

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

**H505**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y213/01 Summer 2024 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper Y213/01 series overview

Y213 is one of 24 units in Paper 2 for the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 years through a short-answer essay question and a traditional essay question. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short-answer essay and a traditional essay. Candidates have to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short-answer essay question, candidates need to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both, they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels candidates need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

The majority of candidates chose Question 1 over Question 2. Their choice hinged mainly on their understanding of key terms in the questions. If candidates were not confident of the meaning of 'Thermidorian regime' in Question 1, they would have to choose Question 2. If taking Question 2, they had to be confident of what constituted 'legal changes' and 'constitutional changes' for part (a) and to know enough about Napoleon's later domestic policies for a convincing answer to part (b).

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• were clear about terminology</li> <li>• had a clear grasp of chronology and, therefore, relevance</li> <li>• could structure their ideas successfully</li> <li>• could organise relevant evidence effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confused terminology in the questions</li> <li>• had a muddled sense of chronology and, therefore, relevance</li> <li>• struggled to give form to their ideas</li> <li>• were short of relevant evidence.</li> </ul>

## Question 1 (a)

1

(a) Which of the following was of greater importance in the decline and fall of Napoleon?

- (i) The war against Britain
- (ii) The campaigns of 1813–1815

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

Many candidates did not appreciate that 'The campaigns of 1813-1815' excluded consideration of most of the Russian campaign.

For (i) more successful responses appreciated Britain's naval advantage, the consequent impact of Napoleon's Continental System on his aggressive strategy and Britain's role in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo, as well as her role organising and financing anti-Napoleonic coalitions. On (ii) more successful responses explained Napoleon's weakened army after 1812, the importance of his defeat at Leipzig and also commented on the strengths of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> coalitions. Exemplar 1 below is not that secure on detail and judgement but has the essential outline of both factors, hence Level 4, 5 marks.

## Exemplar 1

1	(a)	<p>The campaigns of 1813 - 1815 <del>is</del> had greater importance in the decline and fall of Napoleon because this period was when Napoleon's enemies such as Britain, Prussia and now Austria had signed the Treaty of Chaumont which was a pact that meant the allies would combine to end Napoleon. The campaign in Leipzig, also known as the battle of Nations had great importance in Napoleon's downfall because his old tactics, were no longer surprises and the enemies had now figured out his tactics meaning that they attacked him at Dresden and from the battle of Leipzig, Napoleon's army were tired because even when his army had depleted to 60,000 men he was still keen to fight on so the campaigns of 1813-1815 highlighted <sup>that</sup> Napoleon's army was depleting at a fast rate. It was also more significant <del>than</del> the war against Britain because it led to Napoleon having to abdicate to the island of Elba which was a monumental moment symbolising Napoleon's decline.</p> <p><del>As a result of</del> These campaigns also <del>is</del> had an impact on the people within France who were starting to welcome the</p>
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		<p>allies as Napoleon's <del>head</del> 'greatness' was depleting. Without the support of his own people, Napoleon was bound to fall and so the campaigns in 1813-1815 were of greater importance to the decline because it marked the moments where Napoleon was released he had 'waged war too much' as he admitted and so led to his downfall because even he lost faith in himself.</p>
		<p>The War against Britain is less important in the decline and fall of Napoleon because throughout Napoleon's rule Britain and France were at war, but this did not make him stop. For example, the economic war against Britain, the continental system despite its failures like when key industries in France such as shipbuilding and rope making fell, it was not the decisive moment for his fall when the campaigns in 1813-1815 <del>were</del> show the allies coming together to fight Napoleon. The continental system also opened new markets in the Alps and river Rhine for Napoleon so this economic war was not as significant because he was still determined to fight on. Additionally, this war was not an easy battle for Britain, they too suffered</p>

		as their trade declined by 50%.
		Showing that it was not as important
		than 1813-1815 where the allies
		were superior. There was ongoing
		war with Britain and Napoleon could
		not quite seem to break their naval
		superiority of Britain. but again, this
		did not lead to his downfall because
		he managed to get an army of
		656,000 for Russia showing that
		there was still a chance for him;
		and when Wellington entered Toulouse
		after the Peninsular war, he was not
		highly successful in breaking France
		showing that 1813-15 was of more
		importance because it led to his own
		people like Talleyrand conspiring against
		him and his abdication which Britain,
		despite being one big factor was not
		as great.

