

APPROACHING THE TEACHING OF UNIT 1

- » Unit 1 has several very important characteristics:
 - it covers a lengthy period of History as it fulfils the national criteria that History has to be studied in breadth at both AS and A level
 - it focuses entirely on assessing understanding of key historical concepts as laid down in Assessment Objective 1
 - its focus is on skills rather than on content and facts
- » It is stressed that all the content in each option has to be taught, although it is equally stressed that the content does not have to be taught in depth.

ADVICE ON APPROACHING THE CONTENT OF UNIT 1 PERIOD STUDY 6

In order to manage the content of Period Study 6 it is recommended that teachers look to use a general overview of important individuals, events, terms, and dates that are essential to understanding each topic or issue. It is vital to stress that the Period Study should be looked at as a whole and where appropriate, links and connections should be made between and across features and characteristics.

One possible way of managing the content of this option is to approach each main topic through discussion. Beginning and ending the study of each topic or issue with discussions or debates helps to focus attention on significant features associated with the topic or issue. This should help learners focus their attention on what matters most in the period studied.

Teachers should make use of the range of suggested discussions as a means of organising their approach to the content of the specification but should not assume or expect that examination questions will be set directly or solely based on any of the discussions suggested below.

The content of Period Study 6 can be managed by engaging in a series of discussions or debates. Suggestions include:

- Discuss the impact of Peter the Great's domestic policies on Russia
- Analyse the extent of Russia's success in foreign policy under Peter the Great
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Frederick the Great's reforms on Prussia
- Consider whether Frederick the Great can be described as an enlightened despot
- Discuss the main features of the ancien regime in France
- Discuss the long and short term reasons why revolution broke out in France in 1789
- Examine the extent of change in Great Power relations up to 1756
- Discuss the importance of the main conflicts in Europe between 1756-1815

ACTIVITY 1: USING ILLUSTRATIONS TO DISCUSS CONCEPTS

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

In order to introduce and debate some of the suggested discussions in this option it is possible to use illustrations to introduce or develop understanding of some of the issues. Most of the specified content covered in this option can be introduced, developed, debated or reviewed using illustrations. These can be cartoons, paintings, prints or maps. Below is an example which focuses on discussing the concept of **similarity and difference**.

The cartoon below is a contemporary comment on the ancien regime. Use the cartoon below to begin a discussion of why revolution broke out in France in 1789.



Ancien Regime

[Image](#) by M.P / This image is in the public domain

ACTIVITY 2: RAG-rate the key features and characteristics

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

For each of the suggested discussions given above, learners should be able to analyse and evaluate a range of features and characteristics associated with each one. For example, these can be considered for their importance or significance in each issue. To start this process, learners could use three coloured highlighters to put a Red, Amber or Green star next to each feature.

Red: Features that have little relevance to the enquiry

Amber: Features that have some relevance to the enquiry

Green: Features which are directly relevant to the enquiry.

Related activities would be to use coloured highlighters to identify these features and characteristics in relation to:

Time – are they long term or short term factors?

Perspective – are they political, economic, social, individual factors or a combination of these?

Here is an example of a suggested discussion:

Discuss the long and short term reasons why revolution broke out in France in 1789

Rag-rate the following features and characteristics associated with this discussion:

- Unfairness of the taxation system
- Ideas of the Philosophes
- Growing frustration among the bourgeoisie
- Ineffectiveness of Louis XVI
- Dislike of Marie Antoinette
- Failure of the Reform process
- Dramatic growth of the national debt
- Bankruptcy of the State

- Summoning of the Estates General
- Impact of the American War of Independence

Now repeat the activity for any three of the other suggested discussions on page 2.

ACTIVITY 3: MOVING FROM ASSERTION TO ARGUMENT

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

Activity 2 can be followed up by one which asks the learners to justify their RAG-rating decisions. This will help in understanding the difference between assertion and argument.

Assertion: a statement or an opinion which is not supported by a reason or further detail.

Argument: an assertion justified with a reason or further detail which explains or justifies something and counters other arguments.

