



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS2F

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2F

Unit 2F: Challenging British dominance: The Loss of the American Colonies, 1754–1783

General Comments

This year there was no repeat of the problems noted in the Summer 2010 examination concerning Questions 01/02. The sources proved more accessible, and caused relatively few problems for candidates. Of the optional questions, Question 03/04 was noticeably more popular than Question 05/06, and this was attributed to some concerns on the part of candidates with Question 05. As with last year, it was pleasing to note that the French and Indian War continues to be a popular topic, though in this examination the driving consideration may have been aversion to Question 05. Overall, candidate numbers in this Alternative continue to increase.

Question 1

- 01** Most candidates found this a less demanding exercise than last year. Usually they were able to identify the main differences between the sources: Source A indicated a rapid outburst of protests against the Townshend Duties, with richer merchants very much involved, whilst Source B claimed a slower development of resistance, with many merchants anxious to avoid a trade war with Britain, and therefore not resorting initially to any obvious form of protest. On the whole, candidates are now aware that identification of similarities is also important, and thus usually mentioned that both sources referred to the existence of strong colonial resentment against the Duties, and that political considerations, the desire to defend perceived colonial rights, were probably more important than economic factors. Weaker candidates may have only identified one difference, or may have lacked precision in their responses, or may simply have focussed on points mentioned in one source but omitted from the other (such as the twelve letters attacking the Duties written by John Dickinson).
- 02** Usually candidates attempted to answer this question based on both own knowledge and the sources. Source C was the key source, with clear reference to the Quebec Act, the most obvious manifestation of concessions to French Canadians. However, many candidates failed to build on the factual framework supplied by the source, and often did not specify the nature of these concessions, or did so in a rather spasmodic, unstructured fashion. Rarely did candidates outline the implications of the establishment of French civil law without a jury, though a larger number did explain the importance of the recognition of the Catholic establishment and the strategic impact of Quebec's boundary expansion. A small but significant number felt that the Quebec Act increased democracy in Canada, thus increasing the desire of the American colonies to extract similar concessions from Britain. Relatively few candidates demonstrated awareness of earlier perceived concessions to French Canadians, through reference to either the Treaty of Paris or the Proclamation Line of 1763.

Most candidates realized that Sources A and B were of limited value in terms of the French Canadian issue, but did provide useful indicators of other factors contributing to the outbreak of the War of Independence. Economic factors (including, but not limited to, Townshend's Duties) and political considerations (usually the issue of no taxation without consent) were raised by most candidates, with appropriate source attribution,

and the usual conclusion was that these issues were of much greater significance than the concessions made to French Canadians. Hardly any candidates omitted reference to French Canadians completely.

Question 2

- 03** There were some acceptable responses here. Most candidates were able to make a reasonable number of observations about the lack of British effectiveness in the early stages of the conflict, usually commenting on the failures of Braddock, the unreliability of Indian allies, and the commitment and capability of French commanders such as Montcalm. At times responses tended to be descriptive and/or narrative, but there were few candidates who were incapable of expressing at least some valid and appropriate observations. The lack of any clear event within the wording of the question had no appreciable impact on the quality of responses.
- 04** Candidates almost universally agreed with the quotation, placing considerable emphasis on the impact of Pitt after 1757. Almost all then proceeded to refer to other contributory factors, but the almost inevitable conclusion was that these would have amounted to little had Pitt not been at the helm of events. Quite often the 'other factors' referred to were directly linked by candidates to Pitt himself; for example, foreign support was advanced as a factor, but Pitt was then given credit for arranging the Prussian subsidies, which in turn persuaded Frederick II to intervene. Relatively few candidates were aware of the view that Pitt's contribution to victory might possibly have been overemphasized by contemporaries and by subsequent historians. Overall, it was encouraging to note the high number of candidates (clearly exceeding 50% of the entry) attempting Questions 03/04; whilst this might in part have been because candidates found Question 05 somewhat daunting, there was no evidence that candidates attempted Questions 03/04 without reasonable preparation.

Question 3

- 05** This was the question which caused greatest problems for candidates, and, as noted above, it was the least popular optional question. Whilst candidates were able to comment in general terms about the limitations of British commanders, many were either unable to identify the specific role played by Howe, or confined their responses to the contribution by Howe to Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga. However, the question was far from a disaster, and an encouraging number were able to write at some length about the heavy losses inflicted on Howe's forces at Bunker Hill before his elevation to overall commander of British forces, his failure to pursue and destroy Washington after victory at Long Island, his defeat by Washington at Trenton, and his general belief in the need for reconciliation with the colonists rather than outright victory over them.
- 06** Those candidates who persevered with Question 05 obtained their reward with Question 06, which caused few obvious problems. Most candidates were able to write at some length about the impact of French intervention in the war, many observing that this had arguably commenced some time before the official entry of French forces into the conflict. Candidates then proceeded to contrast French intervention with other factors contributing to the triumph of the colonists, and were then able to reach a balanced conclusion.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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