

Print exam correction:
Sources Book, Page 8, Source 9,
in the description, 'autocracy' has been
changed to 'aristocracy'; in the glossary
'autocracy' has been deleted.

SUPERVISOR TO ATTACH
PROCESSING LABEL HERE

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Write your **student number** in the boxes above.

Letter

History: Revolutions

Question and Answer Book

VCE Examination – Tuesday 12 November 2025

- Reading time is **15 minutes**: 2.00 pm to 2.15 pm
- Writing time is **2 hours**: 2.15 pm to 4.15 pm

Materials supplied

- Question and Answer Book of 28 pages
- Sources Book

Instructions

- Use the additional space at the end of this book if you need extra space to complete an answer.

Students are **not** permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

Contents	pages
Section A (2 of 4 questions, 50 marks)	3–19
Section B (1 of 4 questions, 20 marks)	20–24
Assessment criteria for Section B	28

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Section A

Instructions

- Answer **two** of the following questions in the spaces provided.
 - Write your responses in English.
-

Revolution	pages
Question 1 – The American Revolution _____	4–7
Question 2 – The French Revolution _____	8–11
Question 3 – The Russian Revolution _____	12–15
Question 4 – The Chinese Revolution _____	16–19

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Section B

Instructions

- Write an essay on **one** of the following questions in the space provided.
 - Write your response in English.
 - Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 28.
 - Shade the **box** next to your selected question, and write the question number and the name of the revolution in the boxes provided on page 21.
-

Question 1 (20 marks)

The American Revolution

'It was the contribution of popular movements that made the outbreak of revolution certain to happen.'

To what extent do you agree? Use evidence to support your response.

OR

Question 2 (20 marks)

The French Revolution

'The spread of Enlightenment ideas made the outbreak of revolution certain to happen.'

To what extent do you agree? Use evidence to support your response.

OR

Question 3 (20 marks)

The Russian Revolution

'The influence of liberal ideas and reforms in Tsarist Russia made the outbreak of revolution certain to happen.'

To what extent do you agree? Use evidence to support your response.

OR

Question 4 (20 marks)

The Chinese Revolution

'The influence of Mao Zedong Thought (Maoism) made the outbreak of revolution certain to happen.'

To what extent do you agree? Use evidence to support your response.

Assessment criteria for Section B

The essay in Section B will be assessed against the following criteria:

- construction of a coherent and relevant historical argument that addresses the specific demands of the essay question
 - demonstration of historical knowledge that is accurate and appropriate for the essay question
 - application of historical thinking concepts such as cause and consequence, continuity and change, and/or historical significance
 - use of sources as evidence to support a historical argument, including a range of primary sources, perspectives and historical interpretations
-

History: Revolutions

Sources Book

VCE Examination – Tuesday 12 November 2025

Contents	pages
The American Revolution _____	2–4
The French Revolution _____	5–7
The Russian Revolution _____	8–10
The Chinese Revolution _____	11–13

Refer to the sources in this book for each question in Section A, as indicated in the Question and Answer Book.

