5.1 Contextualizing 18th-Century States

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 22 marks**

KEY WORDS Estates-General • Third Estate • privilege • national debt • revolution • coup

Objective

Build the skills to set the **context** for Unit 5 (about 1750–1815): growing world trade, Britain's rise, the French Revolution, Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna and the Romantic reaction.

You must be able to:

- describe the main developments in Europe from about 1750 to 1815
- explain how war, debt and new ideas led to revolution
- write context for a question about the French Revolution or Napoleon

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

The broad picture

development	what was true
world trade	Atlantic trade in sugar, tobacco, cotton and enslaved Africans made merchants and states rich
wars	Britain and France fought for colonies (Seven Years' War, 1756–63; American War of Independence, 1775–83)
debt	these wars left France deeply in debt
ideas	Enlightenment ideas of rights, consent and equality spread through print
revolution	the French Revolution (1789) ended absolute monarchy and the privileges of the nobles
Napoleon	from 1799 he ruled France and conquered much of Europe until 1815
reaction	the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) restored monarchs; Romantic artists praised feeling and the nation

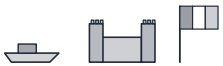
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War costs + an unfair tax system + bad harvests + new ideas = a crisis that the old government could not solve.

Answer shapes: a context sentence names a broad development, gives one example and links it to the topic.

2 Practice

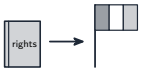
2.1 Identify two developments in Europe between 1750 and 1815. [2]



2.2 Explain how wars contributed to the financial crisis in France before 1789. [3]



2.3 Explain one way Enlightenment ideas contributed to the French Revolution. [3]



3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Read the source.

> "What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been until now in the political order? Nothing. What does it ask? To become something."

Abbé Sieyès, pamphlet, January 1789

(a) Identify what Sieyès says the Third Estate has been until now. [1]

"What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been until now in the political order? Nothing. What does it ask? To become something."
Sieyès, January 1789

(b) Explain what Sieyès meant by "Everything". [1]

(c) Explain one reason this pamphlet was popular in 1789. [1]

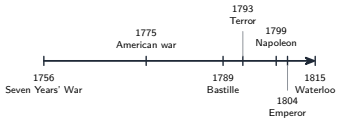
3.2 The timeline shows key events from 1756 to 1815.

(a) Identify the year the Bastille was stormed. [1]

(b) Explain how the American War of Independence affected France. [2]

(c) Explain why the king called the Estates-General in 1789. [2]

(d) Explain how Napoleon was able to take power in 1799. [3]



(e) Write a context paragraph for the question: "Why did revolution break out in France in 1789?" [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: the growth of Atlantic trade; the French Revolution of 1789; Napoleon's conquest of Europe; Britain's rise as the leading trading and naval power; the Congress of Vienna; Romanticism

2.2

France fought costly wars against Britain, including the Seven Years' War; and it paid for the American War of Independence, which cost over a billion livres; so by the 1780s about half of the government's spending went on interest on its debts, and it could no longer borrow

2.3

thinkers such as Locke and Rousseau argued that government needs the consent of the people; educated members of the Third Estate read these ideas in books, pamphlets and newspapers; so in 1789 they claimed to speak for the nation and demanded a constitution and equal rights

3.1

(a) nothing

(b) the Third Estate did almost all the work and paid most of the taxes, so it was really the whole nation

(c) the king had called the Estates-General, so people were debating who should have power, and many in the Third Estate were angry that the first two estates could outvote them

3.2

(a) 1789

(b) France paid for an army and navy to help the Americans, which added greatly to its debt; and French soldiers came home having seen a successful fight for rights against a king

(c) France was bankrupt and the nobles refused new taxes without the Estates-General's consent; so Louis XVI called it, for the first time since 1614, to approve new taxes

(d) the Directory was weak, corrupt and unpopular; Napoleon was a famous general after his victories in Italy; so with the support of the army and some politicians, he overthrew the Directory in the coup of 18 Brumaire and became First Consul

(e) a broad development, for example: costly wars had left France bankrupt; a second, for example: Enlightenment ideas of rights and consent had spread; linked: so when bad harvests raised bread prices in 1788–89, the Third Estate challenged the king and the privileged orders

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