

Unit 3 covers two themes on an extended period of at least 100 years, each with a focus on change, continuity, similarity and difference. You will show understanding of the main developments and turning points. The emphasis is on developing and interpreting a broad overview of the period studied. The examination tests this by asking two different types of questions.

In Section A, in which you choose one of two questions, you are required to answer a question covering a shorter timeframe, usually about 15–40 years.

### Section A – Specific events in a narrower timeframe.

**2019 Question 1:** ‘To what extent did the Reform Act of 1832 successfully address demands for parliamentary reform during the period from 1793 to 1832?’

#### The command term:

The command term is **to what extent**. So, in the context of **this** question, you will focus on the main idea in the question – **the Reform Act of 1832** – and make an argument that considers it in relation to other relevant factors – **successfully addressed the demand for parliamentary reform – in the context of the period – 1793 to 1832**. Your aim is to **make a consistent and balanced judgement that is supported by factual evidence**.

#### The named issue – The Reform Act of 1832.

- Calls to reform Parliament had existed since the middle of the Eighteenth Century. They grew as the industrial revolution re-ordered the structure of society against a backdrop of a growth and redistribution of the population.
- The demands focused on two main areas: firstly, the franchise, the issue of who amongst the adult male population was entitled to vote; secondly, the distribution of parliamentary seats to reflect more accurately where the population lived.
- In 1801 the House of Commons comprised of 658 members, of whom 513 represented England and Wales. There were two types of constituencies: counties and boroughs. All counties in England returned 2 MPs as did each borough. In Wales, each county had 1 MP (Monmouthshire had 2) as did each borough.
- The distribution of seats varied widely. The Midlands, North of England and South Wales were under-represented compared to the South. Lancashire in 1831 had a population of 1.3 million and only 14 MP's, while Cornwall had a population of 300,000 people and only had 42 MP's.
- 56 boroughs had fewer than 40 voters while expanding industrial cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds had no MP's. Very small constituencies were known as Rotten or Pocket Boroughs as they either sold their votes or were controlled by individuals. Old Sarum, a ruined mound had 7 voters. Dunwich had been eroded by the sea. The eligibility to vote depended, in some circumstances, on the ownership of property not residency.
- Franchise qualification in county constituencies was based on the ownership of land worth forty shillings (£2). Voting qualifications in the boroughs could vary widely. The system was far from democratic. Of the 202 boroughs in England, only 7 of them had over 5,000 voters, while 56 had fewer than 50 voters.
- Voting was open, and this led to widespread corruption and intimidation when elections were held. In 1831 out of a British population of 24 million the electorate included only 500,000 men.

#### Areas of debate – Did the 1832 Act successfully address the demand for parliamentary reform?

- 56 small boroughs lost their MP's, and these were redistributed to large industrial towns and counties. This was the start of enfranchising the new urban areas of the country. However, there remained 35 boroughs with less than 300

voters, while Liverpool had 11,300.

- Although the franchise increased to 813,000 it was still far from democratic, leaving most working-class men in towns and the countryside still without a vote.
- The Act did not introduce a secret ballot, allowing intimidation and bribery to continue. The extension of the vote to tenants-at-will paying an annual rent of £50 (The Chandos clause), reinforced the control of large landowners over rural constituencies.
- Even though the 1832 Reform Act was a disappointment to radical politicians and the working class, it did mark a first tentative step towards parliamentary reform.

#### The required timeframe:

**1789:** The French Revolution broke out with the storming of the Bastille on 14 July, being a key event. The Absolute monarchy was replaced by a Constitutional one. A limited measure of democracy was created by the Constitution of 1791.

**1792:** During a Second French Revolution the Bourbon Monarchy of Louis XVI was overthrown, and a Republic was established. Charles Grey, a Whig politician founded a group to argue the case for parliamentary reform known as the Society of the Friends of the People (SFP). In the same year the London Corresponding Society (LCS) was founded by Thomas Hardy. Among its aims was to secure annual parliaments and universal male suffrage.

**1793:** Following the execution of Louis XVI in January, extreme Democrats known as Jacobin brought in a new and far more democratic Constitution. Grey introduced a petition from the SFP asking the House of Commons and William Pitt to inquire into changes to the electoral process. Fear of revolution in Britain saw to request defeated by almost 200 votes.

