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# A-level HISTORY 7042/2H

Component 2H France in Revolution, 1774–1815

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Mark scheme

June 2024

Version: 1.0 Final



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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

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## Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

### Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity, you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level, you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

### Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

**Section A**

- 0 1** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying Robespierre.

**[30 marks]***Target: AO2**Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.***Generic Mark Scheme**

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25–30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19–24**
- L3:** Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13–18**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7–12**
- L1:** The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1–6**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

## Indicative content

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

**Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.**

**Source A: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:**

### Provenance, tone and emphasis

- although this is the work of an ‘outsider’ – an Englishman – it is a first-hand account from an educated observer living in Paris at the time; as a ‘spy’ for the British government, the writer is accustomed to observing and making deductions, as he does here, and he has every reason to provide an honest picture of what he sees
- written in 1791, as Robespierre’s influence was beginning to increase, this source offers a unique picture of a man who was, at the time, still under-rated; he had become President of the Jacobin Club in 1790 and led a small group on the left in the National Assembly
- writing privately to the British government, the writer is likely to have been influenced by anti-French sentiment – as suggested by his use of ‘the usual excitability of a Frenchman’; he is possibly trying to show his own superior powers of observation in his prediction of Robespierre’s future influence; nevertheless, his job was to supply Britain with accurate information and this letter would apparently contain such
- the writer’s observations span from Robespierre’s physical attributes to his ideology and character and his language is colourful and illuminating; although the source is more descriptive than analytical, it brings out Robespierre’s elusive nature – he is ‘a character to be contemplated’ – and offers some comment as the author observes Robespierre carefully.

### Content and argument

- the source emphasises some of Robespierre’s key characteristics: he is described as cool, measured, stern, rigid – characteristics that help reinforce his enigma. He may have suffered shyness or may deliberately have hidden his inner feelings from others. He was a lawyer (and therefore bourgeois) by profession and carefully dressed as such (somewhat contrary to the suggestion of ‘no vanity’ in the source), but his frugal lifestyle and introversion meant he was easily overlooked by fellow deputies – as mentioned here; he was not appointed to any committees nor given the presidency of the National Assembly, although he was elected secretary of the NA in June 1790; nevertheless, the source under-emphasises the attention and opposition he aroused by his many speeches
- the source stresses Robespierre’s belief in republicanism and it is significant that the writer identifies his commitment to this even before the King’s flight to Varennes; Robespierre would play a key role in the ending of monarchy on 10 August 1792; in 1790–91 Robespierre spoke out for universal suffrage, the right to petition, unrestricted admission to the national guard, public offices and army ranks. He opposed a royal veto, abuses of ministerial power and religious and racial discrimination
- the source reinforces the view that even while only a simple deputy, Robespierre was viewed as different from other politicians – ‘incorruptible’; he despised wealth as is made clear in his speeches, he supported strict moral values and decried those who enjoyed worldly pleasures; his reputation for high-mindedness had popular appeal but the political manoeuvring, violent radical beliefs and ruthlessness that would bring him power are less well observed

- the source provides context for Robespierre's rise to prominence in its reference to the National Assembly's view of Robespierre as 'insignificant'. Robespierre was to be a lone voice in his opposition to war but he gained in ascendancy in 1792 helping to destroy the Assembly and establish the National Convention; by July 1793 he had become the main voice propelling the Terror in France – his ascendancy aided by the underestimation of his colleagues as well as his enemies. The writer is farsighted in his view, although Mirabeau made similar claims at this time.

**Source B: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:**

### **Provenance, tone and emphasis**

- this speech, which comes directly from Robespierre, is valuable both as evidence of Robespierre's eloquence and style of address and for its confirmation of his personal beliefs
- given in February 1794, the speech was made when Robespierre was a dominant figure in France; he had joined the CPS in July 1793 and had overseen the spread of the Terror with the demise of the Girondins, the Law of Suspects (September 1793) and the declaration of revolutionary government (October 1793). Robespierre was in a very powerful position and in March/April would send both the Hébertistes and Dantonists to the guillotine
- the source is addressed to the National Convention and is therefore a public pronouncement; it suggests that Robespierre felt the need to justify his actions (and government through the CPS) and that there were those in the National Convention that needed convincing
- the source contains some convoluted logic (perhaps suggesting the manipulations of the lawyer) in proposing that 'Terror is a natural consequence of the principle of democracy'. Nevertheless, the argument is conveyed in elegant and seemingly logical prose which was bound to carry some listeners with it. Clearly patriotic in tone, the speech is imbued with a confident belief in the inevitable outcome of revolution and the achievement of 'liberty'. Robespierre certainly manages to suggest that any who dared disagree with him had to be traitors.

