

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y213/01 Summer 2023 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper Y213/01 series overview

Y222/01 is one of twenty-four units in Paper 2 for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 years through a short-answer essay and a traditional essay. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short-answer essay and a traditional essay and candidates had to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short-answer essay question (a), candidates needed to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both, they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates needed to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels, candidates needed to assess the issues they discussed and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short-answer essay - reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important - linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question - discussed at least two relevant issues in depth - the supporting detail was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic - reach a supported judgement about the issue in the question - make a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question.	- considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way - produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response - were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question - showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay - were unable to support their answer with relevant or accurate material - did not focus on the precise wording of the question - made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Which of the following was of greater importance in the fall of Napoleon?

- (i) Napoleon's personal failings
- (ii) Napoleon's rule in France after 1807

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

The major problem with this question for most candidates was part (ii), Napoleon's rule in France after 1807. Few responses offered much in the way of French, domestic reasons for Napoleon's fall, resorting instead to general considerations of imperial decline, which overlapped with part (i). Napoleon's personal failings, contrastingly, were well covered, popular points being his military adventurism after 1809 and his reluctance to make a compromise peace.

Exemplar 1

a) Napoleon's personal failings, especially regarding the Continental Blockade, announced in the Berlin Decrees, ultimately proved misjudgement, resulting in his downfall. The imposition of the Continental Blockade aimed to reduce British trade links, weakening their economy such that France could exert their force and dominate. However its lack of effectiveness was a result of Britain forming trade links and also the lack of implementation in Portugal. Consequently, Britain's trade in Europe fell by 50% and was still smuggled into the mainland. The Blockade led to the Peninsular War between 1808-1814 which ultimately saw a diminish in Napoleon and his military's strength. His decision to leave the war within two months ultimately allowed Britain to exploit French weakness

and liberate France with victories in ~~the~~ ~~Battle of~~ Vitoria and Salamanca. Furthermore, Napoleon's mistake in the Russian Campaign in 1912 saw his army face the harsh winter conditions in Russia such that his army fell from 600,000 to 120,000. These personal mistakes in the military ultimately saw his persona as a military genius tarnished resulting in a loss of support and therefore his fall.

Napoleon's rule in France is deemed to not be as successful. Despite stabilising the financial system in his early years, his decision to engage in wars saw a financial strain on France and therefore led to financial stability for which the French people did not approve. Furthermore, Napoleon's ~~rather~~ approach to education was controlled

by the Imperial University in 1908, suggesting Napoleon had taken a step back from domestic policies, to focus on engagement in the war. Furthermore, after 1807, Napoleon's army was waning in success, hindering the economic and political stability of France, resulting in further resentment from his people.

In conclusion, Napoleon's personal failings and decisions were more important as, with the continental blockade, he had increased tensions with powers such as Russia who withdrew in 1810 and allowed once more for Britain to exert their superiority, showcasing weaknesses in both Napoleon as an Emperor and military genius.

Exemplar 1 illustrates the problems a good number of candidates had with this question, managing some relevant, basic comment on part (i) but only touching the surface of part (ii). This was given Level 3: 3 marks.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* To what extent was Napoleon's Empire in France a police state?

[20]

This question proved a challenge for many candidates. Some ignored the wording 'in France' and wrote about the Empire as a whole, others interpreted 'police state' to mean something more generally authoritarian, an approach that was valid if done well. It was rare indeed to find candidates who had much knowledge of Napoleon's policing arrangements, of Joseph Fouché or the *livret*, although explanation of censorship was more common.

Exemplar 2

b. Napoleon's empire and rule can be described as a police state due to his controlling approach to aspects of French life such as the political structure, religion and in regards to education. The extent of control and centralisation led to a more extreme government compared to the years of the directory. Consequently, his reforms of the political structure ~~we were~~ saw France act as a police state the most however, Napoleon's ability to disillusion the people saw France appear to be more welcoming and a distanced version to what life was like during the Terror.

Napoleon had created a centralised political system which saw him hold all the power, initially as First Consul and then as Emperor. Whilst there was an illusion of universal suffrage, in

reality, there was only presentations of candidates and for which Notables were chosen. This very indirect system led to Napoleon able to pick who formed his government, therefore holding near absolute power. In line with his controlling approach, he issued the civil code in 1804, which saw the diminish of the power of the female and the rise of male dominance in the household, by making access to divorce much harder. Furthermore, the code saw the return of slavery and therefore suggests Napoleon's policies were very repressive leading to the idea of a police state. However, whilst Napoleon still relied on censorship to exert his political dominance, the number of counter-revolutionaries executed and arrested had decreased substantially, as well as promoted others through the Legion of Honour which

saw 3500 titles given out, which came with land and prestige, suggesting he was not opposed to increasing the power and status of his people and that through his bribery had to rely on the support of others to exert control as opposed to having a position of power which allowed him to have absolute control. However, under the *senatus consultum*, Napoleon's consolidated power ultimately led to his unquestioned role as ruler of France, suggesting a lack of flexibility in France's political framework is indicative of a police state.