**1799:** The LCS and other like-minded organisations were banned by the government.

**1809:** Sir Francis Burdett a prominent radical MP introduced a scheme for parliamentary reform, but it was heavily defeated in the House of Commons. He tried again in 1817 and 1818 with similar outcomes.

**1812:** John Cartwright and others found the Hampden Club in London to further political debate and argued the case for parliamentary reform.

**1819:** A large peaceful pro-reform rally of around 60,000 people was held in St. Peter's Field in Manchester. It was addressed by the leading radical Henry 'Orator' Hunt. Alarmed at the size, local MP's ordered its dispersal. This was brutally carried out by the local Yeomanry and in the resulting chaos and panic there were eleven deaths and large numbers of people injured. This shocking event was known as the Peterloo Massacre.

**1820:** The Whig politician Lord John Russell introduced a modest Bill to disenfranchise the corrupt Cornish borough of Grampound and re-distribute its seats to the industrial county of Yorkshire. It was approved by both the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

**1828:** Russell suggested that Parliament abolished the corrupt boroughs of Penryn and East Retford, and transfer their seats to the large industrial towns of Manchester and Birmingham. The measure was rejected by the House of Lords.

Questions can broadly be broken down into four parts:

1. The command term

2. The named issue

3. Areas of debate (leading to a judgement)

4. The required timeframe

Consideration of all of these is essential to a well-argued and historically justified answer.

In Section B, there is one compulsory question. It covers the duration of the timeframe or a period of at least 100 years. You will need to draw on material from across the timeframe

Questions can broadly be broken down into four parts:

1. The command term

2. The named issue

3. Areas of debate (leading to a judgement)

4. The required timeframe

Consideration of all of these is essential to a well-argued and historically justified answer.

### Section B – Developments across a prolonged timeframe

**2019 Question 1:** ‘The power of government was mainly responsible for the failure of most popular protest movements in the period from 1780 to 1885.’ Discuss.

#### The command term:

The command term is **Discuss**. So, in the context of **this** question, you will focus on the main idea in the question – **the power of government** – and make an argument that considers its relation to other relevant factors – **the failure of protest** – in the context of the period – **1780 to 1885**. Your aim is to **make a consistent and balanced judgement that is supported by factual evidence**.

#### The named issue – Why did most popular protest movements fail?

- Post war discontent from 1815 to 1820 was confronted by the full range of state coercion both overt (use of the military and Yeomanry) and covert (agent provocateurs and government spies).
- Events during 1831 – the Swing Riots and Merthyr Rising saw the authorities deploy considerable force and use the full weight of the law to deter rioters.
- The Chartist Movement was deeply divided on the tactics which it could deploy to achieve its ends. Physical Force and Moral force Chartism appealed to differing sections of the working class and undermined any unity which was required to argue for an overly ambitious programme of reform.
- Where the Rebecca Riots were concerned, a case can be made that their initial protest against the turnpike system was successful as the government set up a Commission of Enquiry, which resulted in legislation to limit the number of Turnpike Trusts and Toll gates in each county.
- Early Trade Unions such as the GNCTU while attracting a mass membership, were weak and the case of the Tolpuddle Martyrs undermined their attempts at solidarity.

#### Areas of debate – Was the power of government solely responsible for the failure?

- During the French Wars (1793 to 1815) and the post-war period (1815 to 1820), the government deployed the full power of the state to suppress all disturbance. They ensured that the full weight of the law was used, and many rioters were executed, imprisoned or transported. Spies and agent provocateurs infiltrated various organisations and leading activists were arrested. The army and local military were used for any disturbances. The state it can plausibly be argued was unwavering in its determination to prevent revolution and radical reform during this period.
- Some movements such as Chartism failed in the short term because they were deeply divided over the strategy and tactics that could be used to achieve the six-point charter. Moral Force Chartist opposed those who favoured physical force. A disunited movement was less likely to achieve its goals. It could also be argued that the Chartist programme was far too ambitious for any government at the time to consider granting.

