

7.5 The Age of Progress and Modernity

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to explain **positivism** 实证主义 and the loss of confidence.

You must be able to:

- state positivism's claim and its reach
- state the two shifts that produced modernism
- explain why the CED calls this a tension rather than progress
- distinguish two different doubts

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Positivism

The philosophy that **science alone** provides knowledge, emphasising rational and scientific analysis of nature **and human affairs**. Society becomes an object of scientific study.

■ Two shifts

In the later nineteenth century a new relativism in values **and** the loss of confidence in the objectivity of knowledge led to modernism in intellectual and cultural life.

■ Tension not progress

The confident claim and its collapse are decades apart, which is why the thread is a see-saw. Describing the century as steady progress toward science misstates it.

■ Two doubts

Relativism in **values** doubts what is good; loss of confidence in **objectivity** doubts what can be known. Distinguishing them costs nothing and makes an answer precise.

2 Practice

2.1 State positivism's claim and its reach. [2]

2.2 State the two shifts that produced modernism. [2]

2.3 Two different doubts arise in the later century.

(a) Name them. [2]

(b) State the difference. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Positivism holds that knowledge comes from [1]

- **A** tradition
 - **B** science alone
 - **C** revelation
 - **D** intuition
-

3.2 Modernism is described by the CED as [1]

- **A** a style choice
 - **B** a consequence of the loss of confidence in objectivity
 - **C** a scientific method
 - **D** a political programme
-

3.3 A century opens in confidence and closes in doubt.

(a) State what this shows about the thread. [1]

(b) Explain why "progress toward science" misdescribes it.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **7.5 The Age of Progress and Modernity** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **19th-Century Perspectives and Political Developments** section of the AP European History handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 that science alone provides knowledge; reaching both nature and human affairs.

2.2 a new relativism in values; the loss of confidence in the objectivity of knowledge.

2.3 (a) relativism in values; doubt about the objectivity of knowledge. (b) one doubts what is good, the other what can be known.

3.1 B. the strong version of the claim.

3.2 B. the CED presents it as a consequence.

3.3 (a) that it is a tension rather than a direction. (b) the strongest claim for science was made and then collapsed within decades, so the century ends further from confident objectivity than it began.