~~He also~~ Whilst Napoleon hoped to exert as much control, Napoleon appeared quite liberating in his approach to religion. His imposition of the Civil Code in 1801 saw the return of Catholicism as the Catholic Church had agreed to recognise the revolution.

Furthermore, the toleration of Jews and other religions was permitted which demonstrates quite a welcoming approach to religion. As a result, religious provincial regions, such as the Vendée, were appeased and supported this harmonious religious atmosphere. However, the extent to Napoleon's liberating approach can be seen through his demand for the church to remain state owned and also the implementation of St. Napoleon's day in August. The idea of a day to commemorate Napoleon shows the extent of his influence and his vision of himself as a saint, suggesting his control over France is to unprecedented and extreme, resulting in the idea of a police state. However, despite this, from the perception of the French citizens,

Napoleon's religious reforms were less controlling and proved beneficial, seen with the support in the provinces.

Finally, with regards to education Napoleon implemented a very standardised curriculum for which all schools followed.

His opening of 45 new lycées and 6000 new schools saw a greater number of men have access to education, notably sons of generals.

The extent of consistency can be seen as all schools had the same timetable, with the same material

being taught in hope to produce skilled military men. Such control is indicative

of a police state as Napoleon's educational reforms are an attempt to shape the

next generation of his army ~~be~~ and have complete influence over the material

they consume. In 1808, the control of schools was handed

to the Imperial University who continued with this centralised approach. Whilst the educational reforms show a high degree of control, this was mainly restricted to sons of nobility as out of 6500 places, 2500 were given to the elite. The lack of access to education, especially for girls who were deemed for marriage, led to a small minority who experienced this vigorous regime, suggest the Empire itself, was not a police state. However, the vigorous and disciplined nature of education in comparison to previous governments show a ^{more} tightly ~~an~~ controlled approach such that Napoleon himself knew exactly what lesson was being taught at any given time, demonstrating aspects of a police state.

In conclusion, Napoleon's political reforms proved most extensive in the initiation of a ~~politic~~ police state due to the widespread nature of his

policies as they targeted the most amount of people. Religious reforms targeted provincial areas, and education a small minority. The extent of a police state in France was also covered well by Napoleon such that French citizens supported his role suggesting it was not as repressive as times under the terror.

This exemplar illustrates how responses often lacked the specific knowledge of policing and repression required for the higher levels but could write a plausible answer by discussing the nature of Napoleon's authoritarianism. This was given Level 4: 11 marks.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Which of the following was more important in the fall of Robespierre?

- (i) The loss of the support of the sans-culottes
- (ii) Robespierre's policies

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This question was attempted by most candidates. There were a fair number of very good answers. The best responses had a proper grasp of relevance and appreciated that the really telling material should be confined to the period December 1793 (Law of Frimaire) to July 1794 (the coup of Thermidor). This meant that for part (a) (i) the alienation of the sans-culottes from the Committees begins with the disbanding of the *armées révolutionnaires*, accompanied by the purge of the *Hébertistes* and *Indulgents*. Later, shortly before the coup of Thermidor, a reform to the maximum limited sans-culottes' wages. Again, in terms of Robespierre's policies, it is only from December 1793 that his influence on policy making is most pronounced. So, the escalation of the Terror from the purges of March and April to the Law of 22 Prairial and the Cult of the Supreme Being are the most relevant examples. Better responses recognised that some of Robespierre's policies served to alienate the sans-culottes and that the critical point was the sans-culottes' failure to defend Robespierre against the Convention during the Thermidor coup.

