



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS1K

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS1K

Unit 1K: Russia and Germany, 1871–1914

General Comments

Overall this was a successful paper which students found accessible. There was a more even split of students between the questions, with more students attempting question three, on foreign policy than in previous years, possibly because of the time period covered by the question. Question one remained the most popular question, as in previous years. On the 12 marks questions, students displayed great confidence and awareness of the question demands. There was a consistent focus on answering the question and a greater proportion of students were aware of the need for a range of factors with explanation and some linkage. Many students also were aware of the need to prioritise. The longer essay questions still seem to pose a greater challenge, (quite rightly) there were still many students who failed to focus on question demands, either in evaluating success, importance or extent. At the bottom end of the mark levels students produced descriptive accounts with some relevant material but really needed to focus this on the question. Understanding the distinction between, economic and political was crucial.

Question 1

- 01** This was a popular question and was generally completed very successfully. Students at the higher levels were able to identify a range of factors that led Bismarck to introduce protective tariffs in 1878. Good students were aware of economic issues leading to the change and were also able to link this to Bismarck's need for political change, strong answers referred to the difficulties posed by the National Liberals, both to economic policy and to other policies and the position in the Reichstag. Less effective answers gave either a list of factors with little explanation, or a very limited range of generalised reasons with little support
- 02** This pair of questions was obviously popular because students wished to answer a question on Bismarck. The early part of the fight against Socialism, which was the most important consequence of economic change, was generally well known and assessed, the most able students also examined the success of the successive governments up to 1914 in dealing with the continuing growth of the SPD and its' ever increasing influence in the Reichstag. Attempts at repression and the attempts to gain widespread support through policies such as *Sammlungspolitik* were also considered. The highest scoring students also referred to the growing influence of the industrial elites and their influence on politics. Less capable students remained focused on Bismarck with little or any focus on the later periods and also produced a great deal of largely descriptive writing. There were also a small number of students who did not understand what the political impact of economic change was and proceeded to describe government economic policy and economic issues. These students were appropriately rewarded.

Question 2

- 03** This was a reasonably well answered question and revealed that many students know a great deal about the events of 1905. Good answers were able to provide some background reasons for the events that almost forced the Tsar to issue the October Manifesto. These students could explain how the situation in 1905 escalated until

Nicholas had to make concessions. This escalation included the impact of Bloody Sunday, the continuing failure and eventual defeat in the Russo-Japanese war and the mutinies and strikes that broke out after this. Students often explained that Nicholas did not wish to issue the manifesto and that he was persuaded by figures including Witte. Many prioritised the role of Witte and were rewarded for this. Less effective answers concentrated on a general description of the events of 1905 or a general explanation of why there was discontent in Russia at that time with little focus on the reasons for the October Manifesto.

- 04** This was a reasonably successful question that revealed a solid knowledge of the Dumas from many students. The most successful answers were able to use a detailed knowledge of the Dumas to assess their contribution to any political stability that existed in Russia at this period. These students were aware of the impact that the initial promise of a Duma had on the post-1905 situation and to make the point that the idea of some representation was a positive step towards stability. These students went on to examine the careers of the first two Dumas and to generally agree that they were detrimental to stability. They were able to make some assessment of the extent to which the reformed third Duma was able to make a contribution to stability. These students were also able to refer to other factors promoting stability such as the role of Stolypin or economic growth. They were also able to challenge the existence of stability in Russia at this time. Weaker answers simply described the careers of the Dumas with little attempt at assessment. Some material was very sketchy and failed to consider political stability.

Question 3

- 05** This question was the most effectively answered, with many students having detailed knowledge of Bismarck's foreign policy. Many students were able to give a range of reasons why Bismarck wanted the *Dreikaiserbund*, although far fewer gave consideration to the wishes of the other countries or personalities. The best answers gave some indication for the motives of the other powers, the desire to avoid conflict in the Balkans, isolation or the wish to combat socialism. These students often gave a reasoned priority, often from Bismarck's point of view, the need to keep France isolated. Lower scoring students failed to provide a range of factors or an explanation, often they focused only on Bismarck's wish to isolate France.
- 06** This was unusual for a foreign policy question in that students mostly kept to the dates in the title. Obviously a focus on Bismarck's policies was again welcome, although some leapt forward to cover the Franco-Russian Alliance. Good answers displayed sound knowledge of Bismarck's foreign policy with an assessment of success or failure. These students were able to provide an overall assessment of success or failure as part of their conclusion. Students who scored less highly still had a reasonable knowledge (on the whole); however, they were either very thin or very descriptive, or both, and failed to provide effective assessment. There were some instances where understanding of the issues was compromised by a lack of knowledge of the order of events, for example, the Reinsurance Treaty before the Congress of Berlin.

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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