### **Content and argument**

- the source provides a valuable picture of Robespierre's view of the ends of the revolution; he had regularly referred to 'liberty and equality' – wanting this written on the National Guards' uniforms in 1790 (a move that was rejected) – and it shows the influence of the Enlightenment on his thinking; patriotism is also added here – a reflection that this was a time of war – and a war that Robespierre now supported
- Robespierre is keen to assert that he is not justifying 'excess', yet that is exactly what he was already being accused of, in the ruthless way in which the rising in the Vendée, the Federalist revolt and political enemies were being dealt with; his view of 'excess' is clearly at variance with that of others
- Robespierre seeks to justify government by Terror and resorts to talking of the people's 'natural virtue' which can only be protected by Terror; his argument for the 'absolute power of liberty' introduces a rather different concept of liberty from that held by most early revolutionaries and seems to be invoked simply to justify action against internal enemies; his words are reminiscent of those seeking to justify their own dictatorship
- the speech is typical of how Robespierre was able to use words and apparently logical argument to justify his own actions; the argument doesn't hold up to too much close scrutiny and yet as part of a longer public declaration it might have seemed compelling, particularly in its reference to natural 'virtue' and the 'sacred name of liberty' which suggested a spiritual force behind what he advocated.

**Source C: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:**

**Provenance, tone and emphasis**

- this description is provided by Joachim Vilate who, as a member of the Revolutionary Tribunal, had been close to Robespierre and, along with all the other National Convention deputies, had attended the Festival of the Supreme Being in person. He is able to provide a personal and vivid picture of events
- although describing an event in June 1794, Vilate actually wrote this piece a year later, and with a particular purpose in mind; his imprisonment after Thermidor (when Robespierre was tried and guillotined and all those involved in his regime imprisoned and tried themselves) has led to him writing a critical appraisal emphasising Robespierre's pretensions as a way of placing the blame for the collapse of the regime on him alone
- this source was written for publication and is clearly designed to absolve the author and other government members from responsibility for the errors of the Terror by showing where Robespierre had gone wrong. The source has its value (in its criticisms) and limitations (in its purpose)
- the tone is critical and sarcastic, mocking Robespierre (with his 'flowing feather plumes') and offering no attempt to analyse what this festival was about. Vilate's references to Robespierre 'playing God' are deliberately chosen to stir up sentiment against Robespierre as a person.

**Content and argument**

- this source mocks Robespierre's 'bold' pretensions and pride as he headed the procession for the Festival of the Supreme Being, his head decked in flowing feathers and a tricolor scarf around his neck. Nevertheless, this behaviour was not necessarily typical. Robespierre was often described as arrogant, because of his lofty ideals and incomprehension of those who did not share them, but he largely operated in a more discreet way – working through committees and keeping himself in the background rather than flaunting power
- Robespierre's exhilaration is described, but not explained in the source. It was the result of his Deism. He had promoted a new state religion – the Cult of the Supreme Being – to counter the sans-culottes' de-Christianisation campaigns and used this Festival to promote his deeply-felt ideas of 'Republican virtue'; his spirituality is under-played here
- the source refers to the crowds who had dressed up for the occasion and the cries of 'Vive Robespierre', showing the degree of Robespierre's popular appeal and his dependence on sans-culotte support; the sarcastic remarks of his colleagues suggest that he was in a dangerous position politically (and perhaps behaving in an overly naïve manner); even one sans-culotte saw through the façade showing how fickle the allegiance of the crowds really was; Robespierre would be arrested and executed in July
- the source is limited in presenting this occasion from a one-sided standpoint, mocking Robespierre for 'playing God', but it confirms the occasion as the highpoint of Robespierre's influence; he regarded this Festival as a personal triumph which helps explain his over-confidence; the same month he supported the Law of Prairial which inaugurated two months of the 'Great Terror'.

