

AP[®] EUROPEAN HISTORY

2007 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 7

Identify the grievances of the groups that made up the Third Estate in France on the eve of the French Revolution, and analyze the extent to which ONE of these groups was able to address its grievances in the period from 1789 to 1799.

8–9 Points

- Thesis is explicit and fully responsive to the question.
- Organization is clear, consistently followed, and effective in support of the argument. It addresses the 1789–91 period and may have awareness of events up to 1799.
- Essay is well balanced; all major topics suggested by the prompt are covered at some length. In addition, it responds to the tasks of the question (grievances, groups, and extent to which ONE group addressed its grievances) and identifies at least TWO specific groups and at least TWO specific grievances. The groups and grievances need not be linked.
- All major assertions in the essay are supported by multiple pieces of relevant evidence. The essay analyzes the ability of one group to address its grievances through the application of at least THREE examples of relevant evidence.
- May contain errors that do not detract from the analysis.

6–7 Points

- Thesis is explicit and responsive to the question.
- Organization is clear, effective in support of the argument, but not consistently followed. It addresses the 1789–91 period and may have awareness of events up to 1799.
- Essay is balanced; all major topics suggested by the prompt are covered at least briefly. In addition, it responds to the tasks of the question (grievances, groups, and extent to which ONE group addressed its grievances) and identifies at least TWO specific groups and at least TWO specific grievances. The groups and grievances need not be linked.
- All major assertions in the essay are supported by at least ONE piece of relevant evidence. The essay analyzes the ability of ONE group to address its grievances through the application of at least ONE example of relevant evidence. It may refer to more than ONE group and support that reference with at least ONE piece of relevant evidence.
- May contain an error that detracts from the analysis.

4–5 Points

- Thesis is explicit, but not fully responsive to the question. The essay may omit ONE task of the question (grievances, groups, and extent to which ONE group addressed its grievances).
- Organization is apparent but not consistently followed or ineffective; chronology may be limited or confused.
- Essay shows some imbalance; some major topics suggested by the prompt are neglected. It may identify at least ONE specific group and at least ONE specific grievance, OR may identify the ability of ONE group to address its grievances with the identification of at least ONE example of relevant evidence.
- May contain errors that detract from the argument.

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Question 7 (continued)

2–3 Points

- No explicit thesis or thesis that merely repeats/paraphrases the prompt.
- Organization is unclear and ineffective; awareness of chronology may be absent.
- Essay shows serious imbalance; major topics suggested by the prompt are neglected. It inadequately responds to tasks of the question (grievances, groups, extent of address) AND/OR refers to a single grievance AND/OR refers to a single example of the ability of the Third Estate to address a grievance.
- May contain several errors that detract from argument.

0–1 Point

- No discernible attempt at thesis.
- No discernible organization; chronology may be merely repetition of the prompt.
- One or none of the major topics suggested by the prompt is mentioned; little or no supporting evidence used. The essay refers to Third Estate as a single group OR refers to a single grievance of the Third Estate OR refers to a single example of the ability of the Third Estate to address a grievance.
- May contain numerous errors.

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Question 7 Historical Background

Material in this section is derived from the following texts:

Chambers et al., *The Western Experience*, 9th ed.

Hunt et al., *The Making of the West*, 2nd ed.

Kagan et al., *The Western Heritage*, 9th ed.

Kishlansky et al., *Civilization in the West*, 6th ed.

McKay et al., *A History of Western Society*, 8th ed.

Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe*, 2nd ed.

Palmer et al., *A History of the Modern World*, 10th ed.

“ . . . [T]he Old Regime had ceased to correspond with social reality by the 1780s. Legally, society was still based on rigid orders inherited from the Middle Ages. In reality, France had already moved far toward being a society based on wealth and education, where an emerging elite . . . was frustrated by a bureaucratic monarchy that continued to claim the right to absolute power” (McKay, 699).

