



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 2041

Unit HIS3A

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS3A

Unit 3A: The Angevin Kings of England: British Monarchy, 1154 –1216

General Comments

Once again, this was a very pleasing examination for this A2 medieval history specification. With over half the teaching year available for studying Unit 3 the majority of candidates showed themselves to be able and enthusiastic historians, well-prepared, both in knowledge and skills. The best answers were clearly focused on the question and set out an explicit historical argument supported with detailed own knowledge. Candidates' work was presented with care; showed good organisation, focus and structure, and was expressed in clear and precise language. The standard achieved in the best answers was very impressive.

Candidates coped well with the demands of the examination. There was a full range of answers on all questions. Time did not appear to be a major issue for most candidates: they generally managed to answer two questions in good time. There were very few unfinished answers, although lack of range was an issue in weaker responses. In common with last year's examination one issue in candidates' historical writing style continues to give cause for concern, unfocused historiography. Centres should note that while use of historical reading as a source of ideas, interpretations and details, may be creditworthy if it helps develop an historical argument, but it is not a requirement of this paper. Moreover, superficial descriptive references to historians as 'revisionist' or 'traditional' are trite and redundant. Centres must understand AQA's view on the meaning of term 'historical interpretation'. For detailed guidance on this matter please go to the AQA website for History, Teacher Resource Bank, and read *Advice from the Chief Examiner on the assessment of Historical Interpretation (AO2b) in A2 History*.

Encouragingly, it appears that over 80% of candidates were able to access at least Level 3 marks with a significant number (over 40%) producing responses which merited Level 4 and 5 marks. Therefore, the rewarding of Level 2, and to greater degree Level 1, was relatively limited. Each of the three questions attracted responses across the ability range, question 2 was the most popular choice, attracting nearly two-thirds of the candidature, in contrast to questions 1 and 3 which each attracted just over one-third of all scripts.

Question 1

01 Although this was the least popular question, it produced the best quality answers. In this question candidates were asked to evaluate the causes of the conflict between Thomas Becket and King Henry II. Conceptual shortcomings were the key discriminator in responses, because the question suggested the causes could be grouped into issues of principle and personality. Some weak answers struggled with this. However, most answers displayed clear focus and understanding and could produce a structured response, so depth and quality of historical evidence was the most significant difference. Many candidates made good use of the key events of the 1160s, and the Constitutions of Clarendon in particular, to define the issues at stake. Issues of long-term context; royal authority over the Church, the growth of papal authority and the impact of King Stephen's reign were clearly understood, as were issues of jurisdiction such as criminous clerks and benefit of clergy. More able candidates were able to link issues of personality to key events during the dispute and much was made of Becket's change following his consecration as Archbishop. Weaker candidates chose to ignore the focus of the question and produced descriptive narrative on the conflict between King Henry II and Thomas

Becket. More able candidates often gave useful evaluation on the long-term context, evaluating causation through the relative ease with which compromise was reached after Becket's death.

Question 2

- 02** This was the most popular question and produced many strong, conceptual responses, over 40% of answers receiving L4 and above. Candidates were asked to evaluate the success of King Richard I as King of England. This allowed able candidates to analyse what was meant by successful kingship in a medieval context, to contrast medieval and modern expectations, and to display breadth of understanding, often through use of recent historiography by Gillingham and Asbridge in particular. Weaker candidates tended to ignore the English experience of Richard's rule and focus on his success as a crusader King. In contrast, able candidates took this theme and developed issues such as the financial impact of crusading on England and also the issue of absentee kingship. Balance across the reign was also a key discriminator with weaker candidates failing to look at events after 1194, especially the impact of Hubert Walter.

Question 3

- 03** As the breadth question this made different demands upon candidates, while historical knowledge and analysis was still expected, range across the period was also required. Most candidates were able to meet these requirements and produced well-balanced analysis on the reasons for the rise in anti-Semitism between 1154 and 1216. However, performance in this question was lower than elsewhere in the paper, with only just over 30% of answers achieving L4 and above. Significant weaknesses included the limited depth of historical knowledge, a lack of range across the period, and a failure to focus on reasons for the increase in anti-Semitism rather than simply describing general causes. In particular some answers had little to say on the period after 1190, and could not provide material on the key issue of Christian crusading fervour. Nevertheless, the better responses were noteworthy in their precision, range and focus. In particular, the relationship between the Jewish community and the financial demands of the Angevin kings were well developed, as was the issue of baronial anti-Semitism.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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