**Question 1 (b)\*****(b)\*** Assess the reasons for the establishment of the Thermidorian regime.**[20]**

Most candidates realised that the core of the question concerned the fall of the Jacobin dictatorship, epitomised by Robespierre, in July 1794. The most successful responses picked carefully through the evidence, appreciating that the climactic period of the Terror from June 1794 is the vital factor. Splits among the members of the committees and threats to the Convention were highly consequential, as was the cooling of support for the hard-liners among the sans-culottes. Military, economic and religious factors could also be brought into play, as could the way the Thermidorians proceeded after the coup of July 1794. Exemplar 2 below (Level 6, 17 marks) is a very well-supported response with an excellent grasp of precise chronology and the relative importance of the key factors.

**Misconception**

Confusing 'Thermidorean' with terms such as 'Jacobin' or 'republican' led to serious irrelevance and confusion.

## Exemplar 2

b)	<p>The establishment of the Thermidorian regime came in July 1794 and was characterised by the fall of Robespierre and a rejection of Terror. Robespierre's actions himself were the most important reason for the <del>fall</del> establishment of the Thermidorian regime as <del>he persuaded</del> his actions persuaded deputies to bring an end to Terror. However <del>the</del> improvements in the war also contributed as they removed the need for terror and the deputies in the convention also acted as a trigger cause.</p>
	<p>Robespierre's actions were the most important reason for the establishment of the Thermidorian regime as they persuaded deputies in the Convention to bring about his fall and bring an end to Terror. Robespierre's policies of the liquidation of the factions with Danton and the Deismolins killed on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1794 and the Hebertists on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1794 worried the deputies that Robespierre would turn of them next and so persuaded them to launch a preemptive strike against Robespierre on the 26<sup>th</sup> July. Robespierre's policies with the centralisation and escalation of terror further contributed to <del>for</del> his fall as it persuaded deputies to bring an end to terror.</p>

as they no longer believed anyone was in control of it. Robespierre's policy of 22 Prairial on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1794 worried the deputies of the convention with its sweeping measures as it removed the right to defence. Robespierre's actions were further important in leading to ~~the end~~. So, Robespierre's ~~and~~ policies of the escalation of terror and liquidation of the factions were important in leading to the establishment of the Thermidorian regime as they worried deputies and so persuaded them to bring about an end to Terror and the fall of Robespierre.

~~Robespierre~~ The deputies in the convention were also significant in leading to the establishment of the Thermidorian regime ~~and~~ and so the end of Terror and Robespierre as they ~~acted~~ were instrumental in carrying this out and so acted as a trigger cause. It was the deputies of the Convention who launched a pre-emptive strike against Robespierre as they drowned him out with cries of 'Down with the Tyrant' on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1794. This was crucial in acting as a trigger cause for the fall of Robespierre and so the establishment of the Thermidorian regime as it ~~permitted~~ ~~followed~~ the following day Robespierre was executed. Robespierre's actions however were still more important in leading to the establishment of the Thermidorian regime and so his fall is that the deputies were persuaded to act and launch this pre-emptive strike against Robespierre on the 27<sup>th</sup> July precisely because of Robespierre's actions. This is demonstrated as

Robespierre stopped attending the convention from the 12<sup>th</sup> June 1794, which enhanced fears of his counter-revolutionary intentions whilst ironically he gave a speech to deputies of the Convention only the day before on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 1794, talking of a conspiracy involving unknown numbers of deputies. So, the actions of Robespierre can far better explain his fall & so the establishment of the Thermidorian regime as the deputies were motivated to act to instigate his fall because of fears that he would turn on them next. So, the deputies in the convention were significant in leading to the establishment of the Thermidorian regime as they were the ones to enact Robespierre's fall however, Robespierre's actions were still more important in persuading the deputies to act.