Exemplar 3

a The loss of the support of the Sans-Culottes was a vital reason in the fall of Robespierre - this group acted as a revolutionary driving force which were vital in sustaining momentum during the terror. However, when this was lost, Robespierre had alienated a key group of supporters who had given him leverage to hold power such as through the expulsion of the Girondins where 80,000 Sans-Culottes on the 2nd June 1793 demanded the 29 Girondins be handed over and threatened with a cannon. Sans-Culottes were key to the 1792 decree of the Reps on Mission as well as the Armée Révolutionnaire on September 5th. However, when these were recalled in 1794, the Sans-Culottes felt alienated as they lost power in the provinces. Additionally, the execution of Danton and the Desmoulins as well as Herbert and his supporters created a distance between Robespierre and the Sans-Culottes, they were loyal followers and they felt that Robespierre was restricting their influence. As a direct result of this alienation, Robespierre lost a key source of fuel in his terror - the Sans-Culottes were having their power attempted to be dominated by Robespierre. As they were essential for being a committed force in protecting his ideals, the loss of their support was very vital in ascertaining the reasons for the fall of Robespierre.

Robespierre's policies themselves were a key reason for his fall from power - he was becoming much more radical towards the end of his time as leader. The Law of Prairial

along with law of suspects shortened trials which were all brought to a central revolutionary tribunal in Paris and created the Great Terror where approximately 1784 people were killed with the very quick execution time of trials. Robespierre was creating his own downfall by creating an excessive climate of fear whilst strengthening the CPS' power immensely, the fall out with the CGS proved vital to his downfall. Additionally, the creation of the cult of the Supreme being was interpreted as Robespierre setting himself up as the head of a new religion which alienated many supporters who wanted to distance themselves from religion and therefore his power was undermined.

Overall, the policies of Robespierre were a more important reason for his fall from power, whilst the support of the Sans Culottes was greatly important, their role was more for creating wider terror in discovering more counter revolutionaries. Also, at the Coup of Thermidor, it was Robespierre's policies and ramping up suspects which led to the Thermidorian revolt. It was evident that he had given himself too much personal power and the terror was largely getting out of hand in terms of the number of deaths and therefore, as a result of his own policies he needed to be removed from power.

Exemplar 3 shows sound understanding with valid points on both factors but lacks the sharper relevance (focus on 1794) needed for higher marks. There was some balanced evaluation and a substantiated judgement. This was given Level 5: 7 marks.

Exemplar 4

a Robespierre, as a key member of the Jacobin political club and a leader within the committee of public security (CPS), grew to be largely ~~the~~ unpopular in the late 1790s, leading to ~~a~~ his downfall. His rise had been supported mainly by the sans-~~culotte~~ culottes, who thought ~~for~~ Robespierre was working to benefit them. One of the key reasons for his fall was the loss of the support of the sans-culottes following events such as the introduction of a general maximum, a limit on the amount ~~a~~ a merchant could price his goods for, and a limit on wages. This cap on how much a person could earn ~~severely~~ severely impacted Robespierre's popularity, with the sans-culottes heavily disliking the general maximum's limitations on their earnings. The loss of a key group of supporters that were largely responsible for the events of the 1789 ~~R~~revolution is ~~mostly~~ ~~to~~ quite important in the fall of Robespierre, as his main radical support came from the sans-culottes, and without that support, there was a higher possibility for revolts aimed against Robespierre. Overall, the factor of the loss of support of the sans-culottes is somewhat important to the fall of Robespierre.

On the other hand, Robespierre's policies and changes he introduced while he was essentially the leader of the CPS were ^{also} important in causing his fall. Robespierre's introduction of the policy implementing the general maximum was a key reason for the loss of support of the sans-culottes, creating the circumstances for that

a... to occur. Alongside this, his creation of the cult of supreme being, a new religious group in which Robespierre was the leader, garnered a large amount of discontent, as Robespierre was messing with religion in France, which was quite a controversial area to implement changes to. Also, the extreme amounts of power given to both the Committee of General Safety (~~CGS~~ CGS) and the Committee of Public Safety to allow them to expedite trials and survey for any counter-revolutionary movements or people created a large amount of distrust, not only in Robespierre and his policies, but also the ~~CGS~~ CPS and CGS. Overall, ~~Robespierre's~~ Robespierre's policies were largely important in ~~the~~ his fall as they created circumstances for the loss of support from the sans-culottes as well as general distrust in him and his ideals from the public.

in conclusion, ~~Robespierre's~~ Robespierre's policies were more important in leading to the fall of Robespierre as they created a situation in which the general maximum was imposed, directly leading to the loss of the sans-culottes support. Although that factor on its own is key to Robespierre's fall, without the impact of Robespierre's policies, the loss of the sans-culottes support would not have been so widespread.

