Section A

Answer Question 01.

Extract A

The government had involved Britain in a long and costly European war, which began in 1793. And yet the war years produced the most rapid economic and social changes so far experienced. Industry and trade flourished as European factories and ships were restricted by the hostilities. Agricultural production rose sharply and waste ground was cultivated to meet the demands of a rapidly growing population at war. Canal investment peaked in the 1790s; many service industries boomed. There were social costs – the squalid slums of industrial towns and the monotonous work in farms and factories – and the war brought inflation and the income tax; however, by 1812, Britain had become the richest country in Europe.

Adapted from Eric Pawson, The Early Industrial Revolution, 1979

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Extract B

There is no evidence that the French Wars stimulated innovation in industry. Investment slowed sharply due to heavy war spending and taxes. Canal building virtually stopped after 1800. House building collapsed, so the supply of houses was reduced, which pushed up rents. There were high food prices as the wars disrupted the European grain trade. Therefore, war harmed living standards for the poor. By 1812, the effect of the wars on foreign trade was devastating although there was the opening up of British trade with captured French colonies. The wars were far more devastating to France than to Britain; but Britain’s economy was already the stronger and more advanced, and neither war nor peace made much difference to this.

Adapted from Charles More, The Industrial Age Economy and Society in Britain since 1750, 1989

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01 With reference to these extracts and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two extracts provides the more convincing interpretation of the impact of war on Britain by 1812?

[25 marks]
Section B

Answer either Question 02 or Question 03.

Either

02 ‘Pitt was a successful, reforming prime minister in the years 1783 to 1793.’

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view. [25 marks]

or

03 ‘The reforms of the 1820s were the result of radical agitation from 1812.’

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view. [25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS