



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS2E**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2009 examination – January series*

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## *Unit HIS2E*

### **Unit 2E: The Reign of Peter the Great of Russia, 1682–1725**

#### **Comments from the Chief Examiner: Unit 2**

In this examination session some issues generic to all the Unit 2 papers were noted:

- In the compulsory source question, 1(b), some candidates failed to use both the sources and their own knowledge in responding to the question. Candidates must be reminded that unless they refer to the sources, by explicit comment on detail or views, paraphrasing or direct quotation (or if they use the sources only and show no additional knowledge), their mark will be limited to a maximum of the top of Level 2.
- Although there were fewer problems of timing than in Unit 1, some candidates clearly spent considerably longer than 15 minutes on the (a) questions and 30 minutes on the (b) questions, and consequently failed to complete their final answer. They should be reminded that even a couple of focused paragraphs could enable them to reach a Level 2 mark, whereas a string of notes would be unlikely to show skills above Level 1.
- It was clear from some scripts that candidates were not familiar with the complete content requirements for their alternative. Candidates must be reminded that they need to revise all of the content of these 'depth' units, particularly since this paper features one compulsory question which can be drawn from any part of the specification content, as can the remaining two questions, from which they have to choose one.

#### **Report from the Principal Examiner**

##### **General Comments**

Only a few candidates attempted this unit in this examination session. However, it was pleasing to see that all candidates attempted the questions and showed some understanding of the period.

##### **Question 1**

- (a) In this question, candidates are asked to compare two sources. Most candidates were able to identify at least basic differences between the two sources with better candidates responding to the 'how far' instruction by also pointing out that there are some similarities. There was some confusion about who the Streltsy were, but those candidates who understood the position of the Streltsy were able to use this knowledge to put the sources into context.
- (b) Most candidates referred to the sources although some misunderstood Source A. Some candidates had difficulties in identifying changes in society and wrote a little too generally about Peter's reforms. Others described changes without assessing how far these reforms transformed Russian society. Better answers were able to integrate the information from the sources, (the strengthening of divisions in society, opposition to Peter's reforms, the worsening condition of the peasants, the rising social status of some of the nobility) developing this with their own knowledge. In addition candidates did include their own relevant knowledge of Peter's reforms (cultural changes – fashion, the

calendar, St. Petersburg; educational and religious reform; the structure of society – the Table of Ranks, state serfs etc) to support their arguments.

### **Question 2**

This was not answered by many candidates.

- (a) Those that did attempt this question showed some knowledge of the events of 1689 but tended towards narrative rather than identifying reasons for the end of the Regency.
- (b) Some answers identified reforms to government although were not always successful at assessing whether this strengthened government. Other answers were not focused and wrote generally about Peter's reforms with only vague or implicit links to government.

### **Question 3**

This was, by far, the most popular question from the two choices.

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify some reasons although these were sometimes asserted, rather than explained. There was some confusion between the Great Northern War and Peter's conflict with the Turks. Candidates are reminded that for the highest levels, as well as identifying reasons, they should seek to link or prioritise these.
- (b) Candidates knew both the events of the Battle of Narva and the Battle of Poltava well. However, candidates did not always support their answers with detail about the military and naval reforms to show how these explained the turnaround in Russian military fortunes. Most candidates attempted some balance in their answers recognising that other factors were also important, although many of those were confined to Charles XII's mistakes in the lead up to the Battle of Poltava. The question was directed at the period 1700–1721 so answers which did not go beyond 1709 were limited in scope. Better answers recognised that some of Peter's other domestic reforms – finance, industry etc. – helped support the war effort and, at the very least, made reference to events after 1709.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.