This response makes valid points but is uneven and limited in range and detail. This was given Level 4: 5 marks.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* How important were the ideas of the Enlightenment and American Revolution in bringing about the French Revolution? **[20]**

Most candidates took the logical approach of examining the Enlightenment and American Revolution. This was sometimes done together. These nominated factors were set against other important causes of the revolution, typically, the financial, economic and political failings of the *ancien régime*. Focal points for the initiation of the revolution were usually taken to be the formation of the National Assembly with the Tennis Court oath, the storming of the Bastille or, rarely, the October days. Post-1789 material was irrelevant for this question. The best responses recognised the difficulty of reforming the monarchical system and how this led to an escalating crisis, driven by financial weakness and short-term economic problems. New ideas from the Enlightenment and American Revolution only had real significance once the monarchy was forced to call the Estates-General. Less impressive responses tended to assume that a revolution was widely anticipated or desired, rather than something more coincidental, emerging from the failure of Louis XVI's government.

Exemplar 5

b	Enlightenment ideals and the ^{American} French Revolution were a vital driving force for the French Revolution which was based upon the same ideas of liberty and freedom from oppression. However, it can be argued that the role of the enlightenment ideals and the ~~American~~ Revolution during the French Revolution is often overemphasised due to the internal problems France was facing such as the financial difficulties as well as ~~the~~ conflict with the feudal system. On balance, whilst enlightenment ideals and the American Revolution undeniably influenced the thought behind the French Revolution, they are less significant as opposed to the financial difficulties that France was facing at the time.
	The American Revolution and enlightenment ideals were, to a large degree, very important in shaping the thought behind the French Revolution. Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke proposed the social contract theory which gave rise to the idea of government by consent and the right to remove any leaders that were not supporting the wishes of the common people. Furthermore, thinkers like Voltaire and Montesquieu brought up ideas regarding the separation of powers. These are clearly seen as influential on the French Revolution, causing the Estates General in January 1789 and their subsequent meeting on the 5th of May was in line with enlightenment ideals.

as they drew up cahiers and all three estates asked for a constitutional monarchy, giving the people more of a say in the system of government over them. The ~~Am~~ American declaration of Independence on the 4th July 1775 also upheld these ideas of liberty, freedom and natural rights which were seen as influential particularly with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and citizen ~~written~~ ^{on the} 26th August 1789 which was written in collaboration with Thomas Jefferson, the American ambassador to France. Therefore, it is evident that the ideals of the enlightenment and American Revolution had an influence on the radical thought behind the French Revolution such as the decentralisation of power and providing more individual rights.

However, it can be argued that the importance of the enlightenment and ideals of American Revolution were overemphasised, particularly when assessing class based problems in France and general discontent with the king. French society was split into three estates and the social burden of taxation ^{solely} largely fell upon the third estate which led to mass protests. Louis XVI himself was an unpopular and incompetent king whose decisions fluctuated immensely such as the exile of the Paris Parlement to Troyes ^{as they rejected the land tax} and the subsequent revolt of the nobility in the August of

1788. Arguably, the revolt of the nobility could have been influenced by enlightenment ideals as they were protesting for the unfair expulsion of a political body which could be in line with Locke's social contract theory. However, whilst this may have been a background factor, discontent within class groups was much more important in bringing about the French Revolution; the assembly of notables themselves encouraged the calling of the estates general to voice their different class grievances. Furthermore, a majority of the third estate would have had poor education and would therefore have not been heavily influenced by texts and enlightenment ideals which would have been largely inaccessible for most people. Therefore, whilst the ideals of the enlightenment and American Revolution are ~~defini~~ undeniably seen in the course beginning the French Revolution, they are more of a background factor in the causes as the real motives lay with social and political discontent.

The most significant cause for the French Revolution was the ~~exte~~ financial difficulties that was happening in France at the time which led to widespread discontent as opposed to ideals of the enlightenment and American Revolution. Louis' constant changes in his controller generals meant that the financial crisis was not being solved whilst in 1781 Necker

drew up the *Compte Rendu au Roi* which showed a surplus of 10 million livres to encourage spending to the crown, Calonne and De Brienne later discovered the 165 million livres deficit which grew to almost 280 million the following year. Controller generals used such as the selling of venal offices could be seen as 'enlightened' since the system of privilege was arguably breaking down yet it is more credible to argue this was done out of financial desperation. Furthermore, controller generals such as Turgot and Necker were advised against the involvement in the American War of Independence yet the Treaty of Alliance solidified the connection and 1066 million livres in expenditure was used on the American Revolution which fuelled discontent in the *Sans-culotte* further. Therefore, financial motivations were seen as more significant than the enlightenment ideals, the arguable 'start' of the French Revolution on the 14th July 1789 with the storming of the Bastille had its root cause in Necker's dismissal and whilst this event can be interpreted as going against the ancien régime and destroying that metaphorically which appears 'enlightened' this was not the cause for bringing about the revolution.