Groups in the Third Estate

The population of France on the eve of the French Revolution consisted of three estates: the first (clergy), second (nobility), and third (commoners). The Third Estate, which constituted approximately 95 to 97 percent of the population, was highly diverse: it included the *bourgeoisie*, or “middle class”; the peasants (perhaps 80 percent of the total population of France); and the urban, or working, poor, who lived in all of the cities and towns of France, and were particularly influential in the city of Paris. Paris was by far the largest city in France, with a population of perhaps 600,000 people.

These groups were, in their turn, diverse as well. Many of the *bourgeoisie* were very wealthy, and many were well educated. Members of this group were lawyers, bankers, financiers, industrialists, scientists, and landowners. By the eighteenth century, serfdom no longer existed in France. To be sure, many peasants lived in poverty and had to obey remnants of feudal obligations, but many peasants were prosperous and owned their own land, and all peasants were legally free. Peasants were usually opposed to local authority, particularly the local nobility, but they tended to be vaguely royalist and fervently Catholic. The urban poor ranged from ordinary shopkeepers, skilled laborers and artisans, through all of the various forms of unskilled labor. Many were desperately poor. The working poor are often described as the *sans culottes* (without breeches). That phrase accurately describes the daily dress of the urban poor, but the concept more properly refers to a political philosophy that embraced radical (for the eighteenth century) forms of popular sovereignty, economic opportunity, and social interaction (types of dress and terms of address.) Some members of the *bourgeoisie*—Robespierre, for example—were closely allied with the *sans culottes*. Women were, at the time, not considered a separate group, but most modern textbooks consider them so, particularly urban women. These texts usually mention universal lack of political representation, economic hardship (price of bread), group action (march on Versailles, October 1789), and political theory or ambition (Olympe de Gouges, *The Rights of Women*, 1791) as unifying principles of this group.

Grievances of the Groups

A financial crisis of epic proportion—it developed over the course of more than a century—gripped France by the 1780s. The principal causes were a lack of income, based on an archaic system of taxation, and overspending. The monarchy was blamed for the over spending (Queen Marie Antoinette was known colloquially as “Madame Deficit”), but the more significant expense was the cost of more than a century of warfare and military spending. By the late 1780s, military spending constituted about 25 percent of the annual budget, and about 50 percent of the annual budget was applied to the interest on the accumulated debt (and not on retiring the principal). Perhaps 6 percent went to the monarchy, and that left only about

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Question 7 Historical Background (continued)

20 percent to run the entire nation. *The principal grievance was the “seemingly unwarranted privileges held by nobles and other corporate groups” (Merriman, 453), which meant the Catholic Church. The nobles were exempt from many forms of taxation, and the Church and clergy were exempt from all forms of taxation. The Third Estate bore the burden of taxation, and collections did not meet the expenses of the government. Many groups, particularly the bourgeoisie, resented the political structure of France. The authority of the French monarchy (theoretically, an absolute monarchy) and of the nobles’ councils (parlements) opposed the concepts of popular sovereignty embraced by the educated and the liberal. There was a general resentment of the privileges of the first two estates, as privilege opposed the concepts of “equality before the law” and “equality of opportunity.” Many bourgeoisie were well educated and had been imbued with an “enlightened” distrust of monarchy, religion, and tradition, which, they considered, were neither “rational” nor “natural.” The resentment of privilege naturally focused on the most privileged: the monarchy. Monarchical incompetence—Louis XVI was considered lazy, stupid, and naive; Marie Antoinette profligate, devious, and treasonous—was widely blamed for national problems. Finally, a series of unsuccessful wars resulted in a humiliating loss of territory in North America, the Caribbean, and India.*

A series of poor harvests in the 1780s affected all groups, but particularly the peasants. The government subsidized the price of grain, but there was less food and more economic instability. The peasants were subject to all taxes, and, in addition, to “feudal” obligations, such as the *corvée* (state labor) and “*banalités*” (payments to the lord). Peasant resentment resulted in widespread attack on noble property in the summer of 1789; this became a major factor in “the Great Fear.” Higher food costs also affected the urban poor, some bourgeoisie (employers), and housewives. In fact, the famous “women’s march on Versailles” began as a protest against the rising cost of bread. Political issues were also among the grievances of women. None of the several constitutions of the Revolution granted any political rights to any women, and most of the textbooks mention Olympe de Gouges, whose *The Rights of Women* was published in 1791. As the Revolution continued, the urban (working) poor became more committed to popular sovereignty and radical democracy; this was particularly significant in the Reign of Terror (1793-94).

