



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2012**

**History 1041**

**Unit HIS2F**

***Report on the Examination***

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## *Unit HIS2F*

### **Unit 2F: Challenging British Dominance: The Loss of American Colonies, 1754–1783**

#### **General Comments**

There was evidence of genuine quality in many of the scripts, but there were also indications that the degree of preparation might not have been as extensive as appropriate for a 'depth' paper. Both Questions 03 and 05 produced quite low marks from a range of students who clearly had little specific knowledge of either the siege of Louisburg or the terms of the Quebec Act of 1774. Question 06 also caused problems, and it may well have been that aversion to Question 03 forced students into a 05/06 combination which may have had a more adverse impact on student scores than would have been the case with a Q03/04 combination. Centres should be aware that in a 'depth' paper, with a compulsory question, that there is little, if anything, from the specification that centres can safely omit from their teaching.

#### **Question 1**

- 01** Most students were able to identify both differences and similarities of views across the two sources, and were often able to supplement this with appropriate and constructive 'own knowledge'. Even relatively weak students were able to recognise that Source A regarded General Howe as 'not incompetent', whilst Source B referred directly to Howe's 'incompetence'. Other points of difference included the reasons for Howe's evacuation of Boston in 1776, the reasons for Washington's escape from Long Island after defeat at the hands of Howe later in the year, and the broad reasons for the limited success of British forces as a whole (the unusual circumstances of having to deal with irregular forces, according to Source A, contrasted with the lack of good generalship and the existence of confused strategic direction, as indicated in Source B). Similarities may have been slightly less numerous, but were hardly more difficult to identify, with most students mentioning that Howe had, sensibly, understood the need to evacuate Boston. Also both sources agreed that the British army was potentially superior to the rebel forces, but had failed to adapt effectively to the different style of conflict in North America. Appropriate 'own knowledge' included reference to other examples of Howe's performance in North America, or examples of incompetence/ability taken from the experiences of other British commanders in North America.
- 02** Most students were able, based on source extraction and own knowledge, to produce reasonable responses to this question. Sources A and B offered contrasting views of Washington's skills, Source A pointed out how he avoided open conflict with Howe's trained troops after Long Island, but Source B attributed Washington's survival here to Howe's emphasis on capturing New York rather than pursuing the rebels. Source C contained no direct reference to Washington's role, but did offer a range of other reasons why the American rebels triumphed, and students usually made extensive use of these. From their own knowledge, students were able to comment on Washington's key role in training and disciplining the rebel forces, and in developing the use of indirect warfare against the British.

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**Question 2**

- 03** There were some weak responses here, with too many students clearly unaware of the actual location of Louisburg; many couched their responses in such vague terms that Louisburg could have been anywhere, not necessarily in North America, whilst some believed it was in, or very near to, the Ohio Valley. Good answers would have mentioned the strategic value of Louisburg, near to the mouth of the St Lawrence, thus being key to Pitt's strategy of getting to the heart of French Canada via the St Lawrence river and Quebec, rather than through the Ohio Valley; to this end, it was part of Pitt's three-pronged strategy of 1758. It greatly boosted British morale after earlier defeats in North America, particularly in view of the fact that it reclaimed a port captured during the War of Austrian Succession, and controversially restored to the French at the end of that war. Some students, perhaps desperate to find material to use, went on to assess the results of Louisburg's capture, but failing to set this in the context of the reasons for the capture.
- 04** This question posed few problems, with students well prepared to unload their knowledge of Pitt's aims and abilities, contrasting these with various other factors, though not always linking Pitt to these factors; the role of the British Navy, for example, was often treated as a separate consideration to Pitt's policies, whereas in reality Pitt's reforms, naval appointments and financial husbandry provided the basis for the significant naval contribution.

**Question 3**

- 05** This question produced some very disappointing responses. Whilst many students were able to analyse constructively the terms of the Quebec Act, others had virtually no knowledge of these terms, and saw the Act very much as an extension of the 'Intolerable Acts', some actually stating that the Quebec Act was purely designed to increase taxation of the American colonies. Worthy responses made clear reference to the undemocratic revised structure of government in Quebec, possibly an indication of how Britain would ideally wish to govern the whole of her North American territories, the recognition granted to the Roman Catholic Church, and the territorial extension of Quebec, effectively blocking colonial expansion towards the Mississippi.
- 06** This caused more problems than anticipated. The focus on Britain's 'unwillingness to compromise' was not welcomed by most students. Responses were often relatively narrative, describing British legislation during the period, and the colonial response to this. Weaker students often confined their narration to limited parts of the period, sometimes stopping completely around 1768, or not starting until 1770. Those who proceeded beyond narration sometimes developed an inappropriate focus, emphasizing the impact/limitations of British legislation, rather than the extent to which British policy reflected a willingness to compromise. Otherwise knowledgeable responses would have been much more effective had they commented on the stream of 'taxation' legislation in the mid-1760s, the punitive nature of the legislation of 1774 and George III's negative response to the Olive Branch Petition, contrasting this with the occasional signs of compromise such as Stamp Act repeal, repeal of most of Townsend's Duties, and slowness of response after the Gaspee incident. Better responses pointed out that the colonists were hardly willing to compromise themselves, with their violent reaction to the Stamp Act, and incidents such as the Gaspee and the Boston Tea Party.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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