



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2012**

**History 1041**

**Unit HIS1G**

***Report on the Examination***

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# Unit HIS1G

## Unit 1G: Britain, 1815–1865

### General Comments

Students answered questions in all available combinations. There was a better spread of answers this year, with more students attempting questions 05 and 06. Most students were able to answer all of the questions in the time limit provided. For those that did not, the final answer tended to come in note form, for which very few marks could be rewarded. Some students did attempt to add a conclusion to their work where they were running out of time, and this allowed them to access rather more marks than those who merely added a series of bullet points. A range of marks were awarded on this paper, from those who were excellent with marks close to the maximum 72, down to script totals in single figures.

The most popular question on the paper this year was Question 1. Question 2 (on Chartism and Peel) turned out to be marginally less popular than in previous years, with an increased number of students answering Question 3 on Ireland, although this was still only a minority of the total students entered for the exam.

Quality of Written Communication was generally competent, but there continue to be some key spelling mistakes. Students should be aware of how to spell 'Britain', 'parliament', and 'Prime Minister'.

### Question 1

- 01** Students were aware that there were a number of factors behind the popular discontent in the years 1815–1820. A majority of students were able to identify three key factors, and add some explanation to these to show why popular discontent took place. Students discussed the impact of industrialisation, and many were able to link this to the effects of the end of the Napoleonic Wars, in order to show how together they caused further discontent. Students were also able to discuss the 'class legislation' introduced by the government, in particular the Corn Laws of 1815, the Abolition of Income Tax in 1816 and the introduction of the Game Laws in 1817. Some students also discussed the reaction to government repression during this period (suspension of Habeas Corpus, and the introduction of the Six Acts) to show how this also led to the growth of popular discontent. The poor state of the economy was also discussed by some students, as was the impact of the agricultural revolution. Many students were able to achieve good marks on this question by covering a range of accurate reasons, and adding explanation. However the best answers came from students who were able to draw links between factors, either throughout the answer, or in their conclusion.
- 02** High level responses to this question were able to develop a balanced argument which showed that although the economic reforms of the Tories after 1822 were important, they were not the only causes of the decline in popular discontent. Students were able to discuss the Reciprocity of Duties Act 1823 (and the other agreements subsequently made), the modification of the Navigation Acts, the Bank Act 1826, and the reduction of duties on imports. However, some students were confused at the differences between the Navigation Acts and the Reciprocity of Duties Acts, and some weaker students believed that the two were the same. Some students were also confused over the extent of the tariff reforms introduced by Robinson, and a number of them quoted the tariff reforms introduced by Peel's Conservative Government in the 1840s instead. A number of

students did mention the introduction of a sliding scale for the Corn Laws. Although there was a slight modification in 1822, this was not a sliding scale, and was not introduced until 1828. References to the creation of the Metropolitan Police were also not relevant to this question. Students do need to be aware of the time frame of the question set. Students that were able to access the higher levels were also able to produce a balanced argument, and this considered the issue of 'how far' the economic reforms were responsible. Students were able to discuss the changes made to the Tory Cabinet after the death of Lord Castlereagh, and his replacement by Canning, and the introduction of Peel, Huskisson and Robinson to top positions in the government. Some students also considered the cyclical nature of the economy, and were able to assess that the improvements in the economy after 1820 saw the reduction in popular discontent, rather than any real contribution by the government. Some students also addressed the issue of legislation introduced by the government in the 1810s that was designed to suppress popular discontent. Some good evidence was introduced and arguments made about the impact of the Six Acts, the suspension of Habeas Corpus, and the Seditious Meetings Act. All three had an impact on reducing radicalism, and this repressive legislation may also have accounted for the reduction in popular discontent.

The reduction in discontent was also linked to the introduction of the Combination Acts in 1824. Students were able to discuss why the legalisation of trade unions allowed the amount of discontent to fall. Some students also considered the subsequent amendment to the act in 1825, and the impact that this had.

Weaker answers failed to consider the impact of Tory legislation linked to the economy, and many students instead focused on the reforms of Peel at the Home Office, which did not fully address the question. In a small number of cases students got confused between this period, and the Conservative government under Peel in the 1840s, and as a consequence the information provided was not relevant.

## **Question 2**

- 03** Most students were aware of the fact that there were a number of reasons for the rise of Chartism, and a high proportion of them were able to come up with three key reasons. Disappointment with the Great Reform Act of 1832, the impact of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, the growth of radicalism (especially the leadership of Lovett), and the state of the economy were all considered by students as reasons for the rise of Chartism. A small number of students were somewhat confused between the rise of Chartism, and the push for reform back in the period before the Reform Act of 1832.
- 04** A number of students were not fully focused on the whole of the question. Students who focused solely on Britain with no mention of Ireland struggled to get good marks. Those that focused on issues without mentioning Peel's economic reforms were similarly lacking in the range and depth expected from a good answer. Those that were successful focused on the financial reforms of Peel as being responsible in part for the mid-Victorian boom. They covered the issues of tariff reform, the re-introduction of Income Tax, the Bank Charter Act and Companies Act as well as the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The impact of these reforms was also evaluated by some students as to whether this led to an increase in stability. The Railway Act of 1844, and its contribution towards stability in Britain, was also considered by some students. However, other areas considered by students were not always fully focused on the question set. On the issue of Ireland, even those answers at the higher levels tended to have only limited amounts of information linked to this. A large number of students used the Famine as evidence of no real stability being produced in Ireland. Others were able to add a more rounded approach to the issues in Ireland, and the Maynooth grant, the Universities Act, and the Devon Commission were all considered by some. Weaker answers tended to lack some in-depth

information, or would concentrate solely on one aspect, rather than providing the depth needed. Clearly in some cases the students focused on the limited area on Peel that they felt confident about on the day.

### **Question 3**

- 05** The reasons why Catholics were emancipated in 1829 were well developed by a majority of students. There was an awareness of a range of factors being responsible for this and most students were able to provide a good range. Some students also considered the longer term factors such as the promise made by Pitt before the Act of Union was passed, alongside the support amongst some MPs for the issue since the early 1820s. Level 3 type answers were fairly commonplace on this question, with most students being able to provide a good range of evidence. There were also a number of responses that were far more descriptive though, re-telling the story, rather than attempting to explain why Catholic Emancipation was granted.
- 06** Students seem to have been better prepared for the Irish question this year. However, a number of answers tended to be quite thin in terms of range and depth. There was a tendency to concentrate on the impact of Catholic Emancipation, and as a consequence some students overlapped their information with that on question 05. Some focused on the impact of the Tithe War, and the attempts by the British government to gain support from the Irish, during the 1840s in particular. A significant number of students found themselves unable to gain good marks on this question as they did not show any real attempt to balance their answers. For those that did attempt to balance out the argument, evidence was provided linked to the Famine, and its impact. Some students were able to link this to the rise of later organisations like the Fenians and the Irish Republican Brotherhood who sought to break away from British control. Others considered the impact of absentee British landlords, and the poor relationship they had with their Irish tenants. Good answers tended to show that religion had played an important role in influencing Irish attitudes towards the British, but they also considered the significant impact that the Famine had on relations between the two countries. A number of students were also able to consider the long term discontent felt towards the absentee British landlords, and linked this back to the role that this has had played in agitation both earlier in the century as well as pre-1800.

### **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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