



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 2041

Unit HIS3H

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS3H

Unit 3H: Monarchies and Republics in France, 1815–1875

General Comments

A very good range of responses was seen and it was clear that the paper had discriminated well. Questions 1 and 2 were much the most popular, although there were also a sizable minority of candidates that chose to answer Question 3 on the Church. Overall, there were some very pleasing responses in deed from candidates that had prepared well.

As in previous sessions, most candidates proved to have good language and essay skills. There were some very sophisticated displays of sentence construction and many candidates managed to argue a clear case. Indeed, many were a sheer delight to read. It is obvious that candidates are being very well-prepared for the stylistic demands of essay papers within centres. Less convincing, however, was the knowledge of specific events necessary to support some of the excellent argument. A number of candidates clearly understood what the key arguments were but lacked the depth of historical knowledge to advance far away from the realms of assertion. It is perhaps worth emphasising to candidates that, whilst a narrative of events is most certainly not required, argument alone cannot progress an essay towards the higher levels.

There seemed very few candidates affected by issues of timing, although some candidates did not really distinguish the breadth question as one that required less depth of detail. Surprisingly, there were some candidates that consistently misspelt words of historical significance such as Louis.

Question 1

01 This proved to be a very popular question and saw a full range in the quality of response. Unfortunately there were some occasional answers in which the candidate did not understand the term ‘July Monarchy’ and consequently analysed the wrong period.

The scripts awarded the higher levels tended to focus on the issue of short-term factors and compared these to long term. In addition, the best responses gave due weight to the issue of political miscalculation, rather than simply considering short-term factors in general. Very rarely did candidates lapse into a generalised examination of whether the monarchy was doomed from the start, but many did argue that the foundations of the regime were weak.

A large number of candidates referred to foreign policy as a reason for collapse, which is of course relevant, but candidates should be reminded of the need to make this link explicit. It is of much less use simply to argue that foreign policy failed in this period without explaining how this assertion links to the collapse of the Monarchy. In some examples, so much time was given to the mistakes of foreign policy that there was suspicion that the candidate actually knew little of domestic events at all. At the other extreme there was some genuinely very impressive knowledge displayed surrounding the immediate events of the collapse and especially of events concerning the dismissal of Guizot. This was a central question which candidates who had prepared a good bank of specific factual support were able to do well in.

Question 2

- 02** This was a popular and generally very well answered question. There was a good range of factual knowledge in evidence with almost every candidate able to draw on examples from a number of foreign policy events. Some candidates did, however, struggle to get beyond identifying the events and some were unfortunately very confused over who fought what where.

The responses were very well argued and it was only the exception that did not seek to offer some sort of balance. Moreover, this balance was only very rarely artificial or contrived. The very best responses combined this level of analysis with a good ability to deploy dates, names and events in a focused and supportive manner.

It is perhaps worth emphasising that a question referring to Napoleon III strictly means the period when he held that title and not before, although if a personality trait is being discussed there might be some relevance if this is explicitly identified and linked to the period in question.

Commonly, candidates began their responses with an analysis of the Crimean War, although it was here, and possibly also the when referring to the Italian Campaign, that candidates made the greatest number of factual errors. Perhaps understandably, there was some confusion over the reasons for French involvement in both, with the greatest level of uncertainty in reference to the Crimea. In addition to this, concrete knowledge of what France may have achieved in the Crimea and also Italy was at times sketchy, and rather bizarrely, a number of candidates placed the Crimea in China. There was in addition some confusion over whether France obtained Nice and Savoy after the Italian campaign or not. Far more secure knowledge was displayed when considering Mexico; indeed this commonly had some good, developed understanding with a very clear expression both of motivation and also of outcome. It was unfortunate that that the small number of candidates affected by issues of time management missed out the Franco-Prussian war from their response. Another small number of candidates spent a considerable amount of time trying to establish what Napoleon III's motives were. In theory a good definition of aim will help in determining degree of success, but care should be taken that the essay does not become one focused too heavily on the question of motivation rather than of outcome.

Question 3

- 03** This was a less popular question, although there were still quite a number of candidates that combined it with a response to Question 1.

This was clearly the breadth question so it required less detailed factual knowledge and much more of a grasp of the broader sweep of historical change. Some candidates unfortunately still fail to register that the key here is to cover this broad chronological sweep. There were some for example that neglected to mention Louis XVIII at all, and it was really quite rare for any mention of the period 1870 to 1875. The very best response tended not to adopt a chronological narrative but instead focused on the events of political change in order of significance for example. It was also quite rare for candidates to give due weight to the issue of political change – quite a number of responses identified how important the social or economic role of the Church was in this period but failed to link this effectively to the concept of political change. Possibly if a more disciplined focus had been established then candidates might have struggled slightly less in trying to include all of the material they wished to in the time given. A further challenge arose as some candidates

seemed not to consider the significance of the role of the church but rather simply identified what it did. It remains very useful advice to encourage students to spend some time reading and considering precisely what the question is demanding.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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