



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS20

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS20

Unit 20: The Impact of Chairman Mao: China, 1946–1976

General Comments

The majority of candidates displayed good knowledge of the subject and a developed understanding of the concepts and issues involved in the study of Chinese history. Candidates also continued to show improvements in examination technique. The majority of answers showed a genuine attempt to address the analytical demands of the questions and there were relatively few responses which were driven entirely by narrative.

There was a fairly even spread of responses to the two optional questions although Question 2 (03 and 04) was marginally more popular than Question 3 (05 and 06). The focus on the Cultural Revolution in the compulsory Question 1 (01 and 02) proved to be popular with students and there were a number of very good responses to these two questions.

Question 1

- 01** This question asked candidates to compare *views* from two sources about the reasons for the Cultural Revolution. Although some candidates only compared factual details in the two sources, the vast majority were able to select opposing views and make a clear comparison. Most candidates were able to identify similarities and differences and contextual knowledge was present in most answers. Provenance of sources may be one element of contextual knowledge but candidates do need to be aware that this is not a question about the reliability or the utility of the sources and they will gain no credit for asserting that one author is more reliable than another simply on the basis that he/she is or is not of Chinese origin. For Level 4 candidates needed to address the question ‘how far’ the views in Source B differed from those in Source A. A well-argued conclusion can often be the difference between a Level 3 and a Level 4 mark.
- 02** This question required candidates to use all three sources and their own knowledge to assess the extent to which Mao achieved his aims in the Cultural Revolution. Although Source C was most useful in this respect, there was material in all three sources which candidates could use in response to this question. Candidates who ignored the sources and answered the question solely from their own knowledge penalised themselves, since such responses are limited by the mark scheme to a maximum top of Level 2 mark. Similarly, candidates who used the sources but added nothing in terms of contextual knowledge also penalised themselves. It was pleasing to note that only a minority of candidates answered the question in these ways. Many candidates used Source C to argue that many of Mao’s aims had been achieved by 1971 but that, even in Mao’s own estimation, no ‘final victory’ had been achieved. Sources A and B were useful in outlining Mao’s aims for the Cultural Revolution.

Question 2

- 03** There were some very good answers to this question. The majority of candidates were able to identify a range of reasons why the Five-Antis campaign was introduced in 1952. A minority of candidates confused the Five-Antis with the Three-Antis. The better answers were those in which candidates were able to place the campaign in the context of the Communist Party's consolidation of power in this period and also to link the fact that the campaign specifically targeted corruption in business with Mao's long-term economic aims. Those achieving the highest marks were able to show some linkage between the various factors, perhaps in terms of prioritisation or in terms of categorisation.
- 04** Most candidates who attempted this question had a very good knowledge of the role played by terror in the Communist Party's consolidation of power. They had solid knowledge of the range of methods used to consolidate the Party's hold on power. Land Reform figured prominently in many answers, although a significant minority of candidates failed to make the point that land reform also involved terror to a very large extent. The majority of candidates achieved at least a Level 3 mark but there were also a large number who produced Level 4 or Level 5 responses.

Question 3

- 05** Most candidates showed good knowledge of the First Five Year Plan and the reasons why it was introduced. Some candidates confused the Five Year Plan in industry with the drive for collectivisation in agriculture. Although the two policies were clearly linked, they were nevertheless two separate policies. Answers which made a link between the Five Year Plan and collectivisation were credited, as long as candidates understood that the Five Year Plan was purely about setting targets for industry. There were many good answers to this question and it was particularly gratifying to see that many candidates understood the context in which the Plan was introduced – 1953 was the start of a new phase in the development of Communist China, after power had been consolidated and the economy had been stabilised.
- 06** The quotation in the question invited challenge and most candidates were able to offer an effective counter-argument, showing the ability to differentiate between the relative success of the First Five Year Plan (to 1957) and the almost total failure of the Great Leap Forward. Better answers introduced balance into the argument by showing that even the First Five Year Plan was only a qualified success.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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