**Section B**

**0 2** 'The urban workers and peasants were responsible for the political changes in France in 1789.'

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.*

**Generic Mark Scheme**

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

**Indicative content**

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

**Arguments supporting the view that the urban workers and peasants were responsible for the political changes in France in 1789 might include:**

- the urban workers and peasants who suffered from heavy taxation and the burden of feudal dues, became increasingly politicised during 1789 as the King sought reform to ease Crown bankruptcy; pamphlets such as Abbé Sieyès' 'What is the Third Estate?' made them more aware of the inequalities of the Ancien Régime encouraging them to press for change
- peasants and workers participated in the first stage of the drawing up of 'cahiers' for the Estates-General; which encouraged them to reflect on their grievances and demand redress; the Réveillon riots at the time of the Paris elections illustrated the mounting pressure from below
- the urban workers of Paris led the storming of the Bastille which forced political change with the reinstatement of Necker and the King's acceptance of the National Assembly, Paris Commune and National Guard
- the peasants created the disorder of the Great Fear, holding the National Assembly to ransom and bringing about the August decrees with the abolition of feudal rights
- urban workers – largely women and the men from the National Guard – carried out the October Days which forced the King to return to Paris, leaving the future of the Assembly and King in the hands of the urban mobs.

**Arguments challenging the view that the urban workers and peasants were responsible for the political changes in France in 1789 might include:**

- the bourgeoisie carry much responsibility for political change: they had the greatest influence on the cahiers of the Third Estate and they made up the Third Estate's representatives who influenced the actions and decisions of the Estates-General and subsequent National Assembly
- enlightened nobles such as Mirabeau and clerics such as Sieyès also provided leadership to the Third Estate, manipulating the cahiers and joining the bourgeoisie in creating the National Assembly, propelling the Tennis Court Oath and forcing through legislation irrespective of royal wishes
- the bourgeoisie and enlightened nobles were behind the Declaration of the Rights of Man, constitutional changes and changes to the Church; enlightened nobles chose to renounce their feudal rights producing the August decrees
- the King had a huge influence on political change with his indecision and obstinacy which led to the breakdown of the Estates-General, his forced return to Paris in October and his subordination to the will of the National Assembly
- the King's finance ministers who failed to solve inherent structural problems in Crown finance might be held responsible for the calling of the Estates-General – itself a major political change; the dire economic circumstances of 1789 which no officials could ease were also as much responsible for the political changes as the people who reacted to them.

Students will need to make a judgement as to the extent to which urban workers and peasants were responsible for political change in 1789. The importance of the storming of the Bastille, the Great Fear and the October Days will need to be explored, but the part of the bourgeoisie and enlightened nobles and clerics should also be taken into consideration when assessing who or what should take most responsibility for political change. An argument could also be made that the King himself should bear the greatest responsibility for the loss of his own power. Reward any well-argued response that seeks to explain a variety of political changes in 1789.

**0 3** 'Most people in France benefited from Napoleonic rule in the years 1799 to 1808.'

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.*

### Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

**Indicative content**

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

**Arguments supporting the view that most people in France benefited from Napoleonic rule in the years 1799 to 1808 might include:**

- education was extended, reorganised and secularised; new lycées were established and education co-ordinated by the imperial university (1808); careers were open to talents and rewards, eg the Legion of Honour noble titles, pensions and administrative positions were available for loyal service; this particularly benefited ambitious middle classes and members of the military
- there was generally plentiful employment (aided by war) for workers prepared to find it; merchants and traders benefited from the establishment of the Bank of France which aided monetary control and helped boost French economy; chambers of commerce and other associations were established
- the quality of life improved as new law codes brought fairer justice: the Civil Code clarified the law, confirmed the abolition of feudalism and the legal rights of the purchasers of the biens nationaux, gave equality before the law and promised freedom of conscience; the commercial code aided trade and business; the code on criminal procedure confirmed trial by jury. The reorganisation of local government and a strong police presence (gendarmerie and administrative police) restored order and efficiency
- there was greater religious freedom: the Concordat (1802) appeased the Catholic majority and the Organic Articles guaranteed religious toleration to Jews. Protestants could worship freely and their ministers became state employees (as did Catholic priests) after taking an oath of allegiance
- people enjoyed a greater sense of unity and involvement: most Frenchmen over 21 could vote in the first round of elections; amnesties were extended to rebels who laid down arms and co-operative nobles, émigrés and refractory priests were re-assimilated; the growth of the Empire gave people something to believe in and victories increased patriotism and optimism.

