



# **Examiners' Report**

## **Principal Examiner Feedback**

**January 2017**

**Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Level in History (WHI01)**

**Paper 1A: France in Revolution, 1774-99**

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## **Introduction**

WHI01 is a new International Advanced Subsidiary examination that is part of the new iA Level History qualification, WHI01 (unit 1) is a Depth Study with Interpretations, and comprises four options; 1A France in Revolution 1774-99, 1B Russia in Revolution 1881-1917, 1C Germany 1918-45, and 1D Britain 1964-90. The assessment criteria for all the options, and questions are AO1 and AO3, and all the options and questions, are covered by a generic mark scheme, based on Level descriptors.

It is important that centres take on board some generic comments which are based on the marking of this summer's cohort, and consider and apply these when preparing candidates for future examinations in these options.

- WHI01 is both a study in depth and a study of interpretations, and it is necessary for candidates to do both, at all levels in the mark scheme, in order to score marks. Ignoring the stated view in the question, and merely writing information that may be relevant to the general focus of the question does not fully meet the criteria for Level 1, and consequently none of the other levels. Even at Level 1 the mark scheme expects simple or generalised consideration of the stated view in the question. Some candidates paid very little attention to the stated view (ignoring it completely or sometimes only referring to it in the conclusion) and narrated or described other information that was either relevant or not to the actual question.
- Across all of the options, in candidate responses, there was very little evidence seen of planning. As the examination is two hours long, implying that candidates might divide that time equally between the two essays they choose, it would seem sensible to devote some time (possibly no more than 10 minutes per question) to planning the structure of the answer to each question. That would hopefully ensure that when the answer is written the stated view is considered (Level 2, 3 and 4 all require, to varying degrees, understanding, analysis and exploration of the given view) and then other factors/views can follow, which will then allow the candidate to establish some criteria by which they are able to consider the importance, or not, of the given view and make some judgements. Those candidates who planned (this appeared on their examination script before they answered the question) invariably scored better than candidates who had not planned. Planned answers tended to score at the top of Level 3 and into, and including the top of Level 4, whereas unplanned answers meandered and judgements tended to be stated, rather than supported by valid criteria, and often achieved marks at the Level 2 and Level 3 boundary or below.
- The need to stress to candidates that in examination situations they must read the question carefully, and not take the question as an opportunity to write all they know about the topic, or answer a question they would have preferred that is near to the actual question, but not the actual question.
- There was some evidence of candidates running out of time, but they were very few. Impressing the need to plan essays in the examination is surely the remedy to this problem.

### **Option 1A France in Revolution 1774-99**

- Question 1 proved to be the most popular, followed by question 2, question 3 and question 4.
- In question 1 many candidates were able to consider corruption at court and its impact on France, and then discuss other problems before making a judgement about the main reason for discontent.
- The example below scored a mid-Level 3. The stated view is considered, other problems are also considered and judged against the stated view and a judgement is made. Knowledge is deployed but in places it lacks range and depth.

(This page is for your first answer)

Although I do agree that the corruption in the court is a valid ~~case~~ cause for discontent in France; I ~~do~~ do not agree that it was the most significant ~~cause~~ <sup>reason</sup>. In my opinion - which could further be backed up by the post revisionist view - the issues with the taxation system, the socio economic gap within and between the Three Estates; along with ~~the~~ France's participation in different wars that came with a negative outcome upon the country - definitely were reasons for discontent. To add to this; the rulers' conservative character also was a reason for the people's wish ~~to~~ change the way the country is run - hence the Revolution beginning in 1789.

To begin with, many historians might agree that the most important reason for discontent was the ~~the~~ socio-economic inequalities and gap between and within the Estates.

