

35 Minutes.**Late Qing Reform**

Study Source A and Source B.

SOURCE A

The following extract is taken from a history book about the New Policies of the Late Qing Dynasty.

In 1905 ministers were sent abroad [by the Qing government] to investigate constitutional rule, but it was not until 1911 that the government set up a so-called ‘responsible cabinet’, which was the notorious ‘Royal Cabinet’. Among its thirteen members, only four were Chinese while eight were Manchus, five of whom came from the royal family. In other words, this cabinet was mainly made up of Manchus who were mostly members of the royal family. So far the Qing Court’s intention in starting institutional reform was completely unmasked. They had no plan to implement constitutional monarchy at all and it was merely an attempt to centralize all power under the royal family under the pretext of ‘constitutional reform’. The essence of institutional reform is the separation of powers; however, not only did the political reform in the New Policies exclude the separation of powers, but it was also a practice of centralization of power in the guise of reform.

SOURCE B

The following extract is taken from another history book that is also about the New Policies of the Late Qing Dynasty.

In the *Outline of Constitution by Imperial Order*, the articles regarding the Qing Court contained highly autocratic features, saying ‘the Great Qing Emperor rules the Great Qing Empire, for all generations, and must be eternally respected’ and ‘the sacred dignity of His Majesty may not be violated’. Besides, the Emperor enjoyed a series of decision-making powers that were fundamental to the country, including the power to convene and dissolve the parliament, to design the government structure, to command the army, and to declare war and make peace. Apparently, this constitutional monarchy was in stark contrast with the one adopted by modern countries. There is no way to relate it to the constitutional monarchy in modern sense as it was just absolute monarchy under the cloak of constitution. Despite the inferiority, the Qing Court needed 9 years of preparation time to get ready a list of reforms needed. It is true that there were many remarkable constitutional improvements that actually facilitated the institutional reform by the reformists, which entailed amendments to laws, judicial reform, promotion of universal education and creation of local self-governments. Related to the foundation for a constitutional system for modern countries, these were not only included in the list but were also implemented stage by stage. The contribution was definitely not a small one.

- (a) What was the attitude of the author of Source A towards the Qing government’s constitutional reform? Explain your answer with reference to the language and arguments used in Source A. (4 marks)
- (b) With reference to Sources A and B, compare the views of the two authors regarding the reform implemented by the Qing government. (4 marks)
- (c) ‘The Qing government’s political reform had good intentions but bad results.’ Do you agree? Explain your answer with reference to Sources A and B and relevant historical events during the period 1901-11. (7 marks)