



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1H

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – June series

This Report on the Examination uses the [new numbering system](#)

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Unit HIS1H

Unit 1H: Tsarist Russia, 1855–1917

General Comments

This examination attracted a far larger number of entries than the first examination of this Unit in January 2009. The overall performance was encouraging. Candidates coped well with the demands of the examination. Time did not appear to be a major issue for most candidates: they generally managed to answer four part-questions in good time, although occasionally too much was written in response to the part (a) questions (01, 03, 05). There were very few unfinished answers. There were a few rubric offences, usually when a candidate attempted more than two of the two-part questions. The most pleasing feature of candidate response was the impressive level of knowledge shown by many candidates, who not only knew the basic facts, but often appeared to have read quite widely, including sources which would not necessarily form a staple part of AS teaching and learning. Centres seem to have come to terms with the expectations of the new Unit. Answers to Question 3 suggested that most centres had managed to complete the Unit, since there was not the lack of accurate knowledge of the 1917 period that was evident in the first examination. Neither was there the significant discrepancy between performance in different questions which had been a feature of the previous examination. What was disappointing was the significant number of candidates with poor literacy skills, which sometimes got in the way of the answer, so that it was difficult to discern a clear line of argument. In contrast, there were many excellent responses, with candidates combining knowledge, analysis, evaluation and judgement throughout the answer. Some candidates wrote very good answers but wasted time by writing a lengthy conclusion which did not add anything to the answer, because it simply repeated, sometimes word for word, supported judgements which had been made at various other points of the answer.

Question 1 was the question most attempted by candidates. There was not much to choose from in terms of popularity between Questions 2 and 3.

Question 1

- 01** This question was usually answered well, except by candidates who wrote about the motives for emancipation rather than the results. Most candidates showed a good understanding of the various causes of dissatisfaction with emancipation, as experienced by both peasants and noble landholders. Many answers linked the various factors well and consequently achieved Level 4.
- 02** In contrast, this question was not answered well. and for many candidates, it was the weakest part of their response to the examination as a whole. Several candidates did not appear to have read the question carefully, either focusing on the pre-1881 Alexander II period or writing almost exclusively about industrial rather than agricultural development. Consequently, relatively few candidates got into the highest two levels. A significant number of candidates did not cover the entire 1881–1914 period, in particular ignoring post-1900 and the entire Stolypin era. Candidates generally understood the basic weaknesses of agriculture, and focused on these weaknesses, or also briefly examined other weaknesses in the Russian economy, as they were entitled to do. Weaker answers attempted judgements which were not supported by evidence. There were other gaps in knowledge. Those candidates who write about Stolypin's agricultural reforms sometimes

get the facts wrong, and have a fairly simplistic understanding of how effective these reforms actually were.

Question 2

- 03** There were many good answers to this question, helped by the fact that most candidates did know the details of the October Manifesto. However, too many candidates were determined to write an account of the 1905 Revolution, which of course was relevant as background, but was not the main focus of this specific question. Some candidates ignored the role of Witte, instrumental in persuading the Tsar to issue the Manifesto. Some candidates wasted time by writing about what happened **after** the Manifesto was published, which was irrelevant to the question. Candidates needed only to develop two or three relevant factors to have gained good marks.
- 04** Most candidates understood the question, although answers were variable in quality. There were good answers which examined a range of factors affecting Russia's stability before 1914, but to get into the higher levels, there had to be a significant focus on the Dumas. Candidates often showed an impressive knowledge of the various Dumas. Other factors could include aspects such as economic developments and the impact of Stolypin's policies of reform and repression. Problems from previous examinations were repeated: notably the confusing of government with parliament, and confusion between exactly who were liberals, radicals or conservatives.

Question 3

- 05** This question produced a range of responses. Weaker answers tended to describe the war and the problems it caused Russia (not always accurately), but made too little attempt to relate this material to Nicholas II's leadership. Better answers focused on the obvious factors such as the Tsar taking over the military leadership, and the dislike engendered by the tsarina and Rasputin effectively running the government and meddling in political appointments.
- 06** Answers to this question were often knowledgeable and well argued. Most candidates showed a good knowledge of events, and were certainly able to explain the problems faced by the Provisional Government in running the war, competing with the Soviet, managing expectations and so on. Candidates were usually able to distinguish between the difficulties largely beyond the Government's control, such as those inherited from the Tsar, and those mistakes made by Kerensky and co. Good answers usually examined other factors also, particularly the role of the Bolsheviks. The mistakes of previous examinations were often repeated, for example assertions about Lenin's 'mass support' throughout Russia. But to merit the highest levels, there had to be a relevant, supported assessment of the Provisional Government itself, and most candidates did this.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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