



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1F

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Unit HIS1F

Unit 1F: France in Revolution, 1774–1815

General Comments

In this summer's examination session, Question 1 was overwhelmingly the most popular (although not necessarily the best known), but there was a fairly even mix of takers for each of the two remaining questions. Most candidates completed the paper and appeared to have divided their time sensibly, writing answers of appropriate length for the 12 and 25 minutes which were available for each question part. Furthermore, the majority had an adequate knowledge base from which to answer and many demonstrated a sound technique in responding directly to the questions posed. Nevertheless, there were, as always, those who failed to use their knowledge to best advantage, by writing over-descriptively, forcing the reader to discern 'implicit' reasons (01/03/05) or indirect awareness of importance (02/04/06). Sometimes, such candidates assumed that the views of historians, who were not always named nor accurately cited, would be an adequate substitute for their own arguments. It must be stressed that historiography is not expected at this level and is only rewarded where it adds to a candidate's personal analysis and judgement. A further recurring problem that undermined some candidates' performance was a failure to pay heed to the dates given in the questions. Candidates need to be reminded that these serve a purpose and are just as important as other 'key words' in providing a focus for answers.

Question 1

- 01** Most knew what the Tennis Court Oath was and the immediate circumstances leading to the Assembly's dramatic gesture. Various reasons were given for the deputies being locked out of their normal chamber, from spring-cleaning and decorating to stacking furniture and installing security devices, but most offered some comment on this 'trigger' for action. Looking at longer-term causes, the best answers explained the circumstances under which the Estates-General had met, the mutual suspicion, the problems over voting procedure, the growing confidence of the Third Estate and the failures of the King and his ministers. Some went still further back in time to explain why the Estates-General was called in the first place and this could offer some valid contextual reference, although it was not strictly necessary. Indeed, answers which only talked about financial problems and the breakdown of the Assembly of Notables, skirted what was being asked for here, failing to link directly to the reasons for the taking of the oath, although those that identified the constitutional problems of the Ancien Regime and the growing desire to change the form of government as underlying reasons for the oath were well-rewarded.
- 02** Although there were some very impressive answers to this question, it was disappointing to find that many candidates only referred to the storming of the Bastille, as an example of crowd action in 1789. Activity in the capital earlier in the year, including disorder in the bread queues, strikes and the Reveillon riots helped better candidates put the activities of the crowd into a broader perspective, whilst reference to the October days gave much greater scope for an analysis of 'importance'. For the most part, candidates tried to balance the Parisian crowd against other factors affecting the revolution. Some concentrated, as expected, on 1789 – considering the important contributions of the deputies at the National Assembly, the peasants and perhaps the King' himself as alternative factors in the revolution. Others took a broader stance looking at the ways in

which other factors contributed to the outbreak of revolution in 1789 and this was also credited, although the relative importance of Crown debt, Enlightenment philosophies and the crowd's destruction of a symbol of the Ancien Regime was harder to judge effectively. A substantial minority took their answers well beyond 1789, sometimes showing very little appreciation of the chronology of events.

Question 2

- 03** Those who avoided the temptation to write about what the Committee of Public Safety did, rather than why it was established, were mostly able to refer to the need to defeat enemies 'within and without' and to provide some sort of central control at a time of fear and danger. The most common error was to suggest that the CPS was set up by Robespierre to advance his own purposes of dictatorship. Those who understood the circumstances of the spring of 1793 well, were usually able to show the interaction of the demands and troubles within France caused by the external war, the growing fear of counter-revolution (made worse by events on the Vendée) and the attitude of an increasingly radical government, dominated by Jacobins/Montagnards who had already executed the king. Such linkage of influences, enabled the better candidates to obtain Level 4 marks comfortably.
- 04** Knowledge of Robespierre was variable and some strayed outside the years 1793–1794 to talk of Robespierre's influence on the revolution as a whole from 1789. Those who understood the details of the Reign of Terror, however, were usually able to use this knowledge to good effect and many provided effective balance by suggesting that the activities of the *sans-culottes* (or the impact of war or counter-revolution) were more important (or in the most sophisticated arguments, more important in the early stages). Some took a different approach to a balanced argument and looked at the ways Robespierre was important (mostly in the continuation of the Terror beyond 1793 and the Cult of the Supreme Being), and balancing these against the ways in which he was not (the crushing of revolt in the provinces, and dechristianisation being two such examples). Either approach was acceptable and those able to sustain a convincing judgement were thus able to reach Level 5.

Question 3

- 05** A good range of reasons was advanced here, mostly linked to Napoleon's desire for control and the need to heal the schism opened up by the revolution. A few made particular reference to the date and the need to consolidate power after the 1799 coup as well as the opportunity afforded by the election of a new Pope. However, it was not essential to explain why 'in 1801' for the highest marks and some got there by other means. As always, it was necessary for candidates to link the reasons they advanced and prioritisation (usually emphasising Napoleon's personal quest for power and popularity) was the most common way this was achieved. Sadly, a few spent far too long writing out the terms of the Concordat. Such an approach could not gain marks above Level 2 since it only produced implicit reasons.
- 06** This was the only question in which the wording appeared to cause problems. Understanding of what was meant by 'administrative' (although the term is used in the most recent textbooks on the period) was, at best, hazy and, at worst, non-existent. Some candidates, quite appropriately, tried to define 'administrative' in their opening paragraph, and where such a definition was offered, whether right or wrong, the subsequent answer was judged on its own terms. However, some used the term rather meaninglessly, whilst others ignored it altogether and simply wrote an appraisal of Napoleon's policies. A less

excusable fault, was to pay no heed to the words, 'maintaining control'. There were too many answers that provided generalist comments on the success and limitations of Napoleon's policies, their contributions to 'stability' (a previous question) and how well Napoleon's reforms fulfilled revolutionary principles. Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of focusing on the exact wording of the questions set. Whilst a generous approach was taken in the marking of this question, unless candidates made some attempt to address 'control', either showing that reforms were important in some ways but not in others, or that in addition to administrative reforms, other measures were important for Napoleonic control, they could not achieve high marks, no matter how well the detail of reform was known.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.