

History and Politics Department: Revision Advice

Subject	History
Exam Board	OCR
Unit	The Origins and Course of the French Revolution 1774–95
Unit Code	F964 B (Enquiry)
Format of Exam	1 hour 30 minutes Students answer 2 questions (30% and 70% each). No choice.
Link to Specification	http://www.ocr.org.uk/download/kd/ocr_9582_kd_gce_spec.pdf

Introduction

This option is concerned with the origins and main phases of the French Revolution. Candidates should study both the long-term and short-term causes of the Revolution. The focus is on the period from the accession of Louis XVI (especially the period after the American Revolution) to the Constitutional Monarchy and its overthrow in August 1792. This is followed by the rise to dominance of Robespierre, the Terror, the fall of the Girondins and Danton, the domestic policy of the Jacobins, and the reasons for the fall of Robespierre. Knowledge of the main features of the ancien régime and the new features of Republican and revolutionary France is expected.

Key Issues

- What were the economic and social causes of the Revolution?
- What were the political causes of the Revolution?
- What was the nature of the Revolution during 1789–92?
- What were the reasons for the rise and fall of the Terror from October 1792 to 1795?

Indicative Content

The social and economic problems of the *ancien régime* in France; the impact of enlightened ideas in France (while the emphasis is on the period from 1774, candidates should have a general background understanding of longer-term *ancien régime* issues); the impact of war and the American Revolution.

Shorter-term political causes of the Revolution: the political and financial impact of the American Revolution; the financial and political problems of the Crown; the influence of Louis XVI; attempts at reform by Turgot, Calonne and Necker; and the attitudes of the nobility to reform.

The main revolutionary events of 1789 to September 1792: the Calling of the Estates General, the Oath of the Tennis Court, the constitution of 1791, the overthrow of the constitutional monarchy, the significance of riots and direct popular action 1789–92.

The Convention and the Terror, the rise of Robespierre, internal changes and the impact of war; the destruction of the Girondins, opposition to the Jacobins and the fall of Robespierre; the establishment of the Thermidorian regime.

The Exam

The focus of questions may be an in-depth study of a specific turning point or a more thematic consideration of a longer period of several years. The 4/5 sources will be mainly contemporary. Only one may come from an historian.

Source Skill Advice:

Avoid a 'shopping list' consideration of sources one by one. Instead:

- Compare the sources content (cross-reference)
- Compare the sources' provenance
- Compare the typicality of the sources (bring in your Contextual Knowledge here)
- Come to a final judgement

Suggested Revision Activities

- Practice responding to past/possible questions in timed conditions (either planning or full text answers)
- Make detailed revision notes on the key issues
- Revision must involve an activity - simply reading through notes/text-books is not enough.