

Exercise walk-through

Comparison in the Age of Absolutism and Constitutionalism ■ 3.8

eXercise

You must be able to

- choose a basis of comparison and apply it to both
- state a genuine similarity as well as a difference
- explain why similar pressures produced different outcomes
- avoid describing each model separately with no comparison

Method — A basis

Compare on one question at a time: who controls taxation, who controls armed force, what limits the ruler, who holds office. Applying one question to both is a comparison; two descriptions are not.

Method — A similarity

Both models produced a stronger, more permanent state apparatus than existed in 1500. Both raised more revenue, employed more officials and maintained larger forces.

Method — Why they diverged

Where representative institutions were already established and connected to a propertied class able to withhold revenue, the constitutional route was available; where they were weaker or divided, the absolutist route was.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State what makes a comparison rather than two descriptions.

Solution 2.1

Method: A basis

Worked steps

one question applied to both cases **B1**, rather than two separate accounts placed side by side **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State one genuine similarity between the two models.

Solution 2.2

Method: A similarity

Worked steps

both produced a stronger, more permanent state apparatus than existed in 1500 **B1**, with more revenue, more officials and larger forces **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

Two realms face similar fiscal pressure and take different routes.

- (a) State one factor explaining the divergence.
- (b) State why the pressure alone cannot explain it.

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

(a) the strength and connection to a propertied class of existing representative institutions **B1**. (b) the same pressure produced both outcomes, so it cannot be what distinguishes them **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Both absolutist and constitutional states in this period

- A** reduced their revenue
- B** built stronger, more permanent apparatus than existed in 1500
- C** abolished armies
- D** eliminated officials

Solution 3.1

Method: Why they diverged

- A** reduced their revenue
- B** built stronger, more permanent apparatus than existed in 1500 
- C** abolished armies
- D** eliminated officials

Worked steps

- B.** state capacity grew on both routes.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

A comparison requires

A one question applied to both cases

B two separate descriptions

C a narrative of each

D a list of rulers

Solution 3.2

A one question applied to both cases



B two separate descriptions

C a narrative of each

D a list of rulers

Worked steps

A. a shared question is what makes it comparative.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 4 marks

Write a comparison of the two models on the question of control over taxation.

Solution 3.3

Method: A basis

Worked steps

one basis applied to both **B1**; the absolutist position stated **B1**; the constitutional position stated **B1**; a statement of which difference mattered most and why **B1**.