



2009 History: Revolutions GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students showed good awareness of the framework required for their answer and confined their responses to the appropriate time frames in the 2009 History: Revolutions examination. However, linking of knowledge to the contribution to ‘a revolutionary situation’ or the ‘development of the revolution’ requires greater attention.

Generalisations appeared too often in this year’s examination. Students should beware of broad statements such as ‘everybody lost confidence in the Tsar’ and ‘... contributed greatly’, as answers need to be specific and address the question directly. Essays that lacked precise evidence and presented a generalised view did not receive high marks.

When discussing a graphic, students need to draw upon features of the graphic by explicitly mentioning them in relation to their view. More attention should be given to quoting from the documents to help build an answer.

Too many students seemed to have little sense of a chronology of events and responses showed that they were unable to work backwards in time and place events in a broad context. An increase in the use of dates would add value to responses. Students should be encouraged to prepare for the examination by constructing timelines and placing documents in a broad context of events.

Some students attempted every question. Students should practise handling whole papers and ensure they select the correct revolution.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

Section A – Revolution one

Part 1 – Revolutionary ideas, leaders, movements and events

Revolution chosen	America	France	Russia	China
%	11	42	39	8

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	4	8	11	14	14	14	13	9	4	4	5

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	17	8	9	9	11	11	11	10	7	4	4	4.1

Questions 1 and 2

Students should pay more attention to learning facts about the outcomes of particular actions or events. In preparation for this section of the exam, students would benefit from drawing flow diagrams in order to make clear connections between events. Many responses did not show connections well and often listed information without explaining the contribution to the revolution or revolutionary situation. Students need to ensure that they respond to all parts of the question, such as ‘how did’, ‘explain the importance of’, ‘contribute to a revolutionary situation’ and ‘in the development of the revolution’. It was pleasing to note that most students confined their response to the space allocated on the examination paper.

The best answers showed an excellent range of knowledge and responded well to the cue ‘how did’. They showed a clear understanding of the contribution of events to the revolutionary situation and explained the steps in a logical sequence. Excellent responses used correct and specific historical terms and included dates, places and names. However, many students simply supplied a list of events or a narrative without making the connection to the role these events played in bringing on the revolution.

On the whole, students displayed their knowledge of relevant information and usually used the time frame given in the question. Students should signpost their answer so that their points are clearly evident. Some students signposted their



response very well by using ‘firstly’, ‘secondly’ and ‘thirdly’ to note their points, or language such as ‘furthermore’ to link points, which helped them to build their position about the onset of the revolution.

In Question 2, excellent responses not only demonstrated how an event or idea, leader or movement was part of the revolution, but how a number of other events or circumstances also combined to create a ‘revolutionary situation’.

America

Students tended to narrate the ‘story of the Revolution’ without making the link as to why an event was important. While students were aware that the Boston Tea Party was an important event, they did not make the link that it was a watershed in the relationship between the colonies and Britain. Good answers showed an understanding of this ‘parting of the ways’ by discussing the violence involved in the event and explaining that, after the extensive destruction of British property and the punitive measures put in place by parliament to coerce the colonies, it was unlikely there would be reconciliation. They also showed links between the reaction from Britain and the formation of the first Continental Congress and then the Continental Army.

For Question 2, most students did not show an understanding of the number of articles that Jefferson wrote, which included ‘Summary View’, ‘The Right to Bear Arms’, the draft of the Virginia Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Each of these presents revolutionary ideas. It is recommended that students read widely to prepare for the exam.

France

For Question 1, most students described the financial outcomes of France’s involvement in the American War of Independence and many also noted the ideas which LaFayette brought back to France. Question 2, on the role of the Parlement in Paris in creating a revolutionary situation, was less well answered. Students either knew this area well or they did not know what the Parlement was.

Russia

Restricting the time frame for this question to ‘by 1905’ was only limiting at first glance. The best answers showed that there was still much material to be discussed, including the aftermath of the humiliating defeat of the army at Mukden and the navy at Tsushima Straits. Students also mentioned the Potemkin mutiny and linked it to a loss of support for the Tsar from the armed forces and the 1905 Revolution beginning with the Putilov strike. As in the other revolutions, the best answers for Russia showed the student’s ability to explain a sequence of events in the development of a revolutionary situation.

