



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2011**

**History 2041**

**Unit HIS3B**

***Report on the Examination***

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## Unit HIS3B

### Unit 3B: The Triumph of Elizabeth: Britain, 1547–1603

#### General Comments

Despite the excellent performance of the best-prepared candidates, there was some decline in standard overall from the previous year's performance. There appear to have been several reasons for this. There was a greater level of inconsistency within scripts, which does suggest a tendency towards over-selective revision, a higher proportion of candidates compared with 2010 had difficulties with timing, and some answers did suffer from misplaced and inaccurate historiography.

#### Question 1

**01** The best answers to this question were sharply focused, evaluative and conceptually sophisticated, discussing the interaction of different causes confidently and coming to reasoned conclusions. Most answers contained some relevant knowledge about the causes of the various rebellions. In general, candidates were better prepared on the Western Rebellion and on Wyatt's Rebellion than they were on Kett's Rebellion. Virtually all candidates had at least an awareness of the religious motives of the western rebels, and most candidates showed an understanding of the motives of Wyatt and his followers. There was rather more vagueness about the motives of the East Anglian rebels, with many candidates believing that the Crown itself was enclosing land as laid down by the (non-existent) Enclosure Act of 1548. Examiners were quite happy to accept as valid the claim, as asserted by several historians, that Mary herself led the only successful Tudor rebellion. Unfortunately, many candidates wasted much time discussing the details of the *Devyce* of 1553, which was not a rebellion and would have acquired legal status had Edward VI lived longer. Some candidates wished to produce prepared answers on the mid-Tudor crisis, which contained tangential relevance at best, and a few candidates mistakenly assumed that Wyatt's Rebellion was a reaction to Queen Mary's implementation of the law against heresy, which had not been enacted at the time when the rebellion took place. A further problem was created by geographical imprecision, which led not only to some candidates misplacing rebellions in the wrong parts of the country but which then almost invariably contributed to imprecision in the evaluation of the rebellions concerned.

#### Question 2

**02** Despite this question having been drawn from a mainstream area of the specification, it was not in general answered well, though there were some outstanding answers from some candidates. Many candidates abandoned missionary priests and Jesuits at an early stage of their answers to produce prepared responses to a question on the overall threat to Elizabeth, which had not been set. As a result there was much discussion of the 1569 rebellion, the plots against Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada. Such material, when it was explicitly linked to the key theme of the question, could gain some credit. Many candidates, in addition, produced lengthy discussions of the Puritan threat to Elizabeth. These were not relevant to the question asked. Many candidates produced historiographical approaches in answering this question. Some of these were very convincing and did much to advance candidates' arguments. Others were less effective

and produced at best over-simplification and at worst error-strewn claims. For example, Christopher Haigh's nuanced argument that there was a *tendency* for *many* priests to operate in the south-east of England where they could make *relatively few* converts was often rendered as a blanket assertion that *all* priests operated in the south-east and gained *no* converts.

### **Question 3**

- 03** Many candidates were able to produce worthwhile responses to this question. These not only included consideration of those ministers formally mentioned in the specification (Burghley, Leicester, Robert Cecil, Essex) but also a range of other ministers such as Walsingham, Mildmay, Hatton and even, in one or two cases, Sadler. The quality of material was variable. In particular, there were some sketchy attempts to assess the ministerial contribution to the 1559 Settlement without much idea of what that contribution might have been. Moreover, some answers suffered because of an assumption that all MPs were ministers, leading to irrelevant arguments to the effect that Elizabeth was not well served by, for example, Strickland and the Wentworths. On the other hand, the ministerial contribution to effective parliamentary management was understood by many candidates, and most candidates were able successfully to claim that the quality of ministerial service declined in the final years of the reign.

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