



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS2C

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2C

Unit 2C: The Reign of Henry IV of France, 1589–1610

General Comments

There was a good spread of marks across all questions with Question 01/02 achieving the highest mean score across all three questions. Of the remaining two choice questions 03/04 proved more popular than 05/06, though 05 was comparable with 01 but was significantly better in terms of the mean average percentage across all questions and part questions, the weakest being 04 in terms of the mean.

The candidate responses seen were consistent with previous years in terms of accessibility and depth of knowledge and understanding. Candidates were able to demonstrate clear knowledge of a range of not unfamiliar topic areas from within the specification. The weaker candidates tended to offer secure narratives without always consistently acknowledging the analytical and evaluative links required. Stronger candidates were again able to advance to the boundaries of Level 4 and Level 5 with alacrity by offering supported and sustained judgments. Centres are to be commended for their consistency with which candidates are obviously prepared for each examination session. There is no standard text book for this unit and information, exemplars and historical opinion must be trawled from a range of not always accessible or available texts and sources which then require considerable sympathetic synthesis by departments. This is clearly done and centres must be congratulated for this.

There appeared fewer unfinished responses this year and equally very few weak responses. The recent appearance of Pitts's *Henry IV* has added considerably to the list of must have texts for Henry IV, though it too requires considerable caution in its use within the AS programme of study as an academic monograph.

Question 1

- 01** The sources used appeared from the quality of responses to have been well selected allowing candidates scope to identify similarity and difference whilst equally inviting wider contextual discussion in order to access the full range of available marks within the levels. There is a clearly defined route through 01 which many centres clearly instruct their candidates in negotiating. The three plus one/two formula with links appears to be well understood. Many candidates were able to progress beyond the prescription of the demands of the question and demonstrate independent knowledge in support of the sources. Candidates were able to articulate the contextual problems facing Henry's accession in 1589 and place his personal agenda within this context. In making a judgment about the degree of difference, candidates were able in the majority of cases to conclude that Source A considered the issue only in terms of Henry's political needs and the consequent impact on the lower classes, whereas Source B considered the situation from both the political and religious viewpoint.
- 02** Similarly there were very few responses to 02 which failed to use the sources or *vice versa* though there remains a degree of mechanistic determination to use and refer to the sources as an exercise to be achieved almost in its own right by some candidates. Similarly there still remains the belief that simply referring to a source is not necessarily using and integrating that source into a coherent and focused response. Similarly there

were a few responses which copied out sources as a substitute for their own analysis and evaluation. Sources were well integrated into candidates' own knowledge and analysis leading to reasoned and sustained evaluations and judgments. The topic was not an unfamiliar one on the nature of Henry IV's abjuration and later conversion and using this as a vehicle for a more developed discussion on the nature of Henry's authority. The question encouraged a high proportion of mid to top level marks. Candidates were able to identify and link into the question additional issues such as Henry's image as a heroic warrior king, the image of a "Man for all Seasons": A man capable of restoring respect to the crown and to France as a nation state. Good answers were able to conclude that Henry's conversion paved the way to his acceptance as King and his coronation clearly into his role as monarch and was a highly significant factor. However Henry still had to show that he was an effective monarch and it was probably due more to the breadth of his achievements in the period that he secured his position as king of France.

Question 2

- 03** A popular choice which was on the whole was well attempted by the majority of candidates. Again it was clear that 12-mark questions are now well taught by centres and candidate responses are a consequence of that preparation. Many did however, write at great length about issues better placed into 04 as a consequence of a slight misinterpretation of the intention of the focus of the question. A number of candidates found the question challenging in terms of the precision of its requirements. All candidates were able to explain why Henry issued the Edict giving a range of religious, political and economic reasons. Yet a large minority described in great detail the terms of the Edict. 03 was not the place to do this and contributed to a lower award of marks in 04 where such information was required. Most candidates were able to acknowledge that Henry's success in ending the internal wars with the opportunity to sort out his religious problems to provide stability after the long years of war, arguably there was greater readiness to accede to a new regime.
- 04** Was well attempted but some content required in 04 found itself in 03 and this gave rise to some imbalance in coverage and accessibility of the prescriptors for that question. A proportion of candidates either place relevant material on the Edict required for 04 in 03 or repeated the information. The reiteration either worked for 04 but was largely off focus for 03 or in some cases information on the Edict was in 03 and then not in 04 leading to a lowering of potential marks. This was invariably down to misinterpretation of the demands of the respective questions by some candidates.