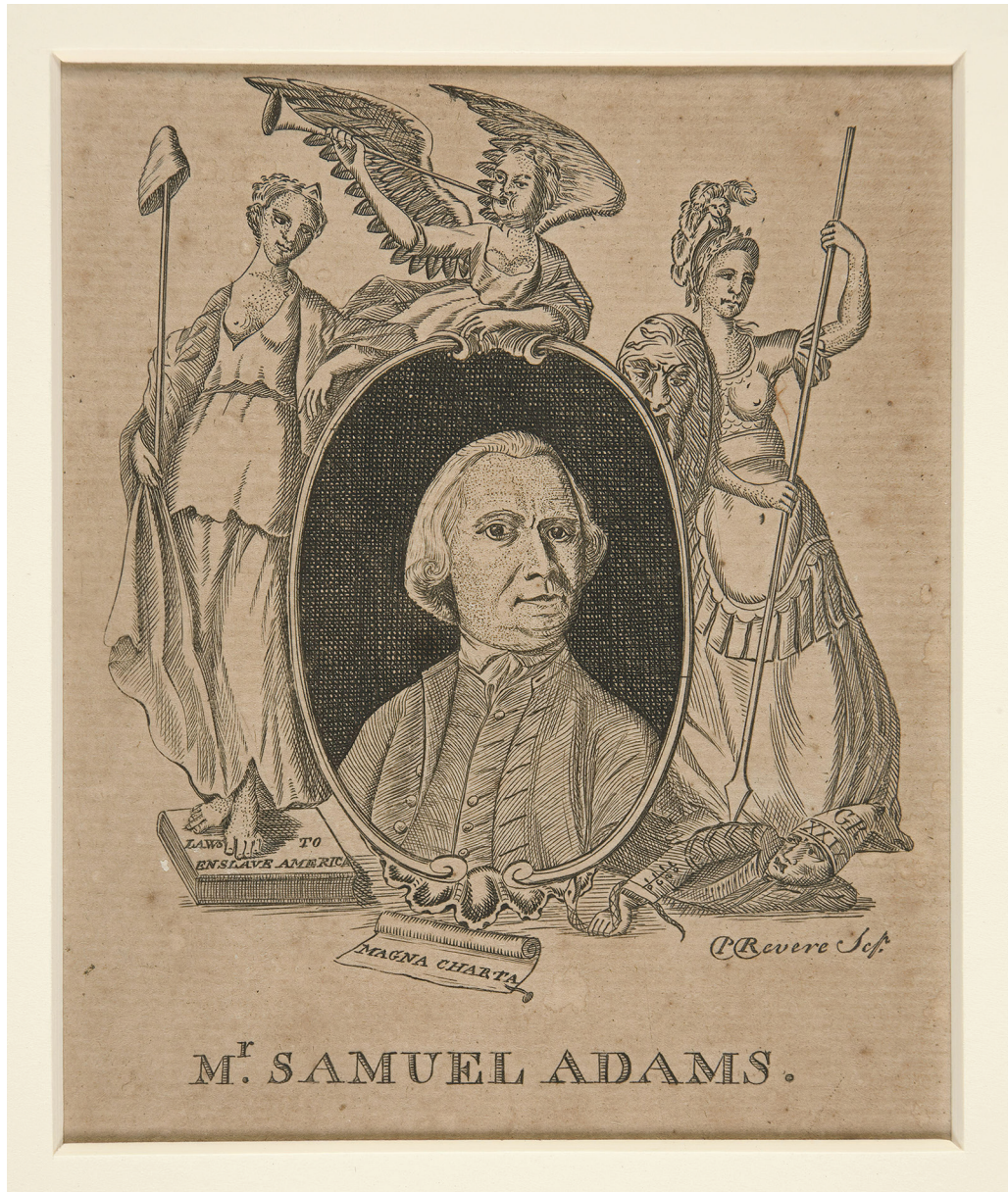
You may keep this Sources Book.

The American Revolution

Sources 1–4 relate to Question 1.

Source 1

This engraving by Paul Revere was published in Boston in 1774. It shows Samuel Adams surrounded by three goddesses.



Photographic reproduction: Penta Springs Limited/Alamy Stock Photo

Source: P Revere, *Mr Samuel Adams*, Royal American Magazine, April 1774

On the left, the goddess of liberty is standing on a book titled *LAWS TO ENSLAVE AMERICA*. In the centre is the goddess of fame. On the right, the goddess of war and justice is standing on a British soldier. The text on the document at the bottom reads 'MAGNA CHARTA'¹.

¹**Magna Charta** – Magna Carta, a document produced in England in 1215 stating that the king and his government must obey the law and respect the rights of the people, including liberty

Source 2

An extract from the pamphlet *Common Sense*, written by Thomas Paine and published in the colonies in January 1776

I have heard it asserted¹ by some, that as America has flourished² under her former connection with Great-Britain, the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness ... Nothing can be more fallacious³ than this kind of argument ... America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her ...

...

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour⁴ their young, nor savages make war upon their families ...

