

SECTION A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the political significance of Versailles. [30]

Passage A

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Adapted from: F. Bluche, *Louis XIV*, published in 1990.

Passage B

Versailles transformed the mythical-historical deification* of the monarch, already the basis of so many ceremonies and public displays, into permanent structures. When its designers built the Palace of the Sun for the King they sought to give the impression that he had created universal harmony; in the process it was not dynamism that they celebrated, but the triumph of reason and order which had always existed, and of which the prince had supposedly rediscovered the secret. The palace and the gardens became an absolute universe, a pure expression of the will of the prince; they were also a kind of theatre set, with Paris as the audience. The King compensated for his inability to create universal monarchy through a symbolic conquest of the world, for example re-created in miniature in his gardens, where he could mould the model to his fantasy. There are good reasons to think that as this process increased, the pursuit of genuine power declined. After the middle 1670s the imaginary and real worlds of the monarchy grew apart, with serious implications.

The 'king who could do no wrong' was worshipped in his own person, as his decisions progressively lost touch with the reality of a country he never saw. By definition, the Golden Age and the Sun-King represented a 'highest point' which was seen as incapable of improvement or development, symbolised by the repetitive rituals of the Court at its centre. King, ministers, and courtiers alike were led to see any problems as minor defects, to be remedied by mere administrative action.

**deification* – treating something in a god-like way

Adapted from: R. Briggs, *Early Modern France 1560–1715*, published in 1998.

SECTION B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** 'Mazarin contributed more than any other minister to the development of absolute monarchy in France.' How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1610 to 1715? **[25]**
- 3*** 'Peasant unrest was more serious than other opposition.' How far do you agree with this view of France in the period from 1610 to 1715? **[25]**
- 4*** 'France was a greater international power in the period from 1610 to 1660 than it was from 1661 to 1715.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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