The debate here was a sound one with most candidates able to construct a debate for and against the premise of the question. Whilst the Edict made concessions to the Huguenots these arguably were limited and determined by the goodwill of the King, whilst the notion of a "state within a state" may not be completely convincing without further consideration of the political and social context of the period. Catholics felt conceding issues such as career opportunities within the Long Robe and the civil service, religious toleration was promoted and freedom of worship albeit constrained and controlled left them angry. Huguenots too whilst the Edict was an improvement on their liberties and prospects they were to remain a minority faith and sect within a wider Catholic France, Many candidates referred to high profile Huguenots such as Sully which in some cases became an opportunity to off load considerable revised and prepared for material, not quite the focus of the question.

Question 3

- 05** This question was very well attempted by those candidates who chose it. There was a clear knowledge and understanding of the demands of the question and the format of three effective factors with links for Levels three/four is now well understood by centres who clearly prepare candidates well. There was a good knowledge displayed covering the nature of threat both real and perceived by France. Many candidates were able to articulate a clear set of factors top of the list was invariably the vulnerability of French encirclement by Habsburg territories and allied states. The global power of Spain was acknowledged as was the Spanish support for the Catholic League, Spanish troops in France and on the immediate borders and mistrust of Spanish intentions. The treaty of Vervins left many in France certain it was more favourable to Spain and left France's eastern borders dangerously exposed. Conversely Henry's own actions contributed to the fear of future Spanish aggression through his alliance system.
- 06** This question was reasonably well attempted by the majority of candidates who were able to demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of foreign policy in the period; similarly with the financial problems faced by Henry IV and the limitations finance placed upon his relations with other countries. There was however a slight disparity between linking the two issues together into a coherent and sustained evaluation. There was also perception of a small majority of candidates that they were not going to waste their clearly well-revised and rehearsed knowledge of Sully at any costs and took the finances as the green light to divest themselves of that knowledge revealing in the process a decided lack of discrimination and relevance, producing a number of quite descriptive answers.

The vast majority were nevertheless able to constrain themselves and address the contextual need to engage with Sully and to seek more relevant links and use of examples to illustrate the limitations of finance on foreign policy. The Spanish war, later border disputes and later potential French aggression were all considered. Key areas appeared to be Savoy, Cleves-Jülich, the Netherlands and alliances with German Protestant princes.

Good answers concluded that, overall, Henry could not always manipulate situations and financial problems were common in this period across Europe. Despite these shortcomings, France did emerge as a strong European power under his control. In this sense the question was an effective discriminator, allowing for a range of narrative, narrative with links and demonstrably relevant analysis and evaluation from stronger candidates.

In conclusion: the paper contained a range of accessible topics based on the specification. The consequent success of the vast majority of the candidates was well observed and statistically well defined. The Principal Examiner would like to take this opportunity to thank all centres who teach this unit and all students who enter for this unit. Yet again the hard work and preparation is well evidenced and a reflection of the consistency with which the unit performs. The specification offers a very prescriptive range of topics which centres are by now wholly familiar with, whilst this lends itself to confidence and reassurance please be mindful that the some questions cannot be set every year and that there remain opportunities to offer more innovative questions within the specification. However the four cornerstones of Henry IV remain: religion, the economy and finance, foreign policy and royal authority.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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