

# AS and A LEVEL

*Delivery Guide*

H105/H505

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# HISTORY A

Theme: The French Revolution

December 2014



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CB1 2EU

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# Introduction

Delivery guides are designed to represent a body of knowledge about teaching a particular topic and contain:

- Content: A clear outline of the content covered by the delivery guide;
- Thinking Conceptually: Expert guidance on the key concepts involved, common difficulties students may have, approaches to teaching that can help students understand these concepts and how this topic links conceptually to other areas of the subject;
- Thinking Contextually: A range of suggested teaching activities using a variety of themes so that different activities can be selected which best suit particular classes, learning styles or teaching approaches.

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## KEY



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AS Level content only



# Curriculum Content

## Unit Y213: The French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon 1774–1815

### Key Topic

#### **The causes of the French Revolution from 1774 and the events of 1789**

### Content

#### **Learners should have studied the following:**

The structure of the Ancien Régime; qualities of Louis XVI as King of France; financial problems and attempts by Turgot, Necker and Calonne to deal with them; the ideas of the Enlightenment and the impact of the American Revolution and the War of Independence; social discontents; economic problems from 1787; the Assembly of Notables and the political developments 1787–May 1789; the Estates General, events in Paris in 1789; the ‘Great Fear’; the October Days.

#### **The Revolution from October 1789 to the Directory 1795**

The attempts to establish a constitutional monarchy; reforms in church and state; the significance of riots and direct political action 1789–1792; the Jacobites; the flight to Varennes; the overthrow of the monarchy; the Convention and the Terror; the destruction of the Girondins; the ascendancy and fall of Robespierre; the establishment of the Thermidorian Regime; the constitution of the Directory.



# Curriculum Content

## Unit Y213: The French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon 1774–1815

### **Napoleon Bonaparte to 1807**

The career of Bonaparte to 1799: early life and character; his military leadership and reasons for success to 1799 including Toulon, the Italian Campaign, Egypt, the weaknesses of the Thermidorian regime and the coup of Brumaire in 1799; Napoleon's reforms as Consul, including the constitutional, legal, financial, educational changes; the establishment and nature of the Empire in France; nature of and reasons for military successes and failures after 1799: Marengo and the War of the Third Coalition, including the battles of Ulm and Austerlitz, Trafalgar.

### **The decline and fall of Napoleon 1807–1815**

The Continental System and the war against Britain; the war in Spain; the Russian Campaign; Napoleon's rule in France after 1807; the campaigns of 1813–1815 and abdication; the Hundred Days; personal failings and reasons for fall.



# Thinking Conceptually

## **Approaches to teaching the content**

A chronological approach to content can lead to chronological answers. While an understanding of the chronological outline of the period is crucial to fit content into a wider framework, a thematic approach to content is advised.

An effective approach is to break down each key topic into a number of smaller investigation questions as a means to approach content. Content investigated in this way leads naturally to essay style responses and provides opportunities to develop key historical skills such as significance, change and continuity, evaluation etc.

Each section of each topic can be approached in this manner. One potential area for investigation could be 'Was the Ancien Régime weak in 1787' requiring students to investigate different aspects of the Ancien Régime such as the strength of Royal Government, the Royal finances, the support of the three estates and the economy.

Another potential approach is to investigate a controversy, for example 'Was Napoleon's rise to power due to luck or skill?' Students can assess the strength of the evidence that supports and opposes this assertion. They can then develop this in a number of ways depending on ability or position within the course. A lower ability student may be challenged to answer the question with a simple YES or NO and then explain their reasoning. A higher ability student should be

challenged to consider to what extent Napoleon used his skill to take advantage of good fortune and construct an answer that considers the interplay of both factors. A good way to develop this type of task is a 'washing line investigation', an example of which is included in the resources section. This promotes the skills of evaluation and analytical argument.

## **Common misconceptions or difficulties students may have**

Students will be likely to initially find the terminology of the French Revolution difficult to comprehend due to the conceptual nature of much of the content such as the ideas of the enlightenment or the concept of and importance of Liberty to the various revolutionaries or the role of Nationalism.

Revolutionary calendars are also likely to cause confusion with the different names introduced for the months of the year and the resetting of the calendar to year one. It may be necessary to provide students with a reference guide to convert the revolutionary calendar into the Gregorian calendar.

Differences between various revolutionary groups and governments need to be highlighted clearly. For example the National Assembly and republicanism can be contrasted with the Committee of Public Safety and the Directory's forms of republicanism.



