Answers

Key Topic 1 Britain and the French Wars, 1793–1815

Page 11, Complete the paragraph
The naval mutinies in 1797 were a threat to Britain’s naval supremacy. On 16 April 1797, Admiral Lord Briport ordered the fleet at Spithead to sea. The crews of every ship refused the command. Discontent centered on the quality of food, pay and brutal officers. There is no evidence that the seamen were much affected by the spirit of the French Revolution. Many officers sympathised with their men and the mutiny was conducted in a civilised way. Following a petition to the Admiralty, the government agreed to raise wages and made concessions on some other issues. As legislation to improve matters ground through Parliament, a fresh mutiny, led by petty officers, broke out on 7 May. Lord Howe dealt in person with the mutiny, guaranteeing that the men’s demands would be met. On 12 May, a more serious mutiny broke out at the Nore. The mutineers had more far-reaching demands, including the power of veto over officers. The Nore mutineers were joined by the North Sea Fleet. Pitt’s government, determined to make no further concessions, took steps to isolate and starve the mutineers. The mutiny ended in mid-June when moderate sailors wrested control from the radicals. 29 leading mutineers were executed. The mutinies were serious. It seemed that the navy’s most valuable asset – its discipline – was on the verge of collapse. Accordingly, for a few weeks in mid-1797 the Royal Navy did not rule the waves and Britain might well have been invaded.

Page 11, Eliminate irrelevance
In 1795, Sir John Jervis took over command in the Mediterranean, replacing Hood. Jervis, who loathed inefficiency, set about whipping the fleet into shape. He forged an excellent relationship with those officers (like Nelson) whom he trusted and respected. In 1796, the situation deteriorated when the Netherlands and Spain changed sides joining France against Britain. The Royal Navy, now facing far more enemy ships, was seriously strained. The main British fleet was stationed at Spithead (off Portsmouth), leaving just fifteen battleships to blockade Brest, where double that number of French ships were preparing to break out. Jervis, meanwhile, stationed the bulk of his force off Cadiz, facing the main Spanish fleet. On 14 February 1797, Jervis's fleet encountered a Spanish force almost twice the size of his own at the Battle of Cape St Vincent. Confident in the skills of his men, Jervis attacked, his ships cutting through the enemy line. Jervis knew that the Royal Navy’s strength was the discipline and teamwork of his men. While some operated guns, others worked aloft, furling and unfurling sails. The gunners were particularly well-trained. The speed at which guns fired usually determined the outcome of naval battles. Jervis’s seamen could unleash a broadside every minute and a half – much faster than their enemies. Nelson played a major role. Acting with speed and courage, he boarded and captured the much larger San Josef. Jervis won a great victory, capturing four enemy ships and driving the rest back into Cadiz. He was now ennobled as the Earl of St Vincent and soon became the head of the Channel Fleet.

Page 13, Spot the mistake
The paragraph does not get into Level 4 because, although the examples are focused on the question, they lack specific detail.

Page 13, Develop the detail
The battle of Trafalgar was a decisive victory. But it did not prevent a French invasion which had already been postponed. Nor did it have much impact on the remainder of the war of the Third Coalition. Two months after Trafalgar, Napoleon triumphed at Austerlitz, knocking Austria out of the war. Prussia and Russia were both defeated by 1807. Nevertheless, after Trafalgar the Royal Navy achieved an aura of invincibility and was not seriously challenged by the French for the remainder of the war. This meant that the Royal Navy could transport troops and supplies to Spain and Portugal after 1808. It could blockade most of Napoleon's main ports. It could seize French and Dutch colonies. Its frigates could terrorise European coastlines, damaging local trade and tying down large numbers of enemy troops.