**Arguments challenging the view that most people in France benefited from Napoleonic rule in the years 1799 to 1808 might include:**

- earlier revolutionary hopes of ‘liberty and equality’ were not fulfilled: there was strict censorship, and extreme vigilance which curbed peoples’ freedom of speech, action and association; Church/state relations remained strained as Napoleon’s support for the papacy weakened
- people were financially oppressed: taxation levels were kept high to finance Napoleon’s ambitions and collection was ruthlessly enforced; from 1806/7 Napoleon’s continental system caused economic disruption for merchants and traders as well as raising living costs for the general populace
- some workers suffered as industry was distorted by wartime demands weakening the non-essential industries; workers could not combine, had to carry the ‘livret’ and were subject to employer’s whims; peasants’ lives changed little as there was little interest in agricultural improvement; conscription was oppressive
- quality of life still depended on social status and income: a hierarchical social structure was reinstated, breeding resentments from those excluded; not all careers were ‘open to talent’ and education for the lower classes was restricted
- revolutionary moves to greater gender equality were undone: women were degraded to second-class citizens in the Napoleonic codes and education reforms: primary education was deemed sufficient for girls.

Students can justifiably argue in favour or against the view, but most are likely to adopt a middling position and conclude that whilst some – particularly the middle classes – purchasers of the biens nationaux – and successful soldiers and administrators – benefited from Napoleonic rule, others – such as women – suffered and lost some of the advantages they had gained in the revolution. The end

date of 1808 should allow for an assessment of life under Napoleon before wartime problems, such as the Peninsular War and a deteriorating economic situation, in the wake of the continental system, distorted conditions further.

**0 4** How significant was the 1812 Russian campaign to the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire?

**[25 marks]**

*Target: AO1*

*Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.*

### Generic Mark Scheme

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- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

## Indicative content

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

### **Arguments supporting the view that the 1812 Russian campaign was significant to the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire might include:**

- the lengthy campaign which was characterised by starvation and exhaustion on the advance, disease, frostbite and guerrilla attacks on the retreat – destroyed Napoleon's Grande Armée, reducing military capacity and sapping the morale of survivors; this gave hope and practical advantages to Napoleon's enemies, intent on destroying his Empire
- Napoleon made a number of tactical errors, which lost him respect and encouraged imperial defiance: his untimely decision to attack Russia with insufficient preparation, his reliance on strength of numbers (regardless of using non-French troops and raw recruits), the over-stretching of his supply lines and the fatal delay in Moscow suggested over-confidence and lack of realism; he also damaged his standing by deserting his armies on the retreat
- the campaign weakened Napoleon's control at the centre of Empire: the Malet plot was launched in his absence and the myth of Napoleon's invincibility was undermined leaving nothing to bind the Empire together
- the failure of the Russian campaign triggered a new coalition; Alexander I came to believe he had a religious mission to free Europe from Napoleon; Napoleon was forced to accept an armistice (following the exhaustion of the campaign) and this allowed his enemies to group.

### **Arguments challenging the view that the 1812 Russian campaign was significant to the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire might include:**

- the Empire and its satellite states, stretched across much of Europe and was too large for France to control; the continental blockade – a response to Napoleon's continental system – bred resentments within the Empire which contributed to its collapse
- the Peninsular War proved a running sore: it consumed large numbers of French soldiers and huge amounts of money so Napoleon could no longer maintain his Empire; by 1813 the French had been forced to retreat and Wellesley led an invasion of France, defeating the French at Toulouse in 1814
- from 1809 France suffered huge losses of manpower, eg in battles against Austria; this meant more conscription from within the Empire, provoking imperial peoples and producing a less reliable army with which to defend imperial interests; further discontent in the Empire included the behaviour of Napoleon's governors and administrators, hefty taxation demands, stringent policing and general hostility to 'foreign' control
- Napoleon had long relied on his army's discipline and tactics but his enemies (particularly Austria and Prussia) copied and reformed their military so that they could oppose him successfully at the Battle of Leipzig (1813), whereupon the Empire fell apart; the British also had the financial resources to 'bleed France dry'.

The key word here is 'significant'. The failure of the Russian campaign was clearly a major contributor to the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire but students will need to assess just how significant a contribution it made. Some may legitimately argue that it was the key turning point after which nothing could save the Empire from disintegration. Others will accord it less prominence and perhaps suggest an alternative explanation, such as the importance of the 'Spanish Ulcer' which weakened the control of the Empire over a longer period of years or the underlying discontent within the Empire itself. Reward any balanced response that attempts to justify the significance of the events and developments which brought the Napoleonic Empire to an end.