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## Level 3 History 2021

### 91438 Analyse the causes and consequences of a significant historical event

Credits: Six

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Analyse the causes and consequences of a significant historical event.	Analyse, in depth, the causes and consequences of a significant historical event.	Comprehensively analyse the causes and consequences of a significant historical event.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**Write ONE essay in this booklet.**

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (▨). This area may be cut off when the booklet is marked.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

High Merit

06

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Write an essay on ONE significant historical event that you have studied, using the essay question below. Your essay should be concise and well argued.

Write your chosen historical event in the box below.

Plan your essay on page 3. Begin your essay on page 4.

**ESSAY QUESTION**

Evaluate the most important causes of your chosen historical event.

Historical event: **The French Revolution**

## PLANNING

You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 5–6 pages. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay.

Begin your essay here:

The French Revolution was a significant historical event during the 18th century. The French Revolution was significant because it impacted millions of lives at the time, and also introduced new political and social structures that are present to this day. The most important causes of the French revolution were the divisions in society and the financial crisis. The divisions in society were a more important cause of the French revolution than the financial crisis.

The French revolution took place during the late 18th century in France, but mostly in Paris. It involved the commoners revolting against the privileged estates and the monarchy because they wanted freedom and equality. Maximilien Robespierre was one of the main revolutionary leaders during the French revolution. The French revolution was significant because it had an impact on millions of lives at the time. It also resulted in new political structures, such as democracies, being formed. If these political and social structures had not been formed, then we could still be living under the rule of an absolute monarchy to this day.

One of the most important causes of the French Revolution were the divisions in society. During the 1780s, France roughly had a population of 26.5 million. This population was divided into 3 estates. The first estate (clergy) made up less than 0.5% of the population, but owned 10% of the land. They were also exempt from all taxes, and paid a lump sum of 5% of their income as tax each year. Additionally, they were exempt from military conscription and the corvée royal (unpaid roadworks that could take up to 2 weeks). The second estate (nobility) made up less than 1% of the population, and owned between 20-25% of the land. They were also exempt from the main tax (the taille), and had lower rates on all other taxes. All military officers were picked from the nobility, and they were also exempt from the corvée royal. The third estate (everyone else) made up more than 98% of

the population. The bourgeoisie were the wealthy commoners who relied on their skills for income. They owned 25% of the land, and were often richer and more successful than members of the nobility. This resulted in the bourgeoisie resenting the nobility's privileges, and it was enlightenment ideas that allowed the bourgeoisie to question the nobility's privileges. The rest of the third estate was made up of semi-skilled or unskilled commoners, who relied on their masters and the price of food to survive. Some people such as prostitutes and day labourers were even worse off, as they didn't know where the next days work was coming from. The third estate had no privileges, and paid most of the taxes. They could also be forced into the corvée royal and military conscription. A traveller in France during September 1788 said that, "Lands held by the nobility are taxed very little. Land held by commoners is taxed heavily." This is significant as it shows the difference between the commoners and the privileged estates. Despite the commoners struggling to survive, they had to pay most of the taxes. Historian Georges Lefebvres said that "Land was almost the only form of wealth." This is important as most of the land was owned by the first 2 estates or the bourgeoisie, which meant that the peasants were left with nothing. Furthermore, Historian William Doyle believed that "Poverty was France's most visible social problem." This is because the peasants struggled to survive each day, yet they still paid most of the tax and had no privileges. This resulted in tension between the third estate and the first 2 estates and the monarchy. This is because the bourgeoisie were the most resentful of the nobles privileges, as they were often more successful, and because the peasants were struggling to survive. These divisions led to the third estate opposing the others, and being willing to revolt if the time came. The privileges of the estates was one of the most important causes as when the financial crisis occurred, the first 2 estates refused to give up their privileges in order to restore economic stability. This resulted in the calling of the Estates General on the 5th of May, 1789. The three estates would vote to change the privileges in order to make financial reforms. However,