In conclusion, in hindsight it is easy to apply the ideals of the American Revolution and the enlightenment to the events that kickstarted the

French Revolution upon assessing the significance of the Estates General and Bastille for example. However, its role must not be over emphasised and whilst they certainly played a key role, it was the internal discontent in regards to social class and the dire economic situations that played a greater role in bringing about the revolution.

The sans-culottes who were a key driving force in catalysing the revolution would not have been influenced themselves by these ideals but their actions do draw parallels. Therefore, whilst they did indeed have some influence they were not the most important factor.

This response is clearly structured and has very good understanding throughout, making a persuasive case for the secondary importance of the Enlightenment and American Revolution. This was given Level 6: 17 marks.

Exemplar 6

b The Enlightenment as an intellectual movement and ~~the~~ France's involvement in the American Revolution allowed for the spread of ideas that ~~fundamentally~~ were fundamental in ~~the~~ bringing about the French Revolution. ~~Idea~~ Ideas such as freedom and equality, as well as the idea of a democratic state, were the consequences of the involvement of French soldiers in America's war of independence, while the ~~Enlighten~~ Enlightenment ~~created a question~~ led to the questioning of the king's powers and the belief in the rationality of the people. These ideas created a base for the French Revolution, and were largely important in bringing about the French Revolution.

the involvement of French ~~sold~~ soldiers in America's War of Independence allowed for the ideas of freedom and democracy to spread throughout France, relayed by the returning soldiers who helped America gain its independence from the British empire. The idea of democratic freedom and equality was of high importance in bringing about the French Revolution as it created doubt in the ~~absolute~~ absolute monarchy, and therefore in King Louis XVI's right to power. The fact that the soldiers had fought for another country's independence ~~to~~ from a monarch with control over them, but were unable to do the same within ~~to~~ their own country created circumstances that began to bring the revolution into existence.

b... Furthermore, this idea of democratic freedom and equality was enhanced by the Enlightenment movement and its ideals. With key philosophers such as Rousseau and Voltaire questioning the amount of power the king had over the rational beings of France, the distrust in the king's power spread, mainly through the 2nd ~~Estab~~ Estate, the nobility. Overall, the idea of democratic freedom and equality, spread by the Enlightenment movement and France's involvement in the American Revolution, were highly important in bringing about the French Revolution.

Alternatively, the distrust in the king and his powers was already growing without the influence of the Enlightenment and the American Revolution, due to King Louis XVI's inability to manage the expenses of France and leading to the creation of further debt. The growing instability of France's economy paired with bad harvests and increasing grain prices and population, was of extreme importance in bringing about the French Revolution. With the population growing from 18 million in ~~the~~ the early 1700s to 26 million in 1789, and the cost of living rising by roughly 45% in this period while the wages only rose by 22%, the state of France's economy and society were severe. King Louis XVI's decision to fund the American Revolution was an additional disaster to France's finances, creating anger and

b... hostility aimed towards the king and his government. Therefore, the actions of King Louis XVI ~~that led to~~ that had disastrous impacts on French finances, economy and society were also of high importance in bringing about the French ~~perott~~ Revolution.

In conclusion, both the ideas of the Enlightenment and the American Revolution were vital in ~~bringing~~ about the French Revolution, with the ideas of freedom, equality and distrust in the amount of power invested ~~to~~ in the king being fundamental ideas of the Revolution. However, these ideas were mostly in existence already, due to the inability of King Louis XVI to adequately govern and manage France and its economy and debts. Therefore the ideas of the Enlightenment movement and the American Revolution were of high importance in bringing about the French ~~Rev~~ Revolution, ^{and} ~~but~~ ^{supplemented} ~~only only mainly added to~~ the ^{less} ~~more~~ important factor of distrust in King Louis XVI ~~that~~ that stemmed from his inability to manage the finances of France ~~responsibly~~.

This response provides a line of reasoning but is more generalised, less developed and less secure in terms of knowledge, notably on the Enlightenment. This was given Level 4: 11 marks

Misconception



There was confusion in the use of the terms 'financial' and 'economic'. Too many candidates appeared to use these terms almost interchangeably which limits the development of a line of reasoning for this question. Long-term financial weakness, or indebtedness, caused by huge, expensive loans and weak tax revenue is the main driver of the 1787-9 governmental crisis, beginning with the summoning of the Assembly of Notables in 1787. Economic problems are seen in manufacturing slumps after 1786 and, worst of all, the very poor harvest of 1788. Together, these served to make the urban working classes restive, especially in Paris, and explain the uprisings of July and October 1789.

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