



**General Certificate of Education
January 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS2E

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2E

Unit 2E: The Reign of Peter the Great of Russia, 1682–1725

General Comments

It was pleasing to see that candidates generally understood the demands of the questions and tried to answer them in a focused way. However, chronology remains an issue with some candidates which hinders their attempts, especially when examining the whole reign. Candidates are also reminded of the importance of using specific examples in their answers to support their arguments.

Question 1

- 01** This question was generally answered well and the majority of candidates were able to achieve Level 3. Candidates are reminded that it is important to pick out both similarities and differences between the two sources if they are to show the extent of difference. Likewise own knowledge or context should be deployed to enhance the comparison. There were still a few candidates who tended to summarise the sources or make only implicit comparisons but most were able to make explicit points.
- 02** Some candidates seemed to find this question difficult because of a lack of knowledge about Peter's economic policy. Some candidates were only able to mention finance for which they gained credit but these answers tended to lack range. Almost all candidates were able to use the sources usefully but some were not able to develop the points beyond the source with their own knowledge. However, the best answers supported their arguments both with the sources and their own knowledge and were able to make clear and balanced arguments.

Question 2

This question was not as popular as Question 3 but the majority who chose it showed good levels of understanding and knowledge.

- 03** Most candidates were able to identify a range of reasons including the lack of a healthy adult male, the problems of a female regent and the ensuing power struggle. Weaker answers either tended to write a narrative of the events of the 1680s with reasons only being implicit, or wrote generally about the weaknesses of Russia rather than concentrating on **political** instability in the 1680s specifically.
- 04** Weaker answers tended to describe Peter's governmental reforms rather than assess whether or not the power of the Tsar was strengthened, or asserted that power was increased or decreased without supporting this view. Better answers were able to refer to a range of reforms – the Senate, the Colleges, the Church, local government etc and show judgement in assessing their impact on the power of the Tsar.

Question 3

This was by far the most popular of the two optional questions and was generally handled well.

- 05** Most candidates were able to identify a range of reasons explaining why Peter attacked the Turks in 1695. Weaker answers either described the attack (and sometimes the attack in 1696), or wrote very generally about Russia's position and/or Peter's motives. Some candidates remain confused about the Black Sea/Baltic Sea which, in some cases, severely limited their assessment. However, the very best answers had good detail and were able to link or prioritise their reasons with support.
- 06** There was a range in quality seen in answers to this question. Weaker answers tended to lack knowledge and so relied on assertions. Again, some candidates were hindered by confusion over the Black Sea/Baltic Sea and sometimes between the Swedes and the Turks. Other answers were only narratives of Peter's foreign policy and tended to state whether each event/battle was a success/failure without assessing the position in 1721. For example, the Great Embassy was given as an example of Peter failing to achieve his diplomatic aims, or the attack on Azov in 1696 was given as an example of Peter achieving his military aims; without there being a recognition of any change in the situation by 1721 this judgement is limited. However, there were many examples of well-supported and balanced arguments. The very best answers were able to clearly identify Peter's aims and assess whether or not they had been achieved by 1721.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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