Key Topic 2 The Crimean War, 1854–6

Page 23, Develop the detail
The quality of British military command was a cause of concern. Lord Raglan, appointed to command the Crimean Army, was 55. He had served on Wellington’s staff in the Peninsular War and had subsequently been Wellington’s Military Secretary. No one doubted Raglan’s...
administrative ability or bravery. At Waterloo, his right elbow had been shattered by a musket ball and he had let the surgeon amputate his damaged arm without a murmur. He also had many personal qualities: diplomacy, loyalty to subordinates and devotion to duty. Unfortunately, he had not seen active service since 1815 and had never commanded an army. Only one of Raglan’s divisional commanders was under 60 and he, the Duke of Cambridge, was the Queen’s 37-year-old cousin who had not seen action before. The Chief Engineer, Sir John Burgoyne, was 72. Only two of the infantry divisional commanders had led anything larger than a battalion into action.

Page 29, Complete the paragraph

The Crimean War revealed the power of the press. Newspaper coverage of the war, aided by the electric telegraph, ensured that the public was able to read about the reality of warfare with immediacy for the first time. Thanks to new technology and the abolition of various taxes, the cost of newspapers was falling. That said, newspapers remained too expensive for most of the population. Moreover, many Britons were unable to read one, even if they could afford to buy one. Daily newspapers in the 1850s therefore largely catered for the literate middle and upper classes.

Key Topic 3 The Second Boer War, 1899–1902

Page 33, Spot the mistake

The paragraph does not get into Level 4 because, although the examples are relevant to the question, they lack specific detail. Nor is there an explanatory link at the end of the paragraph, linking the example back to the question.

Page 33, Develop the detail

The Boer Army should not have been underestimated. The First Boer War suggested that the Boers were likely to be tough opponents. Excellent horsemen and hunters, their commandos were essentially expert mounted infantry. They clearly had a greater familiarity with the terrain than British officers. They were armed with Europe’s best weapons, including smokeless Mauser rifles, French Creusot siege guns and the latest field guns from Germany. Moreover, Boer morale was strong and was sustained by the belief that they were engaged in a life-and-death struggle to preserve their distinctive culture. Finally, many Boers in Cape Colony and Natal sympathised with the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. For all these reasons, the Boers were likely to prove tough adversaries.

Page 39, Complete the paragraph

By 1899 the press had considerable power. Most Britons could now afford to buy daily newspapers. Technical improvements ensured that newspaper costs were falling. Moreover, newspapers were able to sell below cost price, bridging the gap by advertising revenue. The most successful paper was the Daily Mail, launched by Alfred Harmsworth. The paper sold for a halfpenny when most established papers cost a penny. By 1900, the Mail had built up a circulation of nearly one million, far more than all its rivals. Other papers were forced to drop their prices to stay competitive. Moreover, new papers appeared in imitation of the Mail. The Daily Express, launched in 1900, daringly printed news on its front page. Both papers were fiercely imperialist and both devoted huge space to imperial topics. Hardly surprisingly, both supported the Boer War. But the British public could receive their news from other sources. Indeed by 1900, some 150 daily papers catered for the tastes of an expanding reading public and the dailies were supplemented by a plethora of weekly papers, monthly periodicals and quarterly reviews. In the absence of other methods of mass communication, the press was the main medium for politicians to put their views to the people and for people to keep themselves informed.

Page 41, Complete the paragraph

There is no doubt that a sizeable minority of the population opposed the war from the start. Many on the political left were critical of imperialism. Some believed that Britain’s imperial ambitions (and expense) served to distract attention from social problems at home. Some attacked the Empire for its exploitation of native races. Many on the left saw greed as the motivating force in overseas expansion. Given the opposition to Empire, it was hardly surprising that left-wing politicians were vehemently opposed to the war. Most Radical Liberals, like Lloyd George, attacked the war simply because they considered it to be morally wrong. Many supporters of the fledgling Labour Party were also critical. They tended to view the war as a capitalist war, driven by men like Cecil Rhodes. The most outspoken opponents of the war were the Irish Nationalists, who empathised with the Boers as fellow victims of imperialist aggression. Thus, from the outbreak of war in October 1899, a number of influential anti-war groups campaigned against the war.
Key Topic 4 Trench Warfare on the Western Front, 1914–18

Page 47, Develop the detail
The British Army was woefully deficient in modern technology in August 1914. Each infantry battalion, for example, had only two machine guns. The entire army had only 80 motor vehicles. All guns and supplies were drawn by horses. Moreover, the army had no field telephones or wireless equipment. Worse still, the stock of munitions was grossly inadequate. Barely 6,000 rifles and 30,000 rounds of shells a month were being produced. The situation did not improve much during the first months of the war. Rather than spreading munition production, the War Office concentrated orders in the hands of government ordnance factories and long-established contractors. This limited industry’s ability to respond to new demands. Indiscriminate recruiting led to the enlistment of many skilled engineers who could not easily be replaced.

