

3.8 Comparison in the Age of Absolutism and Constitutionalism

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

KEY WORDS comparison 比较

Objective

Build the skills to write a **comparison** 比较 of the two models.

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

1 Worked examples

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

■ 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.

■ 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.

■ 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.

2 Practice

2.1 State what makes a comparison rather than two descriptions. [2]

2.2 State one genuine similarity between the two models. [2]

2.3 Two realms face similar fiscal pressure and take different routes.

(a) State one factor explaining the divergence. [1]

(b) State why the pressure alone cannot explain it. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Both absolutist and constitutional states in this period [1]

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

3.2 A comparison requires [1]

- **A** one question applied to both cases
- **B** two separate descriptions
- **C** a narrative of each
- **D** a list of rulers

3.3 Write a comparison of the two models on the question of control over taxation. [4]

Solutions

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

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

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

3.1 B. state capacity grew on both routes.

3.2 A. a shared question is what makes it comparative.

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