Ability to Address Grievances, 1789-99

General Political Context of the French Revolution

Louis XVI responded to the financial crisis by summoning an Estates General, which met at Versailles in May and June 1789. Members of all three estates selected representatives, and Louis XVI allowed the “doubling of the third,” although he adamantly maintained the traditional principle of “vote by order.” The Third Estate overwhelmingly selected members of the bourgeoisie as its representatives. The collection of the famous *cahiers de doléances* and the publication of radical tracts, particularly *What Is the Third Estate?*, raised expectations of significant reform. This did not happen: the Estates General never recommended any reform to the king, who eventually attempted to turn out the representatives of the Third Estate. This led immediately to the convening of the National Assembly and adoption of the Tennis Court Oath (June 1789). The National Assembly enacted many important reforms, such as the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (August 1789), the abolition of privilege (August 1789), and the Constitution of 1791, which established the next government, the Legislative Assembly. This unicameral legislature, which defined “passive citizens” (those with civil rights) and “active citizens” (those who could vote and hold office), lasted only a little more than a year; it failed by August 1792, owing in no small part to political inexperience and the role of the urban poor. The next government, the Convention, ruled in theory from 1792 to 1795, but it had become ineffectual by the spring of 1793, doomed by war and political partisanship, particularly between two radical factions, the Girondins and the Jacobins. The ascendancy of the Jacobins led to the infamous Reign of Terror (1793-94), a violent dictatorship based on the principles of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in which the role of the urban poor was significant. The excesses of the Jacobins led to their downfall in the “Thermidorian Reaction” of July 1794; this led directly to the last government of

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Question 7 Historical Background (continued)

this period, the Directory (1795-99.) The Directory included a bicameral legislature elected by all male taxpayers, although only “men of property” could vote or hold office. It was an unstable government that survived all but the last of several coups d’état, that of Brumaire, Year VIII (November 1799). Napoleon Bonaparte was one of the conspirators in this plot.

Ability to Address Grievances (by Group)

BOURGEOISIE (“MIDDLE CLASS”)

Specific grievances

Eliminate noble and clerical privilege
 Tax exemption
 Political authority
Religious toleration
Civil/political rights
Protection from nobility

Extent of ability to address grievances

Estates General (May–June 1789)
National Constituent Assembly (1789-91)
Tennis Court Oath (June 1789)
Destruction of privilege (August 1789)
Declaration of the Rights of Man (August 1789)
Constitution of 1791
Legislative Assembly (1791-92)
 Limited monarchy (unicameral legislature)
 “Active” and “passive citizens”
 Religious toleration
 Confiscation of church property
National Convention (1792-95)
 Monarchy abolished (First Republic)
 Universal male suffrage
Reign of Terror (June 1793–July 1794)
 “Republic of Virtue”
Directory (1795-99)
 “Men of property”
 Restriction of the urban poor

PEASANTS

Specific grievances

Taxes, feudal obligations
Agricultural problems/high price of bread
Protection from nobility
Protection from political radicalism

Extent of ability to address grievances

Attack on châteaux (July–August 1789)
 Civil/political rights (limited)
“Great Fear” (August–September 1789)
Destruction of privilege (August 1789)
Declaration of the Rights of Man (August 1789)
Constitution of 1791
 “Passive citizens”
National Convention (1792-95)
 Monarchy abolished (First Republic)
 Universal male suffrage
Rural revolt (1793)

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Question 7 Historical Background (continued)

URBAN POOR (“SANS CULOTTES”)

