



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2012**

**A2 History 2041**

**HIS3E**

**Unit 3E**

**France and the Enlightenment:**

**Absolutism Under Threat, 1743–1789**

**Final**

***Mark Scheme***

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all examiners participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each examiner analyses a number of students' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available to download from the AQA Website: [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

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## Generic Introduction for A2

The A2 History specification is based on the assessment objectives laid down in QCA's GCE History subject criteria and published in the AQA specification booklet. These cover the skills, knowledge and understanding which are expected of A Level students. Most questions address more than one objective since a good historian must be able to combine a range of skills and knowledge. Consequently, the marking scheme which follows is a 'levels of response' scheme and assesses students' historical skills in the context of their knowledge and understanding of History.

The levels of response are a graduated recognition of how students have demonstrated their abilities in the Assessment Objectives. Students who predominantly address AO1(a) by writing narrative or description will perform at Level 1 or low Level 2 if some comment is included. Students who provide more explanation – (AO1(b), supported by the relevant selection of material, AO1(a)) – will perform at Level 2 or low Level 3 depending on their synoptic understanding and linkage of ideas. Students who provide explanation with evaluation, judgement and an awareness of historical interpretations will be addressing all 3 AOs (AO1(a); AO1(b); AO2(b)) and will have access to the higher mark ranges.

To obtain an award of Level 3 or higher, students will need to address the synoptic requirements of A Level. The open-ended essay questions set are, by nature, synoptic and encourage a range of argument. Differentiation between performance at Levels 3, 4, and 5 therefore depends on how a student's knowledge and understanding are combined and used to support an argument and the how that argument is communicated.

The mark scheme emphasises features which measure the extent to which a student has begun to *'think like a historian'* and show higher order skills. As indicated in the level criteria, students will show their historical understanding by:

- The way the requirements of the question are interpreted
- The quality of the arguments and the range/depth/type of material used in support
- The presentation of the answer (including the level of communication skills)
- The awareness and use of differing historical interpretations
- The degree of independent judgement and conceptual understanding shown

It is expected that A2 students will perform to the highest level possible for them and the requirements for Level 5, which demands the highest level of expertise have therefore been made deliberately challenging in order to identify the most able students.

## **CRITERIA FOR MARKING GCE HISTORY:**

### ***A2 EXAMINATION PAPERS***

#### **General Guidance for Examiners (to accompany Level Descriptors)**

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##### **Deciding on a level and the award of marks within a level**

It is of vital importance that examiners familiarise themselves with the generic mark scheme and apply it consistently, as directed by the Principal Examiner, in order to facilitate comparability across options.

The indicative mark scheme for each paper is designed to illustrate some of the material that students might refer to (knowledge) and some of the approaches and ideas they might develop (skills). It is not, however, prescriptive and should only be used to exemplify the generic mark scheme.

When applying the generic mark scheme, examiners will constantly need to exercise judgement to decide which level fits an answer best. Few essays will display all the characteristics of a level, so deciding the most appropriate will always be the first task.

Each level has a range of marks and for an essay which has a strong correlation with the level descriptors the middle mark should be given. However, when an answer has some of the characteristics of the level above or below, or seems stronger or weaker on comparison with many other students' responses to the same question, the mark will need to be adjusted up or down.

When deciding on the mark within a level, the following criteria should be considered *in relation to the level descriptors*. Students should never be doubly penalised. If a student with poor communication skills has been placed in Level 2, he or she should not be moved to the bottom of the level on the basis of the poor quality of written communication. On the other hand, a student with similarly poor skills, whose work otherwise matched the criteria for Level 4 should be adjusted downwards within the level.