Page 53, Complete the paragraph
On 1 July 1916, after a huge artillery barrage, 14 British infantry divisions attacked. The result was disastrous. Much of the German barbed wire had not been cut. More importantly, the artillery barrage was too far ahead of the advancing troops, lifting over the front-line enemy trenches some minutes before the British infantry could reach them. The race for the parapets was thus won by the Germans, leaving them able to man their machine guns. The result was that the British troops crossing no-man’s land advanced into a hail of fire. Half of the first wave of attackers became casualties within thirty minutes. Only a few troops managed to reach the German trenches and they lacked the strength to hold them. Thus, by the end of the first day of the Somme battle, Britain had suffered over 57,000 casualties, including 19,000 deaths, the greatest loss of life in one day in the British Army’s history. German losses were about a tenth of this. The day had thus been a tragic and terrible failure from a British perspective.

Key Topic 5 War in the Air, 1914–18

Page 63, Complete the paragraph
Aircraft made an important contribution to Douglas Haig’s success in the Hundred Days Offensive between August and November 1918. By 1918, the Allies were producing over 11,000 planes a month, while the Germans manufactured less than 2,000. Control of the skies allowed the Allies to reconnoitre battlefields with impunity. Aircraft provided British artillery with valuable information about the placement of German guns and the strength of German defences. They could also provide tactical support for infantry and launch raids on enemy supply lines, communication centres and reserves. In this way, the RAF made life harder for the German Army and easier for Haig, paving the way for ultimate Allied victory in November 1918.

Page 65, Develop the detail
German aircraft raids on England did not commence on a major scale until 1917. The German High Command hoped to crush Britain’s will to fight by disrupting war industry, communications and supply. London was first bombed on 27 May 1917. Seven more raids followed. On 13 June, 162 people were killed in London in a raid by fourteen Goths. While the raids caused alarm, Germany lacked sufficient planes to cause serious disruption to Britain’s war effort. As Britain’s anti-aircraft defences improved, German bombers suffered heavy losses. In August, the Goths turned to night operations, which were safer but less accurate. There were a further nineteen raids, the final one coming on 19–20 May 1918. British civilian casualties totalled around 850 dead and 2,000 injured. German High Command’s aim to crush Britain’s will and ability to fight came to nothing. Indeed the air attacks may have strengthened the resolve of most Britons to continue the war.

Theme 1 The changing role of government in preparing Britain for war, 1790–1914

Page 71, Complete the paragraph
Defeat in the American War of Independence had tarnished the British Army’s image and morale. Its poor performance in 1793–4 indicated there was need for serious reform. Frederick, Duke of York, second son of King George III, who became Commander-in-Chief of the army in 1795, initiated a number of important reforms. He had led an expeditionary force, not very successfully, in Flanders in 1793–4. Nevertheless, he proved himself a capable administrator. York’s reforms included stamping out the worst excesses of the purchase system. Officers had to serve two years before they could purchase a captaincy and six years before they could become a major. York also established a Military College and a school for cadets (which evolved into the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst). In 1799 he ordered the formation of an Experimental Rifle Corps. In 1802, this unit became a regiment of light infantry – the 95th. Its men, armed with the Baker rifle and trained in the art of sharpshooting and using cover, were among the best soldiers in the British Army. York was forced to resign in 1809 over a scandal.
involving his mistress and the sale of commissions. But he was soon reinstated and continued his policy of cautious reform. According to military historian Sir John Fortescue, York had done more for the army than anyone had done for it in the whole of its history. Thus by 1815 the British Army had been considerably improved. So much so, that it was the only military force in Europe not to suffer a major defeat at the hands of Napoleon.