China

The time frame of 1928 to 1934 for the first question challenged students. Students who wrote on the ideas of Mao during the Jiangxi Soviet after the Shanghai Massacre did not show the ways in which Mao deviated from the ideas of an urban-based revolution promulgated by the Comintern. Unfortunately many students discussed Mao’s theories that were developed at Yen’an, which was outside the time frame.

Question 2 also had a narrow time frame of 1908 to 1911, yet there was plenty of scope for material within this three-year period. The best answers explained how the death of Cixi opened up opportunities for the growth of revolutionary movements and used the Tongmenghui, failed uprisings and the Double Ten Revolution as evidence. Some answers included the ideas of Sun Yat Sen, although most students overlooked this aspect.

The following is a high-scoring response to Question 1 on France. This response demonstrates very good knowledge, which is used to point out some outcomes of France’s involvement in the American war and how this contributed to the revolution. The skill of linking the event to a developing revolution is evident. While this is not the very best answer, as it still generalises a little, it is clear in its knowledge, there are some specific facts and it is conclusive. It is therefore in the high range.

The most imminent consequence of the War of Independence, where France had allied with America against Great Britain, was the dire situation that it had left the French economy in. Over 1 million livres had been spent on the war effort, financed mainly on loans and by 1786 France was facing bankruptcy. This was the catalyst for the 1786 Assembly of Notables and the 1787–1788 ‘Aristocratic Revolt’ with the Parlement of Paris that precipitated the rising and unmet class expectations throughout France. The crisis was heightened by the extreme food shortage that had arisen in Paris due to the little money in the economy. By 1789 an average urban worker in Paris was spending around 75% of his wage merely on bread. This only created a further revolutionary situation as grocery riots erupted alongside the poor harvest of 1788–89. Ideologically, the American War of Independence brought back news of a revolution against the monarchy and ultimately it made the philosophes previous ideas real and achievable. Thus ‘American Spirit’ is considered by Simon Schama as one of the more prominent ideological influences.



Leader La Fayette was one of the main advocates of the American Revolution as he had returned from there as a general, and his influential status certainly provoked further ideas of revolution by 1789.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response to Question 1 on Russia. This answer shows a strong command of the build up leading towards the unrest of 1905 and the introduction of the Manifesto. It clearly points out how the development progressed from the defeat and indicates a pathway for the revolution.

The unexpected defeat of Russia in the Russo–Japanese War was highly significant in contributing to a revolutionary situation by 1905. Firstly, soldiers who were angered by the harsh conditions they had endured during the war and their humiliating defeat, began to revolt in certain instances like the mutiny of the Battleship Potemkin in 1905. This allowed the Tsar to understand the seriousness of the possible threat to his power. What is more, this same dissatisfaction with the defeat and disillusionment with the Tsar was re-echoed amongst urban population as people were shocked that Tsarist Russia had succumbed so easily to an Asian nation which had been held in contempt as inherently inferior. The fact that nearly half the Russian fleet had been sunk in the Battle of Tsushima Straits (May 1905) shocked the Russian people and led them to question the supposed infallibility and omnipotence of their aristocratic leader, Nicholas II. Furthermore, the cost of engagement in the war had compounded the already serious economic problems, causing a decline in living standards and consequently simmering dissatisfaction that threatened to overboil. eg. In Russian cities there were an average 16 people to an apartment and factory workers endured 60 hour working weeks. Thus the ‘spark’ of the January Bloody Sunday massacre caused the flames of revolution to arise. Finally the fact that angry sailors and soldiers were returning to St. Petersburg in October 1905 as a massive general strike was raging, forced the Tsar to take action because he knew they could otherwise add to the growing unrest and lead to a full blown revolution. Thus the Tsar introduced the October Manifesto which promised reform in October 17 1905.

The following is a medium-level response to Question 2 on China. This answer starts with information outside the question’s time frame, which is often characteristic of weaker answers. The response provides some general ideas and goes on to loosely describe the three principles. It does not fully focus on **how** events contributed to a revolutionary situation by 1911 but more on narrating the events.