Improvements in the war was further a significant reason for the establishment of the Thermidorian regime in that it persuaded the deputies to bring about an end to Terror by removing its justification as Terror was no longer necessary. There were improvements in the war with the Battle of Fleurus on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1794 which removed the last threat of the Austrians and opened the way up for a renewed attack against Belgium. This was significant in that furthermore, Terror had been introduced as an extraordinary measure due to the threat of war as the constitution declared government by Terror on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1793 in response to the war

going badly with defeats at the battle of Neerwinden on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1793. Thus, improvements in the war were important in leading to the establishment of the Thermidorian regime as it meant that Terror was no longer needed as there was no longer a such an extraordinary threat of approaching enemy armies. Furthermore, it then made sense to get rid of terror and is lead to establishment of Thermidorian regime by getting rid of its figurehead and so improvements in the war persuaded the deputies in the convention to ~~erase the~~ carry out the fall of Robespierre to get rid of the policy of terror. Robespierre's actions were still more important however in explaining the establishment of the Thermidorian regime and so his fall as the reason why ~~he~~ <sup>Robespierre</sup> was seen to be the figurehead of Terror was because of his own policies. This is demonstrated considering Robespierre was increasingly seen as a dictatorial figure after he led the procession of supreme being on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1794 whilst similarly he became a spokesperson for terror as he made speeches justifying it on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1793 and 5<sup>th</sup> February 1794 and so people started to view terror as his policy. So, improvements in the war were significant in leading to the establishment of the Thermidorian regime and so it helped to persuade deputies in the convention to bring about an end to terror by removing its figurehead - Robespierre - as it was no longer necessary. However, Robespierre's actions were still more important in leading to the establishment

of the Thermidorian regime considering his policies of becoming a spokesman for terror can explain why he was seen as a figurehead for terror and so why deputies sought to get rid of terror by getting rid of its figurehead.

In conclusion, Robespierre's actions and policies can best explain the establishment of the Thermidorian regime which can be characterised by Robespierre's fall and a rejection of the policy of Terror. Robespierre's actions were crucial in that his policies of centralisation and escalation of terror worried deputies that the policy of terror was out of hand and so persuaded them to enact his fall and bring an end to terror. Furthermore, although improvements in the war contributed to the establishment of the Thermidorian regime as it removed the need for terror, Robespierre's actions can still better explain why he was seen as a figurehead for terror and why the deputies were motivated to launch a pre-emptive strike.

## Question 2 (a)

2

(a) Which of the following reforms during Napoleon's consulate had the greater impact on France?

(i) Constitutional changes

(ii) Legal changes

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

The main problem for candidates was defining what 'constitutional' and 'legal' meant in this context. Less successful answers included almost any Napoleonic reform under either category but successful answers realised that 'constitutional' referred to the dispositions of political power, 1799-1804, and 'legal' to the establishment of a new legal code and system. More successful responses recognised the long-term significance of the legal reforms.

## Question 2 (b)\*

(b)\* Napoleon's rule in France brought little benefit to its people after 1807.

How far do you agree?

[20]

Many candidates struggled to find enough appropriate material to answer this question convincingly, preferring to write about Napoleon's foreign policy with occasional reference to how this might affect the people of France. To answer this question effectively, the bulk of the evidence needed to be on Napoleon's 'rule in France' and hence his domestic policy, especially after 1807. Exemplar 3 below (Level 4, 12 marks) does at least tackle the question on its own terms but is struggling to find sufficient hard evidence to support its line of reasoning in several instances. Hence it was awarded the top of Level 4, rather than Level 5.

## Exemplar 3

2	b	To assess whether Napoleon's rule brought little impact <del>to</del> to its people after 1807, you must examine the impact it had on civil liberties, <del>each</del> standard of living, and lack of political power. On these measures, it is clear that Napoleon's rule in France brought very little <del>to</del> <del>the</del> benefit to its people due to mass conscription, the establishment of an <del>into</del> authoritarian, hereditary empire, and
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		the poor standard of living, fuelled by the <del>the</del> military defeats and consequences of Napoleon's foreign policy.
		<p><del>the</del> After the restoration of absolutism following Napoleon's rise to power, his <del>a rule</del> saw many reforms such as censorship, <del>a</del> inequality and low morale. This is due to his attempt to prevent opposition such as reducing the amount of journalists from 73 to 13. In the same vein, Napoleon reintroduced inequality by creating an imperial nobility and the Legion of Honor. Despite Napoleon arguing that these nobles <del>was</del> were granted land and patronage due to their military success, it had detrimental impacts on the urban working class and led way to the creation of a police state. Similarly, the French Grand Armée saw <del>low levels of morale</del> low levels of morale due to the defeats in battles <del>the battle of Leipzig</del> <sup>- such as the battle of Leipzig.</sup> and the lack of revolutionary spirit. This shows that Napoleon's rules had little benefit in securing the civil liberties <del>and</del> of the French and legitimising class inequality.</p>
		Another example of Napoleon's rule bringing