Specific grievances

High grain prices, unemployment
Civil/political rights (limited)
Protection from nobles
Democracy (1793-95)

Extent of ability to address grievances

Public demonstrations, attack on Bastille
Destruction of privilege (August 1789)
Declaration of the Rights of Man (August 1889)
Constitution of 1791
“Passive citizens”
Attack on Tuileries (August 1792)
September massacres (September 1792)
Convention (1792-95)
Monarchy abolished (First Republic)
Universal male suffrage
Reign of Terror (June 1793–July 1794)
“Republic of Virtue”

WOMEN

Specific grievances

High grain prices, unemployment
Civil/political rights (limited)

Extent of ability to address grievances

March on Versailles (October 1789)
Constitution of 1791
“Passive citizens”
Some civil rights (divorce, property, financial support)
Olympe de Gouges, *The Rights of Women* (1791)

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On the eve of the French Revolution, there were hundreds of grievances among the Third Estate. King Louis XVI was plagued by cahiers d' doléances (lists of grievances), which ranged from the absurd to things that had to be dealt with to try and prevent revolution. While the Third Estate consisted of the largest percentage of Parisians who were peasants, or merchants, or lawyers, it was the upper bourgeoisie that was most greatly able to address its grievances.

With the eve of the Revolution in sight the biggest grievances of the Third Estate, were those which dealt with representation and the weight of the large Third Estate's vote. Although Louis XVI granted the Third Estate a greater number of representatives to the highly populated Third Estate, the votes between all three estates were equal. This presented a problem because the first estate (which consisted of the clergy) and the second estate (consisted of the nobility) would always outnumber

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The Third Estate in their roles, making it impossible to make ~~any~~ any gains; economically, politically, etc. The upper middle class ~~known~~, known as the bourgeoisie which made up most of the represented Third Estate, wanted to be recognized by the ~~the~~ monarch in the same way that the nobility were recognized. It was through this grievance that the Third Estate got so angry when Louis XVI left them waiting for almost two hours until he could see the credentials of the First and Second Estate. There were also many grievances of the peasantry who were struggling under the back-breaking taxes placed upon them, coupled with food shortages and bad harvests left a disgruntled peasantry on the breaking point.

While each group of the Third Estate had many grievances, it was this upper middle bourgeoisie class that was able to have their grievances addressed by the monarch, and see results. After the incident of the credentials, the repres

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representatives of the Third Estate came to their boiling point when ~~they~~ they found that their chamber to meet in had been locked. Outraged, they went to a local tennis court, and swore the Tennis Court oath stating they would not back down until a new constitution had been written. Louis XVI then granted that the estates General combine into a one body legislature called the National Assembly. This not only gave the Third Estate more political say so, but also addressed their ~~problem~~ dislike of the three estates meeting separately. Under the National Assembly, a new constitution was written which granted ^{universal} male suffrage and also levied equal taxes among each class.

On the eve of the ~~the~~ French Revolution, each group within the Third Estate was disgruntled to say the least. Each had lists of grievances which continually went unanswered by the monarchs. But, it was with the

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Tennis court oath that these disgruntled people were finally able to have their grievances addressed with results.

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The French Revolution is often compared to the American Revolution. They have their differences and similarities. Just like the Patriots were dissatisfied with the American Government, the Third Estate was angered by the French government. The French Revolution was severe especially on the day of the demolition of the Bastille. In the period of 1789 to 1799, some of the grievances that the Third Estate made was a complaint about the high taxes, complaint about the nobility control and exemption from tax paying, as well as extreme poverty and the disconnection of the French monarch Louis the 16th had with the French people. The sans-culottes were able to address its grievances from the period of 1789 to 1799.

The third estate; the women, peasants and sansculottes, basically (the non-clergy, non-aristocrats and nobility were completely dissatisfied and angry with the fact that because of the French and in the 7 years war, the French was in massive debt. What Louis 16th and the monarchy did with this

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debt was have the people pay for it.

This angered the third estate much, leading them to take the Tennis Court Oath in the later years.