each estate only had 1 vote, which meant that the third estate would get outvoted by the first 2 when their privileges were threatened. The bourgeoisie saw this as an opportunity to gain equality, and sparked a revolution amongst the peasants as well. This is why traditional interpretations of the event refer to it as a "bourgeoisie revolution." The divisions in society and privileges was one of the most important causes of the revolution, as the refusal to give up these privileges will result in the revolution. Another important cause of the French Revolution was the financial crisis and failure to reform. This was an important cause as the failure to make financial reforms lead directly to a revolt from the peasants. During the late 18th century, France had no central treasury, and taxes were collected by officials who paid for their position. The people who would collect taxes also kept a small percentage of the tax they collected. Additionally, since they paid for their position, it was mostly wealthy individuals who could afford to pay for it, which increased the wealth inequality. When Louis the XIV died, France was in a debt of approximately 150million pounds. After the loss of the Seven Years war and the French providing financial support to the American war of Independence to get revenge against the British, France was left with a debt of 250million pounds. The interest on this debt was greater than the annual tax revenue. This is significant since France had an inefficient system and no central treasury at the time. A better system would mean that France would be in a stronger financial position. However, the king employed finance ministers to make financial reforms. These ministers included Calonne, Turgot and Necker. The Paris parlements and guilds rejected Turgot's 6 edicts, and Calonne and Necker were forced to resign as they had upset powerful individuals, including Marie Antoinette. This was significant as the majority of the population was fond of Necker, since he had reduced corruption in venal offices and hadn't raised taxes on the poor. Necker stated that, "The state of national finances has always been a mystery." This was significant as the peasants were struggling to survive, while the first 2 estates and monarchy lived luxuriously. The reforms of



Turgot and Necker were also rejected as they required the first 2 estates to lose their financial privileges. In 1906, Historic writer Evelyn Beatrice Hall said, "If any human power could have stemmed the avalanche of the French Revolution, it would have been the reforms of Turgot." This is significant as the first 2 estates and other influential individuals opposed had opposed financial reform. This showed a weakness in the crown, and led to a revolt from the third estate because they needed financial reforms and wanted to have equality. Additionally, since Marie Antoinette had strongly opposed reform and been one of the main reasons that Necker was forced to resign, the general population was angry at the monarchy aswell. This combined anger at the monarchy and also the privileged estates failing to accept reforms pushed the third estate to revolt. The financial crisis and failure to reform was an important cause of the revolution as it led to the majority of the population revolting against the monarchy and privileged estates, and marked the start of the revolution.

The divisions in society were a more important cause than the financial crisis and failure to reform. This is because the divisions in society enabled the third estate to be willing to revolt when the time came. Additionally, it was the failure to reform and the refusal to give up privileges that led to the revolution. This means that if there had been no financial privilege for the first 2 estates, then the financial crisis may not have occurred. Even if the financial crisis had occurred, no privileges would mean that the finance ministers such as Turgot and Necker would be able to make financial reforms. Since it was the refusal to give up privileges in order to have financial reform, the divisions in society were a more important cause than the financial crisis. This is because if there had been no privileges, there would have been financial reform, which would result in no revolution.

The French Revolution was a significant historical event during the late 18th century. The revolution had many causes, but the most important causes were the divisions in society and the financial crisis and failure to reform. The divisions in society were a more important cause of the revolution than the financial crisis.







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## Merit Exemplar 2021

Subject	L3 History	Standard	91438	Total score	06
Q	Grade score	Annotation			
1	M6	<p><b>The French Revolution (1789–1799)</b></p> <p>The candidate has made an appropriate choice for the event, The French Revolution, and provided a well-structured response. Clear causation is evident, with the candidate setting out the most important cause at the beginning of their argument and sustaining that argument across their response. The candidate is overt in the cause they are prioritising, which helps to meet the criteria for a High Merit grade.</p> <p>The candidate discusses the Estates-General and the Bourgeois Revolution, using relevant and specific supporting evidence for each that shows a depth of understanding. There is a clear and considered explanation of each cause.</p> <p>The candidate needed to develop the complexity of causation required for Excellence by choosing the “Tennis Court Oath” as the event rather than the broader French Revolution. This would have linked well with their argument on the Bourgeois Revolution.</p>			