# Thinking Conceptually

A clear distinction should be made between intention and consequence as part of the revolution. It is tempting to view the revolt of the Parisian Crowd in 1789 as a direct consequence the revolt of the third estate in the 'tennis court oath' which in turn can be seen as a consequence of the revolt of the Nobles over the two previous years and create the appearance of a natural step by step progression. The potential that events could have turned out differently (and indeed why they did not) at every stage of the revolution should be highlighted.

The stages by which Napoleon assumed greater power over time and became Emperor by initially appealing to revolutionary ideas of liberty are confusing to students due to the obvious contradiction and whether Napoleon was republican in the first place. This actually represents a good opportunity to create a debate as to Napoleon's character.

**Conceptual links to other areas of the specification – useful ways to approach this topic to set students up for topics later in the course.**

This section develops key conceptual historical skills which link directly to the British period study and enquiry. It could also be used by students as the basis for their topic based essay as there are many areas which merit wider investigation.





## ACTIVITIES

There is a wide range of primary source material that can be used as the basis for issues upon this topic. The amount of printed material as well as the proliferation of newspapers and attempts to disseminate information to the population means that it is generally possible to find material that illustrates ideas and concepts particularly within the first half of the course, for example the newspapers of Danton or Desmoulins represent a good method of investigating challenges to the Committee of public safety. (See Learner Resource 1).

There is also a large amount of pictorial evidence from the period, which can make useful starters or plenary tasks to investigate particular events or issues such as Napoleons seizure of power (see Learner Resource 2).

The contentious nature of the revolution leads to a wide range of contradictory secondary opinion, in particular it's most controversial episodes such as Napoleon's seizure of power or the terror. These can be contrasted easily to create debate in class (see Learner Resource 3).

It is generally possible to break down bigger topics into a range of smaller areas, which can then be assessed and evaluated against each other. For instance 'Which of Napoleon's domestic reforms was the most significant' can be broken down into a range of factors which can then be evaluated in a number of ways:

- Ranking
- Divide them into significant factors and insignificant changes
- Significance ratings
- 'Spectrum of Significance' (see Learner Resource 4)

All of these exercises challenge students to come to an evaluative judgement, which then develops essay and analytical skills.

Tasks differentiating between different elements of an argument thus directly leading into essay skills. For instance 'What/Who was most responsible for the outbreak of the French revolution?' beginning with sorting key information culminating in an evaluative ranking (see Learner Resource 5).



# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Learner resource 1:</b> This resource consists of a section of Camille Demoulin's newspaper the Old Cordelier translated into English. It can be used initially to introduce students to the difficulties and challenges represented by using revolutionary source material in the classroom. One possible task would be to translate the text into compressible 'student speak'. In this example the text (taken from <b>The Vieux Cordelier Translation Project</b> <a href="http://vieux-cordelier.livejournal.com/2997.html">http://vieux-cordelier.livejournal.com/2997.html</a>) is included and students should find 3 extracts which criticise the Committee of Public Safety and then use these to summarise Desmoulins criticisms overall.</p>	
<p><b>Learner resource 2:</b> This resource is based upon a cartoon from 1799 depicting Napoleon's seizure of power. It is a useful starter or summary to the topic as it challenges students to work out what is happening using symbolism that should be either recognisable or discernable, e.g. the cockades on the frogs' hats or the military uniforms of the crocodiles. This is designed to be studied first by individual students then built upon in pairs and then by whole class discussion. This cartoon also provides a route into studying British perspectives upon Napoleon and the coup d'état.</p>	
<p><b>Learner resource 3:</b> This resource is designed to introduce students to the idea of historiographical debate between these historians who have created valid but contradictory arguments. This should be used in conjunction with a textbook to provide evidence for evidence supporting both positions to be gathered (the table would need to be enlarged in reality to allow more space for data collection. An appropriate resource which could be used for this would be <i>Waller, Sally; 'France in Revolution 1776-1830' (London, 2002)</i>. This should then lead to an evaluative judgement between the two historians' positions made using a washing judgement task, with a written or oral explanation to support this.</p>	



# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Learner Resource 4:</b> This resource represents a spectrum of significance in which the sort cards can be cut out and arranged or stuck onto the spectrum to ascertain their relative significance leading students to make a judgement as to both the relative significance both of aspects of Bonaparte's domestic policy but also its overall impact. This would most likely form a review task to the end of a unit on domestic policy and lead into analytical essay work upon this topic.</p>	
<p><b>Learner Resource 5:</b> The first part of this resource is a note-taking page on 'What/Who was most responsible for the outbreak of the French revolution?' with space to take notes relating to each factor (best done if enlarged to A3 size) and a space to write in a ranking from one to 4 to determine the most important to least important factor. This can be done in conjunction with a text book such as <i>Murphy, Derick 'Europe 1760-187' (London, 2000) pp. 59-67</i>. Students should rank these 4 factors once the note taking task is complete and provide a written explanation to support their judgement.</p>	



