



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1L

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 HIS1L

Unit 1L: Britain, 1906–1951

General Comments

This was the first sitting of a summer examination for Unit HIS1L of the new History Specification. Certainly pleasing, and perhaps a little surprising, was that most candidates found the time allowed of one and a quarter hours adequate and manageable for answering two full questions. The main general fault in terms of time management for some, however, was that too much time was spent on the first part question to be answered, normally Question 1(01), to the detriment of subsequent responses. Second, again for a minority, was to devote fairly equal amounts of time (or space used in answer booklets) to all four responses, when the second part questions carried twice as many marks as the first part questions. In some cases this led to remarkable feats of writing. A few candidates did run well out of time in finishing their final answer. There were also a few candidates who answered a question, or both, in 'reverse', that is part (b) (02, 04, 06) then part (a) (01, 03, 05). A very small minority answered both of their (b) questions first followed by their responses to the (a) parts. In these cases, as previously reported on the January 2009 examination, they did themselves no favours by losing continuity (in terms of knowledge and understanding) between the two parts of each single full question.

Marks awarded to individual candidates ranged from the maximum of 72 to those in single figures. Most of course were somewhere in between. Scripts which achieved high marks, or indeed individual responses with marks in Levels 4 or 5, received them because they addressed the assessment objectives within the context and content of writing about particular historical issues, in that they deployed knowledge relevantly, communicated their understanding, analysed and had conceptual awareness. Answers which received the lowest marks almost always displayed very little knowledge, or were confused, or generalised. The basis of knowledge for building understanding and skills of explaining and evaluation was not evident. On the whole the relative standard of answers to the 'explaining' questions was higher than that to the essay questions. As in the January examination, a fair proportion of candidates answered one of their questions rather better than the other, and others answered one question successfully but could not find a second question to do anywhere near as well because of an inadequate level of knowledge or understanding.

The paper was, however, accessible to the vast majority of candidates. All scripts were marked in accordance with the Mark Scheme. Question 1 was answered by almost all candidates, perhaps because the topics appeared at the beginning of the Specification, or by familiarity of them from the legacy unit HS2R. There was a fairly even level of performance in responses between Questions 2 and 3, although about twice as many candidates answered Question 2 as Question 3. Nevertheless it was pleasing to see so many answers to Question 3 which covered topics towards the chronological end of the Specification.

Quality of Written Communication was generally satisfactory, although lack, or poor use, of punctuation did not help some candidates. A few used commas to the exclusion of virtually all other forms of punctuation. The main spelling mistakes of proper nouns were of 'Attlee' and 'Beveridge', even though the latter's name appeared in both parts of Question 3. Once again a significant minority used the word 'where' when they meant 'were', and a handful of candidates also used the reverse. Again, as in January, some candidates appeared tentative or uncertain

in argument by using phrases such as ‘a reason could have been’, or ‘it may have been because...’, giving the impression of both uncertainty and lack of conviction in pursuing an argument.