After the Boxer Rebellion and the further embarrassment this caused for the Dowager Empress and the Qing Dynasty, the period 1908 to 1911 established a revolutionary situation in China which was to end imperialism and the Qing Dynasty. The reforms that came from the Boxer Protocol included education, military and agricultural reforms that to some extent authorised what was already happening in China. The establishment of the Tongmenghui Revolutionary group by Sun Yat Sen provided an alternative to an Emperor and additionally provided hope for the people. Sun Yat Sen’s Three Principles of ‘Democracy, Nationalism and the Peoples’ Livelihood’ addressed the needs and wants of the people of China in comparison to Cixi who was degrading China’s international morale through increased foreign interference. The railway recovery movement was established to re attain China’s control over its railway system and this resulted in the edict nationalising railways. As the Provisional Assemblies were established there was further discontent for the Qing and support for an alternative government. Provisional Assemblies supported the Wuhan uprising in October 1911 as members of the Tongmenghui and New Army joined to overtake the Qing Dynasty and on Sun Yat Sen’s return in December he was announced as Provincial President.

Typically, medium-range responses have some accuracy, showing the student’s ability to identify perhaps one or two pieces of information. They are general in content and loosely controlled. There might be only two main ideas which are described in loose terms and other ideas might be less relevant or of lower significance. They sometimes contain information from outside the time frame or slip in relevance. There is little demonstration of the pathway to revolution.

Part 2 – Creating a new society

Revolution chosen	America	France	Russia	China
%	11	42	39	8

Question 3ai–ii.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	3	11	86	1.9

Question 3bi–ii.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	4	12	84	1.8

Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	13	15	21	21	15	10	5	2.6



Question 3d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	11	8	10	11	12	11	11	10	8	4	3	4.3

As in past years, the basic comprehension questions were answered accurately by all but a few students. However, students must ensure that they read the questions more carefully and answer the question that is being asked. Too often, misunderstanding of the question resulted in an incorrectly focused response. Students often provided information required to answer the next question in their answer to Question 3c. and then repeated the same information in their response to Question 3d. Question 3c. was generally not well answered across the revolutions. Students often did not demonstrate their knowledge of the topic or, where they had good knowledge, they could not link it very well to the ideas contained in the document or graphic.

There was a lack of skill in analysing the views expressed in the document or graphic and some students tried to do historiography in this part of the question where it was not required. Students may benefit from practice in writing short summaries of the viewpoint contained in extracts.

It was clear that many students did not use the document by quoting from it to frame their answers to Questions 3c. and 3d. Teachers must inform students of the requirement to quote from the extract. Some students did well to use the phrase ‘as stated in the extract’ in brackets and explicitly show that they could ‘use’ the extract.

Weaker responses to Question 3c. told a story of events rather than explaining events in the context of the document by using it, as well as several pieces of additional information. Improvement is needed in reading the question and identifying what to focus on.

Question 3d. was poorly done. Weaker students seemed to either just list their knowledge or compare historians. They did not tackle the ‘strengths and limitations’ of the document as evidence, and at times referred to the strengths and weaknesses of the event itself. There were a lot of memorised quotes which lacked relevance to the context of the document and question. A typical weak statement was ‘*This is written by a historian and not someone who experienced the event first hand and therefore it is bias.*’ Students should also learn how to use the term ‘bias’ and ‘biased’ correctly. It is not vital for students to know the school to which a historian belongs, but they should know what the historian is saying about the revolution.

High-scoring responses used outside factual knowledge to illuminate ideas presented by the document. Medium and weaker responses often did not move beyond the information contained in the document and did little more than describe or paraphrase the content. Others ignored the document entirely and just expressed the student’s own knowledge. Most students made a generalised attempt to analyse the view, but they must identify specific words in the document which provide clues to the position held by the author. The best approach is to explain a historian’s viewpoint and then show how it differs from or confirms the ideas expressed in the extract. Students should not use clichés such as ‘revisionist, therefore he looks at a range of views’ or ‘primary, therefore he is biased’.

America

The document was about ideas of freedom and equality and how the Declaration of Independence was used to argue for changes to the power structure. Few students thought to mention the fact that slaves were counted for taxation purposes and eventually 3/5 of a person for representation. The qualification placed on representation was not widely discussed. Students should be encouraged to examine the application of key ideas in the new society in more detail.

In their responses to Question 3d., about the lack of political freedom, students showed more confidence in opposing the view presented in the extract, which was highly commendable. For example, students often agreed with Foner’s claim that there were groups excluded from political practice but also challenged this view by saying that it would have been quite remarkable to find certain groups having rights in 1789. Students often cited Wood in claiming that the Revolution was not directed towards women’s or slaves’ rights but it did lay groundwork for such disadvantaged groups to later obtain rights.

France

Many students seemed unfamiliar with the law of 4 December or did not connect it to the Law of Frimaire, and some missed the Terror, which showed a very poor sense of chronology. Too many students made vague references to war



and counter-revolution. However, those who did respond well used good evidence and referred to historians' views accurately.

Russia

The effort to get the historiography correct and to present two or more perspectives was often done at the expense of focusing on the event itself. This mistake was clear with regards to Lenin's New Economic Policy. Many students seemed more concerned with indicating how other historians view this event rather than outlining their own understanding/knowledge of this event. Responses must provide a balance between knowledge of the event and historians' viewpoints. Many students did not focus on the 'outcomes' of the NEP. This indicates that more thorough reading of the question is required.

China

A surprising number of students missed one of the key historical debates, that is, why did the Cultural Revolution occur? Many students seemed not to have read the question carefully and simply wrote about the accuracy of the document. Students need more practice in responding to detailed extracts.

The question on historiography, Question 3d., provoked some good evidence to evaluate Spence's view on the Cultural Revolution. Students argued that Spence presented little information on the reasons for the launching of the Cultural Revolution. They were able to show that Mao had his own political agenda and manipulated the youth for his own purpose. However, too many students seemed unfamiliar with the causes of the Cultural Revolution

It was evident this year that students mainly avoided the past mistake of randomly name dropping historians into their responses. There seemed to be an effort overall to link historians to a particular view. Teachers should continue to advise students of this excellent approach. Unfortunately, some students were still confused about which historian wrote about which Revolution. Unfortunately, too many responses contained vague or inaccurate terms such as 'biased', (usually spelled incorrectly) and 'Marxist' (not accurately identified).

The key to a good response is to first analyse the historian's view and express this clearly using a quotation, then explain whether this view is supported by evidence or not. The next step is to explain who shares the view or opposes it.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response to Question 3c. on Russia. This answer does both things required by the question: it quotes from the extract and uses additional knowledge to discuss the consequences of the NEP.

Lenin's reference to the NEP being intended to 'strengthen the foundations of socialism' speaks to the intended effect of the NEP to consolidate the Communist Party's rule. The NEP did indeed lead to a decline in opposition to the Bolsheviks in Russia's urban population and peasants benefitted as electricity production multiplied by 3 times between 1921 and 1924 and the average workers wage increased by 150%. However, an unfavourable result was the advent of criticism in the Bolshevik Party itself as members like Kamanev labelled the NEP the 'New Exploitation of the Proletariat'. Also Lenin's idea that there would be a revival of the 'petty bourgeoisie' was realised as Nepmen, people who bought and sold manufactured goods at a profit came to be rich. However, Lenin's idea that 'manufactured goods' would become easily available was not instantly realised as the Scissors Crisis 1923 resulted from the NEP. As the trade of grain was made free but industry still kept under state control, manufactured goods came to be 3 times as expensive as agricultural products and were incredibly difficult to obtain.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response to Question 3d. on France. This student immediately places the discussion in historical debate and then goes into the extract to examine particular parts of the view by reference to the sans-culottes. Clearly the student infers the powers of the CPS by referring to the 'tyrannical rule' and is able to discuss what is missing from the extract.

This extract provides an accurate view of the social effects of the law of December 4 1793. As a Marxist historian, Rudé is of the school of thought which focuses on the social aspects of the French Revolution. This extract is thus reliable insofar as to explain how the sans-culottes were affected by the institution of the Committees of General Security and Public Safety. Conversely, revisionist historians focus more on the political effects of such events, such as the subsequent execution of the followers of Danton, labelled 'indulgents' and the Hébertists, both of whom opposed the tyrannical rule of the CPS in 1794. Rudé also makes mention of the economic situation of France, which resulted from the suspension of the constitution of 1793, which heavily favoured the sans-culottes. The main weakness of this extract is that it does not make reference to the Terror which would claim thousands of lives by the fall of Robespierre on 9 Thermidor year 11. Overall this document is a reliable view of the downfall of the Jacobin government after December 1793.