Criteria for deciding marks within a level:

- Depth and precision in the use of factual information
- Depth and originality in the development of an argument
- The extent of the synoptic links
- The quality of written communication (grammar, spelling, punctuation and legibility; an appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of ideas, including the use of specialist vocabulary)
- The way the answer is brought together in the conclusion

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June 2012

**A2 Unit 3: The State and the People: Change and Continuity**

**HIS3E: France and the Enlightenment: Absolutism Under Threat, 1743–1789**

**Question 1**

- 01** To what extent was involvement in war the most important reason for the worsening finances of France in the years 1743 to 1787? (45 marks)

*Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)*

**Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2**

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**
- L2:** Answers will show some understanding of the demands of the question. They will **either** be primarily descriptive with few explicit links to the question **or** they may contain explicit comment but show limited relevant factual support. They will display limited understanding of differing historical interpretations. Historical debate may be described rather than used to illustrate an argument and any synoptic links will be undeveloped. Answers will be coherent but weakly expressed and/or poorly structured. **7-15**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the demands of the question. They will provide some assessment, backed by relevant and appropriately selected evidence, which may, however, lack depth. There will be some synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included although these may not be highly developed. There will be some understanding of varying historical interpretations. Answers will be clearly expressed and show reasonable organisation in the presentation of material. **16-25**
- L4:** Answers will show a good understanding of the demands of the question. They will be mostly analytical in approach and will show some ability to link ideas/arguments and information and offer some judgement. Answers will show an understanding of different ways of interpreting material and may refer to historical debate. Answers will be well-organised and display good skills of written communication. **26-37**
- L5:** Answers will show a very good understanding of the demands of the question. The ideas, arguments and information included will be wide-ranging, carefully chosen and closely interwoven to produce a sustained and convincing answer with a high level of synopticity. Conceptual depth, independent judgement and a mature historical understanding, informed by a well-developed understanding of historical interpretations and debate, will be displayed. Answers will be well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**
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## Indicative content

**Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.**

Students will need to assess the impact of the cost of war on France. Students are not expected to have knowledge of the conduct of the wars themselves, simply of the impact that these wars had. Nonetheless, one might expect that the better type of response will at least identify the wars of the period using specific knowledge. This knowledge should then be balanced against other reasons for financial crisis in order to arrive at a reasoned conclusion.

Students may refer to some of the following material in support of the premise:

- at the beginning of this period, French finances were reasonably sound, this may well be attributed to a period of previous peace, however, this was undermined by the continuing War of Austrian Succession. The peace did nothing to improve France's finances, indeed Louis was considered to be 'as stupid as the peace'
- the Seven Years War, 1756–1763, seriously dented France's financial position, but also seriously damaged trade and the ability of the French navy to sail unmolested. Temporary emergency taxation was exactly that and failed to establish any broader principle of a more equitable taxation system. The war was funded through loans and a national lottery
- Turgot suggested that the first shot fired in the American War of Independence 1776–1783 would bankrupt France. The cost of fighting a war at such distance proved colossal (over 1066 million livres) but had been financed in its entirety by loans at high interest. It was the inability to pay this debt, or even the interest accrued on it, that broke the French financial system.

Nevertheless, there are a number of other factors to consider:

- long-term financial problems and the nature of an inequitable taxation system. The problem was not the cost of war but the inability to pay the debt. This in itself was a consequence of a taxation system that failed to tap the wealth of the country. Whilst it is inaccurate to suggest that the privileged went untaxed – the *Don Gratuit* and the various emergency taxes prove otherwise – they were hardly providing a decent return
- Ministers such as Necker used the financial system for their own political end. To suggest in the *Compte Rendu* of 1781 that the country was actually producing a surplus was reckless in the extreme, and whilst it may have been grounded in sound economic theory, the attempt to fight war entirely on borrowed money, proved flawed
- the failure to support financial reform must count as significant. Turgot and the physiocrats, Calonne and Brienne all had ideas that may have improved the financial situation, yet there was only temporary support at best. It was the failure of the political regime that led to the financial crisis.

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**Question 2**

- 02** 'It was the ministers of Louis XV and Louis XVI that were mainly responsible for the weakening of Royal authority in the years 1764 to 1787.'  
Assess the validity of this view. (45 marks)

*Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)*

**Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2**

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**
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**Indicative content**

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Students will need to identify the nature of the political crisis if they are to effectively determine its cause. Students might use a range of valid indicators including inability to control the Parlements; the rise of Enlightened thought; the rapid turnover in ministers; inability to introduce reform; calling of the Assembly of Notables.