...

A government of our own is our natural right ... it is infinitely⁵ wiser and safer, to form a constitution of our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance.

Source: T Paine, *Common Sense* (pamphlet), in *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, Vol. 1, MD Conway (ed.), GP Putnam's Sons, New York, 1894, pp. 85, 86 and 99

¹**asserted** – spoken confidently, argued

²**flourished** – grown, prospered

³**fallacious** – false, untrue

⁴**devour** – eat

⁵**infinitely** – very much

Source 3

A historical interpretation, published in 2011, outlining some of the challenges facing Native Americans before and after 1776

... [C]hallenges confronting Native Americans ... became acute at the end of the Seven Years' War as numerous British American settlers pushed westward, encroaching on¹ Indian² lands ...

...

Tensions between European settlers and Native Americans were subsumed³ by the subsequent conflict between the British and their North American colonists. When the War of Independence began, Native Americans found themselves in a position of relative (and temporary) power as both the British and the American rebels sought to cultivate⁴ their support ... [But] With the rebel victory in the war, Native Americans were confronted by a new, more dangerous situation. The United States, which had secured capacious⁵ boundaries at the Peace of Paris, and, possessed of a growing population determined to settle western lands, posed a mortal⁶ threat to the Native Americans, who could no longer count on the support of Britain.

Source: FD Cogliano and KE Phimister (eds), *Revolutionary America 1763-1815: a sourcebook*, Routledge, New York, 2011, pp. 7 and 8

¹**encroaching on** – taking over

²**Indian** – Native American

³**subsumed** – blended, became part of

⁴**cultivate** – gain, achieve

⁵**capacious** – large, vast

⁶**mortal** – deadly, fatal

Source 4

A historical interpretation, published in 2009, outlining the reasons for amendments to the American Constitution. These amendments became the Bill of Rights.

Antipathy¹ toward a strong central government was only one concern among those opposed to the Constitution; of equal concern to many was the fear that the Constitution did not protect individual rights and freedoms sufficiently ... Indeed, five states, including Massachusetts, ratified² the Constitution on the condition that such amendments be added immediately.

When the first Congress convened in New York City in September 1789, the calls for amendments protecting individual rights were virtually unanimous³. Congress quickly adopted 12 such amendments; by December 1791, enough states had ratified 10 amendments to make them part of the Constitution. Collectively, they are known as the Bill of Rights. Among their provisions⁴: freedom of speech, press, religion, and the right to assemble peacefully, protest, and demand changes (First Amendment) ...

Source: G Clack, MS Neely and A Hamby (eds), *Outline of U.S. History*, Nova Science Publishers Inc., New York, 2009, p. 56

¹**antipathy** – dislike, hostility

²**ratified** – voted on and approved

³**virtually unanimous** – something that almost everybody agreed with

⁴**provisions** – details, condition

The French Revolution

Sources 5–8 relate to Question 2.

Source 5

This is an image of the Three Estates, produced in 1789. It shows the three main social groups: the church (First Estate), the nobility (Second Estate) and everybody else (Third Estate).



Photographic reproduction: Niday Picture Library/Alamy Stock Photo

Source: Unknown artist, 1789

The text on the farming tool translates to 'wet with tears'.

The text on the papers in the coat pocket of the bishop translates to 'bishop, abbot, duke, count, pension, ostentation'¹.

The text on the papers in the trouser pocket of the peasant translates to or reads 'salt and tobacco, tailles², corvée³, tithes⁴, militias⁵'.

The text on the noble's sword translates to 'reddened with blood'.

¹ **ostentation** – showing wealth and luxury

² **tailles** – a tax imposed on the peasantry

³ **corvée** – a labour tax owed by the peasant to his lord

⁴ **tithes** – taxes paid to the church

⁵ **militias** – military service

Source 6

A historical interpretation, published in 1989, outlining some of the actions of Marie Antoinette before 1789

When funds ran low she repeatedly went to the King, who usually indulged¹ her. As a young woman she indulged a weakness for diamonds that ... earned her a smart rap over the knuckles² ... from her imperial mother. “A Queen can only degrade herself³,” wrote [her mother] Maria Theresa, “by this sort of heedless⁴ extravagance in difficult times.”

