



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS2B

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2B

Unit 2B: The Church in England: The Struggle for Supremacy, 1529–1547

General Comments

Students' work was of a high standard in response to the questions set on the June 2012 paper. Overwhelmingly, students chose to answer the optional question on the dissolution of the monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace. Clearly, they were well prepared for the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace and also the compulsory source question on Anti-clericalism and the break with Rome. The availability of past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports has led to the majority of work being clearly structured and focused to meet the assessment objectives. Unfortunately, there are still numerous weaknesses with spelling, punctuation and grammar; even words which are printed on the question paper are misspelt and it is very common to read 'henry' and 'rome' as well as countless other proper names without capital letters. There is also an excessive use of the conditional tense rather than the past tense; History has happened and things either were, or were not. There still remain responses which include endless views of historians, regardless of whether they are relevant or not. Elton's view that the divorce was the 'occasion not the cause...' was ascribed to every known historian: Starkey, Bernard, Loades, Lotherington...and even to Elton himself.

Question 1

- 01** The two sources provided students with a range of clear comparisons of views. The similarities of complaints about clerical abuses were evident in both sources as was the importance of money to the Catholic Church in the early sixteenth century. The views of the contemporary and historian did differ in terms of how significant the abuses were. Many students were able to achieve Level 4 in their response to this question through a consideration of how the context in which the two sources were written explained the difference between them. This use of own knowledge, especially of Thomas More's Humanism, allowed for considered and supported evaluation. A small number of students were still in GCSE mode and considered reliability. Others compared the sources with other historians. The question does ask for comparison of views and it is the students who use 'views' overtly in their responses who achieve the higher levels.
- 02** The knowledge of Humanism was also useful in constructing a response to this question. The Humanists, such as More, were keen to reform the Church from within rather than to break with Rome. Not all those who criticised the Church were of the same mind; undoubtedly the opinions of MPs wishing to press a different agenda, sharing the beliefs of Richard Hunne, were utilised to pressure the Pope to grant an annulment. Students have refined their understanding of the reasons for the Divorce; some have extended it to the break with Rome. However, it is important to use such knowledge in the context of the question. Much more could have been made of the underpinning of the legislation which pressurised the Pope and, ultimately, failed to secure the annulment. The sources are selected to enable students to present a rounded answer to the question. Source C offers the most direct links to the question but all sources must be used to achieve the higher levels. Most students know that they have to use the sources to go beyond Level 2; however, the point at which they remember this in the examination varies. The majority of students do use the sources from the outset but there is always a significant number who

remember half way through or later and go back to make reference to the sources. It is very difficult for examiners to follow a series of sequentially (although not always even that) asterisks which lead them throughout the answer booklet to find references to the sources often crammed into margins. In doing so the flow of the argument is lost. Sadly, it is often the more able students who fall foul of this.

Question 2

- 03** The question on the dissolution of the smaller monasteries in 1536 was just that. It required an explanation as to why the smaller monasteries were dissolved in 1536. It did not ask why monasteries *per se* were dissolved. Far too many students answered this in general terms. Whilst the general reasons were rewarded up to bottom Level 3 (7 marks) some of the reasons pushed the bounds of credulity – references to the need to secure noble support for Edward’s minority abounded; he was obviously not born until 1537. There was sufficient to write about the nature of the smaller monasteries and perceived corruption, financial needs to build defences against a possible crusade, the example which had been set by Wolsey. Many students did refer to the dissolution of the smaller monasteries being a test case. It was not sufficient to say that the smaller monasteries were dissolved to remove the last vestiges of the influence of the Pope. How could it be when monks were relocated to the larger abbeys and some were temporarily restored?
- 04** The focus of the responses to the question on the importance of the dissolution of the smaller monasteries to the Pilgrimage of Grace was much clearer than in the previous year’s answers. Students were very well informed about the causes of the Pilgrimage and the relative historical interpretations. Those who reached the higher levels were able to address the concept that different groups in society were motivated by different concerns. (Although, the surprise appearance of Mr Darcy – a refugee from English Literature – was a diversion, along with the twelve wounds of Christ.) There were some issues with chronology in this part of the second question; whereas, Edward had been noted in 1536, Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn were both given as reasons for the Pilgrimage of Grace. Both, of course, were dead by the time the Pilgrimage occurred. The better students produced structured and balanced responses which were well supported with precise supporting evidence. Those responses which demonstrate controlled and sustained judgement will always achieve the highest level, but the development of supporting evidence can make a significant difference between Level 3 and Level 4. It is helpful where students produce an introduction which summarises their argument, but they should be encouraged not to repeat the same point over and over again. It would seem that students who do write out a brief plan before they start do produce a more controlled piece. Clearly those who spend too long planning compromise the development of their argument.

Question 3

- 05** The reasons for the placing of the English Bible in parish churches elicited some very detailed responses which demonstrated an understanding of the context of the injunctions as a whole. The role of Cromwell was explained in guiding Henry’s religious reformation following the Break with Rome and the need to establish himself as the head of the Church in the minds of the laity at all levels. Whilst only a small percentage of students chose this optional question, there were a considerable number of students who had chosen it because they knew only slightly more about this area of the specification than they knew about the Pilgrimage of Grace; such answers were very woolly.

- 06** The division between the good answers to the extended writing element of this question and a range of vague responses was also evident. Perhaps a more worrying trend is that a significant number of answers to questions on the 1540s tend to be almost exclusively about faction. This question focused on the scope of religious policy – particularly doctrine. The better students were well informed about the key events and shifts in doctrine and were able to make judgements about these. The supporting evidence was predominantly from the earlier years of the question, but some did consider the ultimate objective in religious policy and the doctrine which underpinned the Royal Supremacy. Such students used the historical interpretation of the King’s Reformation. Where the issue of the different influence groups was related to this the material was credited.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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