

What is the structure of the VCE History (Revolutions) exam?

Section A Question 1 – evidence analysis (20 marks)

This question tests **Area of Study One** (Causes of Revolution) in the **first revolution** you are writing about. The topic will relate to the conditions, factors and events that contributed to revolution – or the people, groups or ideas that inspired it.

You will be provided with **one or more sources**, such as a **document, quotation**, an extract from a **historian** or a **visual representation**. There will be three or more **short-answer questions**, ranging in difficulty and mark value.

It is vital that you **examine each source** closely and carefully. Highlight **key phrases or elements**. Think **critically** about each source's **purpose and perspective**: who created it and why? How does its perspective **compare** to that of other sources?

In the case of historians, think critically about their **historical interpretation** of the topic. Why have they reached it? What other interpretations may exist?

Section A Question 2-3 – extended responses (20 marks)

These questions test **Area of Study Two** (Consequences of Revolution) in the **first revolution** you are writing about. The topics will relate to the new society, its leadership and government, its challenges and problems, and its outcomes for the people.

You will be provided with **two specific questions**. You must respond to each question separately, writing around one page in 12-15 minutes. Each response is worth up to 10 marks, making 20 marks in total.

These responses should be **factual responses** that address the question. Include as much **specific knowledge** as you can, such as names, places, dates, laws, policies, statistics, short quotations and reference to historical interpretations.

The best responses are **effectively structured**. Open with a **single-sentence contention** that summarises your response to the question. Then provide a fuller explanation that is well organised and clearly **signposted**.

Section B Question 4 – short essay (20 marks)

This question tests **Area of Study One** (Causes of Revolution) in the **second revolution** you are writing about. The topic will relate to the conditions, factors, events, people, groups or ideas that contributed to revolution.

You must a **short essay** (3-5 pages) in response to a specific question. The question may be accompanied by **stimulus material**, such as a quotation or statement. You should consider this material when planning your contention.

The best essays are **clear, confident and well organised**. Develop a **strong contention** that responds to the question; avoid 'fence-sitting' or 'having a bet each way'. Articulate this contention in your introduction, then revisit it often in the body of your essay.

As in other parts of the exam, your essay should contain as much **specific knowledge** as you can provide, such as names, places, dates, figures, quotes and interpretations.

Section B Question 5 – evidence analysis (20 marks)

This question tests **Area of Study Two** (Consequences of Revolution) in the **second revolution** you are writing about. The topic will relate to the new society, its leadership and government, its changes, problems and outcomes.

You will be provided with **one or more sources**, such as a **document, quotation**, an extract from a **historian** or a **visual representation**. There will be three or more **short-answer questions**, ranging in difficulty and mark value.

It is vital that you **examine each source** closely and carefully. Highlight **key phrases or elements**. Think **critically** about each source's **purpose and perspective**: who created it and why? How does its perspective **compare** to that of other sources?

In the case of historians, think critically about their **historical interpretation** of the topic. Why have they reached it? What other interpretations may exist?

What do the assessors look for?

- **Relevance.** Good responses understand what the question 'wants'. They do not digress or stray.
- **Directness.** Good responses get straight to the point and answer the question. They do not ramble.
- **Knowledge.** Good responses use specific information: names, dates, places, events, sources, quotes.
- **Historical thinking.** Good responses use historical concepts, e.g. change, cause, effect, significance.
- **Clarity and organisation.** Good responses are clear, both in their expression and their structure.