How well did Pitt cope with the revolutionary threat to 1801?

- Radical groups lacked unity nor violence
  - Threat was never very great, peaceful petitioning for Parliamentary reform, not wanting to overthrow Pitt
  - So Pitt did not have much effect, fortunate to have strong body of support on his measures - wasn’t that successful, treason trials all acquitted
- Spies utilised, make government aware of meetings or likely disorder
- Repression
  - Suspension of habeas corpus
- Show-trials
- Accused radicals of seditious libel
  - Arrest suffered temporary imprisonment, loss of income whilst in prison and on trial – disrupt radical cooperation
  - Deterrent
- The Treasonable Practices Act; forbade correspondence with French political societies
- The Seditious Meetings Act; giving powers to magistrates to control holding of political meetings
- Propaganda against French Revolution when it becomes violent
- Rebellion in Ireland against British rule
- Royal Proclamation against Seditious Writing
  - Doesn’t repress to early, wait to see what happens
- Protestantism define opinion, wins Pitt support and makes it easier for him against the French Catholics
- Suspension of gold standard, improved economy for middle classes – increasing money supply, people not starving
- Income tax

Explain how Britain avoided Revolution in the period 1789-1801

- Britain avoided Revolution in a number of different areas from a whole series of groups formed by radicals. The principal reasons why the radicals failed were because: they lacked unity, coherence and mass support; government repression and legislation made the radicals’ tasks much more difficult, preventing the momentum of the radicals to continue from solely talks to violent action; and the conservative propaganda which persuaded the radicals that they had nothing to gain and a lot to lose by emulating the French. All of these combined guaranteed failure for the Revolution.
- One of the main reasons why the radical movement never expanded further than a phase of split groups and societies is because they lacked unity or a drive forward which would mean any risk at all. They didn’t: try to have a mass strike or
Chris Young

- Only Burke at the start thundered against the ‘abominable sedition’ and ‘distemper’ on the other wide of the Channel
- The general joy of dissenters and radicals, who were condemned by Burke, was shared by poets and intellectuals. William Wordsworth went over to France and revelled:
  - A time when nature was rejoiced; France standing on the top of golden hours; and human nature seeming born again...
  - Many such poets hyperbolized and viewed this as the start of a new era for human kind, not just France, as the old seemed to fade away and ‘regeneration of the human race’
- Such optimism was not only spread through poems but also sermons, with the forming of The Revolution Society
- In April 1792, some young Whigs, including Sheridan and Grey, formed the Society of the Friends of the People
  - Fox was not a member though he supported the enthusiasm of those who wished to have equal representation in parliament which was defeated by 284 votes to 41
- In many places, all over Britain, even as far as Stockport, Norwich, Coventry and Sheffield, reform and republican societies were set up and with the execution of the King in France it began to alarm Englishmen of a very different mould from Burke and many turned towards these French ideas and institutions
- When the sympathisers were not looking directly at Paris, they looked enthusiastically to Paine as with his ideas on the rights of man and the social conflicts and he was famous through his books on France and was named an honorary citizen
  - The sale of The Rights of Man was at around 200,000 copies in 1793
- Thomas Hardy formed one of the more interesting societies, called the London Corresponding society which appealed to the working people which was very cheap for members to join
  - Hardy raised not only political questions but many social ones as well such as the restoration of villages land and the reduction of working hours
  - They made many promises: liberties restored, unbiased judges, independent juries, needless people and pension retrenched, better education, less crowded prisons and better provisions for the old aged people
  - So strong was the energy behind this that it seemed the whole English political argument and agitation would be sped up
- The sudden change can be accounted for in three ways:
  - The radical Societies with the general agitation of the people being stirred up
    - Birmingham sympathisers celebrated the fall of the Bastille and damaged many houses