



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS2R

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2R

Unit 2R: A Sixties Social Revolution? British Society, 1959–1975

General Comments

Once again, it was a pleasure to assess many of the scripts submitted for this unit and to note the enthusiasm of students who were keen to show what they had absorbed about the maelstrom of change in the 1960s. Knowledge was often very good, although, as with all examinations, it was the way that knowledge was used that differentiated between the high achievers and those lower in the rankings. Some, unfortunately, wanted to provide too many anecdotes or incidental details, often about people or their own enthusiasms such as the pop groups or the fashion industry, and it was sadly the case that such often failed to respond effectively to the question asked. Knowing how to select and harness appropriate material with which to answer questions and understanding the type of answer expected is clearly an essential skill for every AS student, and should not detract from the students' enjoyment of the period, as the best answers so keenly demonstrated.

Some reminders about the key examination demands (and ones that are sometimes ignored) are therefore provided below, although teachers should note that these must be read alongside the fuller 'official' generic mark scheme. In AS Unit 2, answers to 01 require reference difference, similarity and own knowledge; 02 requires both integrated source use and own knowledge; 03/05 require at least three developed and linked reasons; 02/04/06 require a balanced argument with precise supporting evidence and some judgement.

Question 1

- 01** Candidates are becoming more familiar with the demands of this question and the majority addressed it directly, identifying not only differences in views, but also addressing 'how far' by considering similarities and providing details of the context from their own knowledge. However, there were still some who persisted in writing out what each source said before beginning to answer the question or, who laboriously repeated where each Source came from, only to ignore such information in the rest of the answer. It is encouraging to note that the majority readily identified the differences, although candidates do need to be reminded that descriptions of literal differences, usually stating that one source says this and the other says that, are insufficient to demonstrate a full understanding of how the 'views' differ. The best answers also appreciated that both sources accepted there had been a rise in living standards and explained this similarity as well as commenting on why the Labour manifesto might offer a different slant on events from the Conservative one. A few also provided some pertinent comments on the economic context of the 1964 election. Overall, the standard of responses was generally good, but a little more development of the 'views' plus some more precise own knowledge detail might have enabled those awarded Level 3 to have reached a Level 4 mark.
- 02** The majority of candidates understood the need to produce a 'balanced' answer, although some managed this more successfully than others. It was a delight to read those answers where the candidate had taken time to structure their response, defining what a 'New Britain' meant and measuring Labour's success against their stated aims (partially given in Source A). Such candidates offered clear judgement and usually integrated the sources well. Most students made good use of Source C, which provided a good deal of useful information, but candidates should note that it is not sufficient merely to rewrite what a

source says, but that details, in this case about changes in education, for example, need to be explained and expanded from a candidate's own knowledge.

Among the weaker styles of responses, there were those who tried to credit the Wilson government with every advance in the sixties, from the pill to the hovercraft. Better candidates were far more circumspect – perhaps commenting on the speed of technological change and scientific discovery – but keeping the main focus firmly on the Labour governments and their contribution to the 'new' age. Most candidates incorporated all three sources – giving the conservatives credit for Labour success or considering whether policies were little more than a dreary return to the past (Source B). It was also pleasing to note that there were comparatively few incidences of candidates ignoring the sources altogether, although there were too many examples of candidates writing 'source only' answers, which produced even less complete answers to the question posed than the 'no source' ones.

Question 2

- 03** Many candidates were able to respond well, giving several reasons why advertising grew, although some over-emphasised minor details at the expense of 'big reasons' – most obviously, the affluent society. The latter were also apt to describe the means used by advertisers and even the adverts themselves rather than focusing on why the industry grew in the 1960s. 'Means' was, of course, a factor in the spread of advertising, but it cannot be held to be the only reason.

When candidates had thought their answer through properly, they were usually able to demonstrate the links between their sub-reasons and a main one. Such an approach was, of course, worthy of full marks. At the other end, however, monothematic answers or those that merely described what was happening found themselves in Level 2 or lower.

- 04** There is a danger that some candidates approach this examination with pre-prepared material on change in the sixties, which they feel obliged to off-load in response to whichever question comes nearest to asking about this. Question 04 was the victim of such thinking. Too many dismissed the importance of TVs, or wrote about them in a superficial way, and went on to describe either a different agent of change (usually cars – as on last year's paper) or simply looked at a host of changes (rather than causes of change), often with undue emphasis on music and fashion. Such answers rarely distinguished between causes and manifestations of change and 'cultural' was also ignored. The best answers, on the other hand, produced a fair analysis of differing ways in which TV contributed to cultural change and then made clear links between these changes and those produced by other factors. As always, those that thought sufficiently to offer some personal judgement received high marks.

Question 3

- 05** Most answers to this question provided a reasonable range of reasons, ranging from bigger societal issues and government legislation to more personal factors linking to possessions and the desire for advancement. The best categorised these reasons, or at least offered some differentiation between the framework for change and the actual drivers. These 'linked' responses reached the highest marks. The weaker answers were more random in approach, seeing, for example, opportunities for higher education as of equal importance with the possession of refrigerators and were unreflective in their development.

- 06** Those who chose this question were generally able to write knowledgeably about the strengths and weaknesses of the Feminist movement in Britain, accounting for its spread but noting its limitations. Most were well-informed on the position attained by women through legislation down to 1975 (although the actual progression of legislation was sometimes arbitrary and confused) as well as the position of women in the world of work and education. Direct links between the status of women and the Feminist movement were not always made, however. Furthermore, some ventured into the field of domesticity and the changing role of women as produced by new technologies, which was scarcely relevant to the question asked. The best supported their comments with some detailed factual and statistical material; the weakest offered only generalisations and platitudes.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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