...

Joseph [her brother] saw clearly that his sister wanted the privileges ... of monarchy while being free to pretend that she was really a private individual ... Marie-Antoinette remained determined to design her own identity ... she selected her own friends ... the Queen used her authority to shower gifts, offices and money on her chosen favorites ... And along with each of the favorites came a large clan of relatives ... So that what to the Queen seemed innocent enough ... to less partial⁵ judgment looked like a gigantic network of sinecure⁶ ...; the empire of “Madame Deficit” ...

Source: S Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*, Penguin Random House, UK, 2004, pp. 171 and 180

¹**indulged** – agreed to help

⁴**heedless** – careless

²**smart rap over the knuckles** – quick criticism

⁵**partial** – favourable

³**degrade herself** – harm her reputation

⁶**sinecure** – a job that requires little or no work, usually given to friends or family

Source 7

A historical interpretation, published in 2013, of how the monarchy was affected by revolution

The original aim of the French Revolution ... was not to destroy monarchy ... goodwill towards the king survived ... [T]he destruction of the old social order on the night of 4 August concluded to cries of *Vive le Roi!*¹ and the order that a ... medal be struck², proclaiming Louis XVI ‘Restorer of French Liberties’.

It was only when the National Assembly turned ... to drafting the rules for constitutional monarchy³, that the problems began. Almost the first question they confronted was that of whether the king should have a veto⁴ on legislation ... When the king appeared hesitant to accept the ultimate decision in favour of delaying power⁵ only, the result was the march of the Parisian women to Versailles ... [This was] followed by the famous procession back to Paris ... He had simply surrendered himself, and his power, to a mob.

... the Flight to Varennes ... The capture, and the return of the fugitives to Paris, was the October Days all over again ...

Source: W Doyle, *France and The Age of Revolution*, IB Tauris and Co. Limited, London, 2013, pp. 116, 117 and 119

¹**Vive le Roi!** – Long Live the King!

²**struck** – made

³**constitutional monarchy** – a form of government in which the monarch’s power is limited

⁴**veto** – the right to reject a decision (for instance, by a law-making body)

⁵**delaying power** – the power to suspend approval for a period of time

Source 8

This is a letter written in December 1793 by Collot d'Herbois describing his attempts to defeat rebellion in Lyon, France's second largest city. Collot was a member of the Committee of Public Safety and was one of 82 members of the National Convention sent to ensure that its laws were followed throughout France.

[W]e have restored ... the morale of a few men ... and ... a certain number of patriots¹ who have suffered oppression² for too long. We have revitalized³ justice in republican style, i.e. swift and terrible ... It will strike at traitors like a thunderbolt and leave only ashes. The destruction of one vile⁴ and rebellious city will strengthen all the others.

The death of these scoundrels⁵ will assure life for generations of free men ... We will demolish as much as we can, by cannon-fire and by exploding mines. But ... amidst a population of a hundred and fifty thousand, there are many obstacles to such methods.

The people's blade ... did not frighten [the traitors]. We have set up a commission ... of true republicans sitting in judgement on traitors. Sixty-four of these ... were shot yesterday ... two hundred and thirty will fall today ... to persuade those cities which are vacillating⁶.

Source: R Cobb and C Jones (eds), *Voices of the French Revolution*, Salem House Publishers, Topsfield (MA), 1988, pp. 200 and 201

¹**patriots** – those in support of the revolutionary government

²**oppression** – cruel or unjust treatment

³**revitalized** – gave life to, or renewed

⁴**vile** – evil, horrible

⁵**scoundrels** – dishonest people or villains

⁶**vacillating** – unsure whether to support the government

The Russian Revolution

Sources 9–12 relate to Question 3.

Source 9

This cartoon, titled *The Czar*¹ – ‘Do I smell something burning?’, was published in an American magazine in 1906.



