3.5 The Dutch Golden Age

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 24 marks**

KEY WORDS Dutch Republic • fluyt • Bank of Amsterdam • tolerance • regent • decline

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on the **Dutch Golden Age** (about 1600–1700): how a small republic became Europe's leading trading power, its banks and companies, its tolerance, and why it declined.

You must be able to:

- explain the causes of Dutch commercial success
- explain how the Dutch government and society differed from absolute monarchies
- explain why Dutch power declined after about 1670

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

Causes of success

cause	detail
shipping	the *fluyt* , a cheap cargo ship with a small crew; the largest merchant fleet in Europe
finance	the **Bank of Amsterdam** (1609); the Amsterdam stock exchange; low interest rates
companies	the Dutch East India Company (VOC, 1602) and West India Company (1621)
location	the mouth of the Rhine; the Baltic grain trade (the "mother trade")
tolerance	refugees (Protestants from the south, Jews from Iberia, Huguenots) brought skills and capital

Government

The **Dutch Republic** : seven provinces, each with its own estates; a States General for shared matters; a *stadtholder* (often from the House of Orange) led the army. Rich merchant families (regents) ran the towns. Power was spread out, not held by one ruler.

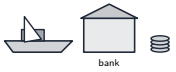
Decline (after about 1670)

Wars with England (the Navigation Acts) and France (Louis XIV invaded in 1672); a small population; English and French competition in trade and empire. The Dutch stayed rich but were no longer the leading power by about 1715.

Answer shapes: link one cause (shipping, finance, tolerance) to a specific institution or group.

2 Practice

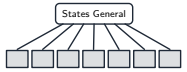
2.1 Identify two reasons for Dutch commercial success in the 1600s. [2]



2.2 Explain how religious tolerance helped the Dutch economy. [3]



2.3 Explain how the Dutch Republic's government differed from an absolute monarchy. [3]



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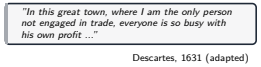
3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Read the source.

> "In this great town, where I am the only person not engaged in trade, everyone is so busy with his own profit that I could live here all my life without ever being noticed by anyone."

René Descartes, letter from Amsterdam, 1631 (adapted)

(a) Identify what Descartes says about the people of Amsterdam. [1]



(b) Explain why a philosopher such as Descartes chose to live in the Dutch Republic. [1]

(c) Explain one reason the source might give an incomplete picture of Amsterdam. [1]

3.2 The table shows the estimated size of European merchant fleets about 1670.

country	merchant ships (tonnes)
Dutch Republic	about 570,000
England	about 260,000
France	about 100,000

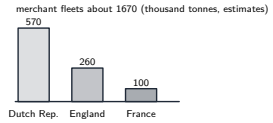
(a) Identify roughly how many times larger the Dutch fleet was than the English fleet. [1]

(b) Explain one reason Dutch ships were cheaper to run than others. [2]

(c) Explain how the Bank of Amsterdam helped trade. [2]

(d) Explain why Louis XIV's invasion of 1672 was a turning point. [2]

(e) Explain why the Dutch Republic declined as a great power after about 1670. [3]



(f) Explain how far the Dutch Republic was a model of a new kind of state. [3]

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Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

any two, for example: cheap, efficient ships such as the fluyt; the Bank of Amsterdam and low interest rates; the VOC; a good location for trade; religious tolerance that attracted skilled refugees

2.2

the Dutch allowed people of different faiths to live and work, even if they could not always worship in public; so Protestant refugees from the southern Netherlands, Sephardic Jews and Huguenots settled there; they brought skills, money and trade links, for example in banking, printing and diamond cutting

2.3

power was shared between seven provinces, each with its own assembly; a States General decided shared matters such as war and foreign policy; and rich merchants in the towns had great influence, unlike in France, where the king held most power

3.1

(a) they were all busy with trade and their own profit

(b) the Republic was more tolerant and had freer printing than most states, so he could write and publish in peace

(c) he was a foreign visitor describing his own experience; Amsterdam also had poor workers, religious disputes and town government he does not mention

3.2

(a) a little over twice as large (about 2.2 times)

(b) the fluyt was simply built with a large cargo space; and it needed a small crew, so wages were low

(c) it held merchants' deposits safely and moved money between accounts without coins; so payments were quick and reliable, and merchants from all over Europe used it

(d) France invaded and nearly conquered the Republic in the "Disaster Year"; after this the Dutch had to spend heavily on armies and allied with England against France

(e) costly wars with England and France drained money; its small population could not match larger states' armies and navies; and Britain and France built their own fleets, companies and empires, taking trade away

(f) a judgement with evidence on both sides; new: a republic run by merchants, with tolerance, a free press and modern finance, unlike absolute monarchies; limits: power was held by a small elite of regent families, the stadtholder acted like a prince at times, and the VOC used force and slavery overseas

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