The following is an example of a high-scoring response to Question 3d. on America. This detailed discussion is an exceptionally controlled and knowledgeable discussion of viewpoints, soundly grounded upon the extract. However, its length is an exception rather than the norm for high achievement.

This extract offers a balanced view of the issue of 'Equality' in that while it hails the new society as a 'democratisation of freedom that was dramatic' especially in regards to the previous British ideal of aristocracy over meritocracy, it does acknowledge that those democratic rights were not extended to 'wives, children, employees and slaves'. This is a view shared and supported by left-wing historians such as Zinn who regarded these factions as being 'politically invisible' and omitted from the order of the 'united interests' that was the Founding Fathers. He would envisage further and claim that the Founding Fathers were elitist counter-revolutionaries who created a 'supremacy of the rich and powerful' which failed to uphold the ideal of 'all men are created equal'. What this extract doesn't mention and what left-wing historians emphasise, is the 3/5ths clause which signalled the Founding Fathers refusal to extend their rights to slaves whom they regarded as 3/5ths of a human being, which contradicted the idea of 'all men are created equal'. The status of slaves, women, native Americans and the poor remained largely the same, while the Founding Fathers became presidents and vice-presidents so that the revolution was nothing more than a shift in power from the British aristocracy to the colonial elite. However this view is not shared by liberal historians such as Wood who would agree with the extract's claim that the new society 'challenged the principle of hereditary aristocracy'. Wood sees the Constitution as creating a 'new social and moral order' where 'all sovereignty rested with the people'. Brogan also said that the Constitution was the ideological fulfilment of the revolutionary ideas of meritocracy over hereditary privilege. The process of separation of powers and the Bill of Rights were further evidence to support Foner's view that the new society ensured 'equality before the law' and 'equality in political rights'. The historian Charles Beard meanwhile, would argue that the Founding Fathers were motivated by a desire to protect their economic interests and while he won't go as far as to claim the Founding Fathers were elitist counter-revolutionaries, he would stress that the new society was intended to maintain the status quo rather than any dramatic change to democracy or equality. Overall this extract highlights both the achievements of the new society in enabling greater freedom for the order of free citizens, while acknowledging the slaves, women, and children who were denied equal access to democratic freedom.

Section B – Revolution two

Part 1 – Revolutionary ideas, leaders, movements and events

Revolution chosen	None	America	France	Russia	China
%	1	5	25	49	20

Question 1ai-ii.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	6	22	72	1.7

Questions 1bi-ii.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	12	29	59	1.5

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	9	13	21	23	16	12	6	2.8

Question 1d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	11	9	11	11	13	12	11	9	7	3	3	4.2

Generally, responses to this task showed the same weaknesses as did those to Question 3 in Section 1. Students were able to identify features from the graphic and read it symbolically, but many did not make links to their own knowledge, use a chronology of events or respond to historiography.

America

Students needed to connect British failure with the 'gestures' of the colonists. The attempt to rein in the colonists showed Britain as maintaining a traditional attitude. Students needed to show their knowledge of the various ways that the colonists tried to rebel. The historiography was not well done and students tended to describe events rather than discuss historians' views.



France

This question was often poorly answered and students experienced difficulty with the term 'patriotic liberty'. It seemed that students could not put the 'night of patriotic delirium' in chronological sequence working backwards or suggest other occasions where the ideal of liberty and a sense of the nation were evident.

Some students were able to compare the aristocratic stage of the revolution to a Marxist view where the involvement of the peasants or the urban working people of Paris produced change.

Russia

Students had little difficulty extracting information about why there was widespread discontent with the Tsar by 1916 and also demonstrated good knowledge of their own. Question 1d. was less well answered. Few students commented on the bias of Miliukov as leader of the Kadets and his position on the war. However, students tackled the historiography reasonably well, attempting to use different historians' views as to why the February Revolution occurred.

China

Analysis of the David Low cartoon was disappointing as the skill of identifying the themes in a visual representation still seems to elude many students. Only a few students were able to connect the gesture 'only up to here' to Chinese agreement to the annexation of Manchuria and the setting up of a puppet government under Pu Yi.