- Many movements flourished in times of economic depression (1838-39; 1842; 1847-4), when the economy improved, unemployment fell and wages rose, there was less imperative to protest. In a way Chartism was a “knife and fork, a bread and cheese question.” As the prominent radical William Cobbett noted: ‘I defy you to agitate any fellow with a full stomach.’
- Not all movements failed. The Rebecca Rioters did manage to achieve a reduction in the number of toll gates and turnpike trusts. Those demanding parliamentary reform in the 1820s did see the government pass the First Reform act in 1832, and although it fell far short of their demands, it was a tacit acknowledgment that there were significant failings in the system and paved the way for further instalments in 1867, 1872 and 1884.

#### The required timeframe:

**1789:** Outbreak of the French Revolution which initially created a constitutional monarchy, which was overthrown in 1792 and replaced by a Republic.

**1792:** The London Corresponding Society (LCS) was founded by Thomas Hardy.

**1793:** Aliens Act prevented any French Republican from coming to Britain, and stopped the exchange of visitors and speakers.

**1794:** The writ of Habeas Corpus was suspended allowing authorities to arrest individuals on suspicion without bringing charges, trial or appearance before magistrates.

**1795:** Seditious Meetings Act restricted the size of public meetings to fifty people. The Treasonable Practices Act extended the definition of ‘treason’ to include speaking and writing, even if no actions were followed. It made holding public meetings, clubs, and the publication of pamphlets extremely difficult.

**1799:** The Combination Act made all trade unions and collective bargaining by workers illegal.

**1811:** The Luddite movement started among factory workers in Nottingham. Against a background of high unemployment, they destroyed machinery which they believed contributed to this. The destruction spread rapidly throughout England over the following two years.

**1815-19:** A variety of protests occurred throughout the country, among the most noteworthy were: The Spa Fields Riots (1815), Pentrich Rebellion (1817). March of the Blanketeers was organised by Manchester radicals with the intention of marching to London to petition the Prince Regent over the desperate state of the textile industry in Lancashire.

**1819:** Peterloo Massacre in Manchester, when local Yeomanry killed 11 people and injured hundreds while dispersing during a mass meeting to demand parliamentary reform.

**1819:** The Six Acts (‘The Gag Acts’) were a collective attempt to suppress meetings for the purpose of radical reform and to disseminate anti-government literature.

**1820:** The Cato Street Conspiracy and attempt by Arthur Thistlewood and others to assassinate the Cabinet, thwarted by government spies.

**1824:** Repeal of the Combination Acts, but strikes were made difficult as peaceful picketing was banned.

**1830:** The Swing Riots - labourers in the south of England destroyed farm machinery which they blamed for the loss of their jobs.

**1831:** Merthyr Riots – large scale disturbances in Merthyr in support of reform resulted in crowd controlling the town before authorities restored order.

**1834:** Robert Owen set up the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union - the first mass union to represent all workers.

**1834:** Tolpuddle Martyrs, six Dorset farm workers were tried for organising a trade union branch and were sentenced to transportation to Australia.

**1838:** The People's Charter is drawn up. Its six points demand wholesale changes to the reformed Parliament and the franchise.

**1839:** Chartist activity in Monmouthshire results in an uprising in Newport, resulting in the deaths of 20 rioters. John Frost and two other leaders were transported. In West Wales, the Rebecca Riots break out and caused largely by poverty among tent farmers. They last intermittently until 1843. A first Chartist petition signed by over a million people is presented to the House of Commons but is rejected.

**1842:** Second Chartist petition of over 3 million signatures rejected by the Commons. Divisions open among the Chartists over tactics to advance their cause either Physical Force or Moral Force.

**1848:** A third petition (also rejected) was presented to Parliament and a mass meeting held on Kennington Common. Following this rejection, the movement declined.

**1851:** The first of the New Model Unions was founded – The Amalgamated Society of Engineers. These expand and grow in influence during the 1870's and 1880's.

**1865:** Reform League formed to demand manhood suffrage and a secret ballot.

**1867:** Hyde Park Riots during campaign to secure the Second Reform Act.

**1868:** The Trade Union Congress was set up to represent the interests of all Unions and campaign for their legalisation (granted in 1871).

### Think like an historian

To reach a valid and supported conclusion, you must consider a range of evidence, and a range of viewpoints, weigh them up and make a judgement on their worth.

### Key words

Analyse \* Concepts and perspectives \* Key issues and content \* Debate \* Continuity and change \* Similarity and difference \* Evidence \* Judgement