



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

History 2041

Unit HIS3A

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

Unit HIS3A

Unit 3A: The Angevin Kings of England: British Monarchy, 1154–1216

General Comments

This was a very pleasing examination for this A2 medieval history specification. Once again the majority of students showed themselves to be able and enthusiastic historians, well-prepared, both in knowledge and skills. The best answers were clearly focused on the question and set out an explicit historical argument supported with detailed own knowledge. Students' work was presented with care, showed good organisation, focus and structure, and was expressed in clear and precise language. The standard achieved in the best answers was very impressive. Students coped well with the demands of the examination. There was a full range of answers on all questions. Time did not appear to be a major issue for most students: they generally managed to answer two questions in good time. There were very few unfinished answers. However, lack of range was an issue in weaker responses; these were short given the time available to students for these essays.

All three questions proved popular, attracting very similar numbers of students. The most important general weakness which emerged this year was a tendency to simply describe events or the actions of various monarchs, and not analyse historical evidence in relation to the specific question being answered. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Question 1

01 There were a high number of strong responses to this question on the restoration of royal authority. Answers were wide-ranging in the evidence presented, developing King Henry's actions regarding issues such as adulterine castles, mercenaries, over-powerful barons and royal government and justice. Most answers used the contrast with King Stephen's legacy to illustrate the challenges faced by King Henry II in 1154. However, although students showed excellent detailed understanding of the policies and actions of the king, there was a tendency to simply describe these factors and not develop a focused argument by explaining their relevance in regard to restoring royal authority. For example, many students described the loss of royal control over coinage during King Stephen's reign and then described King Henry's actions, but failed to explain the relevance the royal monopoly over coinage production regarding royal authority – the symbolic importance of the royal image, for example. In order to establish the success of King Henry's various reforms students needed to explain the consequences of his actions in order to establish the degree of success – that is what the question asked. Nevertheless, the vast majority of students showed some skills in analysis and achieved at least level 3, with over a third of students gaining mid-Level 4 and above. Many able students showed skills in evaluation and judgement by expanding upon the degree of success achieved by the King by 1166, his failure regarding restoration of royal authority over the Church was one notable theme in such responses.

Question 2

02 This breadth question was the most popular of the three, but it proved a challenge for weaker students who were unable to look beyond the reign of King John for weaknesses in the Angevin Empire. This type of question makes different demands upon students, while historical knowledge and analysis are still expected, range across the period is also

expected. Some students chose to ignore both the idea of breadth and also the particular issue in this question, and produced pre-prepared answers on King John and the loss of Normandy. Again, there was a tendency towards description, leaving out any explicit analysis of the issue. For example, such responses simply described the familial quarrels between King Henry and Richard, King Richard and John, and King John and Arthur, but did not explain their impact upon the fate of the Angevin Empire, that is, in terms of territories lost and borders undermined. Nevertheless, at their best many responses were precise and wide-ranging, showing strong synoptic understanding and an impressive conceptual understanding through issues such as the growth and application of Capetian suzerainty over the Angevins. Indeed, over a quarter of students achieved mid-level 4 and above.

Question 3

- 03** This question on King John's relationship with the English Church and the Papacy saw some of the best quality answers, responses to the question with secure knowledge, context and synoptic understanding, and informed debate. Indeed, the use of historiography in this question was very impressive and avoided the difficulties detailed in the June 2011 Report for HIS3A, in particular, superficial descriptive references to historians. Some of the weaknesses in responses included lack of range, with essays ending in 1213 when England became a papal fief, or lack of depth, especially regarding the terms of the agreement between King John and Pope Innocent III. Most essays followed a chronological focus, evaluating success or failure from 1199 onwards, with focus on key elements such as the Canterbury election, the Pope's choice of Stephen Langton, the impact of interdict and excommunication. However, a key problem for weaker students became the loss of argument and reference to the question as they produced descriptive narrative. Many students overcame this danger by balancing their essays around the issues of success and failure, so maintaining an evaluative focus throughout.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

UMS conversion calculator: www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion