the specific demands of the question was not demonstrated very well in most essays on Russia.

The following example is a very good response to the essay on Russia.

*The actions of workers and peasants were a central factor in the contribution to the revolutions in February and October 1917. However other causes were also necessary in the lead up to these revolutions. Workers' and peasants' intentions vastly weakened the government's powers up to the February and October Revolutions of 1917. The demonstrations of workers on 25 and 26 February 1917 triggered the Tsar's breakdown of power and led to Duma president Rodzianko cabling the Tsar for serious concessions on 26 February 1917... As peasants made up the majority of the military their actions in the Petrograd Garrison on 27 February 1917, mutinying in support of the workers were also a trigger removing the Tsar's military authority in the capital.*

The essay on China required students to weigh up the actions of the Red Army against other possible reasons for the success of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and make a decision as to what the 'key reason' was for its success by 1949. Most referred to the respect given to peasants in the Eight Points for Attention and the ideology of the Mass Line as shown in the excerpt below.

*According to historian Meisner, "Mao and the Maoists established rigid dogmas and orthodoxies", as Mao established his own ideology of the Mass Line, New Democracy, Democratic Dictatorship and Rectification, as well as the Eight Points for Attention in 1947 where Mao wrote guidelines for the Red Army including "be polite" and to "not ill-treat captives and women", further justifying a close bond between the Red Army and peasants, clever aligning to Mao's ideology of Peasant Revolution. Many GMD soldiers were known for pillaging and raping in peasant farms, much different to how the Communists were treating them. This ultimately helped the Communists to gather more support from the 80% peasant population which resulted in successful takeover in 1949.*