Students may refer to some of the following material in support of the premise:

- factions at court were encouraged throughout this period by Marie Antoinette, but it was arguably the formation of new centres of political authority fostered by the ambitious ministers that developed and posed a substantial threat. The Society of the Hundred and also Necker's salon are obvious examples of ministers attempting to influence royal authority but from outside the court, and doing great damage in the process. The Palais Royale developed as another area that increasingly criticised the nature of royal authority
- within court, students might identify Choiseul and the Brittany Affair as clear examples where ministerial rivalry did serious damage to the authority of monarchy
- the Maupeou affair can easily be taken as evidence of declining royal authority, but also as a vehicle that limited the independence of the king
- the frequent charge of 'Ministerial despotism' used by the press may be evidence enough that the ministers were usurping authority.

Nevertheless, there are a number of other factors to consider:

- Louis XV was his own worst enemy. His attempts to define royal authority – often in conflict with the Parlements – failed due to his inconsistency. The flagellation Speech is a prime example
- the Diamond Necklace Affair shows how easily Marie Antoinette's image had been exploited in order to discredit the king. This had little to do with ministers and their ambitions
- Maupeou and his ministers may be considered to have worked hard to maintain royal authority. Certainly, this was the view taken by Louis XVI at his accession. Rather than self-serving they served the Crown loyally and effectively
- the parlements and the magistrates represented the greatest threat to the authority of monarchy. An insistence on fundamental laws and a self interest that prohibited financial innovation ensured the weakening position of monarchy.



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**Question 3**

- 03** 'It was the economic and social condition of the people of France which forced Louis XVI to summon an Estates General.'  
Assess the validity of this view. (45 marks)

*Target: AO1(a), AO1(b), AO2(b)*

**Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2**

- Nothing written worthy of credit. **0**
- L1:** Answers will display a limited understanding of the demands of the question. They may **either** contain some descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question **or** they may address only a part of the question. Alternatively, they may contain some explicit comment but will make few, if any, synoptic links and will have limited accurate and relevant historical support. There will be little, if any, awareness of differing historical interpretations. The response will be limited in development and skills of written communication will be weak. **1-6**
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**Indicative content**

**Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.**

Students should be able to identify a very good range of reasons for the calling of the Estates General. Whilst some long-term factors may have had a role to play in the period set by the question, it is important for students to recognise the limits set and should not be giving undue significance to events, say in the 1740s as a reason for the calling of the Estates General.

Students may refer to some of the following material in support of the premise:

- the harvests of 1787 and 1788 had been poor, which, combined with generally bad weather had resulted in a considerable increase in the price of bread. This led to social distress and public displays of dissatisfaction
- the economy was suffering. The demands of higher taxation fell predominantly on the very class of people suffering harvest failure. Combine this with the increasing dominance of the Dutch and especially the English in trade and the seeds were sown for a wider economic malaise. The Day of Tiles was merely one example of wider popular discontent that seemed to threaten the regime
- there had been very high expectation placed on the shoulders of the Assembly of the Notables and its failure to introduce any alleviation of the worsening social conditions led directly to social unrest in Paris
- the Estates General was little more than a delaying tactic deployed by the regime to forestall social unrest. It was not reform but the promise of reform that would lead to stability.

Nevertheless, there are a number of other factors to consider:

- the calling of the Estates General may be considered to have been part of a much broader game of political cat and mouse between the government and the Parlement. The loudest demands for its convocation came from the magistrates and not from the streets, yet Parlement had no real reason to actually want the Estates General as a potential replacement to its own claims to represent the nation
- the Estates General was called to deal with the pending bankruptcy of the state. There was little hope that France could weather the financial storm without taxation that did more to tap the wealth of the rich. It was the Assembly of the Notables claim that they lacked the authority to implement new taxation that was the given reason for the calling of the Estates General
- Louis XVI's desire for popularity might be relevant, although by this stage he had withdrawn from many areas of political life. The Estates General might however be welcomed by ministers keen to circumvent the authority of Parlement.

**Converting marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

**UMS conversion calculator:** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)