In order to help move from assertion to argument, read the example question below and then add support to each of the assertions to turn it into an argument.

How far do you agree that the Diplomatic Revolution had the greatest influence on Great Power relations in the period 1700-1756?

A1: The Diplomatic Revolution had a significant impact upon Great Power relations during this period.

Provide support for this assertion

A2: Another issue to consider is that the War of Austrian Succession had a significant impact upon Great Power relations.

Provide support for this assertion

A3: It can be argued that the rise of Russia - particularly after its triumph in the Great Northern War - had a far greater influence on relations between the Great Powers.

Provide support for this assertion

ACTIVITY 4: DEVELOPING A REASONED ARGUMENT

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

In considering the key historical concepts which underpin this option, it is expected that learners will demonstrate the ability to analyse the issues, evaluate their importance and be able to provide a substantiated judgement supported by appropriate information over the period set. This can often be done in conjunction with the suggested discussions approach as seen on page 2 of this document. Each of the examples of the suggested discussions identified can be used to address specific historical concepts and also to assist learners to develop a reasoned argument.

Here are some examples of how teachers and learners can approach the development of a reasoned argument in answer to a set question:

Key features:

The desire to end Russia's isolation from the west

Peter's belief that Russia had to modernise in economy and society

Asserting Russian power in the Baltic and towards the Black Sea

Evidence to support the proposition:

Russia's isolation from the west

Backward nature of Russian society and economy prior to westernisation

The benefits of modernising Russia

'Westernisation was Peter the Great's most significant policy.'
 Discuss.

Period coverage:

The Grand Embassy 1697-98

Reforms 1699-1721

Foreign policy and war 1696-1725

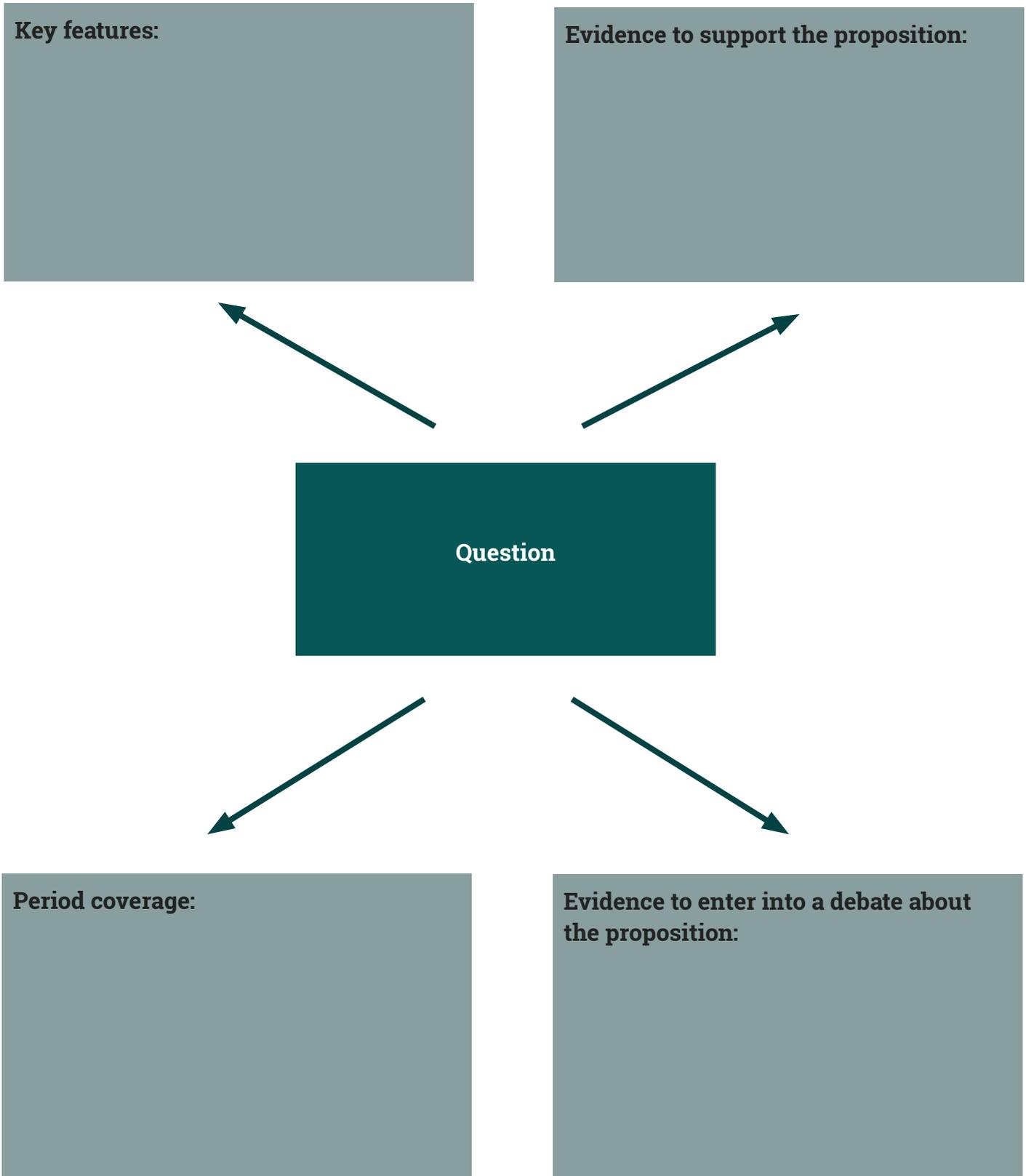
Evidence to enter into a debate about the proposition including an evaluation of the significance of:

Reforms of central government

Reform of the Orthodox church

Reform of the Russian economy

Using the example above, **complete the diagram that follows** for two more questions that have appeared on past examination papers for this option.



ACTIVITY 5: LINKING CONTENT WITH KEY CONCEPTS

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

Assessment Objective 1 outlines a number of concepts which underpin the study of History at AS and A Level. When responding to their assignments, learners often fail to focus on the key concepts in their responses, instead deploying information in a narrative or listing style.

It is important that learners understand that the content in Period Study 6 is linked with the key historical concepts which underpin AO1. These key concepts are shown below with examples of how the content of this option can be utilised to illustrate these particular concepts.

Look at the specification that you are studying for Period Study 6. **Identify two more features of the content of the specification that can illustrate each key concept.**

Remember that the specified content can be used to illustrate more than one concept if appropriate.

Key concepts	Examples of content to illustrate these concepts	
Cause and consequence	1	The main reasons for the outbreak of the French Revolution 1774-1789
	2	
	3	
Change and continuity	1	The changing nature of Great Power relations up to 1756
	2	
	3	
Similarity and difference	1	The impact of Frederick the Great's reforms 1740-1786
	2	
	3	
Significance and importance	1	The significance of the French Revolutionary Wars as a conflict
	2	
	3	

ACTIVITY 6: SPOTTING HISTORICAL CONCEPTS

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

All the questions set for Unit 1 will expect you to engage with a debate over an historical concept. To do this effectively you should become skilled at spotting the concept and the evaluation that the question requires.

Can you identify the key concept from the sample questions below? This first one is completed and identified in **bold**.

- How far do you agree that Peter the Great was **mostly successful** in dealing with the challenges that he faced during his reign 1696-1725?
- Were domestic reforms the most significant change in Prussia during the reign of Frederick the Great, 1740-1788?
- 'The financial problems of the ancien regime during the period 1715-1789 were mainly responsible for the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789.' Discuss.
- 'The Seven Years War was the most significant conflict between the Great Powers during the period 1756-1815.' Discuss
- 'To what extent did Louis XV dealt effectively with the problems which he faced during his reign from 1715-1774?
- To what extent was the war of the First Coalition the most significant development during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815?