Many students called the tiger a lion and too many students failed to notice or comment on the man up the tree called 'foreign interests'. Students need much more practice in preparation for this type of question, and in connecting the features of a graphic to circumstances in a broader context of events than those depicted in the image.

To achieve success with historiography, students must link historical views to the event portrayed in the representation. Assessors look for accurate identification, recognition and discussion of the period, quotes from the document or specific references made to the content of the image, or to what is omitted. Next, students should discuss the ways historians might side with, or oppose, the view of the period expressed by the representation. Students must read the question carefully and address the period or event raised by the question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response to Question 1c. on China. This answer shows excellent knowledge of the period and uses evidence to support the explanation. Unfortunately, the answer does not contain a reference to the cartoon source as required by the question, and therefore could not be awarded full marks. Students should pay particular attention to quoting or describing an aspect of the source and use words like 'as seen in the graphic' or 'as seen in the extract' to make their point clear.

The Japanese occupation of China was a sore point for much of the Chinese population as Chiang Kaishek refused to fight the Japanese invasion, having said later that 'Japanese are a disease of the skin – communists are a disease of the heart' – clearly indicating his preoccupation with the CCP and their soviets as a threat to his position as leader of the government. Employing a 'tactic' of 'trade land for time' (insinuating that the Japanese would overreach themselves) failed to win popular support for the Guomindang who were failing spectacularly at the 'nationalism' outlined in their founding 'principles'. The Japanese occupation of China was indeed the catalyst for the abduction of Chiang Kaishek by the 'Young Marshall', Zhang Xueliang after his land was overrun with Japanese – this action culminating in a 'propaganda win' for the CCP who released Chiang and formed the Second United Front, continued their 'March north to fight the Japanese', furthering their popularity in time for the Sino-Japanese War.

The following is an example of another excellent response to Question 1c., this one is on France. The answer commences with a piece of information given in the extract, which is a good way to start, and provides a basis for discussion. Thus the student shows very good skill in extracting information to assist in answering the question and has fulfilled the part of the question that requires use of the extract. Next the answer builds upon the discussion of the ideal of patriotic liberty showing precise knowledge that the Cahiers expressed a desire for Constitutional Monarchy rather than a desire to be rid of the King. The answer continues to show how the desire for patriotic liberty was expressed in actions during June and July 1789.

Schama refers to the fact this ideal of patriotic liberty linked back to French involvement in the American War of Independence. The demands for an Estates General (1787–1788) to be convoked and the Cahiers De Doleances (Feb 1789) showed how fervently members of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Estates desired the 'radiance' of France and wanted freedom in the form of the Constitutional Monarchy (a desire expressed in 64% of noble cahiers and 57% of commons cahiers). Also it was a longing for the realisation of 'patriotic liberty' that prompted the 3rd Estate representatives at the Estates General to declare the formation of a National Assembly (17 June 1789) and swear not to disband until France was a nation governed by a Constitution (20 June 1789). As Schama argues, it was also 'noble and clerical deputies' who were overwhelmed by enthusiasm for a freer France. The night of August the 4th involved these deputies renouncing privileges (started by members of the Breton club) such as the Tithe,



the Taille and the Corvée, an act motivated by enthusiasm for the Revolution. Schama's reference to the expectation that the King make 'sacrifice[s]' for the good of the nation reflects the manner in which many French people believed in the benevolence of the King and were thus shocked and radicalised when he made such acts as surrounding the National Assembly by armed troops on the 23rd of June, which culminated in the storming of the Bastille (July 14 1789).

The following is an example of a high-scoring response to Question 1d. on Russia.

P N Miliukov's speech to the Duma on November 1916 was merely months before the Tsar's abdication on March 2, 1917. He speaks of the discontent of the Russian people, yet the extract suggests that the Duma was critical in Nicholas' abdication. While the Duma did persuade him to do so, it was the imminence of the crowds of up to 240,000 in St. Petersburg in February 1917 that left him with no other option but to abdicate, and hence end the Romanov dynasty. It was after the sacking of men from the prominent factory Putilov Steel works that crowds started to take over the streets of St. Petersburg. Soviet historians firmly believe that the two revolutions of 1917 were the result of a Marxist class struggle, and hence that it was the 'working class [that] led to the Revolution of the whole people against autocracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat' (Pomomarev). This discounts the Duma's role as their institution did not represent the working class as Prime Minister Stolypin had made sure that conservative, educated individuals were a main part of the revolution. However, there are problems with the Soviet interpretation as up until the fall of the Soviet Union much was used as propaganda to accredit Lenin and the Bolshevik regime.