Another annoyance was the fact that the nobility was exempted from paying these taxes. This especially annoyed the sans-culotte and was one of the points they wrote in the declaration of the rights of man that all men should be created equal just like in the American Declaration of Independence.

A major factor also was the fact that France was in extreme poverty. It was very difficult to ~~give~~ buy bread because it was so expensive of the taxes and inflation. The peasants were extremely angry with this.

Yet another grievance was a complaint of the unjust monarchy. Louis XVI did not have a close relationship at all with his people; he barely knew what was going on in France and would take vacations and hunting trips. The third estate was angry that he was not doing anything about

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The poverty levels. The people, especially women were angry at the fact that France was in extreme poverty while Louis and Marie Antoinette were living lavish and over the top lives. There was an extreme group of women who attacked Marie Antoinette and her extraordinary outfits.

All of these factors led to the night of the Bastille; the demolition and overthrowing of the monarchy. After this the Declaration of the Rights of man were written with similar rights like the equality of man, freedom of speech and press etc. Next came the directory with the factions of the Jacobins and Girondins. Next came the Great Fear as well as the Reign of Terror with Robespierre. After that came the next Louis and Napoleon to the rescue later. The one group that was most influential of the third estate was the Sons-of-the-Foxes. Overall, the grievances were the complaints on taxes, dissatisfaction of the inequality of the nobility and

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the disconnection of the monarchy and the people.

Lined area for writing the answer.

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The French government was on the brink of a violent revolution. A large contributor of this cause was the system of first, second, and third estates. Each estate was given a size and weight in votes. However, ~~the~~ trying to maintain power in the upper class, the first estate held the most vote weight and third being the least despite it representing the largest population.

The French peasants, which made up the Third Estate in the French society saw the system as unjust. They wanted a democratic system where voice of the population would be weighted equally with the First Estates and Second Estates.

Whenever ~~the~~ the Third Estate try to pass a law ~~is~~ that did not benefit the upper or middle class, it ~~was~~ was voted against by both Estates.

In retaliation to the unjust nature of the French government, the 3rd Estate went to the assembly to protest but found that the doors had been locked and them shut out. Improvising, the mass went to a nearby tennis

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court and ~~the~~ conducted the assembly there. Hence, it was known as the Tennis Court Oath. The oath they made was to make the king aware of the injustice towards the peasants.

The Third Estate had been given an opportunity to participate into law making. Being the peasant class, this was exciting news but after finding the truth behind the generosity, they retaliated. Soon, the First and Second Estates witnessed the true power of the mass as they overran the cities and tried to fluxuate the power into harmony.

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Question 7

Overview

The parameters of this question were well within the principles of the Course Description. It was a social history question involving a mainstream subject with which students should be quite familiar: the grievances of the Third Estate in France on the eve of the revolution. And although it was, in general, a social history question, students could respond in a variety of modes: social, political, economic, and/or intellectual.

Sample: 7A

Score: 9

This exceptional essay recognizes the variety of groups among the *bourgeoisie* and specifically—and seamlessly—details how the upper middle class addressed its grievances in the context of 1789. Allusion is also made to the Constitution of 1791. The peasantry and one of its grievances are mentioned, but these factors are not included in the analytical structure of the essay; this does not detract from the overall quality of the response nor prevent the student from receiving full credit for the essay.

Sample: 7B

Score: 5

This essay identifies several groups and grievances and attempts to show how two groups (*sans culottes* and women) addressed their respective complaints. However, the essay conflates, in the context of the events of 1789, the roles of the *sans culottes* and the *bourgeoisie*. It also tries to link the grievances and the actions of women, but it misconstrues the conclusion of the women's march on Versailles in October 1789. The final third of the essay devolves into a chronological narrative.

Sample: 7C

Score: 3

This essay identifies one grievance and mentions the peasants, but confuses that group with the Third Estate. The student then inaccurately discusses the role of a group that has not been identified, the *bourgeoisie*. This essay attempts to respond to the terms of the question but does so inaccurately.