

A-level HISTORY

Component 1E Russia in the Age of Absolutism and Enlightenment,
1682-1796

Friday 9 June 2017

Morning

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 16-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7042/1E.
- Answer **three** questions.
In **Section A** answer Question 01.
In **Section B** answer **two** questions.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Advice

- You are advised to spend about:
 - 60 minutes on Question 01
 - 45 minutes on each of the other questions answered.

Section AAnswer Question 01.

Extract A

From the start of her reign Catherine made all the main decisions in foreign affairs. Within a few months, she wrote to her intimate friend Stanislas Poniatowski promising to support his candidacy for Poland's elective kingship. She aimed to strengthen Russian dominance over ramshackle Poland. Russia had exercised vague control over Poland for decades, routinely marching troops through its territory. Since the late seventeenth century, Poland had lurched into continuous political decay and since it was so unstable, the Russian grip on Poland was likewise shaky. The idea of partition periodically intrigued Poland's neighbours, Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Yet the Russian government usually rejected the idea, preferring the current situation, however unstable, to the diplomatic gamble of partition. As Catherine saw the situation at the time of her accession, the anarchy in Poland played into Russia's hands. Her contemptuous attitude toward Poland combined scorn and disdain for Catholicism with cynical opportunism. Weaker than ever, Poland looked temptingly vulnerable.

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Adapted from Catherine the Great, John T Alexander, 1989

Extract B

Conduct of foreign policy ranked first among Catherine's concerns. Along Russia's western border lay the huge, chaotically governed, kingdom of Poland, which in earlier times had stripped away huge stretches of Russian territory. Poland had been one of the most powerful states in Europe; in 1611, a Polish army had occupied the Kremlin. Large areas populated by Orthodox Russian Slavs still remained part of Poland. Centuries of experience had shown that it was impossible to make friends with the Poles; they would always support any future enemy of Russia, be this Turkey, Prussia, Sweden, or somebody else. Catherine wanted to erase this dangerous neighbour from the map. On 3 January 1795, Russia and Austria agreed to the third and final partition of Poland. Afterwards, Catherine repeated that she had annexed "not a single Pole" and that she had simply taken back ancient Russian and Lithuanian lands with Orthodox inhabitants who were "now reunited with the Russian Motherland". For Poland, the Third Partition meant national extinction.

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Adapted from Catherine the Great, Robert K Massie, 2011

Extract C

No people was more detestable for Catherine than the Poles. There was something unnatural in her hatred, coming, as it did, from an otherwise kindly ruler. On the other hand there was a difference between state and private ethics. Catherine the Empress hated Poland for its people's love of freedom, the proud dignity of its nobles, and the democratic traditions that her autocratic mind found utterly unacceptable. The tragedy that Poland went through in the eighteenth century was seen by Catherine as the consequence of the Poles' inability to lead an independent existence, and a manifestation of their corruptibility. Poland was torn apart with persistence and brutality by Russia, Austria and Prussia in the partitions, and Russia's role was most disreputable and shameful. Catherine's imperial stance was dictated, not only by some general political and diplomatic considerations and the good of the empire, but also by that peculiar aversion that the Empress had for the Poles.

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Adapted from *Five Empresses*, Evgenii V Anisimov, 2004

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Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to Catherine the Great's policy towards Poland.

[30 marks]

Turn over for the next question.

Section B

Answer **two** questions.

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'Rebellions and opposition during Peter the Great's reign originated from the rejection of westernisation.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

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'Swedish failings were more important than Russian strengths in securing Russia's victory in the Great Northern War 1700–1721.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

0	4
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To what extent did the French Revolution change Catherine the Great's domestic policy?

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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