You can also use the WJEC Question Bank facility to practice spotting the key concepts in a range of other past questions. This is available at:

<http://www.wjec.co.uk/question-bank/index.html>

ACTIVITY 7: SETTING APPROPRIATE CONCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

ADVICE ON THE USE OF THIS ACTIVITY

In order to understand the broader nature of Unit 1 it is important that teachers and learners become familiar with how conceptual questions are formed, how they can be phrased and how they can be adapted according to what area of the Period Study is being taught. The following advice is offered:

- the question should be on a **mainstream issue** which is named or closely linked to the detail in the specification. Try not to set questions on minor or inconsequential areas of the specification
- there has to be **sufficient substance** to the main issue set that it promotes a lively debate of the topic studied. Do not set an issue that the learners can easily dismiss
- the question set should cover a **substantial period of time**
- the question should allow learners to **sustain an argument** throughout the answer
- the question should allow learners to show accurate **understanding of the relevant historical concept** in the question
- the question should include a **key word or words** which will allow learners to form a balanced judgement e.g. *'The French Revolution was primarily caused by the weaknesses of the ancien regime.'* Discuss.

A suggested way of approaching this aspect of learning is to use the following checklist when tasks and questions are set to learners.

Does the question set....	YES	NO
highlight a mainstream issue?		
allow a debate to be engaged with?		
cover a substantial period of time?		
focus on a key historical concept?		
include an evaluative word?		

Try and set your own conceptual questions on the content of Period Study 6. Can you set appropriate conceptual questions on the following content areas?

- The reasons for the growing pressure for political change in France c.1750-1789
- The different responses of countries to the threat from France 1792-1815
- A comparison of the significance of the War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years War
- The extent of success of the reforms in Russia 1682-1721
- The importance of the Diplomatic Revolution in foreign affairs

Once you have done this, try and rag-rate the key features associated with your questions.

ACTIVITY 8: EVALUATING ESSAY STYLE WORK

Here are two examples of answers to Unit 1 questions set in the 2017 examinations.

- Can you apply the checklist on page 11 to these essays?
- Consider the strengths and limitations of each essay.
- Consider how each one could be improved and what advice you could give to the learner who wrote it.

Exemplar 1

How far do you agree that Peter the Great's religious reforms were his most important achievement during the period 1696-1725?

Before the time of Peter the Great's rule, Russia was an extremely backward state that had not adopted the more advanced technologies of the West. A major factor that determined this was that the Orthodox Church dominated life in Russia and was very resistant to change. Therefore in order to achieve westernization Peter had to reform the church. It could be argued that this was Peter's most important achievement because it allowed him to adopt Western ideas and transform Russia from a backward state into a European power. However, other people may argue that victory in the Great Northern War was Peter's greatest and most important achievement as it marked the downfall of Sweden and the emergence of Russia as a major player on the European stage. A further argument could be made is that his most important achievement was actually his creation of a navy which had the effect of bolstering Russia's wishes to obtain a Baltic coastline and a Black Sea port.

When Peter became sole ruler of Russia in 1696 the Orthodox Church dominated all aspects of life in Russia. Peter quickly recognised that the Grand Patriarch of the church had too much power and could be a hindrance in his striving for westernisation. This is important to the reign of Peter as it allowed him to act swiftly and subdue the influence of the Church. Peter had ambitions to make Russia a leading European power and felt that he could not achieve that with the Church acting as a barricade to where he wanted to be. Peter therefore stripped the Grand Patriarch of his power and created the position of the Holy Synod. This was very important for Peter because the church did not have as much power over the Russian people and it therefore gave Peter more influence over what happened without there being the constant opposition of the Orthodox Church. A similar situation emerged later in his reign where his son Alexis was against westernisation and therefore Peter dealt with him in a similar manner.