Source: E Zimmerman ('Zim'), *The Czar – 'Do I smell something burning?'*; *Judge* (magazine), New York, 1906

The text on the orange tin next to Tsar Nicholas II reads 'ROYAL EXTINGUISHER'².

The text on the round object at the left of the image reads 'ANARCHY'³.

The text on the smoke at the left of the image reads 'HATE'.

The text on the three steps reads 'ARISTOCRACY, DESPOTISM, TYRANNY'⁴.

¹ Czar – Tsar

² extinguisher – machine used to put out fires

³ anarchy – a lawless society without leaders or government

⁴ despotism, tyranny – ruling with total power, in a cruel and unfair way

Source 10

A letter from Tsarina Alexandra to Tsar Nicholas II, dated 22 August 1915. On that day, Nicholas appointed himself commander of the Russian army.

Do not fear ... God will give me the strength to help you ... we ... see what the struggle here really is & means – you showing your mastery, proving yourself the *Autocrat*¹ without [which] Russia cannot exist ... God, who is just & near you – will save your country & throne through your firmness.

...

... It is the beginning of the glory² of [your] reign, He [Grigori Rasputin] said so & I absolutely believe it ...

...

... Be firm to the end ...

...

... make them tremble before your courage & will³. God is with you & our Friend [Grigori Rasputin] for you – all is well ... Don't doubt – believe, & all will be well & the army is everything – a few *strikes*, nothing, in comparison, as [they] can & shall be suppressed⁴ ...

... Sleep well my Sunshine, Russia's Saviour⁵.

Source: *Letters of the Tsaritsa to the Tsar: 1914–1916*, Duckworth & Co., London, 1923, pp. 114–116

¹**autocrat** – ruler with total power

²**glory** – greatness

³**will** – wishes

⁴**suppressed** – defeated, brought to an end

⁵**saviour** – rescuer, hero

Source 11

A historical interpretation of how the October Revolution affected the everyday life of women, published in 2017

The Bolsheviks came to power with a radical¹ programme for the liberation² of women and the radical transformation³ of the family ... [The] Code on Marriage ... [and] Family ... in October 1918 ... equalized women's legal status with men's ... allowed both spouses⁴ to retain the right to their own property and earnings ... and ... made divorce available at the request of either party. Under the old regime the Church had granted divorce in only the rarest of circumstances ...

...

... [From 1921] cuts in state subsidies led to the closure of the public dining halls, crèches⁵, and communal laundries that had been a feature of War Communism, leaving women once again responsible for looking after children, cooking, cleaning, and sewing ...

... Within less than a decade European Russia⁶ had the highest divorce rate in the world ...

Source: SA Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017, pp. 338, 342 and 343

¹**radical** – complete, total

²**liberation** – setting free

³**transformation** – major change

⁴**spouses** – husband, wife

⁵**crèches** – childcare centres

⁶**European Russia** – western Russia

Source 12

A historical interpretation of the leadership of Lenin, published in 2010

Lenin was an exceptional¹ figure. He founded ... the Bolsheviks, which he turned into a party that made the October Revolution of 1917. The world's first socialist state ... survived against the odds. Lenin and the communist leadership withdrew Russia from the First World War and won the Civil War ...

...

... In 1921 he introduced the New Economic Policy and saved the Soviet state from being overwhelmed by popular rebellion ...

... Lenin created the Cheka ... Lenin justified dictatorship and terror ...

...

And ... while Lenin was cunning and untrustworthy, he was also dedicated to the ultimate² goal of communism. He enjoyed power; he lusted after³ it ... But he wanted power for a purpose. He was determined that the Bolsheviks should initiate the achievement of a world without exploitation⁴ and oppression⁵ ...

...

But ... [Lenin] never ceased to declare that revolutions did not simply happen: they had to be made. And this required leadership.

Source: R Service, *Lenin: A Biography*, Pan Books, Pan Macmillan, London, 2010, pp. 1, 10, 330, 493 and 494

¹**exceptional** – extraordinary, outstanding

²**ultimate** – final, most important

³**lusted after** – wanted and worked hard to achieve something

⁴**exploitation** – unfair treatment

⁵**oppression** – cruelty, domination

The Chinese Revolution

Sources 13–16 relate to Question 4.

