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# A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2F Louis XIV: France and Europe, 1643 - 1715  
Report on the Examination

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7042  
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The responses to the questions on this year's paper demonstrated the full ability range of students sitting the examination. All levels of the mark scheme were used for both Section A and B, with some students progressing to the very top of Level 5. These responses were highly sophisticated and very impressive. Whilst there were some answers which were awarded Level 1, these were quite rare and there were very few students who had little to write on the questions.

Both Sections A and B were marked according to the respective generic levels mark schemes. The indicative content was also referred to, but any answer worthy of credit was awarded the appropriate mark, regardless of whether the information provided by the student was detailed in the indicative content, which is a guide but not assumed to be comprehensive.

Adjustments to the marks within these levels were made according to how well the student's work matched the level requirements. The mid-point of the band was always used as a starting point, with students reaching the top of the band demonstrating some evidence of the level above even if most of the response was firmly in the level below. Equally, students were awarded towards the bottom of the level if the answer did not consistently meet all the criteria of that level throughout the response.

Overall, there was little difference seen in the quality of the responses to the different areas of the specification content, and, to this extent, the questions proved effective at differentiating between students.

### **Question 1**

The source question was challenging and clearly differentiated between students when it came to their ability to assess value in relation to the question. Some students did this very well and were able to explain clearly why points were either valuable or limited in value in relation to the specific question set. These responses used contextual knowledge and were able to explore both value and limitations before reaching a judgement on each source in turn, which was very impressive.

Other students were implicit rather than explicit in their assessment of value. Some students were quite mechanical and would claim that a point was valuable without really explaining why – making the point seem like value was stated rather than fully explained or developed. Others would dismiss points as 'biased' whilst others argued whether the sources were or were not convincing rather than valuable. Nevertheless, most students were able to assess all three of the sources and provide at least some limited comment on each.

When assessing Source A, most students were aware that the author, Vauban, was in an informed position to comment on the defensive priorities of France towards the end of the Dutch War and suggested that this added value to the source when considering the policy of Reunions. Some students were able to analyse the provenance further and comment on the purpose and nature of the source to conclude that Vauban's motive was merely to record his observations in his personal diary, which would suggest that the source provided a valuable insight into some of the defensive reasons behind the policy of Reunions. Students who were able to analyse the content of the source successfully, alluded to the fact that the weaknesses to French border security described by Vauban in the source fitted consistently with their contextual knowledge of France at the end of the Dutch War. However, other students were less successful by attempting to suggest that the source lacked value as it only mentioned defensive rather than aggressive motivations.

When assessing the value of Source B, most students were able to comment successfully on the author of the source and how, as someone who had lived at Versailles during the 1680s, he would

be in a valuable position to comment on the Reunion policy. Whilst some students overstated the level of information that a diplomat from Brandenburg would have been privy to at Versailles, some students were able to successfully comment on how the source provided a valuable interpretation of the Reunion policy from an international perspective. Some students dismissed the source as 'biased' as the author was writing at a time when the alliance between France and Brandenburg had broken down. However, other students were able to engage with the critical tone of the source and argued that this was valuable, as the source provided an insight into the consequence of the Reunions policy on Louis XIV's international reputation.

When assessing the value of Source C, most students were aware of who Louvois was and why he would be a valuable author when considering the policy of Reunions. Most students commented on the nature of the source as a private letter and the fact that Louvois was writing to Louis XIV. Some students dismissed this as making the source 'biased', claiming that Louvois wanted to impress Louis without developing this point further. Other students acknowledged that the exaggeration in the source weakened its value, especially as the source stated that the response to the French invasion of Strasbourg was positively received. Stronger answers used contextual knowledge regarding Strasbourg as a protestant free city to explain why this was surprising and why it might limit the value of the source when considering the policy of Reunions.

When considering all three sources, stronger answers reached an overall judgement on the value of each source individually. Some students attempted to convey an overall judgement at the end of the answer, but this tended to be more of a comparison with the judgement centring around which source was the most valuable, which is not what the A Level source question asks for and was, therefore, neither rewarded nor penalised.