Question 1

- 01** Candidates seized on this and many wrote copiously in explaining the reasons. Material was well-known and the responses in Level 4 normally contained a wide range of factors, e.g. the Education and Licensing Acts, the Taff Vale case and ‘Chinese slavery’, consequences of the Boer War, lack of social reform, weak leadership of Balfour, the importance of the tariff reform issue and Liberal unity especially around preserving free trade. Comment was made on the issues and a holistic assessment given. In particular the key election issue of tariff reform was made central with recognition that it divided the Conservatives but united the Liberals. Where factors were presented essentially as a list, marks not higher than in Level 3 were awarded. The weakest answers omitted to consider tariff reform at all, or regarded it of peripheral importance, whereas others were confused, for example stating that all Conservatives advocated tariff reform or that Balfour had introduced it. Not many mentioned Chamberlain. Responses which were mostly given marks in Level 2 gave graphic details about ‘Chinese slavery’ and/or a narrative on the Taff Vale case, but few saw links between these events and the Lib-Lab pact. Some blamed the government for the Taff Vale judicial decision and there was confusion about the House of Lords as a legislative body and a court of law. Too many argued that the Boer War was still a crucial factor in 1906 and that it had been unpopular. A significant number of answers claimed the Liberals promised social reform in an election manifesto in 1906. Overall the majority of candidates achieved at least Level 3 marks on this question, but a significant number spent too long on it and paid the price later.
- 02** Most answers were firmly rooted in considering poverty as an issue, although many interpreted the question as assessing how successful the Liberals were in reducing it through their reforms. This led to detailed description of, usually many, reforms in which those for children, pensions and National Insurance were given prominence. However, if they did not address the issue of Liberal motivation at all, at best such answers were awarded lower marks in Level 3. In contrast the best responses, given marks in the higher Levels, did what the question asked and assessed how important the aim of reducing poverty was to the Liberals (as a sole or primary motivation), using examples of reforms (without necessarily being comprehensive in coverage of them). Answers reaching Levels 4 and 5 standard pointed out the different views existing within the Liberal Party and indicated the importance of Lloyd George and Churchill as ‘New Liberals’ and the significance of Asquith replacing Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister in 1908. Whilst a few sound answers, normally reaching Level 4 standard, focused almost exclusively on assessing the importance of the aim of reducing poverty within a context of such factors as the work of Booth and Rowntree and the *Report on Physical Deterioration*, as well as in relation to specific reforms such as pensions, most really sound responses also considered other aims of the Liberals. These were essentially the need and drive for national efficiency and (Party) political considerations especially to counteract any appeal to the working classes of the new Labour Party. The main weakness in some responses was to write about non-social reforms such as Trade Union Acts or the constitutional crisis, though a few related the 1909 Budget to the government’s need to raise funds to finance pensions and other welfare measures. Some asserted that the Liberals had established a welfare state by 1914, others that they embarked on a massive social housing programme and/or abolished the Poor Law. There were many references to National Insurance, but some believed the scheme embraced all workers whilst others confused the health and unemployment provisions. Overall it was somewhat disappointing that too many chose to write about the social reforms but without

getting to grips with the question's thrust about the importance of the aim of reducing poverty to the Liberal governments in their social reforms.

Question 2

- 03** Answers overall were certainly not as comprehensive in range compared with the responses to Question 1(a). Whilst clearly relevant as a factor, too many candidates spent too long in describing the Liberal split in 1916 which in some cases also led to confusion over who Lloyd George was in coalition with. Many of the same responses also assumed that Labour remained part of the post-war coalition and therefore saw only the Asquithian Liberals as opposition in the Election. Hardly any candidates referred to non-coalition Conservatives standing in 1918. On the other hand there were good responses which were awarded marks at the top of Level 3 and in Level 4 where clear linkages between reasons were established. These pointed out, as nearly all answers did, that Lloyd George was 'the man who had won the War'. There was much reference to his war record both before and after becoming Prime Minister and also to his electoral promises about treatment of the Germans. Most also mentioned the promise of 'homes for heroes'. However, in addition the best answers also made useful (and accurate) assessments of the Party and overall political situation in 1918, including the implications of the extension of the franchise. They explained why the Conservatives (and especially Bonar Law) wished to stay in coalition with Lloyd George and the importance of the 'coupon'. (Very many answers, and not just those from weaker candidates, stated that the 'coupon' was something given to each voter supporting the coalition rather than to Liberal and Conservative candidates as endorsement of their support for the coalition and to distinguish them from Asquithians and non-coalition Conservatives.) Overall the question was a good discriminator with marks ranging from the maximum to those in Level 1.
- 04** This question was answered reasonably successfully. Most candidates were quite familiar with some events which occurred during the period of the Lloyd George peacetime coalition government. However, there were those who repeated material given in response to part (a) about the Liberal split in 1916 rather than relating the significance of that division to the post-1918 political situation. Many responses which achieved marks in Levels 2 and 3 found it much easier to blame Lloyd George than to exonerate him. Some of the most unbalanced answers saw the Versailles Treaty, post-war debt, rising unemployment, the slump in the staple industries and the Geddes Axe as all failures of Lloyd George and entirely his fault. On the other hand higher Level responses linked Lloyd George's position as head of his minority Liberals within a government whose support was dominated numerically by Conservatives to dependency on his political allies, but not simply asserting that he was the 'prisoner of the Conservatives'. Indeed the best responses achieving marks at the top of Level 3 and above dealt adequately with the Party political situation (though few recognised the attempt by Lloyd George at fusion and the potential for a Conservative split) as well as considering the clear mistakes of Lloyd George and factors which he could not, or only partly, control. Most candidates recognised the honours scandal and the Chanak crisis as major mistakes. Frequently his handling of the Irish issues was also regarded as Lloyd George's own mistake. Only the very best responses distinguished clearly between what were mistakes of his own making and policies which either went wrong, or which he could not control, or were not popular. The failure of welfare and other reforms due to the Geddes Axe was linked in the stronger responses to Conservative influence within the coalition. Much was made of Bonar Law's resignation, especially by better answers, as a crucial factor in the decline of Lloyd George's relationship with the Conservatives, although Robert Blake was right in calling Bonar Law 'the Unknown Prime Minister' with many confusing him with Balfour, various Chamberlains and others. There was similar confusion in relation to Baldwin's name when the Carlton Club meeting was cited. Strong responses drew a distinction between 'Honest Stan' and the more obviously corrupt Lloyd George. It was a clear feature of

