



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2H

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – June series

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

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Unit HIS2H

Unit 2H: Britain, 1902–1918: The Impact of New Liberalism

General Comments

Very few candidates failed to answer two questions and examples of rubric infringement were scarce. In addition to the compulsory question, the majority of candidates answered Question 2. The overall quality of knowledge and understanding was good and there were some examples of responses which suggested exceptional historical ability. Equally a number of candidates were unable to display sufficient precision and balance in their responses and this was reflected in the reward they received. The generic level descriptors offer a useful guide as to how candidates might improve their examination technique by having a close understanding of the nature and expectations of the assessment.

Question 1

Question 01

This was answered well by many candidates. The majority of candidates were able to recognise the importance of identifying both differences and similarities in order to respond to the ‘how far’ directive. Many candidates noted MacDonald’s acceptance of the validity of protest and linked this to the views in Source A. There were some impressive examples of relevant detailed knowledge relating to both Emmeline Pankhurst and Ramsay MacDonald and this knowledge was used to reinforce the similarities and differences found from the sources to suggest well-developed understanding. Relatively few candidates merely described the source content, although there were a number of examples of candidates outlining the content of each source and then adding a paragraph which actually focused on the instructions in the question. Centres may wish to consider techniques that can be applied to the compulsory source questions that enable candidates to focus on the key issues in this type of question.

Question 02

There were many very good answers to this question. Relatively few candidates produced responses that were entirely source dependent. The best answers were those that used the sources to reinforce well-selected own knowledge to produce balanced and analytical assessments of the role of militancy in the achievement of the vote for women. Many candidates produced answers which had these qualities. A number of candidates ignored the reference to ‘before the outbreak of the First World War’ and went on to consider the impact of the war as a factor in winning the vote. In many cases this shift in the emphasis in the question led to irrelevancy. Some answers were dependent on a largely narrative and descriptive approach focused on militancy and the government’s response to it. This approach meant that candidates were unable to address the crucial key words in the question. Descriptive and narrative detail did not enable candidates to consider ‘How important’ militancy was.

Question 2

Question 03

This topic was very well-known and understood by the great majority of candidates. Many answers offered a wide range of factors for the Liberal landslide election victory of 1906. Some candidates displayed a lack of examination technique which undermined their knowledge and understanding. A number of answers became expanded lists of reasons which did not go on to establish links between the factors. Many such responses were confined to Level 3. The most

effective answers were those that offered a range of factors and showed how these factors were related to each other. Many very good answers prioritised the factors and assessed their relative importance. It was clear that many candidates were able to consider both the weaknesses of the Conservatives and the strengths of the Liberals although some did not then proceed to reach a conclusion on the relative importance of these factors. Some answers showed a lack of precision and real understanding when they referred to the legislation that the Liberals went on to enact after 1906. It appeared as if some candidates had learnt a lot about the Liberal reforms and were determined to include this knowledge somewhere in their answers, however irrelevant.

Question 04

The weaker responses relied upon detailed descriptive narratives of the period and made only passing reference to the key instructions in the question. The best answers were those that relied upon well-selected detail that acted as a sound evidence base for a balanced argument. Such answers considered both the positive and negative outcomes of the constitutional crisis and also placed these in a wider context through references to Ireland, for example. Some candidates considered the motives of Lloyd George and suggested the crisis was a deliberate ploy to advance his own political career. Views such as this, when integrated into a balanced response, were rewarded. A significant number of candidates were able to see the opportunities to develop a reasoned judgement in response to this question and many produced a sustained argument based either on agreeing or disagreeing with the proposition in the question.

Question 3

Question 05

As with Question 03, a number of candidates produced rather thorough but disconnected lists of factors which focused on Britain's willingness to form the Entente Cordiale with France. There were some good examples of contextual detail being effectively deployed in order to develop detailed explanations and went beyond a simple extended list of reasons. This type of question called for an explanation of the reasons rather than simply a description. Many candidates did display a sound knowledge base and were able to explain the nature of British foreign policy thinking in 1904 and the significance of international rivalry at that time. The great majority of candidates had a sound knowledge of the Entente Cordiale and clearly understood its role and significance within Britain's international priorities.

Question 06

Many candidates displayed a good knowledge of the period. Some weaker answers drifted away from the focus of the question and wrote at length about the causes of the First World War. Examples of this approach were relatively unusual. The majority of answers remained focused and many were able to address the question directly. There were some impressive examples of answers which display the key elements of Level 4 and Level 5 responses. There was evidence of well-balanced analysis based on precisely selected detail that led to well-crafted judgements. Understanding the role and significance of individuals was clearly an approach that many centres had taken and it was effective in enabling candidates to score well on this question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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