Source 13

This poster, published circa 1937, includes the title *Love and Protect the Common People, Help the Common People*. It was produced by Red Army forces in southern China.



Source: Unknown artist, *Love and Protect the Common People, Help the Common People*, Political Department of the High Command of the Fourth Military Region, circa 1937 <<https://chineseposters.net/posters/pc-1938-001>>

The text down the left-hand side of the image translates as 'Produced by the Political Department of the High Command of the Fourth Military Region'.

Source 14

A historical interpretation of the Chinese Civil War, published in 2016

After some seemingly impressive successes in the first year of the war, the Nationalists [Guomindang/Kuomintang] were unable to achieve a single major victory between 1947 and 1949. Faced by growing desertions, and betrayed by some of his higher officers, who passed to the Communists details of Nationalist troop positions and movements, Jiang¹ could never wholly rely on his supposed supporters, a problem that rarely troubled Mao Zedong. Unable to sustain a genuinely popular following, Jiang increasingly resorted to coercion² as the war went on ... In August 1948, Shanghai witnessed particularly bloody scenes, including street-corner beheadings and shootings by government troops. Such atrocities³ alienated⁴ the Nationalists' diminishing⁵ band of supporters ...

Source: M Lynch, *China 1839–1997*, 3rd ed., Hodder Education, London, 2016, pp. 122 and 123

¹**Jiang** – Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek)

²**resorted to coercion** – chose to use force

³**atrocities** – very cruel actions

⁴**alienated** – distanced

⁵**diminishing** – reducing in number

Source 15

Extract from a speech given by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) at the Eleventh Session of the Supreme State Conference in February 1957

... [B]ecause the imperialists ... oppressed¹ and exploited us ... ours is an impoverished² country and the standard of living ... of our peasants ... is still low ... In this context, it is right to say that the peasants lead a "hard life". But in another sense it is not true ... As a matter of fact, with very few exceptions, there has been some improvement in the life of ... the peasants ... Since liberation [October 1949], the peasants have been free from landlord exploitation³ and their production has increased annually. Take grain crops. In 1949, the country's output was only something over 210,000 million catties⁴. By 1956, it had risen to more than 360,000 million catties ... The state agricultural tax is not heavy, only amounting to something over 30,000 million catties a year.

Source: Mao Zedong, 'On the correct handling of contradictions among the people', speech delivered to the Supreme State Conference, 27 February 1957; Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Volume 5, Marxists Internet Archive <www.marxists.org>

¹**oppressed** – harshly treated

²**impoverished** – poor

³**exploitation** – unfair treatment

⁴**catties** – a unit of weight in China with 1 cattie being approximately 600 grams

Source 16

A historical interpretation of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, published in 2013

In colleges and schools across China, teachers were attacked by pupils. Some were tortured and, in extreme cases, murdered, often in the most barbarous¹ ways ... Professors and scholars who escaped with their lives were sentenced to clean toilets. Almost 400,000 people branded² as rightists were forced to leave cities and return to the villages from which they or their parents had come ...

...

... At their places of work, staff bowed three times before his [Mao Zedong's/Mao Tse-tung's] portrait. The *Little Red Book* was held to cure illnesses ... Control was tightened. The only books, films and theatrical performances allowed were those approved by Jiang Qing³; a total of just 124 novels were published during the Cultural Revolution. Any form of personal taste in clothing was out of bounds – women wore ... flat heels and most people donned⁴ Red Guard-style green uniform jackets, baggy trousers and caps ...

Source: J Fenby, *The Penguin History of Modern China: The Fall and Rise of a Great Power, 1850 to the Present*, 2nd ed., Penguin Books, London, 2013, pp. 451 and 457

¹**barbarous** – savage, cruel

²**branded** – labelled, named

³**Jiang Qing** – Chiang Ch'ing

⁴**donned** – wore

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