



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2012**

**History 2041**

**Unit HIS3L**

***Report on the Examination***

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## *Unit HIS3L*

### **Unit 3L: From Defeat to Unity: Germany, 1945–1991**

#### **General Comments**

The overall quality of response from students was good. Most students produced answers that were substantial and determined to put forward a balanced argument. Standards of presentation and the quality of written communication were variable. While many answers were fluent and controlled, too many students relied on rather casual and approximate language – at this level, use of words and phrases such as ‘incredibly’, ‘definitely’ or ‘the public were not happy about this’ is unhelpful. More effective answers managed to be more concise, more accurate and with more precise definition of terms and concepts. Many generally well-argued answers achieved marks in Level 3 or low in Level 4 when they might well have scored higher with more clarity and control. A more selective approach would also have been beneficial, especially in Question 2, where many answers began promisingly with a good focus on the inherited problems of 1945 but then got side-tracked into comprehensive description of events after Adenauer. A shorter, more focused, more controlled answer will always be more effective than a lengthy answer that becomes ragged because of undue haste. Many students would also have performed better with a more secure understanding of chronology – the sequence of events was often rather muddled in answers to Question 2, for example. These reservations should not be overstated. The work of the best students was analytical showing impressive grasp of political concepts.

#### **Question 1**

**01** The majority of students responded confidently to this question, on the successes of the Ulbricht regime to 1971. Many answers showed secure understanding of the ideological aims of the regime and the importance of social policies as well as the economy. The best answers showed an admirable ability to differentiate between outward conformity and inward retreat to the private sphere. Weaker responses tended to make rely on rather literal and uncritical statements. Chronological understanding was sometimes limited, for example, in making inappropriate references to the ‘niche society’ in relation to the early 1950s.

#### **Question 2**

**02** Answers to this question, on the extent to which West Germany had recovered by 1989 from the economic and political problems of 1945, mostly showed good understanding of the Nazi legacy and of the recovery under Adenauer and Erhard during the 1950s. Several answers lost focus after that, however, and fell into rather rushed and descriptive accounts of later developments that were only tenuously linked to the original argument. As noted above, many students would have benefited from more secure chronological grasp, especially in relation to the 1960s. A number of answers went astray by including extensive comparisons of the FRG and the GDR.

### **Question 3**

- 03** Answers to this question, on the extent to which expectations were matched by realities of re-unification between 1898 and the end of 1991, were of variable quality. The best responses were direct and analytical, with an impressive ability to define precisely the expectations aroused by the euphoria that accompanied the end of the Wall. Weaker responses were too generalised in evidence and assessment. A substantial minority of students wasted valuable time on irrelevant accounts of the history of the GDR before 1989.

### **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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