# Learner resource 1

Oh my dear fellow citizens! Shall we so far debase ourselves as to fall at the feet of such divinities? No, this Liberty descended from Heaven is not a nymph of the Opera, not a red cap, a dirty shirt, or rags and tatters. Liberty is happiness, reason, equality; she is justice, she is embodied in the Declaration of Rights, in your sublime Constitution. Would you have me acknowledge her, fall at her feet, spill my blood for her? Open the prisons of those two hundred thousand citizens whom you call "suspects," for in the Declaration of Rights there was no prison for suspected persons, but only for felons. Suspicion has no prison, it has the public prosecutor; there are no suspected persons but those who are accused of crime by the law. Do not believe that this measure would be fatal to the Republic, it would be the most revolutionary step you have ever taken.

You wish to exterminate all your enemies by the guillotine! But was there ever greater folly? Can you kill one person on the scaffold without making yourselves ten more enemies amongst his family and his friends? Do you think that these women, these old men, these egotists, these laggards of the Revolution whom you shut up, are dangerous? Of your enemies, none remain to you but the cowards and the sick; the brave and the strong have emigrated; they have perished at Lyons or in La Vendée; the rest do not deserve your anger.

**Camille Desmoulins – 'The Old Cordelier's' Newspaper 20/12/1793. This extract is directed against the Committee of Public Safety and the excesses of the Terror**

Extract 1 (quote directly) –

Translation (what is Desmoulins' criticism of the committee of Public Safety) –

Extract 2 (quote directly) –

Translation (what is Desmoulins' criticism of the committee of Public Safety) –

Extract 3 (quote directly) –

Translation (what is Desmoulins' criticism of the committee of Public Safety) –

On what basis did Desmoulins criticise the Committee of Public safety?

Out of 10 how much of a threat do you think this would represent to the Committee? \_\_\_\_  
(Explain your answer)



# Learner resource 2

Think (on your own)

Pair (with a partner)

**What does this Cartoon tell you about Napoleon's seizure of power in 1799?**



Corsican Crocodile dissolving the Council of Frogs – a British cartoon commenting on Napoleon's seizure of power in 1799

Group discussion –

## Learner resource 3

[Thanks to the Terror] the threats to the existence of the revolution had been removed or brought under control by the end of 1793

Duncan  
Townson

The internal threat of the Vendee was over by 1793 and by 1794 the French Army was advancing. The Terror was therefore created by Robespierre's political agenda rather than threat to the nation

Francois  
Furet

# Learner resource 3

Why did the terror take place? Find evidence to support both historian's points of view.

Evidence to support Townson	Evidence to support Furet

Which historian do you find more convincing



# Learner resource 4

Significant impact

Which of Napoleon's Domestic reforms was the most significant?



Insignificant





# Learner resource 4

## Napoleons Domestic reforms

<p><b>The Legion of Honour and other Titles</b> – Napoleon was able to create a system of honours with which to reward supporters. This linked the fate of his supporters to his own and meant that the nobility were dependent upon Napoleon.</p>	<p><b>New Schools</b> – 37 new selective state lycées were introduced in 1802 to provide military based training. Further Secondary Schools were introduced in 1805.</p>
<p><b>Control of Education</b> – The Imperial University created in 1808 controlled lessons and attempted to standardise education and demanded loyalty from staff.</p>	<p><b>Censorship</b> – A tight system of censorship was applied to books, newspapers and journals. These were encouraged for patriotic purposes.</p>
<p><b>Religious change</b> – Napoleon came to the Concordat with the Roman Catholic Church accepting it as the religion of the majority and allowing Catholic worship freely. In return the church accepted the changes of the revolution.</p>	<p><b>Toleration</b> – The organic articles guaranteed religious rights to Jews and Protestants. However there was regular interference in religious life in the name of the state.</p>
<p><b>The Legal System</b> – The introduction of the Code Napoleon simplified and clarified French Law massively and became a model for other European Legal codes.</p>	<p><b>Judges</b> – These were to be appointed by the state and were kept under close supervision.</p>
<p><b>Prefects and Police</b> – Local government was reformed with the introduction of Prefects to manage the departments. The police were also reformed and given greater powers over national security</p>	<p><b>Taxation and the Economy</b> – Napoleon tightened economic control and made collection of taxation more efficient. Although the Continental system as a whole damaged the French Economy and the economy as a whole saw limited growth.</p>







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## OCR customer contact centre

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)



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