



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **A2 History 2041**

### **Unit 3: HIS3E**

### **France and the Enlightenment:**

### **Absolutism Under Threat, 1743–1789**

## **Mark Scheme**

**Specimen mark scheme for examinations in June 2010 onwards**  
**This mark scheme uses the [new numbering system](#)**

The specimen assessment materials are provided to give centres a reasonable idea of the general shape and character of the planned question papers and mark schemes in advance of the operational exams.

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 candidates. 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 candidates' historical skills in the context of their knowledge and understanding of History.

The levels of response are a graduated recognition of how candidates have demonstrated their abilities in the Assessment Objectives. Candidates who predominantly address AO1(a) by writing narrative or description will perform at Level 1 or low Level 2 if some comment is included. Candidates 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. Candidates 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, candidates 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 candidate'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 candidate has begun to '*think like a historian*' and show higher order skills. As indicated in the level criteria, candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates.

## **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 candidates 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 candidates' 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*. Candidates should never be doubly penalised. If a candidate 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 candidate 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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**Specimen Mark Scheme for examinations in June 2010 onwards**

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

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

**Question 1**

- 01** How important was Enlightened thought in the growth of opposition to the monarchy in the period 1743 to 1789? (45 marks)

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

**Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2**

- 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. **0-6**
- 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 a good 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 very good understanding of the demands of the question. There will be synoptic links made between the ideas, arguments and information included showing an overall historical understanding. There will be a good understanding and use of differing historical interpretations and debate and the answer will show judgement through sustained argument backed by a carefully selected range of precise evidence. Answers will be well-organised and display good skills of written communication. **26-37**
- L5:** Answers will show a full 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 very well-structured and fluently written. **38-45**

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## Indicative content

**Note: This content is not prescriptive and candidates 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.**

The role of the Enlightenment in undermining the monarchy was once a popular and significant historical interpretation, although recently this view has become much less favoured. However, the salons, coffee houses and Masonic lodges that became popular from the first half of the century did serve to at least make the existing assumptions of absolute monarchy subject to discussion. The explosion in literature and periodicals further points to the rise of an enlightened public sphere which, combined with reading societies and the attack on traditional religion, is still credited to some degree with a desacralisation of the monarchy. The writing of the key philosophes and especially the Encyclopaedia of Diderot gave individuals the ideas and knowledge necessary to enquire themselves into the nature of monarchy. The work of Montesquieu highlighted the deficiencies of the French governmental system in comparison to the English system. Indeed, the attempted censorship of many key works and the desire to control opinion indicates that this thought was considered to be a threat by contemporaries. However, the membership of the salons and Masonic lodges was far from egalitarian and membership was anyway in decline in the years immediately preceding the revolution; many of the works of the philosophes were too expensive for even the moderately successful workman to acquire, and there remains doubt as to how far the ideas of the Enlightenment penetrated French society beyond a relatively comfortable elite under Louis XVI. Ultimately the Enlightenment was never a political movement; however its ideas were perhaps utilised by others as an excuse to oppose monarchy.

The most significant source of opposition to monarchy throughout this period was probably the Paris Parlement, although in conjunction with the continuing problem of Jansenism. The work of le Paige in concocting historical justifications for a legislative role and the attempt to undermine the position of the *lit de justice* under Louis XV indicates either that the parlementaires were simply dedicated to their ancient role of protecting the fundamental laws of France – amorphous as they were – or that ambitious magistrates were taking advantage of the weaknesses of the monarchy to further their own political careers. The Maupeou crisis at the end of Louis XV's reign might indicate how problematic the parlementaires had become, especially in their opposition to financial edicts. That parlementaires used enlightened themes in some of their discourse such as their response to Turgot's six edicts does not indicate that the Enlightenment was significant, for it was the Paris Parlement itself that was responsible for the censorship of much of the enlightened writing of this period. Whilst the Enlightenment provided some carefully selected ideological basis to opposition the real focus was possibly the parlement and the privileged.

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**Question 2**

**02** 'It was the ministers, not the king, who ensured the stability of France in the years 1764 to 1774.' (45 marks)

To what extent do you agree with this view?  
(45 marks)

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

**Generic Mark Scheme for essays at A2**

- 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. **0-6**
- 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**
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**Indicative content**