Compare the answer above to the example below of a high-scoring response to Question 1d. on China.

This representation does outline the lack of initial action taken by the foreign powers occupying China at that time, as well as displaying Chiang Kaishek's ill-fated 'trade land for time' tactic. It doesn't however, consider the actions of the CCP during this time – their 'march north to fight the Japanese', for example. As a purveyor of 'Scar Literature' Jung Chang would assert that Mao's desire to confront the Japanese, stemmed from 'love of bloodthirsty thuggery', outlined as early as his 'report on an investigation into the peasant movement in Hunan'. The CCP historians viewed Mao's drive to fight the Japanese as fulfilling the 'Nationalism' aspect of the Three Principles laid out originally by Sun-Yat-Sen as the Father of the Nation of China. The CCP were known to have, of the 1700 battles against Japan in Manchuria, 60% of these were fought by the CCP, not the Chinese government, and using guerrilla tactics that were honed back in Jiangxi when Chiang Kaishek did send his troops into battle he refused to retreat often 'losing good men in unwinnable battles' (Fenby).

Both answers show very good skill in starting with the source as the basis of the discussion, although the response on China should have referred to a specific part of the cartoon. They both show that the student can identify strengths or weaknesses within the source as a piece of evidence about the period. Both answers use factual evidence and compare and contrast other views of the period to the view shown in the source.

Part 2 – Creating a new society

Revolution chosen	None	America	France	Russia	China
%	1	5	25	49	20

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	8	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	8	5	7	7	8	6	6	4	4	1	2	9.8

Students seemed to write shorter and more general essays this year, perhaps because they had spent too much time on the first part of the exam. The essays often lacked references to the key terms, and introductions were often poor with little attempt to outline a viewpoint. Paragraphing was also missing from too many essays; responses should be appropriately structured and contain topic sentences.

Often students did not engage in a debate but simply agreed or disagreed with the question. Assessors look for analysis, not just a narrative. In addition, the prompt was generally not used. Students are encouraged to consider the prompt and engage with it in the context of the question.

Responses on America often showed difficulty grappling with the term 'the Blessings of Liberty'.

Responses on France showed that students still make comparisons to the old regime and to the King. Evidence was very poor and students often divided the revolution into three phases and wrote generally about the characteristics of each phase.



Responses on Russia still narrowly hinged on 'Peace, Bread, Land', bread alone or just said that Lenin adapted to Marxism or dealt with War Communism and NEP.

Responses on China which included information from 1911 were disappointing. Teachers are encouraged to check the study design and confine essays to the new society. Most students wrote about The Hundred Flowers campaign, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. There was little information about peoples' rights and freedoms, just a lot of generalisations about 'people suffering'.

The following is an excerpt from an excellent essay on France.

In the years 1789–1792 the ideal of popular democracy was vied for but not totally achieved. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (August 1789) and the 1791 Constitution both enshrined the principle of popular sovereignty and upheld the new elected Constitutional Assembly as the legislature. However, even in clause 17 of the 1791 Constitution, the right to property was also emphasised. In fact those who did not possess adequate property (enough for wealth to pay 3 days work of tax per year) were deemed to be 'passive' citizens and not allowed to vote. It was therefore 'active' citizens who determined who formed the National Constituent Assembly and later the Legislative Assembly and thus shaped the political nature of France. Yet historian Doyle argues that the needs of the majority of French citizens were still met as a Constitutional Monarchy was implemented and ideals of rationality/reason were upheld.

The best essays referred closely to the terms in the question and used a range of evidence to support their interpretation. Too often, historians' views were used in place of evidence rather than as an opinion to support the evidence. Students should supply their own factual evidence and confirm it with an historian's viewpoint rather than only use the viewpoint. The highest scoring essays used specific factual evidence such as statistics, quotes, dates, names, policies or events to support all their points. Weaker responses tended to narrate, describing anything about the revolution, often without clear relevance.