

4.6 Enlightened and Other Approaches to Power

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks

KEY WORDS enlightened absolutism 开明专制 • enlightenment 启蒙运动 • social contract 社会契约

Objective

Build the skills to explain **enlightened absolutism** 开明专制.

You must be able to:

- state what enlightened rulers adopted from Enlightenment thought
- state what they did not adopt
- explain why reform from above had limits
- assess the sincerity question carefully

1 Worked examples

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

■ What was adopted

Legal codification, religious toleration in varying degrees, educational provision, agricultural improvement and administrative rationalisation — reforms that increased state efficiency as well as serving stated principles.

■ What was not

Consent as the basis of authority. An enlightened ruler reformed **by decree**; the social contract's central claim was precisely what could not be adopted without ending the regime.

■ Limits of reform from above

Reform required noble cooperation, and reforms threatening noble privilege were reversed or unenforced. A decree without an administration to execute it changes little.

■ Sincerity

Reforms served principle and interest at once, and the two cannot be separated from the outside. The historically defensible statement is about what was done and what it achieved, not about private motive.

2 Practice

2.1 Name two reforms associated with enlightened rulers. [2]

2.2 State the Enlightenment claim these rulers could not adopt, and why. [2]

2.3 A reform threatening noble privilege is reversed after a decade.

(a) State the reason. [1]

(b) State what this shows about reform from above. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Enlightened absolutism reformed [1]

- **A** by consent of representative bodies
- **B** by decree
- **C** by revolution
- **D** by papal authority

3.2 The claim about a ruler's private sincerity is [1]

- **A** the best available evidence
- **B** not something the sources can settle
- **C** required by the CED
- **D** unrelated to the reforms

3.3 A ruler codifies the law and expands schooling.

(a) State one way this served state interest. [1]

(b) Explain why serving interest does not show the principle was insincere. [2]

Solutions

2.1 any two of: legal codification; religious toleration; educational provision; agricultural improvement; administrative rationalisation.

2.2 consent as the basis of authority; adopting it would have ended the regime that was doing the reforming.

2.3 (a) reform required noble cooperation, which was withheld. (b) that a decree without an administration willing to execute it changes little.

3.1 B. reform came from above without consent.

3.2 B. motive is not recoverable from the sources.

3.3 (a) a codified law and an educated population make administration cheaper and more effective. (b) a reform can serve principle and interest at once, and the presence of interest does not establish the absence of principle.