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Criteria for stability may be identified as financial, the re-assertion of the authority of monarchy, and the containment of the parlements. Louis XV did apparently work hard to assert the old authority of the Crown. The Flagellation Speech of 1766 was a clear rebuke to the pretensions of parlement which Louis XV himself ordered be published in the *Gazette de France* and distributed to all sovereign courts. Louis had issued the *lit de justice* in 1764 that attempted to forbid parlement from discussing financial matters, and this was all the more relevant considering the popular theories of Louis XV's involvement in the *Pacte de Famine* throughout the 1760s. Moreover, Louis XV proved able to personally intervene in the Brittany affair when he convoked a *lit de justice* in 1770 formally absolving d'Aiguillon of involvement, thus keeping a lid on parliamentary and ministerial politicising. Indeed, the activity of Louis XV during this period stands in marked contrast to the relative inactivity of his earlier reign. Louis XV's attempts to ride out the Brittany Crisis, especially by arresting some of the Renne's magistrates and by attending the Paris Parlement in person in 1770 in an attempt to rebuke those involved in the union des classes, proves how keen Louis was to retain an old-fashioned concept of the absolute authority of monarchy. This stood in marked contrast to the efforts of Choiseul to guide monarchy towards a clearer public role. Louis XV's ringing endorsement and support for reform in 1771 – 'I will never change' – probably accounts in part for the longevity of the Triumvirate. However, Louis' political role was antagonistic and the arrogance of the flagellation speech may have done more damage than good. Louis still lacked consistency, for example in releasing La Chalotais. Louis XV's dismissal of Choiseul was also as much a result of the rise of faction than Choiseul's incompetence, and Louis XV's intransigence in attempting to arrest the Paris parlementaires in January 1771 simply made the political crisis worse. Ostensibly it was the ministers who achieved more, for the Triumvirate is invariably claimed to be the last best chance for monarchy to have asserted itself. That it failed was not the fault of the ministers but rather the death of Louis XV. The ministers appear to emerge from the factional years of 1764 to 1771 united in the desire to quieten the parlements. However, the rise of Maupeou was itself a feature of ambition and possibly a consequence of his own desire to be chief minister. The Triumvirate was falling apart well before the death of Louis XV simply because the lack of the common enemy of parlement led to a re-emergence of factionalism amongst the ministers. The Maupeou years seemed to achieve little in re-asserting royal authority but did reinforce popular support for the magistrates and reassure them that government was impossible without them. Ultimately the greatest achievement of the period may well have been financial. This achievement had little to do with Louis XV but was the work of the reforming Terray, so much so that the budget of 1772 came close to being balanced. The somewhat inconsistent actions of Louis XV and the factionalism of ministers such as Maupeou mask the achievements of Terray during a period of genuine financial crisis.



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**Question 3**

- 03** How far was finance the main cause of the crisis for France in the years 1774 to 1789?  
(45 marks)

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

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Finance can reasonably be said to have been the motivating factor behind much of the crisis of the period. Louis XVI had inherited a weak financial situation and a sizeable royal debt. The Maupeou years and more particularly the financial reforms of Terray had come close to balancing the books but had done little to deal with the size of the underlying debt or to make the fundamental reforms necessary. This situation was made worse by France's entry into the American revolutionary wars. It was the extra 1 billion livres that this war cost that directly led to the political crisis of the final years of the ancien regime. It was the near bankruptcy of the Crown and the refusal of the Assembly of the Notables to sanction new taxation that precipitated the calling of the Estates General. However, although finance was at the root of the crisis it was the inability of Louis XVI to remain consistent, the political ambitions of the magistrates and the duplicity of the controller generals that perhaps more directly contributed to the crisis.

Louis XVI's clamour for public acclamation and his recall of the parlements in 1774 laid the foundation for political crisis. Whilst Turgot's six edicts went some way to stabilise finances, Turgot was unlucky in their timing and more unfortunate in losing the support of a vacillating king. Louis XVI was further subject to factionalism at court and especially to the increasingly political ambitions of his wife. Such inconsistency and careerism at court was accentuated by Necker's *Compte Rendu* and its claim to have found a surplus during the revolutionary wars. Whether Necker had a genuine desire to bolster confidence in royal finances or whether he was motivated by a personal desire for acclaim, the *Compte Rendu* made it exceptionally difficult for subsequent controller generals to embark on radical reform. Louis' subsequent inability to remain loyal to one controller general convinced those that wished to be that any financial crisis was the fault of incompetency and not that of a fundamental flaw in the system itself. Yet, changes in society and the increased pamphleteering of the period showed a shift in public interest away from the focus of the Court towards parlement. The obstructionism of the magistrates may be interpreted as either a genuine desire to protect the fundamental laws of France or a feature of their own ambition and self-interest – possibly it was a combination of both factors. The dismissal of Calonne in 1787 and Brienne's public request for views on how the Estates General should be constituted indicates just how far the decline of authority at the centre had gone. It was not finance but the Crown's inability to deal with the political consequences of mismanagement that was perhaps the main cause of the crisis.