(This page is for your first answer) For starters, many <sup>of the poorer</sup> clergy in the First Estate ~~were~~ had a growing resentment towards the wealthier bishops and priests. This was due to the fact that one saw it as completely unacceptable to be performing absenteeism and ~~non~~ pluralism when there was hundreds of people, unemployed and dying of starvation on the streets. In the Second Estate - there were a handful of noble-men unhappy with the mere idea of being able ~~to~~ to buy a ~~state~~ noble-ship status - given the fact that they weren't actually born into that Estate. Also, they were very discontent with the fact that they had no say in the way the country is run - thus forging them into openly wishing for a more active role in the government. In addition, for centuries the largest / most populous Estate - ~~with~~ which held 89% of the entirety of the country's population suffered the most. ~~It~~ ~~was~~ Although the first two Estates had privilege such as tax exemptions and in the second Estate's case - the exemption in the corvée; the Third Estate had no such privileges. They were troubled with the most burdensome taxes - such as the taille and on top of that had to pay the ~~taxes~~ <sup>taille</sup> to the Church. All of this

(This page is for your first answer) unfair treatment upset many - from middle class citizens in the bourgeoisie group to poor beggars and famished sans culottes families. This caused a long-term ~~effect~~<sup>wave</sup> of discontent which kept on growing until they finally decided to start uniting and bring change in 1789.

Another important cause of discontent ~~is~~ was the taxation system. Not only did millions of people suffer with the payment of troublesome and heavy taxes, but the country also had an extremely corrupt and messy way of collecting them. The government hired a company called the Farmer's General and ~~allowed~~<sup>instructed</sup> them to collect the people's taxes with the small price of being allowed to keep a percentage of the income. This led to a very high level of corruption and waste, as they would tax people an unbearably high amount of tax payment - which heightened the people's discontent, frustration and anger. Linked back to the previous point; ~~however~~ the First Estate ~~was~~ had privileges, such as the payment of the light tax called the

(This page is for your first answer) *don gratuit* as well as the fact that they were collectors of the ~~Tithe~~ Tithes. This created a wave of discontent to emerge from the poorer estates - which further ~~added~~ served as a cause of discontent in the majority of France.

Furthermore, ~~as~~ as the ~~po~~ revisionist view might agree - the political struggles pulling France back due to her constant involvement in wars definitely was a cause of mass discontent amongst the people. Due to France's involvement in wars such as the Seven Year War and America's war of independence; the country was thrown into a pit of very heavy debts that kept on growing as ministers such as Necker continued borrowing to cover the costs of the wars. By 1789, France had a 112 million livres deficit which definitely ~~weighed down~~ influenced the and destabilised the French economy.

Not only that, but France wasn't doing well in an agricultural aspect, part of view as well. The people suffered



(This page is for your first answer) with ~~to~~ severe winter episode and a series of bad harvests. There was no food, the unemployment rate was sky high and the people couldn't cope with the high taxes. On top of that, the grievances and losses in the wars ~~to~~ further pulled the French morale downwards. Food riots became extremely common as people could not contain their ~~anger~~ infuriation and resentment towards the Ancien Regime. All of these different problems furthered the feeling of discontent rising in France.

Another point that should be mentioned is definitely the presence of corruption at court. People were quite unhappy with Louis' lettres de cachet that could get someone have their life taken away from them merely due to the king's command.

Finally, the king and Queen's conservative and atrociously ignorant reveries towards their people might have been one of the

(This page is for your first answer) <sup>cherry on top</sup> ~~Last reason~~ ~~was~~ for the people's heightened feeling of hatred. The fact that their own king preferred to deal with his family life than to run the country proved to one people just how much he cared about them. Furthermore, Marie's demeanor and gambling addiction was taken as a strong insult by the people of France. This was due to the fact that the country was drowning in debt and inflation whilst she simultaneously ~~was~~ continued buying herself new jewelry and paying back her gambling debts. This was definitely a ~~severe~~ ~~problem~~ dilemma which caused discontent in France up till 1789.

In conclusion, I stand behind the post revisionist view by stating how although there were none significant ~~causes~~ <sup>causes</sup> for discontent in France; it was the combination of the social, political and economic dilemmas that altogether influenced the events against the ~~centuries~~ <sup>centuries</sup> old Ancien Regime in the years after 1789. From the burdensome taxation system and the social gap between the different Estates in society - to the constant borrowing of loans and political instability.

- In question 2 candidates were able to discuss whether or not the Storming of the Bastille marked the beginning of the revolution, and judge it against other possible factors that signalled the beginning.
- In question 3 candidates saw the stated issue, the reform of law, as much broader than the question intended. Some included the constitution. The reform of law itself was the focus, which the National Assembly reforming many aspects of French law, and this should then have judged against many other action taken by the Assembly.
- In question 4 candidates were well versed factors that made the Directory unsuccessful, with some candidates considering aspects that were successful, before reaching a judgement on the stated issue.