answers achieving marks in Levels 4 and 5, as part of the balance in argument, to consider in some depth both Lloyd George's mistakes and other factors, particularly the changing relationship with Conservatives from late 1918 to 1922.

Question 3

- 05** Achievement in this part question was similar to that for Question 2(a). Many candidates produced sound accounts which demonstrated good knowledge of the key features of the Beveridge Report and the context in which it was received by the public and politicians. Its best-selling record was frequently cited. The very best responses linked Beveridge's work in 1942 with that he did as an advisor to the Liberal governments before 1914. Nearly all candidates were aware of the public mood in 1942 and the effects which the War had had on morale. They grasped that the Beveridge Report came at the right time. They understood the concept of social insurance. Weaker responses, at the low end of Level 3, or more often in Level 2, made only limited or generalised reference to the actual content of the Report. There were attempts to cite the 'five giants' but these were often incomplete or inaccurate. However, some were familiar with the content and Beveridge's proposals but failed to account for its popularity, an approach which usually necessitated a fair amount of repetition when they turned to Question 3(b). There was particular confusion over areas such as nationalisation and education. Better answers in Levels 3 and 4 gave illustrative evidence about the public mood at a time when it appeared that the War might eventually be won (though few mentioned the victory at El Alamein just before publication of the Report). They considered the consequences of evacuation and the popularity of the prospect of a welfare state (with a health service at its core). Good answers also recognised the reaction of politicians especially the more favourable response by Labour than by Churchill and Conservatives.
- 06** This question was answered fairly successfully overall. Most candidates were able to provide some range of material in order to make an assessment about success. Few, however, considered systematically all five 'giants' to test how far the Labour governments were able to deal with each. A few spent rather too long on education without showing how the government implemented the 1944 Act through measures such as raising the school-leaving age. Rather they launched into the later debate over the tripartite system. Some wrote about nationalisation, though mostly out of context without relating it to Beveridge, except for a few who connected it with the aim of preventing idleness or unemployment. Perhaps surprisingly some responses either ignored, or wrote very briefly on, and in generalisation about, housing and the government's record of provision. Stronger answers did consider housing, normally as only second in importance to health, in assessing the government's achievements but pointed out that what was provided was still insufficient given the needs following the War. Such good responses normally mentioned the new towns (amongst which Stevenage was prominent). Indeed some responses confined themselves largely to assessing the level of success achieved in the two areas of housing and health, though, if done well in terms of balanced evaluation, were awarded marks in Level 4. Those who included assessment of the success of other measures such as National Assistance and particularly the all-embracing National Insurance scheme, pensions and family allowances, together with evaluation of the degree of success achieved in housing and health, received marks in Levels 4 and 5. The central feature of almost all answers to this question was, quite rightly, the National Health Service. Most candidates were well-informed about it. Sound responses not only stressed the 'free at the point of delivery' aspect, but also looked at the 'undermining' of that principle by the introduction of prescription charges also the enormous cost. On the whole their balanced judgement was that the Health Service and establishment of a welfare state along Beveridge lines were successful especially in the context of the

country's economic and financial problems following the destruction and dislocation caused by the War. Weaker answers, mostly in Level 2 tended essentially to describe the NHS (and some other measures) and those which did so in great detail left themselves with insufficient time to consider other measures. Not many, even amongst the strongest responses, gave examples of improvements in health such as elimination, or reduction, of disease. Rather too many were uncertain about 'Bevan' and 'Bevin' with some of those covering the options by using both at different stages of their answers.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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