Page 73, Spot the mistake
This paragraph does not get into Level 4 because, although the examples are relevant to the question, they lack specific detail. Nor is there an explanatory link at the end of the paragraph, linking the examples back to the question.

Page 75, Eliminate irrelevance
Britain had major problems recruiting enough men to wage war on France in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. France, which had a system of conscription, was able to muster armies of hundreds of thousands of men. Britain could not match such numbers. In 1793, its army amounted to 40,000 men. Clearly it needed to increase its forces. But conscription was regarded as an unacceptable imposition on the liberties of freeborn Britons. The Royal Navy had similar problems recruiting. But it was entitled to use impressment. The Impressment Service had the power to force seafarers aged between 15 and 55 to join the navy. Press gangs were sent to round up suitable men in and around ports. No press gangs operated on the army’s behalf. Thus, all Britain’s regular soldiers were volunteers. Unfortunately, army life was not particularly attractive. Soldiers were paid less than farm workers. However, the army did offer food, drink, shelter and the prospect of loot. On top of this was a bounty – a signing-on fee – of up to £40, an important motivating factor for recruits. Even so, harsh discipline, coupled with a high death rate, made it difficult to find recruits. Most came from poor families. Soldiers were considered to be on the same level as common criminals. Indeed, some were just that. The army, the Duke of Wellington said, was ‘composed of the scum of the earth...fellows who have enlisted for drink – that is the plain fact’.

Page 77, Develop the detail
The British Army was not particularly short of recruits in 1916. But many Britons thought that hundreds of thousands of men were ‘shirkers’ and ‘slackers’. Accordingly, the government introduced conscription in January 1916 for unmarried men and widowers aged between 18 and 41. The unfit, conscientious objectors, sole supporters of dependents and men engaged in essential war work were exempted. In May 1916, a second Military Service Act extended liability for military service to all men, single or married, aged 18-41. Voluntary recruiting was retained in Ireland, since it would have been hazardous to impose compulsion there in the wake of the Easter Rising. Ironically this did not greatly increase the strength of the army. Instead of unearthing 650,000 slackers, conscription produced nearly 750,000 new claims for exemption, most of them valid, on top of 1.5 million already ‘starred’ by the Ministry of Munitions. In the first six months of conscription, the average monthly enlistment was around 40,000, less than the rate under the voluntary system.

Theme 2 Changes in the role of the people
Page 83, Develop the detail
The winning of naval battles in the French Wars was essentially the result of superior gunnery. The Royal Navy’s gunners were better trained than their opponents. Every Royal Navy ship was obliged to perform daily gunnery practice. Most ships carried 32-pounder guns. Each new gun was fired 30 times by the Ordnance Board before it was accepted for service. Great strides were made in naval gunnery during the wars. Royal Navy ships made use of the carronade and the gunlock. The carronade, developed by the Carron ironworks in Falkirk, was a triumph of industrial innovation. Light, able to swivel and with a short, fat muzzle, the carronade was fitted to the forecastles and sterns of warships. It could be fired rapidly. When loaded with grapeshot, it made mincemeat of sailors and marines on an opposing ship’s upper decks. The French failed to produce a close-range weapon as good as the carronade. Gunlocks, which replaced slowmatches, ensured that British gun captains were able to fire more effectively and efficiently. This gave the Royal Navy a huge advantage in battle.

Page 87, Complete the paragraph
Given that the Crimean War was relatively short and limited in scope and Britain was at the height of its economic power, paying for the war was not a serious problem. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1854, believed in balancing the budget and reducing taxes. However, the costs of the war led to him increasing taxation. He was also forced to increase the national debt by offering government bonds for sale. Sir George Cornewall Lewis, Gladstone’s successor in 1855, was not particularly concerned about balancing the budget. Convinced that heavy taxation was more damaging to the economy than borrowing, he borrowed. Just under half of the war’s cost was ultimately met by government borrowing. Borrowing ensured that the British government was able to pay for the Crimean War without in any way damaging Britain’s economic development or Britain’s prosperity.