



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2P

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – January series

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Unit HIS2P

Unit 2P: The Campaign for African-American Civil Rights in the USA, 1950–1968

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

There were few rubric errors. Every candidate attempted two questions.

Question 2 was the most popular question with only one candidate attempting Question 3. Some good contextual knowledge was displayed in answers to questions one and two. There were some timing issues where candidates spent too long on the first parts of the questions. Also some answers remained unbalanced on the (b) parts of the question and so candidates did not get above Level 3.

Question 1

- (a) The best answers made direct comparisons between the two sources and were prepared to use contextual knowledge as support on President Kennedy. Most candidates were able to discuss the views in the sources. Some of the differences were well-developed and not just a juxtaposing of views but rarely got out of Level 3 because they did not refer to the extent to which they were different and similar. Better candidates realised that the main similarities centred on a lack of interest and success for Kennedy which was often well-supported with own knowledge.

- (b) All candidates used some of the sources. Sometimes use was made of only one source which is not enough to get into the top levels. Candidates need to be very clear when they are referring to a source either through using the letter of the source or a direct quotation. Knowledge of Southern opposition included political as well as violent types. Sometimes candidates did not balance their answers sufficiently. There was a lack of discussion of why Southern opposition was not important in the obstruction of African-American civil rights. The best responses widened out the answer to say why it was not important using other factors.

Question 2

- (a) This proved to be reasonably accessible for those who answered it. Many had detailed knowledge of the Brown versus Topeka Board of Education decision and were able to give three reasons why schools were not desegregated. Candidates were less secure on the inter relationship of the reasons or even choosing which one was the most important and explaining this.
- (b) Although most candidates were able to explain what the Montgomery Bus Boycott entailed, few seemed to be aware of it as a turning point. Furthermore there were few other turning points mentioned from this period. The best answers were able to explain turning points where as the weakest answers were just a narrative of events with very little focus on the question and thin period coverage or just assertions.

Question 3

- (a) There was only one attempt made at answering this question. There appeared to be a lack of understanding for the causation of the riots in New York. The main reason that these occurred was because they followed disappointment over the progress of civil rights in 1964 and this was singularly absent.
- (b) Only a thin understanding of 'black activism' was displayed. There seemed some confusion with the time frame and passive resistance used by Martin Luther King.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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