		<p>little impact to its people can be seen in its failures in stabilising the economy through resources won during the war. Napoleon's triumphant battles <del>soon</del><sup>soon</sup> to cease and with it <del>it</del> saw the decline of raw materials, conscripts and money. This had a significant impact on the people of France as they were suffering from the poor economy. Similarly, Napoleon's failure in the continental system angered the satellite states that were prevented from <del>receiving</del> <del>the</del> British funding. It should be considered that the satellite states in France generated a tax income and the mistake of the continental system hindered this. The lack of funding from the British blockade was highly detrimental to France and its people, encapsulating the little <del>some</del> benefit Napoleon's rule brought to France and its people after 1807.</p> <p>Lastly, Napoleon's rule brought little benefit to the French people <del>as to his</del> losses in battle. The Peninsular War was referred to <del>as</del> the 'Spanish ulcer' by Napoleon as <del>was</del> the guerrilla warfare tactics <del>was</del> had prevented a</p>
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		<p>victorious defeat of the British. <del>people</del> <del>Paris</del> This had impacted the French people as the Grand Armée was heavily defeated by <del>was</del> the Duke of Wellington and <del>was</del> <del>therefore</del> weakened their morale.</p> <p>In the same vein, the invasion of Russia in 1812 had a debilitating impact on the French people as it had weakened Napoleon and the French <del>army</del> Grand Armée <del>for Napoleon</del> and made it easier for the <del>the</del> Sixth <del>army</del> coalition to push Napoleon and the French army back to Paris, where he eventually lost and abdicated in 1814. This mistake was significant as the <del>hard</del> <del>in</del> harsh winter <del>in</del> in Russia, coupled with the failure of staying in <del>a</del> Moscow for too long had weakened Napoleon's army and left him with 50,000 troops in comparison to the initial 600,000 troops. This illustrates that Napoleon's rule brought little impact to <del>the</del> its people after 1807 as it led to the fall of his regime and the capture of <del>Paris</del> Paris, all the while defeating the French Army, thus having little benefit to his people and soldiers.</p>
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It should be considered that whilst the lack of economic stability and ~~peace~~ defeats due to Napoleon's ill-judged decisions, none of great importance, it was the legal reforms of his ~~Constitute~~ that had more significance and had the best amount of benefits for the people of France. This is due to the direct attack on civil liberties and the quality of life regressing due to mass censorship and inequality that was established by the Civil Code and characterized his ~~rule~~ rule as Emperor.

~~Given~~ whilst it is clear that Napoleon's rule in France brought little ~~benefit~~ <sup>benefit</sup> to the people of France, there is room to debate the benefits it had on his people. For example, the signing of the Concordat had appeased many of the angered jurors and priests that refused to sign under the oath and became state employees due to the Civil Constitution of the clergy which deeply angered ~~the~~ the French public and went too far, too quickly. Similarly, Napoleon benefited the moderate middle class more than the urban working class by establishing a new

nobility, expanding education and promoting meritocracy which disproportionately impacted the ~~urban working~~ *vain-cuottes* and women who did not benefit from this. Despite this limitation, Napoleon's rule brought some benefit to its people such as giving land in satellite states to the imperial nobility ~~and~~ which shows the progression of rights of the moderate middle class revolutionaries.

Overall, it is clear that Napoleon's rule as Emperor in France brought very little benefits for ~~the~~ its people, especially the urban working class who not only failed to receive the treatment of the moderate middle class, but ~~also~~ predominantly made up majority of the population. Similarly, the impact of defeats on the Grand Armée, ~~and~~ the lack of civil liberties such as censorship ~~and~~ ~~was~~ which resulted in anger and betrayal, and the poor economy due to Napoleon's mistakes in the continental system which prevented British funding and trading to the French Empire reinforces the little benefit that Napoleon's rule over France brought to its people. This

		has more of an impact over <del>the</del> the benefits that his rule brought as the establishment of an authoritarian police state and lack of civil liberties prevented most of the French people from <del>not</del> experiencing the <del>the</del> benefits of the imperial nobility.
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