However, people would also feel that Peter's victory in the Great Northern War was his most important achievement because it marked the start of Russia's path to becoming a superpower. This is because he defeated the great power of Sweden against all odds. He used his newly established navy to destroy Sweden at Cape Hango in 1714. This was a very important achievement in the reign of Peter the Great because it showed that Peter's Grand Embassy mission had worked because it led to the establishment of a navy and provided enhanced weapons. The argument is there to be had however that without the reformation of the Orthodox Church, Peter would never have been capable of reforming the military and have experienced such emphatic victories due to the effect that the Church had on Russia as a nation and that Peter would not have had the support nor power to carry out these events. This was because Russia was very religious and what the Church said the people followed. The victory in the Great Northern War was also so vital because it allowed Peter to obtain a Baltic coastline and a Black Sea port after previous conflict with the Ottoman Turks. This was a very important achievement because with a Baltic coastline Russia could establish further trade links and continue to follow Peter's dream of becoming westernised

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Peter also carried out a series of domestic reforms that were very important achievements. Namely, Peter improved the military as a result of matching Sweden's immense success in the early stages of the war when Sweden crushed Russia owing to Charles XII's genius tactics of attacking in a snowstorm at Narva in 1700. Peter therefore obtained mass numbers in the army by introducing conscription and also purchased the latest muskets and bayonet weaponry after learning about them in his Grand Embassy mission. This was a very important achievement for Peter as it allowed Russia to compete with Sweden and proof is seen in the way in which Russia destroyed Sweden at Poltava in 1709. However, the argument is still there to be had that without Peter's religious reforms these victories may not have been achieved due to the church being against all forms of modernisation and change.

Another major achievement of Peter was his reform of Russia's government which was also very backward. He introduced more modern methods that had been inspired yet again by the west, particularly Sweden. This was extremely important because it allowed a more efficient and effective way of governing the growing power of Russia.

Peter the Great's reforms of religion during the period 1696-1725 were very important to the growth and development of Russia. There is no doubt that these were great achievements. However, I would not agree that they were the most important. This is because the effects of the success that Peter achieved against Sweden in the Great Northern War were far more important. Peter's military reforms in developing the Russian army and creating a navy were crucial in victories such as Poltava and Cape Hango and led to the Treaty of Nystadt in 1721 which gave Russia her much-desired Baltic coastline. This gave Russia access to the west – a great desire of Peter. Also the creation of the capital city of St Petersburg was crucial as it was Peter's 'window to the west' as well as the establishment of a huge naval base at Kronstadt.

Exemplar 2

'The Seven Years War was the most significant conflict between the Great Powers during the period 1756-1815.' Discuss.

The Seven Years War was one of the most significant conflicts between the great powers during the period 1756-1815 because it was the war where Prussia emerged as a great power on the European scene. The Seven Years War started because of the alliance made during the diplomatic revolution which saw Prussia and Britain sign the convention of Westminster to become allies. In doing this, Louis XVI of France was angered forcing him to sign the Treaty of Versailles with Austria. This would therefore mean that France and Austria would become allies along with Russia in an anti-Prussian coalition. There were many key battles in the Seven Years War with the major battles coming at Rossbach and Leuthen. In Rossbach 25,000 Prussians defeated 50,000 French troops, where only 500 Prussians were killed but 10,000 French were slaughtered. In Leuthen it was once again another major victory for Prussia as 30,000 Prussians inflicted a crushing defeat on 80,000 Austrians. However there were some defeats for Prussia, for example at the battle of Kunersdorf. This proves that the Seven Years War was one of the most significant conflicts between the great powers because three of Europe's great powers were heavily defeated numerous times by the small country of Prussia and therefore because of that Prussia emerged as a great European power which embarrassed the other major powers. It also showed that the great powers were incapable of acting as a team. They didn't attack together attacking one by one at Prussia meaning Prussia only had to worry about fighting one country at a time as all three powers never attacked together. Along with the subsidiary from the British and well drilled army as well as leader Frederick the Great's tactics Prussia shocked everyone by inflicting huge defeats on major powers making the Seven Years one of the most significant conflicts between the great powers during the period 1756-1815. Therefore I do agree with the idea of the Seven Years War being the most significant conflict between great powers as it shows how a small country like Prussia can emerge as a major power due to a well-drilled, well-led army embarrassing the three most powerful superpowers at that time causing them to drop out of the war one by one until its end.