## Question 2

This question required students to consider Louis XIV's religious policy and whether the 1670s saw a period of change or continuity by comparing and contrasting with events earlier in the reign. Most students were able to correctly identify key religious issues from the 1670s, such as the Regale incident and the increasing persecution of the Huguenots at the end of the decade following the Dutch War to argue that there was some significant change. Students were able to balance their answers by looking at the foundations of Louis XIV's religious policy and argue that eradicating heresy remained consistent throughout his reign and, therefore, 1670s were consistent with this. Some students also considered the Jansenists and the continuation of the respectful silence of 1668 into the 1670s.

Some weaker answers did confuse events in the 1670s with events in the 1680s, for example by wrongly attributing the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes to the decade stated in the question. Others attempted to argue that the 1680s rather than the 1670s demonstrated a more significant change in Louis XIV's religious policy, which was not what the question was requiring students to assess.

The stronger answers considered how events in the 1670s suggested that Louis was accelerating policies from earlier in his reign rather than changing course. Both the Regale incident and the increasing persecution of Huguenots could also be seen merely as continuation of earlier policies.

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### Question 3

This was a popular question and most students were able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of the events leading up to the War of the Spanish Succession. Students were familiar with the Partition Treaties following the Nine Years War and how the will of Carlos II ignored the negotiations between William III of England and Louis XIV by leaving the whole of the Spanish inheritance to Philip of Anjou.

However, as students appeared to know the background to the dispute, it did result in some responses falling into long sections of description, rather than clearly linking this knowledge to the question. Some students failed to breach the gap between the will of Carlos II and the outbreak of the War, instead merely claiming that Louis XIV must be to blame for accepting the will on behalf of his grandson.

However, other students were able to use this to argue that as war did not break out immediately following Louis XIV's acceptance of the will and build this into a more analytical response. These students acknowledged that there were a series of blunders made by Louis XIV in the months leading up to war, such as declaring that his grandson would retain his claim on the French throne and sending French troops to the Dutch border forts. Students then considered how these actions would have been viewed by the other European powers and how this resulted in Emperor Leopold galvanising support against France and Spain.

Students had a secure knowledge of the actions of other European powers, particularly Emperor Leopold and were able to provide balance by considering the reasons behind some of Louis' aggressive actions. Students also referred to further contextual knowledge stemming back to the Nine Years War and the War of Reunions, but this was only utilised successfully when responses were able to make a direct link to the short term causes of the conflict. Some students attempted to blame the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession on the actions of either Emperor Leopold or Louis XIV in previous conflicts without successfully linking the point directly to the question.

### Question 4

The challenge in the last question lay in the date range stated, as this was sometimes disregarded by students. Some students referred to the whole later period of Louis XIV's reign, rather than focusing specifically on the period post 1704.

Those students who did engage with the date stated in the question were able to provide a balanced response when considering whether Louis XIV's authority declined. Students assessed the situation at home and considered the Huguenot revolts that were still occurring post 1704. Students also referenced the famine that occurred and the riots that followed to argue that Louis XIV was losing control in the provinces. Strong answers also considered control in relation to the nobility and how the lustre of Versailles was declining. Reference was made to the attempts to tax the nobility in the form of the Dixieme, and how this was evaded and exploited showing a lack of control. Some students referred to the influence of Madame de Maintenon, especially when it came to legitimising Louis XIV's illegitimate sons following the death of his heir in 1711.

Students were able to balance their answers by considering the nature of governance at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and start of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and argue that this period never saw a serious threat to royal control. Students acknowledged the impact of the War of the Spanish Succession with a focus on foreign rather than domestic policy during the period, but used this to show appreciation of all Louis XIV managed to achieve at home despite the challenges abroad. Students also acknowledged that

any suggested influences on Louis XIV tended to focus on policies that Louis XIV was likely to support himself.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.