

History

Advanced GCE A2 7835

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS 3835

Report on the Units

June 2008

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Chief Examiner's Report

General Comments

This Report can be read in conjunction with the Mark Schemes that are available from OCR and Centres are encouraged to discuss the Report with their candidates. The amount of detailed comments in the reports on the Units varies because some questions attracted many answers while others were attempted by few or even no candidates. The Introduction to each Unit contains valuable advice for Centres and candidates, and Centres who have taught topics on which there are few comments are advised to read other parts of the Report as well as the Introduction.

History has continued to grow as a subject in OCR with new Centres entering candidates every session. Since the beginning of Curriculum 2000 there has been a steady increase in AS and A Level candidates. This session saw the aggregation of over 13,000 A2 and over 14,400 AS candidates. It is also encouraging to see that over 90 per cent of OCR candidates continue from AS to A Level. In addition, more Centres are entering candidates in the January session – they comprised 10 per cent of the AS and 30 per cent of the A2 2008 entry. There has also been a significant increase in the number of candidates studying Medieval History, rising by 35 per cent in Unit 2580 and by 38 per cent in Unit 2587 between 2006 and 2008.

There were very few complaints from Centres about questions. Two Centres complained about Question 18 in Unit 2586 and one Centre complained about Question 11 in 2588. In spite of the very small number, each complaint was given serious attention by Principal Examiners and was discussed at the Grade Award meeting. Assistant examiners were also asked whether any of the complaints seemed justified on the basis of candidates' responses. None of the three complaints was upheld.

Periodically there are suggestions in the media and educational circles that A level standards are in decline and that the proportion of candidates who are awarded the higher grades, especially Grade A, has increased unjustifiably. For the past four years, the percentage had been at or above 23 per cent. This session there was a fall in the mean mark for most papers, which suggested that the quality of candidates' work was not as high as in June 2007. 23.1 per cent gained a Grade A this session compared with 23.4 per cent in June 2007. However, a higher percentage of candidates (53.5%) gained a Grade B this session compared with 52.3% in 2007. Candidates gaining an E grade or better continued to be above 99 per cent, which is very encouraging. In contrast, it is apparent that an increasing number of AS candidates were unable to write more than a few lines in some of their answers, and an alarming number scored 0 marks.

Each of the Principal Examiners has highlighted a particularly disturbing trend: candidates are becoming increasingly reliant upon pre-prepared answers that have been learned in revision and, in some cases, given out as part of a class exercise. This practice inhibits both able and weak candidates: the more able often produce a stereotypical response bereft of any individual interpretation; the weaker candidates are frequently unable to adapt their learned answer and so write irrelevantly or in an unfocused fashion. Centres really must encourage their candidates to answer the question set and not to twist it into a different and more amenable question. Some Centres appear to learn essay plans and this, too, usually results in a distorted response. In the evaluation and interpretation of sources, it is equally essential that candidates avoid a mechanical approach. A similar issue has been noticed in the selection of Coursework titles and in teachers dispensing advice to candidates about how to approach a topic. It seems clear that candidates need to be reminded that they must answer the question; in particular, attention must be given to any key words, phrases and commands. As one Principal Examiner has pertinently commented, 'if a question is about domestic policy, then foreign policy is irrelevant'.

Report on the Units taken in June 2008

Another common weakness this session was the quality of factual knowledge used to support an argument. Too many candidates failed to provide accurate and sufficient supporting detail. Dates were not known or incorrectly cited; arguments were often asserted or expressed as generalisations; and key figures and events were frequently confused. These criticisms were evident in both AS and A2 examinations. The failure to present accurate supporting evidence seriously undermines the conviction of an essay and invariably confines the answer to a low mark. Examiners also reported that candidates were producing unnecessarily long essay plans. Planning an answer, particularly one in which an argument is developed logically, is a key element of a high quality essay. It enables a candidate to produce a consistent and coherent interpretation that is focused on the question set as opposed to a lengthy plan that records a list of reasons, events or essential facts. Moreover, a brief and apposite plan is less likely to generate a short or unfinished essay.

Most reports draw attention to the perennial need to improve the quality of candidates' written English. Of course, many candidates expressed themselves reasonably clearly and some answers were a pleasure to read. However, a lot of examiners claimed that the quality of English was at best variable and often very weak. How to redress this feature is problematical but Centres could help their candidates by focusing on the following issues. Firstly, ensure candidates' handwriting is legible and, unless a candidate has received official dispensation to use a word processor, encourage him/her to practise writing essays by hand particularly in their revision exercises. Secondly, stress the importance of accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation. How candidates express an argument goes a long way towards helping an examiner decide whether a concept has been understood or just poorly explained. Thirdly, many candidates still use abbreviations, write one-sentence paragraphs and resort to colloquialisms. Such stylistic flourishes have their place but not in a formal piece of writing. While most of these developments appear among the work of weaker candidates, many middle-grade candidates would have achieved a higher mark if the quality of their English had been better. Arguably the remedy lies with candidates reading more serious historical material, thinking about and discussing key topics, and spending more time practising their writing skills.

2580 - 2582 Document Studies

General Comment

The total entry for these units was the same as last summer, 18,144, but the standard was slightly lower. This was in accordance with Centre predictions which were also a little lower than last year. Candidates found it difficult to access the top of Band II and Band I, those gaining 50 plus being rare. There were a small but nonetheless significant minority who scored less than 20. Clearly there is a group of candidates who should not have been entered and would have been well advised to wait until the January of Year13. Most candidates scored between 25 and 45, often with a discrepancy between the marks for part (a), which were more secure, and for part (b), which were more varied. Sometimes this was the result of poor timing but equally it could reflect the difficulty of balancing all the requirements in the second question. This summer **2581** (with a candidature of 4,324) outperformed the other two units, impressing in particular with their sound contextual knowledge and their attempts at evaluation. They seemed more aware that this paper has to be driven by the sources provided and is not a period studies unit with sources attached for illustration only. **2580**, with an increased candidature of 966, also performed reasonably but with a larger tail than usual. Performance here can often be undermined with an overly formulaic response to source analysis or overwhelming own knowledge that misses the question's focus. **2582's** candidature of 12,824 was, inevitably, more varied but with far fewer marks of over 50 and more marks in the 10s and 20s. However it was felt that if one removed Q7 (the Nazis) then performances were comparable with 2580 and 2581. Although Q7 does attract some able candidates and Centres, it also has a much wider range of weaker candidates.

As one examiner wrote, it is absolutely vital if Centres want to improve the performance of their candidates that they **read this report and its predecessors**. He went so far as to say that failure to do so should carry a health warning. It is clear from reading responses that some Centres do. We can see when our advice is being taken, even when candidates do not quite succeed in carrying it out. Equally we can tell when it appears to be unknown. This can be quite galling as a whole candidature can suffer, simply because it has little idea of the command words and the appropriate approach to a source based paper. Some Centres misapply our points in the classroom so that candidates approach their answers far too mechanically and formulaically, with sections on various qualities, in isolation from content and context. Regardless of their presence, or otherwise, typicality, authenticity, completeness, consistency and usefulness are each given a separate paragraph. Candidates struggle to say anything beyond the 'stock' and generic and miss far more important things like dates, contexts, tone and purpose. Some are still in the realms of basic bias, primary and secondary with all the simplistic assumptions that accompany these rather unhelpful concepts. The best candidates are marked by an intellectual flexibility that can respond via intelligent questioning of the sources as to their limitations, utility, purpose and audience. These will lead directly into the appropriate history and allow an argument and judgement to emerge naturally. Nonetheless over the last couple of years it has been a pleasure to record the very real progress that many Centres have made with the teaching of a source based paper. That candidates still continue to struggle with part or all of this is a measure of the high level skills required, disciplined by the need to appreciate the different worlds of the past. Their achievement is all the more to be celebrated at a time when the traditional forms of language with which History is recorded and communicated are changing.

Given the problems of a linguistic based subject it is hardly surprising that standards of **literacy** are varied. On the one hand there is much to celebrate. Many candidates express themselves reasonably clearly and the mistakes are those of occasional carelessness and the pressure of a public examination. Some are a pleasure to read. Others are tortuous, poorly punctuated, if at all, and often all but illegible. Spelling can be appalling, especially of key names and concepts inextricably linked to their period of study. We try to credit what candidates are attempting to say

but they frequently penalise themselves. Clearly there are few subjects left which require a piece of extended and argumentative prose, so those candidates lack practice outside the subject. An extension of this, and something that we have emphasised before, is the **lack of care in reading the sources, their introductions and attributions**. Although relatively brief the four sources contain much, with crucial qualifications and sub clauses that are frequently missed. Subtleties are ignored and the possible interpretations that can arise from the same source are not picked up. As candidates read the sources (and they are given time to do this) they should bear in mind the introductions and attributions and above all the actual question. On 2581 Q2(a) for example many candidates compared the reactions of Luther to the Dominican Indulgence seller Tetzel, when the question asked about his reasons for these, a rather different matter. Careful reading and careful expression will raise the marks of all but especially those in the lower and middling bands.

Timing appears to be much less of an issue than it used to be. There are very few incomplete answers and those that are tend to be because the candidate has spent too long on part (a), leaving themselves insufficient time for part (b). In some cases the two parts were of equal length. In general answers to part (b) were far too brief and more time should be given to this within the examination. Some Centres seek to tackle this by advising their candidates to answer part (b) first. This is fine but they need to ensure that they clearly indicate they are doing this by labelling the answer with the right letter. Too often they simply put the conventional (a) and it was half way through before the examiner realised they were in fact answering part (b).

The handling of sources is the key to success in this paper and many still seem unaware of how to do this or of the implications of **the command words** in the two questions. With this in mind we repeat again the salient points that teachers should be aware of in the work of their candidates and which they should seek to tackle in the classroom. There are plenty of past papers providing 16 examples for core exercises. **We strongly advise that these are the focus of debate and discussion in class**. Under the new dispensation from September 2008 there are simply five sources instead of the four and a disaggregated mark scheme. All else remains the same as, no doubt, will be what follows.

Sub Question (a)

- Very few candidates compare the sources **'as evidence for'**. The best responses will compare the content of the sources, together with their provenance, noting similarities and differences in the content, and also in the timing, tone, audience addressed and motives of the author. When well done, this often amounts to an effective, even a genuine, comparison of the two sources but the most important step, for a historian, of standing back and considering the sources as 'evidence for' a particular historical notion, idea, interpretation, reality or truth, that step is rarely explicitly taken. It is as if the candidates go through the motions, sometimes pretty well, but do not really grasp that historical interpretation is only on firm ground when securely based on the evaluation and assessment of source materials, and the interaction between them; this is the basis of part (a) in this paper.
- It follows that a **judgement needs to be made** as to which may be the better evidence (or they might both be deemed of equal value providing this is properly established). Candidates rarely do this and it is one reason why so few ever make it to Band I. A **consideration of provenance**, to establish relative value, is clearly crucial to this and this is the reason why it is a requirement in the generic mark scheme. However some candidates now start with provenance, a mistake as it impedes the focus on 'as evidence for'. Inevitably, if the evidence in the content has not been discussed it is difficult to focus on relevant aspects of provenance. We advise at least that content precede provenance; at best it should be inextricably linked. The mechanical answer that addresses similarity, difference, provenance and possibly a conclusion that reiterates previous points is often the best we get. It tends to be given a mid or high Band III, or if well done and effective, a low or mid Band II. A high Band II or Band I will need to compare 'as evidence for',

building to a judgement, focusing on the issue, comparing and contrasting and integrating provenance as the answer proceeds. More usually the provenance is bolted-on at the end where it is **not** being used to explain or judge. It is unlikely to go beyond a Band III. Weak candidates frequently just **state the provenance**, the new form of paraphrase. Their comments on this are thus not linked to the key issue. It is purely noted and, much more rarely, compared, but then not used to evaluate the content of the sources.

- The enemy of this question is the **sequencing of the sources**, in all its forms. This is where a candidate simply describes or analyses the sources separately. No attempt is made to draw out points of similarity or difference and analyse them as comparative evidence. There is no linkage between them. It is a characteristic of Bands IV and V. If done throughout it is placed in Band V. More frequently it appears because candidates are nervous and draw breath, as it were, by describing or explaining the first source. However some then go on to link with a descriptive approach to the second source via a comparative 'however' or 'whereas'. This will work only if the 'whereas' is substantiated. If it is not then the comparison is in the mind of the examiner only and it is 'implicit', a Band V. It would seem that some candidates see the task as one of comprehension, a GCSE skill and did not realise the need to **use the material or link it together**. If comments on content and provenance are not used to answer the question their stand alone value is not especially creditworthy.
- Candidates should engage historically with the sources, as mentioned above. It is vital that they **ask the right questions and avoid the mechanical checklist** they have often been encouraged to adopt by an inflexible approach to the Band I 'qualities'. As often noted in these reports there are still Centres, with the best of intentions, who encourage their candidates to force the source material through unhelpful labels that can be quite 'theological' in approach. It forms a formidable barrier to a proper historical approach that engages flexibly with the material by asking the right questions. It also, crucially, divorces them from the actual content of the sources. As to these 'right' questions it will **depend upon what is set** but candidates should check the **dates** for their possible significance and **precise context**; possible changes; their **purpose and audience**; whether **tone** is an issue or a pointer; how **slanted, useful or accurate** the sources are; **how well informed** are the comments etc. Depending on the question and the sources set some or all of these are the 'right' questions to elicit a high level response.
- **'Stock evaluation'** is another enemy of both part (a) and part (b). It is part of the mechanical approach noted above. Candidates proceed to comment in abstract terms, often inappropriate (primary, secondary, bias, authentic, typical, propagandistic etc.). The mistake they make is to fail to make any engagement with the content to exemplify any of this. As such it remains 'stock' and cannot be historically credited.
- **Missing the question** asked is an obvious point but it is surprising how many proceed to comment on the sources generally rather than in relation to a specific question (on 2580 as evidence for the impact of the Viking invasions, not Alfred's military reaction in general; on 2581 as evidence for attempts to encourage religious unity in the Mid Tudor period, not on religious changes in general; on 2582 as evidence for the attitudes of the German people towards the Jews, not on the attitudes of the Nazis). We always recommend that candidates 'highlight' what comes after the formula 'as evidence for', as a reminder of the question's particular focus. This tends to be the issue of success or failure; someone's qualities or aims; the amount of support or opposition to a particular thing; the views on attitudes towards etc.
- **Curbing 'own knowledge'** is important. On the whole most candidates do not swamp their answers with own knowledge that diverts from the source comparison, but a few do. Own knowledge should only be there to establish the precise historical context. Inevitably it will inform the whole answer because candidates who know little or nothing will compare in a vacuum and it will lead to error and misunderstanding.
- Recently we have noted a trend either to compare the **wrong sources** or to **compare all four sources**. We would appreciate colleagues stressing the importance of this during their course as it constitutes a rubric infringement and candidates will not be awarded

more than 5 marks, a **Band VI at best**. It can be a feature of both able and weak candidates.

- Finally a plea that colleagues and invigilators inform candidates to **fill in the question number** they attempt on the front cover. Some examiners were faced with Centres (some of 100 plus) where they had to fill in every single question number. It would also be helpful if candidates **left a space between the two questions** to enable a final comment to be written. If they word process an answer it would greatly assist examiners if they **use Font 12 and preferably size 12 spacing**. Our thanks in anticipation.

Sub Question (b)

- What deprives most candidates of the top two bands here is the **failure to evaluate the four sources** as the main part of their argument. All four sources must be considered but if they are only used for illustration or reference then the higher order skills are not being addressed. **A top Band III is the highest mark that can be awarded**. Candidates need to group the sources according to view or interpretation, explaining why that has been done and assign value to the group, again giving the reasons for so doing and contextualising and extending or qualifying the argument via own knowledge. Answers need to be built around this with the arguments for and against. If candidates can get this right all else will follow, including the appropriate use of own knowledge. Those who illustrate in their use of sources come in a number of guises: an essay style based on own knowledge with bracketed references (Source A) or just (A) or (A and C); an illustrative aside 'as stated in Source D' or the Source references may be implicit with quotes from them integrated within continuous text which looks like an essay. All of these approaches miss the point of the exercise: **Source analysis and evaluation and their appropriate use is the main purpose of the Unit and the sources should always drive the answer, rather than being of secondary importance to 'own knowledge'**. Those who did try, at some point, to evaluate often did not get beyond seeing utility or reliability in the simple terms of primary/secondary with the assumption that one or the other (usually primary) was 'best'. This could get repetitive as bias was invoked as a form of blanket evaluation. If only they had talked about 'limitations', with examples, related to the question, then their answers would have been lifted to a higher level. A danger for those who separate out evaluation in a paragraph at the end or who sequence by analysing each source in turn is that they forget why they are doing this – to argue a case in answer to the question. The analysis becomes discreet to each source and lacks a focus on the question. They need to evaluate to judge which evidence is the more convincing in its points and therefore the more reliable in its view. **A huge number of candidates, if they evaluated at all, did so only in one, or at best two, cases**, leaving the other sources to be quickly sequenced and referenced. If all else is well (focus, knowledge, context) then they will just make a **low Band II**. Higher in the Band (and obviously Band I) is reserved for those who evaluate successfully three or all the sources.
- The other major weakness on this question is **imbalance** in some form or another. This too can take many guises and will result in a mark ranging from Band II ('some imbalance'), through Band III ('uneven') to Bands IV and V ('clear imbalance'). This was sometimes due to a heavy emphasis on source analysis which forgot that own knowledge should be used as part of that analysis. Much more frequently it was because the sources had been used in a quick general summary at the beginning or end, the answer consisting largely of own knowledge or the answer was essentially a period studies essay with occasional references to the sources for illustrative purposes ('as Source B says...').
- It should already be clear from the above as to what we mean by **'own knowledge'**. The key is to **see it as part of source evaluation**, one of the tools of assessing and assigning value to a source or group of sources, developing a grouping or providing further exemplification of a point. It should **never be a bolt-on**, there purely to satisfy an ill understood generic requirement. Again candidates and teachers need to understand why they are being asked to do this. Most candidates find its successful integration to be

a problem, hence the bolt-on approach of many answers. One solution they adopt is the zero option – they make little or no reference to it. Partly this is because many weaker candidates seem to know very little, even about major topics (Kristallnacht was again a case in point on 2582 Q7 this summer), but it is also an uncertainty on how best to use what they have. Other candidates use the introductions or content of the sources, hoping to pass this off as own knowledge. Some stick to very vague and general context, rarely putting their head above the parapet of the choice and telling example. We remain disappointed by the very restricted limits of what candidates seem to know. Often what we get is not linked to the sources, the question or the argument. It is inappropriate and only of tangential relevance.

- It is also surprising how few candidates use **provenance as the key to evaluation**. This happens in different ways for different Centres. Some candidates use their own knowledge but no provenance to evaluate sources whilst some weak ones use neither and merely sequence. We can only presume that many candidates are not taught how to do this. It would seem that they now know to do it in part (a) but fail to realise it is also a **fundamental element of part (b)** as well. Very few systematically used this skill. If they did then much was 'stock' in its approach, bolted-on after a consideration of content or own knowledge, either after each source or in an extended paragraph at the end. As stated above this should be avoided as it impedes the argument and is not integrated into the assigning of value to a source or a group in relation to the question. Its effect is to lose the vital question focus.
- Many middling and weaker candidates **prefer to explain sources rather than evaluate them**, the comprehension exercise mentioned above. This will also lead to the weakness noted in part (a) answers – **the sequencing of sources**. Occasionally the question and dates will make this a sensible approach (this summer 2581 Q3 on the Mid Tudor Crises was a case in point), but usually it leads to all the weaknesses noted above, as all chance of grouping according to view, cross referencing and linking are lost. We end up with, at worst, paraphrased accounts of individual sources and at best isolated evaluations which fail to build into an argued case. The usual response is a sequenced list of sources, variously described or paraphrased, jumbled up (A,D,C,B) in the mistaken belief that the examiner will not see through this thinly disguised ploy, and peppered about with own knowledge, mainly contextual, basic and general. There might be an introductory grouping, often with little or no rationale, which is never developed or explained. Own knowledge is bolted on – still a much favoured method, even by some able candidates who should know better.
- **Brevity** (sometimes no more than one and a half sides of relatively large writing) compounds these problems. We welcome concision but many candidates rush the final answer and, unaware of the above, hurry to tick off the sources referentially within a contextual own knowledge answer that lacks developed comment. Too long spent on part (a) only makes this worse.
- **Misinterpretation** or misunderstanding is frequently a problem. This can be because a candidate neglects provenance, or because there is a misreading. It can be relatively minor but given that there are only four sources it can also have a disproportionate effect on the answer. It must be emphasised that although we are sympathetic we cannot reward mistaken history. It serves to underline our warning about careful reading.
- **Modern Historians** pose a particular problem for candidates. Much of their analysis here, if it is attempted at all, is 'stock'. We recognise the problems they face. The Historian is often there to help structure an approach to the sources and provide an organisational and grouping tool for the other three (Kershaw for example in 2582 Q7 and Haigh in 2581 Q3). The key is to examine the view or interpretation critically – how balanced is it, does it confirm or counter own knowledge (with examples please!), is the focus political, religious, economic or social? It is not valid to either credit them with Godlike insight or condemn them for not witnessing the events they comment upon.

The best candidates are those whose focus is on the evaluative skills in relation to the content of the sources and who react flexibly in a non formulaic manner to the required focus of the question.

Those who do least well focus mainly on explaining content, often their own limited knowledge, and approach the questions and the sources generally and in a mechanical and formulaic way.

Comments on Individual Questions

Unit 2580/01

There was a sizeable jump in the numbers studying medieval history this year, up to 966 and although it was felt that the standard was a little lower than last year much work was very pleasing. Medievalists would seem to be more at home with source material and its handling and there was much evidence of some very effective and indeed scholarly teaching. Candidates rose to the challenge and much good work was seen. The Crusades remain the most popular option, with Alfred in firm second place and the Normans somewhat trailing. No complaints were received about the questions on this option.

1 The Reign of Alfred the Great 871- 899

(a) Quite a few candidates lost focus on what they were comparing here – the impact of the Viking invasions on England (not just Wessex). They preferred general commentaries on Alfred's reaction to those attacks and incursions. As a result they missed the emigration, fear and poverty, the leadership in hiding in Asser which is supported in Aethelweard's comment on 'devastation' and the impact on Mercia and eastern England but countered in relation to Wessex. Better candidates recognised the changing context of the sources' dates, although some struggled with the idea that he was writing in 893 about the events in 878 **before** Guthrum's defeat at Edington. They were further confused by the dating of Aethelweard, often misread as the 890s instead of the 980s. Stock evaluation of Asser remains a common problem: he is routinely dismissed for bias. At least one Centre offered a more subtle approach along the lines of 'Asser was rewarded by the King so may have gained benefit from writing favourably about him; which was fine or 'Asser spent only 6 months of most years at court, so won't always be reliable'; which was again fine and just better history than simple cause and effect 'he was x therefore y'. Too few asked themselves what words or terms in Asser's extract might indicate reliability or partiality? Candidates should avoid the assumption that Asser's work was supervised and controlled by Alfred, and that Alfred even read it, let alone looked over Asser's shoulder at his obscure and arcane Latin. Asser's references to Alfred's illnesses, the stupidity of his ealdormen, the conspiracy of Aethelbald against Aethelwulf and the tyrannical behaviour of ealdorman Aethelraed all suggest that the work was not seen by him or even intended for an English audience. Candidates also struggled with C, Aethelweard. We did not expect them to know the complicated provenance of this, (the impenetrable Latin which calls into question any idea that he was some sort of propagandist and his departure from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) but some picked up that Alfred is not mentioned, linking it to the provenance's reference to a family connection and commenting that he may have sought to downplay Alfred and promote the role of others in limiting the Viking impact. The gloss and attribution gave more than enough to go on here.

(b) Most candidates knew what was expected, although the term 'overestimated' was more confusing for some than it needed to have been. Some didn't know what it meant. Candidates tended to group the sources into 'over estimated', Sources A and B, and not so, Sources C and D; although all were open to different interpretations and better candidates sifted the evidence with care. Sources A and B were reasonably well used and evaluated, Source C less so for the reasons outlined in part (a). Good candidates spotted that Alfred was not mentioned and made much of this, stressing instead the role of Prince Edward. Some took Source C as evidence of Alfred's failure in the later years and of the ineffectiveness of his military reforms. Similarly Source D was construed by some as

criticism of Alfred's negligence, an odd interpretation given that the only hint of criticism is that the Fyrd 'arrangement revealed weaknesses'. Source D should have presented few difficulties and for many it triggered appropriate contextual knowledge on the Fyrd and the burghs. A minority went into essay mode and left the sources hanging out to dry. Some diverted into education and the Church, a hopeless cul de sac if indulged in beyond a sentence or two.

2 The Normans in England 1066-1087

(a) Some candidates made heavy weather of this comparison. They certainly found the similarities easier to find than the differences. Most grasped the essence of William's relationship with the Papacy, stressing that both saw it as strained, though the more straightforward 'bad' also appeared, as did the intriguing 'unhealthy' and the roundabout 'not what you would call exactly good'. This initial judgement was usually supported by sound point-by-point comparison, as many saw Eadmer's analysis of William's 'regalian rights' being reflected in the particulars of Gregory's abrupt response. Most saw the importance of William's control of English contacts with Rome. They were weaker on provenance, reluctant to state the obvious, that C was evidence from the Pope himself, or that Gregory must have known the sort of relationship that Lanfranc had with William. Very few seemed to know of Eadmer but were able to use their literary skills to comment on the list-like nature of his report, and the repetition of phrases such as 'he would not'. Some commented that as a Canterbury monk he was likely to be in a position to know, in particular on royal and archiepiscopal matters.

(b) Many candidates had a poor knowledge of the issue of ecclesiastical reform. Only better candidates grasped such matters as monastic reform, church councils, the Canterbury-York primacy issue, efforts to tackle simony, clerical marriage and other abuses. The complex triangular relationship between the Papacy, Lanfranc and William was likewise appreciated only by a minority. Nonetheless in both these there was plenty to go in the Sources. What was needed was a balanced effort to write about reform and control, rather than the scant comment on reform and an excessive focus on control which was what we largely got. Perhaps control was easier to write about. Most had little difficulty in grouping the sources (B, C and D ranged against A), although not all were able to support this with precise knowledge or source evaluation. Some were lured into an essay on Church/State relations. The mighty Sir Frank Stenton, doyen of Anglo-Saxonists for a generation, would have been distressed to have been criticised for not being alive in the 11th century, but some candidates saw how rich D is as a source, providing information for both agreement and disagreement with the question's assertion. Indeed better candidates realised that control and reform were mutually compatible. Orderic Vitalis, like Asser in Q1, came in for some needlessly harsh criticism whilst some failed to challenge his reference to William's famous enthusiasm for reform. We do not expect candidates to know much about him but something along the lines of 'his background enabled him to view events from a balanced perspective' would be fine and is basically true; he is at times sympathetic to the Normans, but lays into William over the harrying of the North. Candidates can always comment on whether the author seems reliable and balanced in the actual extract, even if they are scared of getting it wrong about the author generally. One Centre damned Orderic for having borrowed extensively from William of Poitiers but that was what all contemporary chroniclers did and there was no expectation of impartiality.

3 The First Crusade and its Origins 1073-1099

(a) Almost all candidates made a sound point-by-point comparison of the Gesta's accounts of sieges – towers, undermining (the two not linked as many asserted), the attack from more than one point in B, ferocity and the importance of religious zeal. Much fewer made the point that one was not comparing like with like and that, although only separated by 18 months, these were at very different stages of the first crusade's progress. Even fewer picked up on the different solutions to resolving a siege – a negotiated surrender with safe

conduct at Nicaea, massacre and cannibalism (the problem of food supply!) at Maarat, or that Byzantine support was evident at Nicaea but not at Maarat. Most managed to deal with the author of both sources being the same, although a significant minority knew of him as a person called Gesta but thought 'The Deeds' was something else, not realising that Gesta was the Latin for 'Deeds'. Many simply referred to the Anonymous' having participated in the First Crusade, his having been an eyewitness and a soldier, and his having composed the Gesta shortly after the capture of Jerusalem. All this is pertinent but was not often related to assigning value to the Source by linking to the content. Most took it, with some justification, to indicate reliability. Rather surprisingly only a minority picked up on the anti Byzantine tone in A, with a particular animus against Alexius ('a fool as well as a knave'). This was important as A has a carefully managed suppression of the importance of Byzantine technical assistance and diplomacy in tackling the problems of capturing towns. Even fewer could put this into the context of Byzantine Nicaea and Alexius' strategies to recover this and other territory through the agency of the Crusade. A few picked up on his admiration of Bohemond and Raymond, the latter mentioned in both accounts.

(b) Most candidates could see that the primacy of military skill in the causes of success was challenged by the Sources' references to religious zeal or faith (B and particularly C) and to the disunity of the Muslims (D and, in some cases, some excellent and pertinent own knowledge surrounding the siege of Nicaea in A). Most responses were sensibly structured and most, though not all, led their answers with source references. Their evaluation was less secure and a significant number declined to make a judgement on the primary cause of the Crusader's success, preferring to fall-back on the suggestion that they were all equally important. Some had rather a narrow background on the First crusade and relied a little too heavily on events at Antioch, (the Holy Lance appearing in one script as the Holy Nail). Most took Guibert in C at face value, missing that this was the view of a reform minded cleric, although a few questioned his denial of material motives on the part of the Crusaders. A general weakness of many answers was the tendency to change the question into one on Crusader motive rather than the relative importance of the reasons for success. Some introduced other reasons for success, including lady luck, or the assistance of the Byzantines, the latter linked by a handful of candidates to intelligent evaluation of the Gesta in A. Perhaps too many wrote a period studies essay answer with sources referenced and attached but it must also be said that some outstanding evaluative answers were seen that were a pleasure to read, and indeed reward, with full marks.

Unit 2581/01

Performance on this Unit, taken by 4,234 candidates, was higher than on the other two, especially on questions 1 and 2 (the Wars of the Roses and the German Reformation) and teachers and candidates are to be congratulated on the skills and knowledge demonstrated. The Mid Tudor Crises was the most popular question, closely followed by the German Reformation. A long way behind these was the Civil War and then there were the two minority questions, the Wars of the Roses and Louis XIV. No complaints were received on this Unit.

1 The War of the Roses 1450-1485

(a) This was reasonably answered, the sources well understood with most focused on the ambitions of York. There was a tendency to over-explanatory introductions so that in assessing provenance they merely repeated what was there (a well informed Chronicler, Margaret rallying support etc.). Some used tone very effectively to detect the slant in the sources, but fewer referred to the purpose effectively. Others made comments like the following:

'However Margaret's views may be slightly biased towards King Henry as she proved a very loyal wife.'

Much better was:

'It must be considered that Source A was written under Lancastrian rule. This means that the Chronicler could not out rightly denounce or insult Henry as this would be treason, so this source has limitations. However, as it was written in London at the time events occurred, it also has some strengths and reliability.'

Others compared factors which had little bearing on York's ambitions. The best answers discussed the subtle details such as 'falsely claimed' and 'ours by right'. The references to 'oaths' and 'agreements' were rarely compared effectively, so content was often left vague. The emphasis was on the provenance of Margaret in B rather than the Chronicle in A. The date was very rarely mentioned, although some effectively cross referenced mentions of locations.

(b) For some this turned into a general essay on the reasons for the outbreak of the Wars, without clear reference to either 'development of conflict' or 'Margaret of Anjou's influence over Henry VI'. Knowledge drove the answer rather than the sources. Very few made use of the ballad in C, merely mentioning it as Yorkist propaganda without reference to its detail. Many contrasted its subjectivity with that of Margaret's letter in B but missed the difference in date. Few made use of the subtleties of the historian in D, dismissing it in stock terms, (heinzzeit was spotted!) but the best did cross reference its comments on female rule with the propaganda in the ballad (C). A paragraph on Margaret usually mentioned the provenance of B but rarely contrasted 'the traditional role of peace-maker' in D with 'her forces attacked' in A. Sections on Margaret were usually the longest and this could lead to some imbalance. The best used the references to Richard Duke of York's ambition to attribute some responsibility to him, and some used pertinent knowledge of noble feuds to extend this point. The incapacity of Henry VI was often judged to be the most significant reason for the development of conflict and placed it at the centre of a web of factors. Weaker candidates found it difficult to demonstrate how Margaret, Richard and Henry contributed to conflict. Most focused on Margaret and were inclined to justify her behaviour rather than establish the extent of her responsibility for the development of conflict. There was often evaluative comment on the sources, but such comments were not used in reaching a judgement. Nonetheless much high quality was seen here, including a few who argued well that it was not so much Margaret's influence over Henry as her influence over the other Lancastrians that led to conflict.

2 The German Reformation 1517-30

(a) There was much misreading of the question to refer to Luther's or Tetzal's reactions to each other, instead of for Luther's reasons. Own knowledge intruded unnecessarily to develop provenance and add 'events'. Some ignored the comparison, preferring to give their own opinions justifying Luther or discussing the immorality of Indulgences generally. With some justification there was some theological comment as an extension of Luther's aim in B 'to preserve the truth'. However there were some pithy comparative comments, for example:

'Source A on the face of things suggests that the reason Luther reacted in the way he did was because he was jealous of Tetzal. Source B on the other hand, suggests that Luther was opposed to the teachings of Tetzal about indulgences, and reacted angrily because of piety.'

The best answers focused on the fact that both sources showed Luther's attack on Tetzal had a personal quality. Some candidates found ludicrous the argument in A, that Luther was jealous of Tetzal and dismissed it without further comment, but a small number developed it effectively by contrasting the respective skills of the two men. There were some misunderstandings of the references to papal support for Tetzal and Luther's link to

Frederick of Saxony, although few used the latter relevantly by linking it to why Luther might react so strongly to the sale of indulgences. Reference to the Inquisition was made without much relevance. Not everything that appears in a source is germane to the question. The sequence of events confused some – Tetzels burning of the 95 Theses was hardly relevant to the reasons for Luther's writing of them. Most candidates preferred to dwell on provenance, although few arrived at any judgement as to which might be the better evidence (amongst those that did the consensus lay with Melanchthon). Very few considered the purpose of both in writing a life of Luther at that stage. Most spotted the similar dates, the assessments from hindsight and the entrenched nature of the reformation by the mid to late 1540s. Tone was sometimes cross referenced but the weaker candidate fell into stock points. A few were entirely based on provenance, but were not without merit. For example, some explored the relationship between reliability and utility:

'It must be noted that neither source is particularly reliable. Source A is written by a German Catholic critic of Luther, therefore the anti-Luther views are expected, whereas Source B is written by Luther's protégé, Melanchthon, who would obviously support him. However, despite not being reliable they are both very useful. Source A shows a typical Catholic view and shows how and why the Catholics held negative opinions of Luther. Source B shows the response of a typical Lutheran supporter.'

Others contained some implicit judgement:

'Source A illustrates the way in which the Catholic Church and critics completely misunderstood Luther's frame of mind and motives. They saw him as a jealous, overambitious heretic whereas Luther's real motives, known by his friend Melanchthon, were actually that Luther saw himself as a purifier and helping the German people and Catholic Church – as expressed in his 95 theses in 1517.'

There were some thoughtful comments on tone:

'Some might argue that although Source A claims 'he envied Tetzels, (which was probably untrue), it does provide a more rational and balanced argument than Source B, which contains venomous and emotive language against indulgences and Tetzels such as 'wicked preaching', 'most shameless man', and 'corrupt indulgences'. Therefore, whilst Source B is written from a Lutheran perspective and will naturally stand up for Luther, citing reasons that are probably right, as it was known that Luther genuinely believed in the corruptness of indulgences, it is let down by its subjectivity in defending Luther, and using a venomous tone, which is not prevalent in Source A, as we might expect it to be.'

A weak approach to reliability, quite prevalent in the answers to this question, is to attempt to challenge a source simply by saying 'from my own knowledge I know...' without giving any evidence.

(b) Most candidates felt, perhaps wrongly, that they had a good grasp of this question. They often had an extensive knowledge of how blame might be apportioned. Unfortunately this often became the focus of the answer, with scant reference to the sources and no attempt to analyse them. Many discussed those who could have been blamed in turn: the Pope, Luther, Tetzels, Dominicans and Augustinians etc. Sometimes Frederick the Wise crept in, although it's difficult to see how he could be considered under the 'religious authorities' heading. Weaker candidates struggled to understand what might be meant by the term religious authorities. However there were some excellent responses to this question which started by grouping the sources, usually A and D (Luther's responsibility) in opposition to B and C (the authorities' responsibility), but some went further and saw that B and D could contribute to both sides of the argument. Independent knowledge was often impressive, although care had to be taken to confine this to 1517 and 1518. Relevant comment was possible after these dates but some candidates wrongly shifted the focus to Worms and

1521. Such knowledge was most useful when assessing the early responses of the various authorities (Albrecht of Mainz, The Dominicans and Augustinians and Leo X) and the Disputations at Augsburg and Leipzig. Some focused excessively on Tetzl, hardly a religious authority in the sense meant by the question. Candidates tended to use Sources A and B more effectively than C and D. Source C was particularly underused. It repaid attention as it offered corroboration of B's (Melancthon) references to 'corrupt indulgences' and confirmed the portrayal of Tetzl as a vendor of spiritual snake oil. By commenting on the religious authorities methods it put Luther's position into perspective. As to Source D surprisingly few pointed out that it is first hand evidence of an action by the primary religious authority himself, to some extent prejudging Luther in no uncertain terms. The following was a rare comment to this effect:

'Source D illustrates the Pope's opinion of Luther upon hearing about the 95 Theses, 'Martin Luther, a son of evil...'. In his letter to Frederick he makes no mention of these views needing to be discussed, only a need for Luther to be handed over to Rome. The source is very useful in illustrating a typical view of the ultimate religious authority and there is no reason to doubt its veracity.'

Some candidates produced stock comment on the reliability of the Sources, claiming that they did not represent the whole German population. They did not pause to consider whether a question such as this, concerning theology and Church authority and practice, was in fact quite well represented by Sources from theologians and those very Church authorities. Another common problem was that candidates did not recognise that using the Inquisition and accusing someone of heresy were acceptable courses of action in the 16th century toward people who challenged the Church. Blaming the religious authorities for the quarrel on the grounds they treated Luther unreasonably when he specifically challenged the way the Pope was using his authority is somewhat anachronistic.

3 Mid Tudor Crises 1540- 1558

(a) Answers to this question tended to polarise between the really excellent and those that clearly struggled. The obvious answer, that both were examples of attempts to encourage unity and that both were written by monarchs, was as far as many could go. Not many could make much of the dates, the end and the beginning of the reigns, which was fairly crucial to an effective comparison. Mary, contrary to the claims of many candidates, was not at that stage compelling a change to Catholicism ('until further decisions are made'). Punishment was to be reserved for those who stirred up disorder, not for someone who was simply a protestant. The 'new and devilish terms' were rarely understood. The following is an example of an attempt to bring some clarity to the situation:

'Henry's speech is at the end of his reign, whereas Mary's is at the start and this is a key difference in their attempts to encourage religious unity, as Henry wishes to leave a stable society after his death whereas Mary wants to reassert the importance of Catholicism from the start of her reign but is aware of the need to proceed with caution.'

Few saw the distinction between Henry's address to preachers and Mary's to people in general and printers in particular. Candidates were polarised as to whether Henry was being casual and tolerant (!), himself responsible for religious confusion, with Mary being forceful or whether it was the other way around. As both Sources started with pleas and polite requests but moved on to a more threatening approach this led to some confusion over whether they were similar or different as threats from one might be contrasted with pleas from the other, leading to an incomplete comparison. There was certainly a lot of confusion and poor history over Henry's religious position, less so on Mary's. What follows is an excellent answer that developed and explained similarity and difference using an element of provenance:

'Both sources suggest that disagreement between Catholics and Protestants was condemned; Source A is explicit in doing so, saying that 'some are too stiff in their old views (Catholicism), others are too busy and curious in their new opinions (Protestantism),' suggesting that Henry was attempting to make his subjects more flexible and tolerant. Source C also suggests that the monarch attempted to condemn excessive divides between Catholics and Protestants, since Mary 'commands her subjects to live together in Christian charity', reinforcing the idea that both sects of Christianity are, nonetheless, Christians. This can be explained by the fact that both sources are written by monarchs, in whose best interests it would be to stop intensive squabbling or disagreement among their subjects as this could lead to dangerous faction or rebellion – the importance of this is demonstrated by Mary's attack on 'any man who stirs up the people to disorder'. They do, however, differ as evidence for attempts to encourage religious unity as they suggest different things about the views of the monarchs as to what would be the ideal. Source A, written by Henry VIII, does not explicitly endorse any one religious slant, instead urging its addressees to 'preach the word of God as they should, truly and sincerely': this is ambiguous and whilst the reference to preaching might suggest that he supports Protestantism, it is not entirely clear which religion he endorses: his basic point seems to be that they should live in harmony. In contrast Mary in Source B suggests that attempts to encourage religious unity focused heavily on making one religion the one to which everyone would adhere: she says that she desires that all her subjects would quietly follow suit in 'observing Catholicism', thus clearly indicating that she would prefer religious unity to be reached by everyone adhering to Catholicism. This difference can be explained by the fact that Henry does not essentially seem to have been a devout man: he veered between Catholicism and Protestantism depending on what best suited him, and thus was more concerned with making his subjects peaceful; Mary, in contrast, was a devout catholic and consequently focused her attempts to encourage religious unity on promoting Catholicism.'

(b) This question covered a wide period, the very best answers differentiating between the success of statutory change establishing an 'official' religion and the impact of these on popular 'hearts and minds', insofar as they could be read into the acts and proclamations given in the sources. Most effective answers grouped A, B and C and saw that D took a different view on success. Others preferred to group A and B and C and D in an attempt to 'prove' Mary's success. There was some confusion between the First and second Prayer Books. Source B is an extract from the Second Book referring to the failure of the First. Not many realised there was a change of Minister in the intervening years. Indeed some preferred to omit Source B and indeed the whole of Edward's reign from consideration. Weaker candidates again, as in part (a), fell by the wayside on Henry's religion, asserting that he was a Protestant and that he had established a Protestant church. Those with excessive own knowledge treated us to accounts of the Pilgrimage of Grace, hardly relevant here. Source D was not well used, and gave rise to much stock comment. Haigh's subtleties were often missed, although some knew of his Catholicism and were able to remark on the balanced evidence he provides. Others simply lifted what they wanted from him to prove their case and ignored the rest. In general there was a marked reluctance to evaluate the Sources on this question. What follows was an attempt, making a fairly simple point in a rather contradictory way, but one that few made:

'Source B is reliable in that it is a governmental document, issued at the time of Protestant reform, although it is not as useful in describing whether Edward VI was successful in achieving his religious goals. Nonetheless it does demonstrate with some anger that people were not attending Protestant services in the three years following the First Protestant Prayer book. Source B only allows us to see, similar to Sources A and C, the monarch's motives and methods of attaining unity, not the actual outcome.'

4 The English Civil War 1637-49

(a) There was a marked tendency here to ignore the organising thrust of the question – the content and purpose of the Grand Remonstrance. Weaker candidates preferred to consider reactions to it. Better candidates compared purpose (a reactive justification to the King in B but with an eye to what happened in the future; a statement of intent to the people in C by one who opposed it) and content (a commentary and complaint on ministers in B; a commentary and plan to bring Councillors under parliamentary control in C), although many failed to spot the differences and similarities over councillors (complaints versus a proposed solution). Much was made by some, rather irrelevantly, of the King becoming angry. Surprisingly few noted that D'Ewes was quoting Hyde's opinion rather than his own, though even fewer noted the significance of the demand to print the Remonstrance in C. While many noted the divisions in the Commons, hardly anyone noticed that the Lords did not agree (C), contrasting with B's suggestion of a united Parliament. We gained the impression that few knew much about the Grand Remonstrance and its context other than what they could deduce from these two sources. On comparative reliability candidates based their responses on what was given about their provenance – their dates and sources of information (why should we assume that Lucy Hutchinson had no sources of information other than what her husband told her?). Some dismissed Hutchinson on grounds of the date or their knowledge that she exaggerated the numbers massacred in Ireland, not of relevance to this particular issue. Few pointed out the significance of the Irish issue. Ireland was mentioned by most as appearing in both sources but they did not explain how that was relevant to the question and it led many to wander from the point. The following part of an answer did and grasped the essential difference between the two sources:

'Overall Source C seems to give much more of a picture of a belligerent Parliament on the eve of war publishing its manifesto and trying to rally support. The issue of 'relieving Ireland', as Source B carefully mentions, was more of an issue of control over the army that would have to be created. Each side was equally stubborn over this pressing issue, but in Source B the victor's history is written, trying retrospectively to justify Parliament's clash with the King – as such the Remonstrance is depicted as a defence, rather than an aggressive step towards war. These sources together provide a partial view of the purpose and content of the Remonstrance, but bias and brevity mean the view is not complete.'

(b) The most logical route to answer the question effectively was to cross reference B and C, linking to the start of D to argue a case against the King, followed by the provoking of the King in the rest of D, linked to A which argues against his opponents. However in many cases Source A received little attention, perhaps because of what the Petition was, neither from the MPs or the King. Indeed many misinterpreted it to mean that the King wanted to abolish Bishops. They mistook Digby for an opponent of the King and made inaccurate comments about its provenance. Few grasped the importance of the Root and Branch Bill in dividing the King's opponents. The issue of divisions was better grasped by most by using Source C, although the question was frequently lost sight of. Many responses failed to deal with Pym, failing to pick up on the hints and mentions in C. If this happened answers could appear a little lopsided. Indeed candidates preferred to focus on Charles, with little mention of Pym and his associates. Relevant own knowledge was often superficial or brief, especially in relation to the Long Parliament. Candidates seemed more assured on the earlier Parliaments, the Personal Rule and the Bishop's Wars. Whilst occasional reference to the pre 1640 period was appropriate for context, anything more was a serious and irrelevant diversion. Knowledge of the Long Parliament was often inaccurate, Strafford for example being given a posthumous career. Nonetheless examiners were often impressed by the quality of answers here. This is one part of a case that argued that his opponents provoked the King. It demonstrates well how source analysis can be integrated with knowledge to evaluate a view:

'Source D indicates that the King made fundamental mistakes, for instance the attempted arrest of the 5 MPs. This proved Pym and the radicals correct in that Charles could not be trusted... This is corroborated in Source B, which implies that the King 'blocked proceedings'

to aid the Protestants in Ireland, leading to Parliament attempting to counter him. Lucy Hutchinson's exaggeration of the numbers massacred in Ireland was typical of accounts at the time, so when news reached London, Pym used this to his advantage. He used the London mob to intimidate the King and intimated to Parliament that it was Charles who had started the revolt, which was untrue. Source C also corroborates this, implying that 'Pym and others' used the 'troubles in Ireland and many disturbances in England' to provoke the King with the Remonstrance.'

5 Louis XIV's France 1661-1693

(a) Most managed a reasonable comparison of content and provenance with particular reference to the different dates and contexts, B before the financial impact of war really hit home, C perhaps aware of the impact of war on France and its people and all too ready to blame king and Ministers for 'monstrous extravagance'. Some were confused about what was meant by the 'nature of the advice given'. Some interpreted this as the content of the advice in B (to pay more attention to finances). This made a comparison difficult as Source D was a rebuke on the impact of advice given to the King by his ministers, rather than the advice itself. However most compared the sources on their financial references and on ministers' use of flattery which was compared to B, even though B was also useful to illustrate criticism of Louis, which few candidates explained well. Provenance, unless based on the context of the dates, as above, was based mostly on the introductions to the passages, though some knew about Colbert and a few about Fenelon.

(b) This was less well done than part (a), partly because many candidates found it impossible to focus solely on 'domestic affairs' and drifted off into foreign policy, possibly due to the references in A to 'monuments of victory and glory'. This could have been used relevantly when linked to costs of war and tax burdens at home, but rarely was. Very little use was made of Source C, unbalancing the argument, as it was the basis of the counter-argument to the assertion in the question. Surprisingly few mentioned Versailles given the clues in Source A. It would have provided interesting evidence for arguing either way. Certainly A suggests that the 'grand projets' were ministerial creations. Few candidates strayed beyond finance, despite the focus on propaganda and culture in Source A. There was little consideration or understanding of government and administration, even of the financial structures (sale of office for example). It would have helped if candidates had used these sources to look at the function of government and its responsibilities (Fenelon) or who took decisions (Louis in B, C and D; Colbert in A) and who carried them out etc. Very few picked up on the distinctiveness of Source B. Here is one who did:

'Colbert particularly was not there merely for the glorification of Louis. He held four positions in government until his death in 1683, by which time he had, for instance, reformed the taxation system providing monthly financial reports and greatly increasing the yield of taxation. This can partly be seen in Source B, in which Colbert advised Louis to pay more attention to finance 'important decisions must be taken'. However this indicates that Louis was in control and Colbert's use was to advise him to pay attention to problems rather than advising him on how actually to solve them. Despite this it does contrast with other sources which claim that the ministers were only useful for his glorification, and is also perhaps the most reliable as the source is written from Colbert at the time to Louis, directly advising him, whilst Sources A and D are memoirs or letters of criticism written in hindsight. Source C is written at the time but by a writer at Court, therefore recording his own observations and not necessarily the truth: again less useful than Source B.'

Unit 2582/01

Abilities were much more widely spread on this unit, inevitably given the size of the candidature. Well over half tackle Q7 on the Nazis. This summer Anti Semitism produced even more out of focus answers than is normally the case. Perhaps this particular issue

produces more than its fair share of generalisations and emotive thinking, but there were some excellent responses. There seemed to be less doing Q4 on the American Civil War and Q6 on England in a New Century but they retain a fair following in the wake of the Nazis. Perhaps the strongest answers, and with a consistent following, is Q3 on Italian Unification. Of the smaller topics more seemed to answer Q2, and with more success than in recent years, whilst there were reasonably strong cohorts for Q1 on the French revolution, less impressive this year, and Q5 on Parnell and Ireland, a little stronger. No complaints were received about any of the questions on this unit.

1 The Origins of the French Revolution 1774-92

(a) Answers here were frequently disappointing. Candidates struggled with the concept of qualities, focusing on the negative and rather surprisingly missing the positive, especially the hint of initial popularity in Source A ('at first the people were pleased...'). Mistakes were frequent in both Sources. Some thought A was Marie Antionette's mother (or father), despite the clear introduction. Certainly very few understood her origins or could comment on the purpose of the Source, concern for a marriage that was the basis of a Franco- Austrian alliance, although most, rightly, considered it to be reliable and telling evidence. Source C, Burke, proved even more problematic for some, few dealing with it comparatively (although there were some imaginative points about 'diamonds' in A and 'glittering' in C, linked usually to the spending of money). Only better candidates spotted the significance of the date difference, 14 years, and even less that Burke in C was referring to the Queen in the past tense (16 years before), commenting on the passing of an age and blaming not her but an over critical new 'Age of Reason'. An evaluation of provenance thus suffered. Most dismissed the evidence of Burke, claiming that, as a foreigner, he could not have known her, thus missing the opening sentence and also ignoring his more telling comments about the impact of the Enlightenment. Hardly any made the link between the latter point and the information in the introduction that Burke was an English philosopher. Weaker candidates diverted into extended paragraphs on the Diamond Necklace Affair.

(b) Answers were more effective here, although some missed the dates and ran on into 1789 and beyond. Virtually all highlighted the financial problems of the French governments but many found it difficult to use the sources as evidence that royal weakness was the key in failing to get to grips with this, although sources A and D clearly suggest it. The American War was identified and many picked up on the references to the Enlightenment but in the case of the latter few used it as a factor beyond the control of the King and Queen. Weaker candidates turned this into a period studies essay, rattling off factors that explain the outbreak of revolution – the nobility, social issues etc.- but given the absence of any references in the sources such comments appeared bolted-on and divorced from the main thrust of the question, the problems of French government. Most concluded that the financial problems were the main factor but that the weaknesses of the monarchy made a considerable contribution to these. Sources A and C proved most problematic for candidates, despite A feeding directly and reliably into the burgeoning costs of the Court. Source C tended to be ignored because candidates failed to see the emotional point being made about monarchy or the reference to the cynicism of the Enlightenment. The following is an example of a candidate that did make a good use of C:

'Source C talks of the 'glory of Europe which the Queen represented' as 'gone forever' which suggests that the change in the political atmosphere has altered the way in which the monarchy was perceived. This view is not consistent with the idea that the French monarchy as such was the cause of France's problems'.

Misreading was common in Source D, candidates often missing its reference to Louis' attempt to tackle the deficit. The point that Louis could have tackled bad accounting but not the deeper problem was rarely well taken as candidates tended to read the sentence carelessly and argue that he could have corrected the problems. Several extracted the words 'stupid' and 'lazy' from Source D to argue, quite wrongly, that Hardman supported the

traditional view that Louis XVI was both of these things, when he was explicitly arguing the opposite. The following are examples of effective grouping:

'Another problem the government faced was the 'extravagance of the royal court, self evidentially the result of the Queen's weakness in spending money. Source A supports Source B in making the same accusation...even Source C supports this point, albeit in an indirect and perhaps unintentional way given the clear bias of the writer'.

'Source B states 'the American war seems first to have awakened the thinking part of France from the sleep of despotism in which they were sunk'. This statement is backed up by Source D which, after speaking of the American war, says 'there was no longer a widespread belief in the theory of absolute monarchy'.

'Source D states 'the immediate cause of the fall of the Ancien regime was the financial deficit'. This clearly highlights the Crown's lack of money as a major problem. This is backed up by Sources A and B which state respectively that the Queen 'runs up huge debts' and 'the extravagance of the royal court had exhausted the money and credit of the State'. Both these Sources agree that the financial deficit of France was mainly due to the lavish lifestyle of the monarchs'.

The following is a good example of the integration of knowledge to explain, albeit with a certain lack of clarity, a very pertinent point. It is also an example of skilled referencing which could have been improved with some evaluation, either by explicit cross referencing or by stressing the relative value of Hardman and Jefferson:

'The nobles called in the Assembly of Notables which called on the publishing of the royal accounts which would have shown them the costs which were referred to in Source A. The notables were the economists and cynics talked of in Source C and due to the influence of the enlightenment upon them they surprised Louis by their holding him accountable in demanding the accounts. This was something that the previous kings would not have seen because of their absolute power. However, as Source D says, there was no longer a widespread belief in absolute monarchy'.

2 The Condition of England 1832-53

(a) Answers here were very mixed. Good candidates homed in on the fear and desperation common to both Sources and developed this well with references to fear of disease, of bad air, of the lack of sewers, of the need for clean water and of the lack of action. They found more in common between the sources than they did differences such as B's focus on blaming the private Sewer Company in contrast to C's on the 'pest' of the Irish lodging houses, perhaps a more middle class concern and perhaps also a shrewd focus for Welsby when chivvying the local ratepayers into action. Very few appeared to understand this point, or could link it to issues like overcrowding and disease. Many struggled with the provenance of one or other of the two sources, failing to spot the key comparative point about class difference. On B many seemed unable to make the basic points that seemed very obvious about the poorly educated central London masses (although their analysis was shrewd and they knew how to make a noise by writing to the Times). On C there was some muddle about the attitudes of the ratepayers in Ormskirk based around the 10% rule under the 1848 Act. Some read the 164/1,100 to mean that most didn't care when in fact that was quite an achievement, 'unlike elsewhere'. Some split the references to 'Public health' and 'disease', seeing them as two separate things. This made for some cumbersome responses. The following two extracts are effective in the points they make:

'In terms of expressing the attitude of the lower classes to disease and public health, Source C fails. It omits to mention the views of any members of the lower classes. Source B, however, expresses the desperation felt by some members of the poor. The fact that they wrote to a newspaper such as the Times and complained to the Sewer Company suggests

that the poor took an active role in trying to push for change. However, this source is confined to a small area and cannot be regarded as sufficient evidence to support the view that the working classes were active in the field of public health reform'.

'Both sources agree there is a lack of water supplies, no drain or sewers and Welsby pleads for sewers and an ample supply of water. This shows that public health was seen to be improved by having such things as drainage and water. The Public Health Act of 1848 excluded London from its jurisdiction, which would explain Source B's call for help. Source B believes disease is caused by muck and filth which was a common notion of the time as the miasma theory suggested disease such as cholera was airborne. After the cholera outbreaks in London the poor in Source B would have felt they needed to take action to prevent further disease. But Source C shows ratepayers actually doing something and having the chance to implement the Act of 1848, an opportunity which was denied to the Londoners in Source B'.

(b) Answers were a little better here, although a common weakness was a failure to either understand the role of Chadwick or, more common, to avoid much comment on the role of his methods and policy, a serious decision as this formed the main thrust of the question. Perhaps this was because Chadwick was fully focused upon only in the last source, but many also failed to pick up on the helpful references in the steers to A and C about Chadwick, which would have enabled them to see that both these sources take a Chadwickian line on Public Health. They were often quite happy to talk about the unpopular centralisation in Source A without seeing that this was associated in the popular mind with Chadwick. This could also lead to sequencing as candidates missed the obvious grouping of A and D with B and C (the latter's reference to 'unlike elsewhere' being a key reference), although better candidates could see that each source was capable of bearing a variety of interpretations. It was pleasing to see that only a minority failed to understand the satirical nature of Source D, although many misunderstood what it was saying, claiming that Chadwick was trying to impose his own company's soap and products on an unsuspecting Victorian public! Others held him responsible for the permissive nature of the Act. Only a minority developed the counter argument on Chadwick, either by considering the bias in Source D or by comparing it with A, or by using their own knowledge of his role in advancing the cause of Health reform. When it came to other factors candidates were more eloquent and used B and C to show the shortcomings of the local authorities. Source A was rich in pickings here. The following is a useful extract from an answer that cross references the Sources, adds some contextual knowledge with a little light evaluation and provides a useful summary and grouping:

'Source B actively supports the Act and suggests its power and 'protection' be spread further. The fact that Source B is a petition from an area not covered by the Act is evidence for its lack of success. B makes it clear that the wealthy had no incentive to pay taxes to support reform unless they were compelled to do so. Source C agrees as it says that 'unlike elsewhere' it is in favour, evidencing that in other areas ratepayers felt strongly against. Both Sources B and C suggest that reform was slow in coming and the necessity for petitioning the government was due to their reluctance. The laissez-faire attitude of the time made governments reluctant to become involved in reform, feeling that it was not their responsibility to effect change, nor was it the wish of the electorate that they should do so. Source A supports this view, suggesting that local government failed to enforce change due to the unlikelihood of the support of ratepayers. These three sources therefore support the conclusion that the reluctance of the government, as well as the opposition from the electorate, had a far greater effect on hindering reform than the slanted and satirical portrayal of Chadwick's efforts in Source D would suggest'.

3 Italian Unification 1848-70

(a) The responses here were mostly effective with some detailed comparisons of content. Comparison of provenance was a little less assured, perhaps because both were from Cavour, although the dates, the differing contexts (the Crimean War in B and the Plombieres Pact in D) and the public speech and private letter/report should have provided rich pickings. To do well candidates needed to comment on the need for foreign support to change boundaries within the peninsula, evident in both Sources and the difference in aims. Source B implies that Cavour would like to see all of Italy united under a Parliamentary system, to be expected in a speech to the Piedmontese Chamber of Deputies. Source D is very different, setting out an Italy of different Kingdoms within a Confederation headed nominally by the Papacy. It is a secret deal with the French Emperor. The following extract was from an effective response:

'Source B is from a speech Cavour made to the Chamber of Deputies and so he uses patriotic language to appeal to the nationalists in the Chamber, and also the wider public, so that they will support his plans. Source d however is from a private letter to the King and Cavour does not need to persuade anyone of anything. This tells us a lot about his real aims...this would suggest that his main aim was to obtain more power for Piedmont and that his apparently nationalistic views in Source B are a cover in order to appeal to the Chamber of Deputies so that they will support him. Because Source D is from a private letter where Cavour has no hidden agenda, the information which it gives us is more useful than that of Source B, where Cavour was probably lying about his aims in order to achieve the support of the Chamber.'

(b) A few weaker candidates wrote generally about unification but most managed to sustain a focus on Piedmont's leadership, either in general (its strengths and aims) or specifically (Cavour and Victor Emmanuel). The other most favoured options, commented upon in the Sources, was the contribution of the Great Powers, especially France (B and D) and the role of internal 'Risorgimento' (to some extent Gioberti in A and especially Mazzini in C). Most focused on the 1850s, as did the Sources, although some projected forwards into the 1860s to demonstrate how points raised in the sources were born out by later events or, indeed, reflected back to the late 1840s, especially 1848/9, when assessing Sources A and C to explain and gauge the validity of these sources against events. As always on this topic there are those whose own knowledge tends to swamp the Sources, which are used for brief reference only. The role of Gioberti and Mazzini were well known by most and the contrast between A and C picked up on, but if there was a weakness it was that few noticed the residual 'liberal nationalism' in Source A contained in the final sentence: 'Either Piedmont must be Italian or the House of Savoy must lose Piedmont'. It was disappointing that few candidates spotted this, thereby often denying themselves a very telling and germane point. Some, more surprisingly, didn't really grasp the contrast between Sources B and D in this context – the nod to Italian liberal nationalism in B, the Piedmontese nationalism of D. Nonetheless, despite these subtleties most grouped effectively along the lines of B, D and with reluctance A (stressing the leadership of Piedmont) versus elements of A and C (emphasising internal Risorgimento) and B and D (external aid). Only the best pointed out that the sources were about aims, aspirations and hopes rather than anything especially concrete. Even Plombieres in Source D was only conditional, and secret, at that stage.

4 The Origins of the American Civil War 1848-61

(a) Although some managed effective comparisons many struggled, in varying degrees, to do so. This seemed to be because they were faced with comparing two Southern views. There was some confusion on the overall slant of the sources with some seeing Howell Cobb in Source C as more 'extreme' than the Resolutions of Georgia in Source B. Similarly the Fugitive Slave Act proved difficult to compare as candidates misunderstood what was said about this in the two Sources. Others ignored it completely. Better candidates argued that the Resolutions in B bore out the fears expressed in Howell Cobb in C, whereas in other

ways they did not agree with the extremist views attributed by C to Southerners. In general the provenance was well used, the attribution of C being particularly stressed. This question also provided examples of the tendency of many candidates to see the sources as either for or against an issue, or to dip into the sources in a lazy way picking points at random. The result is an answer that fails to recognise the shades of opinion expressed and in many cases an answer that mis-matches content. For example, many missed the point that Source C recognises the dangers of secession ('ending the Union'), as does Source B ('Georgia will resist, even as a last resort by leaving the Union...'). Instead most merely saw the difference between B's reluctant acceptance of the Compromise and C's more positive, even welcoming, reaction to it. What follows are two examples, the first, a very weak response, being very typical of sequencing (the content of B, followed by the content of C) with a little comparison at the end. It lacks any provenance but is also a very good example of a considerable misreading of the Sources, on Georgia's position and on the Fugitive Slave Act:

In Source B it states that there is a firm positive view on the 1850 Compromise. The Convention expresses how they do not fully approve but nevertheless shall still abide by it as it has reduced sectional tension. Also it states that Georgia will not leave the Union even as a last resort, but they believe the Union depends on whether the Fugitive Slave Bill is abolished.

Source C is also in favour of the Compromise 'the dangers which a few months ago threatened the peace of the country, including the very existence of the Union have been avoided'. This shows that in Source C Congressman Howell Cobb is happy with the result of 1850. In addition to this the source suggests that settlement is not necessarily seen as final by a large number of Southerners. Howell Cobb states how determined and also violent the South really is to get rid of the Fugitive Slave Act.

Both Sources B and C share the same view on the 1850 Compromise in that they both see it as definite improvement in reducing sectional tension, but Source C states that it does not feel as if the Compromise is final and that a large proportion of Southerners share that view. B and C both share the desire and determination of keeping their Union, which will only be done if the Fugitive Slave Act is got rid of. Overall the Sources agree in that the 1850 Compromise was beneficial but it is not the end of the matter'.

This is a much more effective response:

'Fundamentally, these two sources appear to agree with each other over the issue of abiding by the Compromise made. Source B does state that Georgia 'will abide by the Compromise'. This shows that this source has a positive attitude towards the Compromise and its necessity, believing in 'the preservation of the Union'. Source C appears to give a very balanced opinion, but ultimately declares that the Compromise is a 'fair and honourable settlement', and similarly shares the view of its necessity in the Union.

However, Source C gives a balanced opinion of the views at the time. It states the view of the North, saying that 'a clamour has been raised up for the repeal of the Fugitive slave act'. It states the Southern view, feeling the Compromise violated their rights'. In view of this the source alludes to the fact that both parties, North and South, lose something; hence the nature of a compromise, and so it is 'fair'. Source B however disagrees with this allusion and is more extreme over the issue of fairness and promises to resist 'any future Act of Congress prohibiting the further introduction of slavery'.

It appears quite obvious that Source B would have a more extreme view on the protection of slavery's growth considering that this source was drawn up by the citizens of Georgia who would have been slave owners themselves with their economy based on the success of slavery. The Fugitive Slave Act was also a massive issue in sectional tension and the same principle applies to the third part of the resolution as with the growth of slavery. Source C is far more passive. It sums up the feelings of both sides and praises the Compromise. There are two major reasons for this. The first is that it is part of a letter written to Unionists, hence the letter would contain either a Unionist aspect or else the writer is himself a Unionist. The second reason is the date. Source B was written almost immediately after the Compromise and so Georgia would have taken it on themselves to impress the seriousness of further

invasive action. Howell Cobb writes a little after this, in 1851, and so by then he has probably seen the beneficial effects more clearly'.

(b) Here too responses were very varied. The question provided a good variety of alternative factors for candidates to consider. They were able to assess the factor in the question by using Sources A and D. Most were familiar with Seward and his views and influence on figures like Taylor. They could also use the Slave Power Conspiracy idea to help evaluate this factor, D describing the South as 'a dreary region of despotism'. They then went on to put forward other explanations such as the divided political parties, using C and D effectively, the Fugitive Slave Act, seen by some as the crucial factor, and the incompetence of the politicians about which all the sources had hints. There were often references to the Dred Scott case and its implications and to John Calhoun and his contribution to increasing tension. However in many cases knowledge was exceedingly thin, seemingly obsessed by the influence of the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin. with little understanding of the overall context. Many candidates ignored the dates in the question (1848-1854), concentrating irrelevantly on the later period. Issues like the Kansas Nebraska Crisis of 1853-4 were conspicuous by their absence. A few comparative, or 'testing' points could be made but it was clear that most were simply offloading material on a preferred period. Candidates found it difficult to categorise in their answers, failing to appreciate that each of the incidents and laws referred to (the Fugitive Slave Act, the 1850 Compromise, the Kansas-Nebraska Act) could be seen either as an example of Northern opposition to slavery or as evidence of Southern aggression. The weaker candidates went through case by case, if not source by source. Some candidates set out to show that 'Northern opposition to slavery was the main cause...' but found that they lacked material. If they were relying heavily on the source content, as many were, then they found themselves discussing Southern feelings as much as Northern and their answers lacked clarity and a balanced argument.

5 The Irish Question in the Age of Parnell 1877-93

(a) The response to this question was very pleasing. The less able seemed able to identify points of comparison in general terms or at least spot a basic or key point – that both opposed Home Rule- whilst the more able could explain the different reasons for doing so. Most commented on the significance of Source D being an Ulster MP, but few knew much about Bright's position in Source A. He was claimed as a typical Liberal, which he was not, a misreading of the introduction which stated that he was a leading Liberal. This limited some of the provenance comparisons. There was some confusion over the point about setting up armed forces. Many took this as a similarity when in fact Bright and O'Neill were talking about different things. Bright feared the establishment of an independent armed force, whilst O'Neill feared a hostile and independent Republic at odds with Britain in a future European War. Few picked up Bright's point about import duties where he was more typically Liberal in his priorities (Free Trade). On provenance surprisingly few made much of the private and insider nature of Bright's Diary in contrast to the public speech of an Ulster MP speaking on behalf of the majority in his community.

(b) The characteristic of many answers here was an excessive, albeit impressive amount of own knowledge which saw the sources relegated to an illustrative and referenced role. They could give details about the votes cast for and against Home rule, about Chamberlain and the political fall-out in general and about Gladstone's son (referred to as 'Sherbert' in one script) and his Kite. Many candidates wanted simply to discuss Home rule in general rather than Gladstone's lack of wisdom in introducing it in the first place. Some were confused by Source B, Cardinal Cullen, mixing him up with Anglicans and the Disestablishment Act of 1869. Very few were able to see the importance of his objection within Catholic Ireland and his warning that the Bishops would preach against it. Even fewer could make the link from what Cullen was saying to 'Protestant' Parnell with his dubious allies in the Land League and the Nationalist revolutionary community. The obvious grouping was Sources A, B and D (on Gladstone's lack of wisdom) and C (on the need to adopt Home Rule as the only means of pacifying and moralising the Union with Ireland). Most followed

this but a surprising number failed fully to examine Gladstone in Source C, the only source to suggest that Home Rule was wise. As a result their argument was seriously imbalanced. Even those who did take it on board failed to develop their comments sufficiently. Source C required careful scrutiny as its focus was narrow and, arguably, specious – Agrarian crime was less of a problem than at the beginning of the decade. It clearly represented only a very partial account of Gladstone's motives and calculations in introducing a Home Rule Bill. Few candidates seemed aware of this.

6 England in a New Century 1900-1918

(a) Responses here were very disappointing, largely because candidates struggled conceptually with both socialism and its attitudes to poverty (wealth redistribution via direct taxation and State responsibility for all) and that of the New Liberalism (a contributory system involving a partnership between the individual and the State). Unless they knew this they found it difficult to compare the sources, especially Lloyd George in B, who demonstrated that there was an alternative to both Socialism and the old Liberal view of self help and laissez-faire. Many happily ignored the key phrase in B, tackling poverty 'through a contributory national insurance scheme'. As a result their focus was largely on Keir Hardie in Source C. Provenance was equally distorted. The date difference was very important here, with Hardie commenting after the introduction of National Insurance and indeed referring back to the promises of 1906, which is where Source B comes from. Most candidates also made the mistake of thinking that Source B was part of the 1906 election campaign. It was not. The 1906 election was early in the year. Lloyd George's Cardiff speech was in October. Although it made a specific reference to the next election it implied at least another 5-7 years, by which time the Liberals would have been able to enact alternatives to socialism as a sitting government with a large majority. They could hardly do so immediately before an election when they were a minority caretaker government. Hardly any candidates considered whether Lloyd George was considering the issue of low wages (he was not) which is one of the main points made by Hardie (that poverty would not exist in the first place if wealth was deemed to belong to the community and was, in effect, held on behalf of that community). Weaker candidates indulged in much copying out of the Sources, especially the figures in C, which were rarely used as part of a comparison. Some introduced, irrelevantly, a lot of their own knowledge. Some thought Lloyd George a radical socialist whilst a few had no idea who Keir Hardie was.

(b) For most this too caused problems. Much was known, through own knowledge, about social reform and weaker candidates duly off-loaded this with little attempt, outside a brief conclusion, to relate it to any possible impact the Labour party may have had on this. Candidates struggled to use the sources, even for reference; those with little knowledge ended up describing the sources with little awareness of the political dimension involved (Source B) or about how to use the ideas contained in Sources A and C, such as comparing their points with the content and aims of the Liberal social reforms. Very few could see the implications of Source C, that the lack of progress on a Labour agenda meant that Labour had had little impact. The definition of 'social' was also often excessively wide. There was no problem in assessing Trade Union reform here, provided it was incorporated into the very real social dimension, but frequently they were simply described in list-like isolation, with no attempt, for example, to link to Source D where the Fabians (Beatrice Webb) were very dismissive of Trade Union MPs ('stupid folk'). Properly used this might suggest that the Liberals were right to reject both Fabian influence and that of ILP socialists like Hardie. It could provide evidence that Labour had little influence, especially if combined with a little context on the rather independent origins of New Liberal thinking. Some candidates looked at Ireland and Constitutional reform, of no relevance here. Those that did well on this question adopted a grouping of B and C (little influence) in opposition to D (initial influence) with A holding out a Labour yardstick against which one might measure later Liberal social reform. Effective evaluation points made were that A and B were about intent within a context of competition for the reform vote whereas C and D were assessing what was

subsequently done; that C was hardly typical, even within Labour (as the comments on division in D made clear) and that such full blooded socialism would have little purchase within practical politics at the time; and that D was balanced in its points on Labour's impact (initially strong enough, but later weakened by by-election defeats and internal divisions).

7 Nazi Germany 1933-45

(a) Responses tended to be modest here because very few candidates really understood the nature of Source B. Weaker candidates read it to mean that Goebbels (the spelling of this and propaganda were as bad as ever) sought to protect the Jews on the grounds that he asked the German people to abstain from further action. When it came to provenance they accepted what he said at face value in which case such a misinterpretation was understandable. What follows was all too typical of what we received on Source B:

'Source B shows that anti-semitism was in an uprise, but the government was paying attention to the situation and trying to discourage anti-semitism, showing that the government attitude was positive but the people's attitude towards the Jews was still negative, because 2 years after Source A the German people were still boycotting the Jews and destroying their businesses.'

Better candidates, the minority, un-wrapped its propaganda message and used their contextual knowledge about SA and SS involvement in Kristallnacht to comment that Goebbels was putting the blame onto the righteous anger of the people, possibly with an international audience in mind. It was therefore difficult to use as accurate evidence for the attitudes of the German people. A small minority seemed to think that in Source B Goebbels was either announcing the boycotting of shops (muddled with A) or the beginning of the Final Solution. Source A was handled a little better, although weak candidates considered it a Nazi source, a possible confusion between Socialist and National Socialist. Surprisingly few spotted that it only commented upon Saxony and therefore not the German people collectively, whilst whole cohorts missed the introductory remark that Saxony was a notoriously anti-semitic area of Germany. Several candidates thought Saxony was a town or village. Some suggested that people bought from Jewish shops in order to increase the Nazi annoyance with and dislike of the Jews, which was not quite the implication of the source. Nonetheless most concluded that its evidence was secure and reliable, especially as its judgement seemed reasonably nuanced. A few even picked up that, despite its socialist credentials, Source A was itself anti-semitic in tone. If candidates managed some of this then they were in a position to compare as attitudes to the Jews, and could see that Anti-semitism was widespread in both sources but that anything violent was disapproved of, hence Goebbels twisting of the truth after the violence of Kristallnacht. However a key problem for many was that their knowledge of what went on during Kristallnacht appeared skeletal or non-existent. There was much sequencing from many, although it should also be noted that some excellent responses were read, which also took account of possible changes given the different dates of the two sources.

(b) Responses here were a little better. A fair number of candidates made an effort and fewer than usual disregarded the sources to embark on an independent account of this contentious issue. A fair few were also able to pick up on the key terms in the question, 'actively' and 'most Germans', although the latter was more neglected than the former. Not many could cope with both. Some struggled to think about what 'active' might mean. Some concluded it meant supporting and involving themselves in everything the Nazis did, whilst not doing so implied actively helping the Jews. A fair number assumed that using violence denoted an active response and everything else was passive. Others saw it as informing or joining the Nazis whilst being passive meant turning the other cheek and maintaining friendly contact with Jewish acquaintances, as implied in Source C. The latter was more successful. Weaker candidates continued in part (a) mode, preferring to explain anti-semitic attitudes rather than the support for them. Most were able to establish a grouping based on B and C

(active support, most Germans) versus A and D (more conditional support and in particular drawing the line at violence). A fair number were able to see the difference between 'restricting their activities' (Source A) and 'reprisals' (Source B). The similarities between A with 'opponents of violence' and D, 'drawn the line at physical mistreatment', were often noted, pleasing given that in the past cross reference between widely separated sources has been quite rare. Source C could be interpreted in many different ways and perhaps because of this was handled much less well as the tone of regret in the source was too subtle for many (although some could use the mention of 'people I knew' to link with A and D). The date of C also threw many – was it primary or not? Some concluded it was reliable because she was there, others that she had forgotten things. Both were stock comments. The title of her memoirs, 'Account Rendered', was lost on almost all, a pity because this was a means of evaluation and it could have been the deciding source in a balanced argument. Only a few could seem to see that she had clearly been an active participant (imbibed from her parents, preaching anti-semitism and blood corruption) and was now bearing witness to past sins, with the possible motive of trying to cast her past in a better light or at least rationalising her experience within a context of expiation. For those determined to argue for long term residual anti-semitism in Germany it was also a lost opportunity to find some limited corroboration, given Maschmann's reference to 'the example of my parents'. Also surprising on Source C was the failure to comment on its typicality in reference to the issue of 'most Germans'. As a BDM leader she was hardly typical! Source D was reasonably well used but it invited much stock comment from weaker candidates who refused to believe in its reliability given Kershaw's failure to witness the 1930s in Germany. Some gave him credit for speaking German. Better candidates were in awe of such a titan of our times ('the brilliant Kershaw') whilst some took him to task for writing this particular work pre Glasnost, before the Moscow Archives were available. Some found his comments impenetrable ('little echo' seemed particularly problematic). For many however it gave them the steer for their argument – that the Germans became more active during the thirties because of Nazi propaganda. The weaker were determined to stray well past 1939, discussing the Final Solution, Wannsee and the extermination camps. Indeed there was much dumping of irrelevant material on opposition to the Nazis, particularly on the White Rose, a post 1939 phenomena. Examiners commented that there was surprisingly little effective own knowledge on Anti-Semitic policy (no boycotts, Nuremburg laws, economic restrictions etc.), let alone the popular reaction to it. We have already referred to the problem of taking Source B at face value in part (a), but it was repeated here with equal seriousness as evidence for popular support and engagement in active and violent anti-semitism. What follows we consider to be an impressive response that incorporates own knowledge and is focused and, in an under-stated manner, evaluative:

'It is clear from the sources as a set that some measure of anti-semitism was felt by most Germans during the Third Reich. Each source agrees that quite strong anti-semitism did exist. Kershaw, in Source D, claims that Germans 'welcome their exclusion from society'. Source A agrees with this claim, saying that 'people are in favour...of restricting [Jews] to certain activities'. Source A talks of little opposition to the existing policies on Jews in Germany. Written in 1936, the Nuremburg Laws of September 1935 had already taken place, declaring that Jews were no longer German citizens and could not form relations with Germans. Source C describes some of the anti-semitic feelings held in Germany at that time. Maschmann describes 'preaching that the misery of the nation was due to the Jews'. This reflects a common opinion at that time, due to Jews often being used as scapegoats. Many people also believed in 'breaking once and for all the supremacy of the Jews'. This shows the 'instinctive anti-Jewish feeling' described by Kershaw in Source D – existing feelings of anti-semitism, certainly not new in the time of Hitler, as indicated in Maschmann's comments about her parents, were played on by the Nazis to gain support for their measures. These were 'strengthened by propaganda' [D] such as that seen in Source B. Here Goebbels claims, wrongly, that not only were the German people in favour of anti-Jewish measures, but that they were in fact more violent and radical than the Nazis themselves. It is unlikely that the extreme anti-Jewish measures that emerged after Kristallnacht in 1938 could have come about without the national mistrust of Jews described

in Sources A, C and D. Source C also describes how anti-Semitic feeling was passed down from generation to generation, supporting the idea that most Germans of the time, of whatever age, approved of anti-Semitic measures. However, only Source B describes 'active support' by the German people for Anti-Jewish policy and it is an unreliable source. Source C describes only anti-Semitic feeling, and Source A even describes some small resistance to the ideas, stressing that ordinary people were not involved in violence. Although the Nazi measures, such as the imprisonment of Jews by the Gestapo, were aided by ordinary people – up to 90% of Gestapo information came not from Nazi members themselves but members of the general public – this did not extend to all anti-Jewish measures. No mention is made in the sources of any measures taken after 1938, and by 1939 measures had become much more violent. Kershaw in Source D says that such policies 'found little echo in the mass of the population', let alone active support. As 'all are decided opponents of violence' [A] it is unlikely that much support would exist for more radical measures. Source C shows clearly that Maschmann and her parents did not actively support policies such as those banning relations between Germans and Jews – her family retained personal Jewish friends. It is likely that the anti-Semitic feeling of most of the nation extended to passively supporting the earlier, less radical measures before 1938. However, much of this support may well be due to intimidation and propaganda rather than true anti-Semitic feeling. Even some less radical measures failed to gain support from the German people, for example the poorly supported boycott of Jewish shops on April 1st 1933. More likely than widespread active support is rather a lack of opposition that allowed Nazi policy to 'take place unchallenged' [D]. The small amount of opposition described in Source A, before even buying from Jewish shops became extremely dangerous, was even extended by some resistance groups in Nazi Germany who opposed anti-Semitic measures. As a set these sources suggest that due to existing anti-Jewish feeling, strengthened by Nazi propaganda, many of the earlier and less radical policies of the Nazis had the support of much of the population but this was not 'active support'. Only Source B implies any greater involvement, and due to the provenance the reliability of this source is questionable. Rather than active support from 1933-9, the sources suggest support for less radical schemes but a disapproval of the later, more radical and violent measures taken after the pogrom described in Source B.'

2583 - 2584 English History

General Comments

Examiners have commented that the questions set were appropriate for AS. However, many have also commented that the overall standard appeared to have declined, with more answers in Bands VI and VII and fewer very good answers, leading to a slight bunching in the middle bands. At the lower end there were certainly candidates for whom AS was not appropriate and it was unlikely that they would have been able to achieve a C grade at GCSE. There were a surprising number of candidates who wrote nothing or only a few lines and this does appear to be a growing trend. However, at the top end there were still candidates who produced excellent answers, well beyond the demands of AS, and which were a pleasure to read. These candidates were in full control of their argument, were able to cite historians' views where appropriate and to put forward their own convincing arguments.

It did appear as if more candidates were willing to plan their answers. In some instances the plan was very long and may have impacted upon their final essay as they had spent too long planning and the plan was nearly as long as the essay. As a result there were a number of candidates who failed to finish. There are also some candidates whose plan is simply a list of facts that they then proceed to impart in their answer. Neither of these approaches is to be encouraged and it would be of benefit to candidates if they were able to plan effectively, focusing on developing an argument or line of thought that they will pursue in their answer. This approach should help to prevent candidates from changing their view half way through an essay or making contradictory points.

Many examiners, on both papers, commented that more candidates were making a genuine attempt to argue or analyse. However, they also stated that the arguments were often poorly supported and that the quality of factual knowledge displayed had declined. Where candidates fail to provide sufficient support they will not reach the top Bands, and where support is virtually minimal the answer is little more than assertion or sweeping generalisations that do not convince an examiner. A lack of detailed factual knowledge often prevents a candidate from developing a coherent or sustained argument and leads to a drift from the focus of the question.

The decline in the depth of factual knowledge is a new development and was commented on by a large number of examiners. It was also noticeable that many candidates confused key figures or got dates of events wrong. Although candidates do not need to learn vast amounts of factual material, the time-span of the Study topics is quite narrow and it is not unreasonable to expect candidates to be able to learn an appropriate range of examples to support their arguments. It should be a matter of course that they know the key pieces of legislation or treaties and the dates in their study topic. This can be reinforced in a number of ways in the classroom and centres would benefit from encouraging this.

There also appeared to be a number of candidates who had pre-learnt answers which they were determined to reproduce in the examination room almost regardless of the question asked. If a candidate wants to reach the very top levels they do need to give specific attention to the key words and phrases in the question, such as 'mainly', 'completely', 'mostly' or 'how far', as this will provide a focus to their argument. Rather than learning a series of essay plans students would be better advised to consider the areas of debate that make up the Study Topic as it is more likely that they will have a view about the issue being considered in the examination.

Examiners do want to know the candidate's view and centres are encouraged to push their students to reach a supported judgement, not simply provide a list of reasons or successes and failures. In lessons encourage students to have a view and defend it so that when it comes to the examination we will not simply see a list of reasons or even worse, a description of the views of historians. This approach will pay dividends at A2. There is certainly no such thing as a right

answer and candidates should be encouraged to challenge historical nostrums, providing of course that they can support their ideas.

The question format for the examination is fairly standard and the expectations surrounding the question stems has not changed, but there are still a significant number of centres who do not appear to understand the requirements, despite comments made in previous reports and at INSET. When a question suggests that a specific factor is the main reason, candidates cannot simply ignore the factor if they want to reach Band III or above. They are expected to write at least a significant paragraph in which they weigh up its relative importance, even if they then choose to argue that it was not an important reason and then evaluate other factors. They should also consider a range of other factors and their relative importance. In essays that ask candidates to 'assess', examiners expect candidates to weigh up the relative importance of a range of factors and make a supported judgement about their importance. Although an increasing number of candidates are trying to do this, there are still a large number who think that a sentence bolted on to the end of paragraph stating that 'therefore this was the most important reason' constitutes evaluation - and this is not the case. Candidates do need to explain why a factor could be considered to be important or less important, not merely state it. Closely linked to this, is the tendency for some candidates to try to jump through a series of hoops having read the OCR generic mark scheme. However, they usually fail in their aim of reaching the top levels because they don't write an answer that engages with the question or is relevant. The best way to hone the skills required for the higher bands is through wide historical reading and plenty of reflection and discussion of the key issues raised.

Centres might also benefit from focusing on the issue of introductions and conclusions. More candidates are writing introductions, rather than jumping straight into their answers, however for many it adds very little to their answer as they simply set the scene or write out the question in their own words, rather than outline their view and the line of argument they are going to take. Conclusions continue to be weak, with many candidates doing little more than offering a cursory repetition of material already offered.

It appears that every year the standard of written English deteriorates and this year was no exception. Despite AS being a formal examination, there are still many candidates who use abbreviations or even bullet points. Punctuation and spelling has declined over recent years and this was reflected in the quality of written English. There were a significant number of answers where candidates used one very long sentence to constitute a paragraph or where paragraphs were ignored completely. The failure to use paragraphs in an appropriate manner does detract from the quality of the argument. Candidates need to read widely as not only will this give them a greater depth of factual material, but it should also help to improve the quality of their written work. There certainly appeared to be more evidence of reliance upon television programmes and the informal communication frequently used, which once again detracts from the quality of the answer.

Principal Examiner Report 2583

England 1042-1100

1a) There were a wide range of responses to this question. The principal weaknesses at the lower end were either that candidates' factual knowledge was very limited or that they did not focus on the question of 'how successfully' and instead described Edward's relationship with the Godwin family. Many candidates were able to place the relationship in context and argued that Edward was very dependent upon the Godwins because of his upbringing and that this made his management of such a powerful family very difficult. Some candidates suggested there were times when Edward did appear to be successful, particularly when he exiled them, but that these moments were short-lived and that ultimately the Godwins triumphed as they secured the succession. However, others argued that this did not signify Edward's poor handling as it ensured the succession went to the most powerful Anglo-Saxon earl.

1b) There were some outstanding answers to this question. Most candidates were able to evaluate both the strengths and weaknesses of the English church on the eve of the conquest and reach a balanced, but well supported judgement. The depth of knowledge was often impressive and candidates evaluated a good range of issues. Most concluded that the church was in a strong position and supported this view by arguing that William saw little reason for immediate change. There were good references to the cultural contribution of the church. Many argued that although the English church differed from the church on the continent, particularly in terms of the size of the churches, this should not be viewed as a weakness. Candidates also argued that although there were some abuses within the church, this did not prevent clergy from meeting the needs of the population.

2a) This was a popular question and saw a wide range of responses. The factual knowledge of some candidates was very limited and this was disappointing as the question was very straightforward and was clearly centred on a key area of the specification. There were many answers that focused almost exclusively on the events at Hastings, often describing rather than analysing the reasons for William's success, and these failed to make reference to the events in the north of England that preceded it and had a significant impact on the force that William would face. However, there were also a large number of candidates who were able to evaluate a wide range of factors and make clear links between them. Many argued that William was very fortunate as Harold's forces had been weakened and that the change in wind direction occurred at just the right moment to allow an unopposed landing. However, they often continued and showed that without William's skill in battle and careful preparations beforehand this would have had little impact. There was often discussion of Papal support for William, but a significant number of answers were unable to explain why this helped to make William more successful. Some candidates also became sidetracked by a detailed discussion of the respective strengths of the claimants and wrote in detail about the claims of Harald Hardrada and Edgar Aethling, which added little to their answer.

2b) Although this answer attracted fewer responses than 2a, there were still a significant number. There was a tendency for many to describe the unrest that William faced and then simply state that he needed force to put it down. The knowledge of the unrest was sometimes superficial or limited to the 'Harrying of the North' and Exeter. However, candidates who reached a higher level frequently drew on a wide range of examples to support their argument that force was crucial. They often linked this to the building of castles and argued that, in this instance, it was the threat of force that allowed William to maintain control. They were able to assess the vital significance of castles in controlling a foreign country with such a small force and illustrate this with reference to specific castles. Some candidates also considered issues such as the feudal system and methods of government, pointing to the use made of Anglo Saxon systems.

3a) A number of answers explained the significance of the Normans' use of the writ after the Conquest; this was one of the better examples of continuity in Anglo-Saxon government. Other examples included the continuation of local government institutions, but knowledge of the different types of court and the role of the sheriff was less clear. Some of the better answers also dealt with the continuity in taxation, but not all fully understood the Danegeld tax and very few were able to link this point to Domesday Book which, at one level, was a record of tax obligations. Most answers included some mention of continuity in royal rituals, but this point was generally less effectively linked to 'government and administration'. The fact that William was crowned in Westminster Abbey, as King Edward had been, is certainly valid, but in order to make the point effective it needed to have been linked to the mechanics of government. The issue of 'crown wearings' was not handled well. Some candidates included a discussion of William's ecclesiastical policy, but this was not focused on the question. Castles were included by a number of candidates, but in most cases they were not able to link the point successfully to the question. There was a tendency to list points and too many focused on areas that were not related to government and administration.

- 3b) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.
4a) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.
4b) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.

England 1450-1509

5a) Although this question attracted a reasonable number of answers many candidates found it difficult to focus on the ideas of 'under-mighty king and over-mighty subjects'. There were a large number of descriptive answers that related the problems of Henry's reign without linking the material to the demands of the question. Knowledge of Henry VI was sometimes very superficial, although many were at least able to discuss the question of the king's failure to control patronage. Answers at the higher levels were often able to link this to the influence of Somerset, and many argued that he was a good example of an over-mighty subject, but at the top level candidates suggested that this was due to the weakness of Henry. There were a large number of answers that drifted into comments about Margaret of Anjou without linking it to the question. In many instances candidates needed more precise examples of over-mighty subjects to sustain their argument as there were a large number who wrote in very general terms and some even ignored the importance of Richard of York.

5b) This question attracted fewer responses than 5a and many answers focused more on why war broke out, rather than why the Yorkists were successful. There were few answers that considered the importance of York's alliance with Warwick. Many answers also ignored the treatment of York and his supporters by Henry and Margaret, which resulted in York gaining much popular support. There was some discussion of leadership and most argued that Henry was ineffectual in comparison to York, Warwick or Edward. Very few candidates displayed much knowledge of the actual battles.

6a) This question saw a range of responses, some chose to compare Edward's first period of rule with his second, whilst others concentrated solely on the second period. Either approach was possible for any band, and as the Study Topic starts in 1471 it was not expected that candidates would consider his earlier rule. The range of factors discussed by candidates was quite narrow, with many limiting their answers to just finances and the nobility. Financial issues were usually handled quite well with many commenting on his reform and his personal control. Consideration of his control of the nobility was frequently poorly supported and many wrote in very general terms, with perhaps a brief reference to Richard of Gloucester. Some better answers developed this by considering his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville and argued that this weakened the monarchy. However, very few answers considered the fact that he avoided civil unrest and ended the danger from Clarence. At the very top candidates did discuss the question of 'how far'.

6b) Although this question was quite popular there were a large number of candidates whose knowledge of the reign of Richard III was very thin. Many answers did not get beyond the disappearance of the Princes in the Tower and the Battle of Bosworth. Candidates' knowledge of the details of his accession was often weak and discussion of his relationship with the nobility was often conducted in very general terms. It was surprising that many candidates ignored Buckingham and did not seize the opportunity to argue that his ambition was responsible for his death. There was much description of the Battle of Bosworth, with a significant number arguing that it was Richard's foolhardiness that ultimately led to his death. As with 6a better answers did focus on the issue of 'how far'.

7a) Henry VII continues to be a popular topic and this question saw a significant number of answers. However, the quality was very variable, with many answers either being very descriptive of the threats or very narrow in focus, covering just the Pretenders. The key to the very best answers was how well candidates focused on the concept of 'completely' as this provided an opportunity for argument and analysis. A popular approach was to suggest that because Henry VII was able to hand on the throne intact to his son he must have been successful; others argued that it was only in the last few years that it could be argued he was successful. There was some good discussion of the threats from Warbeck and Simnel and many

suggested that the threat from Simnel was dealt with easily at Stoke, whereas the Warbeck threat rumbled on. Some better answers were able to link these threats to overseas challenges and argue that Henry was largely successful in neutralising the challenges through a series of treaties and marriage agreements, but many candidates failed to make this link and ignored foreign threats. There was also the opportunity to discuss his marriage and that of his sons in overcoming the threats, but this was seldom developed. The threat from Ireland could also have been mentioned, but again few candidates developed the idea. There was some discussion of the threat from the nobility and some of the better answers argued that this threat was never completely overcome and that there was the possibility of noble unrest, due to his harsh policies, in the last year of his reign.

7b) As with 7a, this was a popular question, but it was surprising to see the narrow range of factual knowledge that was available to many candidates. The best answers identified Henry's aims in the opening paragraph and then went on to assess how far he achieved them during his reign. Most answers were able to identify the main aims of security, avoidance of war, depriving the Yorkists of overseas support, ensuring his dynasty and developing trade and finances. However, the discriminating factor was how well candidates were able to use their knowledge to assess whether the aims were achieved and many answers were descriptive with a comment at the end of the paragraph, rather than a sustained argument. There was some confusion over the invasion of France and the Treaty of Etaples, as well as over the trade treaty with Burgundy. Some of the more successful answers assessed the situation at the end of Henry's reign in order to decide 'how successful' he was.

8a) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.

8b) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.

England 1509-1558

9a) This was a very popular question with a wide range of responses. Most answers were able to offer a point of view, with many suggesting that Henry VIII did not continue the policies of his father. However, a significant number of answers lacked the depth to sustain an argument. Many of the more successful answers adopted a more balanced approach and argued that he did continue many of his father's policies, at least in the short term. This was supported by a discussion over the delay in going to war with France and the retaining of many of his father's advisors. There was confusion over Empson and Dudley, with many candidates suggesting that they were unpopular nobles who Henry wanted to remove before adopting a new approach towards the nobility. There was also confusion as to whether Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon should be seen as a continuation or a new departure given Henry VIII's attitude towards the marriage in his final years. There were a number of answers that were focused almost exclusively on foreign policy and spent much time describing the wars in France. Many candidates wrote about the difference in the personalities of the two monarchs and this was relevant if it was used to explain either similarity or difference in policy.

9b) Henry VIII's foreign policy continues to be a popular topic, but there were a significant number of candidates who found it very difficult to write in any length or depth about the named factor: to remain an ally of the papacy. As a consequence some resorted to describing Wolsey's position within the church and arguing that because of this he would want to remain an ally of the papacy. Candidates found it much easier to discuss other aims and many argued that his main aim was to please Henry, not the Papacy and frequently used the divorce question to support this argument. Once again the range of factual material available to candidates was limited, with many not being able to go beyond the early years, the Treaty of London, the Field of the Cloth of Gold and the divorce.

10a) Although this topic is not as popular as many other Tudor topics there were still a reasonable number of answers. The wording of the question led many into an account of the historical debate about a Tudor Revolution in government without sufficient focus on the demands of the question. Many candidate's answers were focused on a few issues and it was surprising to see how many did not consider either the role of parliament or the reforms of the

various Councils. There were a significant number of answers that made valid points, but lacked the depth of factual knowledge to support the argument being put forward.

10b) This question produced a narrow range of answers as many candidates became confused about developments under each of the rulers and this resulted in many faulty conclusions being drawn. There were a number of answers that claimed Northumberland faced serious unrest, or that Somerset faced only one revolt and drew conclusions accordingly. Knowledge of how England was governed was also very limited, few answers were aware of the use Somerset made of Proclamations and the by-passing of the Council that alienated many and helped to bring about his downfall. Candidates did not seize upon the point that both Somerset and Northumberland were brought down, suggesting that they were not effective. There was some discussion of social and economic policies, but this often lacked the depth of factual detail to sustain an argument.

11a) This continues to be a very popular topic and there were many very good answers. Candidates who focused on 'extensive' were able to set up a good basis for analysis and discussion, whilst others who answered past questions, with a slightly different focus did not reach the highest levels. At the lower end there were candidates who made only passing reference to the condition of the church, suggested that it was in a satisfactory condition and then wrote at length about Henry's need for a divorce. There was discussion of contemporary critics of the church, but most argued that these were either exaggerated for propaganda, were isolated cases or calls from clergy for limited, rather than extensive reform. Many candidates focused on the issues of absenteeism, pluralism and simony, arguing that cases were limited or that the situation was no worse than in the previous century. There were many references to Wolsey, but most also suggested that, although he set a bad example, he was an exception. Many answers claimed that the church satisfied the needs of parishioners and used examples from wills, buildings, ordination rates and the purchase of devotional works to support their argument. There was also much discussion of the lack of opposition to the established church, with many suggesting that the lack of support for Lollardy and Lutheranism showed that the church did not need reform. Some candidates even compared the condition of the English church with Germany and argued that in comparison the English church was certainly in far less need of reform.

11b) As with 11a, this was a popular question and saw many very good responses. It was pleasing to note that most candidates have broadened their approach to the study of Mary's religious policy and answers do not focus as heavily on the persecutions as they used to. Although most candidates were able to argue that legally Mary did succeed in restoring Catholicism quite quickly, many answers went further and looked at the situation at grass roots and argued that Mary was also successful here, largely because most of the population was catholic on her accession. There was also evaluation of her success in establishing seminaries, carrying out visitations and her relationship with parliament. This was balanced by a consideration of her failure to restore monastic lands, her relationship with the Papacy and her failure to produce an heir, leading ultimately to her long term failure, although many concluded that in 1558 she had been mainly successful. There was discussion of Wyatt's rebellion and although some argued that this suggested she was less successful, others suggested that the rebellion was due to political issues and should not be seen as evidence of her failure.

12a) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.

12b) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.

England 1547-1603

13a) This question was not as popular as 13b and many of the answers were limited in their analytical approach. Many answers focused on 'opposition' and therefore inferred that there was more or less support for the policies of the various rulers. Confusion over the causes of Kett's rebellion did not help some candidates develop their argument, whilst others were unsure how to assess 'popular support' and resorted to a description of the legislative measures passed and argued that the acts showed that there was support. There was some discussion of protestant

opposition under Mary and usually reference to the Western Rebellion, but candidates lacked other specific local evidence to sustain their arguments. Many books make specific references to local evidence on the restoration of Catholicism in London and other areas under Mary and candidates would be well advised to be acquainted with this. Very few candidates were able to refer to the evidence from wills or the recovery in ordination rates under Mary. It was also surprising that many ignored the opportunity to discuss either the Lady Jane Grey affair or Wyatt's rebellion.

13b) Although this question was more popular there were still a significant number of weak answers where candidates did not focus on 'the end of Elizabeth's reign', but often wrote lengthy accounts about the Settlement, which was only relevant if candidates showed how it had brought about support by the end of the reign and emphasised the positive effects of its ambiguity. There was also much discussion of negative factors, with much emphasis on the decline in Catholicism and Puritanism. However, answers that focused almost exclusively on these aspects were offering only part of an answer. Where most candidates struggled was to explain the positive appeal of the Church of England, although some did write well about the political appeal and linked this to events such as the Armada. It was disappointing that very few answers made reference to the outstanding leaders of the church. Candidates' knowledge of doctrine and liturgy was less secure and therefore Elizabeth's 'via media' was explained less effectively. Many answers suggested that the population may have become apathetic to religious change and some supported this by drawing attention to an inability to understand Latin and to the confusion caused by so many changes under previous monarchs.

14a) This question was not very popular and the candidates who attempted it found it very difficult to identify the mistakes of Mary and instead simply discussed, often in a list form, Elizabeth's foreign policy aims. The better answers did suggest that Mary's mistakes had been an unsuccessful war with France and a close alliance with Spain, but that Elizabeth had other problems. Very few were able to refer to the quick ending of the war with France, which could have been used to support the assertion in the question. A discussion of relations with Spain should have given candidates an opportunity to argue that although Elizabeth may have wanted to avoid a close relationship with Spain, the political situation meant that she needed to move with caution. Many answers went well into Elizabeth's reign when the focus should have been the early years.

14b) This was a more popular question, but many candidates found it difficult to write a good paragraph on the named factor and were reduced to some very generalised comments. However, there were some answers that linked the problem of searching for new trade outlets to conflict in the New World. Many answers considered that it was the situation in the Netherlands that was the key to relations with Spain and suggested that it was either national security or religion that resulted in a decline. It was interesting to note that many more candidates argued that religion was the most important factor, which represents a significant change in approach over recent years. There were also some attempts to link the developments in France to the deterioration in relations and again this led some to conclude that it was national security that caused the decline.

15a) There were few answers to this question and those who did tackle it often produced an answer that was very limited in scope. Candidates' factual knowledge was often limited to a discussion of religion and her relationship with parliament at the end of her reign. Very few candidates were able to sustain an analytical approach throughout their answer. There was very little reference to issues of the Queen's marriage or the succession, both of which are specifically mentioned in the Specification. Most worrying was the lack of understanding of parliamentary privilege, which was of significant importance if candidates were to produce a full answer.

15b) This was more popular than 15a, but many answers focused on previous questions that have asked how well the government managed the problems of the 1590s. As a result many suggested that because the government managed many of the problems reasonably well then support for Elizabeth remained high. However, others suggested that because the problems Elizabeth faced were serious then support for her must have declined. Very few were able to

draw a distinction between the seriousness of the problems and the fact that support for her remained largely intact. There were some answers that did consider the challenge of Essex and went beyond the basic argument and suggested that although it was put down easily it was evidence of a gulf between the monarch and some of the younger men at court. Many answers were able to discuss the issue of Monopolies and link it to the Golden Speech, suggesting that an initial loss of popularity was overcome. There was also some consideration of the social and economic problems and candidates drew a variety of interpretations. Some argued that the lack of unrest suggested Elizabeth was popular, whilst others developed this and suggested that given the circumstances of the 1590s it was the legislation that kept support for the regime. However, some suggested that inflation and food shortages must have made her unpopular, but this was often simply asserted. There were also a number of answers that did not focus on 'by 1603' and wrote about the whole reign.

16a) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.

16b) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.

England 1603-1660

17a) Answers to this question varied considerably. At the lower end candidates displayed a lack of factual knowledge and often could make only passing reference to marriage proposals for Charles. However, even more able candidates were limited in their range of factual material, with very few making reference to the peace treaty with Spain in 1604. Religious considerations provided most candidates with the main thrust of their argument as they argued that James' apparent sympathy for catholic powers caused disquiet in parliament. Some candidates were able to argue that James' desire to be a 'peaceful king' was not misinterpreted as sympathy for catholic powers. There was some discussion of the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, but candidates need to ensure they are accurate in the factual knowledge they deploy.

17b) There were very few answers to this question and most were more confident in focusing on Charles' reign. However, even here there were answers that relied on broad and unsupported generalisations about the development of Arminianism. There was little consideration of either the Millenary Petition or the Hampton Court Conference. Some candidates were able to link the issue of religion to developments in foreign policy and make some valid points, but overall answers were disappointing.

18a) This is a very popular topic and there were a wide range of answers. However, many candidates displayed a very poor factual knowledge of events from 1640-2 and often wrote in very superficial terms. There were many answers that made no reference to any of the following: the attempted arrest of the Five Members, the Grand Remonstrance or Ireland. Too many answers did not focus on the period 1640-2 and wrote either at great length or entirely on events of the 1630s, explaining why relations between Charles and the Long Parliament were bad, not why they broke down in the period from 1640-2. However, there were answers that considered a variety of reasons and evaluated whether Charles or Parliament was to blame. This approach allowed candidates to reach a balanced conclusion. Many argued that it was the extremism of parliament that ultimately caused the breakdown, whereas some suggested that Charles' attempted arrest of the Five Members was the deciding event as it left the king little choice but to leave London, confirming the breakdown.

18b) As with 18a, this was a very popular question and attracted a very wide range of responses. At the lower end, some candidates focused on events before the war broke out and suggested that these were the causes of the problems. Many were able to identify three key issues: resources and areas controlled, leadership and allies. Provided the evaluation of these factors was strong then all bands were open to such answers. Many were able to draw links between areas controlled and resources, pointing to the financial problems that Charles faced as the war dragged on. These answers often argued that if Charles had seized his opportunities at the start of the war then many of the problems he faced would have been overcome. It was noticeable that many answers lacked precise supporting detail and candidates made sweeping generalisations. However, others were able to support their arguments by precise reference to

battles or financial methods used to raise funds. There was some confusion about the importance of Pym, as many seemed uncertain of the date of his death and credited him with achievements that were much later. The same was true of the New Model Army as some were uncertain about its date of origin and therefore its military involvement. As with question 18a, candidates would benefit from a very clear timeline of events as there is a great deal happening in quite a short time.

19a) Although questions on the Interregnum do not attract many candidates there was a considerable range in the quality of responses. Very few candidates were able to assess the relative importance of reasons for the loss of support of the army and resorted to a well explained list. However, there were also a significant number of answers that lacked any factual depth or support and relied on sweeping assertions. There was opportunity for candidates to draw links between factors such as Cromwell, the army and religion, but most failed to make the connections.

19b) As with 19a, there were few answers to this question and they also showed a limited range of factual material. Many concentrated their answers on Cromwell's failure to ensure a stable succession, the rule of the Major General's and the issue of support for the regime. There was little consideration of his relationship with Parliament and religious developments. Many answers adopted a 'list' approach to success and failure, rather than assessing whether the failures were more important than successes.

20a) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.

20b) There were not enough answers to this question for any valid comment to be made.

Principal Examiner Report 2584

Questions

1a) This was a popular question and drew the full range of responses. At the lower end candidates confused the radical challenge that faced Pitt with Liverpool and therefore wrote about groups outside the period to 1801. Some other weaker answers were unable to identify specific radical groups or spent too long describing the measure that Pitt took to deal with the radical groups. There were some answers that were able to link the measure taken by Pitt to the threat and therefore give their answer some focus, but too many simply wanted to relate the legislation of Pitt's government. However, at the top end candidates did examine the scale of the radical threat, many argued that the threat was perceived rather than real and some suggested that the government used the threat to help unite the nation. Many suggested that the threat was never great because it was associated with the excesses of the French Revolution and that the ideas were seen as foreign.

1b) This question was less popular than 1a and many answers failed to focus on the three ministers named in the question and instead reproduced an answer on 'How liberal were the Liberal Tories', which missed the precise focus of the question and highlights the danger of students simply learning essay plans rather than focusing on applying their knowledge to the question set. Most candidates displayed a satisfactory knowledge of the economic reforms, although more precise details would have helped. Some of the better answers did consider the issues of Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary reform. The issue of Catholic Emancipation did allow more able candidates to discuss whether the motivation was liberal or simply to preserve order. There were some candidates who discussed whether the reforms were less liberal and more a response to the improved economic conditions.

2a) This was quite a popular question and many candidates were able to write knowledgeably about a wide range of factors. At the higher levels many answers discussed the importance of finance and were able to link this to a range of other factors, such as funding the coalitions and providing the weaponry for the continued fight. Some answers were able to consider the value of the subsidies to allies arguing that most coalitions broke down very quickly. Candidates were often able to weigh up the importance of finance against factors such as the Continental system,

naval strength, commanders, the Peninsular War and other campaigns. However, some weaker candidates found the concepts of finance and subsidies very challenging and this resulted in some very superficial discussions of the named factor, limiting the levels that were reached.

2b) This question was much less popular than 2a and many answers were unable to focus on the issue of 'effective peace for Britain'. However, at the top levels candidates found the question challenging and provided the opportunity for high level discussion. At the lower end candidates often resorted to a chronological run through of British foreign policy in the period with little attempt to link knowledge to the actual question set. It was also noticeable that many candidates had little knowledge of the Congress System.

3a) This was less popular than 3b and many candidates at the lower levels tended to answer the question set in June 2007. There was also a tendency for some candidates to focus on the Peel's motives for the reforms, rather than discuss whether the policies succeeded or failed. It was also noticeable that many answers were confused about Catholic Emancipation and what it entailed. The knowledge of some candidates was rather narrow and issues such as Clontarf or Maynooth were ignored, with a large emphasis being placed on the Corn Laws and their repeal. As might be expected there were many answers that simply listed the successes and failures without making any judgement as to 'how far' the policies failed, yet this was a requirement of the highest bands. The better answers were often able to discuss the mix of conciliation and coercion that was adopted by Peel. These answers also established a clear set of criteria against which to judge failure, often going beyond their impact on Ireland and considering the impact for Peel on the Conservative party. It would also be worth noting that there were a significant number of answers that ignored Ireland and considered all of Peel's policies and this meant that a significant part of their answer was irrelevant.

3b) There were a large number of answers for this question. Knowledge of the Anti Corn Law League was very variable, ranging from very little to detailed knowledge, but even when candidates did have display good knowledge they were often unable to link it to the question and discuss whether they helped or hindered repeal, simply asserting that its membership and composition must have helped. However, in the higher bands many were able to discuss the extent to which pressure would have persuaded Peel to repeal or whether they might actually have delayed repeal as he did not want to appear to be giving in to pressure. Candidates were usually able to consider a range of other factors that brought about repeal. Most answers were able to write knowledgeably about the role of the Irish famine and argued that this was the trigger for repeal. Some candidates considered whether Peel used the famine as the excuse for repeal to try and avoid divisions within his own party. Many answers argued that Peel was already a free trade convert, pointing to his response to a parliamentary debate and also that the Corn Laws were the last block to the establishment of free trade.

4a) There were some answers to this question, but many were of a disappointing standard. The answers tended to be very general; particularly when discussing trade and many were unable to explain how this linked to industrial growth. Many were better when discussing other issues, but even here supporting detail tended to be general. Some candidates ignored the end date, particularly when discussing transport and wrote at length about the development of railways in the later period. Most answers were unable to weigh up the relative importance of the factors, although some were able to show links they still lacked the factual support to be worthy of the higher bands.

4b) This question was not popular and candidates who did attempt it seemed uncertain as to the demands of the question, particularly the idea that the response o economic change was political. They were much happier describing the responses to economic change and there was a great deal of focus on the Luddites and the Swing Riots. The earlier period was nearly always ignored with the focus being the Liverpool era.

5a) There were a large number of weak responses to this question, generalised, thin in knowledge and weak in the time span covered. These answers were frequently struggling to write at any length or in any detail about the role of the named factor and went into other issues at the earliest opportunity. Candidates should be aware that a reasonable paragraph on the

named factor is the minimum requirement to reach Level III. However, better answers showed much more secure knowledge and were able to link themes. These answers usually picked up on Free Trade and party developments in the period and linked them to the roles of both Palmerston and Gladstone.

5b) There was a great deal for candidates to write about, but a substantial number failed to focus on the exact wording of the question and often explained why Gladstone lost the 1874 election or simply explained why domestic policies were unpopular with a variety of groups. Factual knowledge of domestic reform was better than foreign policy. Many candidates struggled to discuss why foreign policy could be considered unpopular, although some better answers compared it to the bellicose and jingoistic approach of Palmerston. There were some better answers that were able to argue that both his foreign and domestic policies were unpopular and used the election defeat of 1874 to reflect this approach, pointing particularly to the Licensing legislation to support their view. Ireland did present many with a challenge and knowledge of Irish policy was frequently thin.

6a) There were some answers to this question and most were able to consider a variety of reasons before reaching a balanced conclusion. Many argued that the main reason for the passing of the act was the political situation in the Commons and political expediency from Disraeli, using the changes to the bill to support their argument. Many suggested that Disraeli was simply concerned to pass any act in order to show that the Conservatives were capable of governing and because he believed that the newly enfranchised voters were Tories at heart. There was also consideration given to the personal rivalry between Disraeli and Gladstone. Most were able to weigh this up against the role of popular pressure, using evidence from the Hyde Park riots or Bristol to support their discussions. However, weaker answers lacked the necessary factual knowledge about popular pressure.

6b) This was a popular question and drew the full range of responses. There was a tendency among the weaker answers to either describe the reforms or display knowledge of a very limited range. Some answers were sidetracked into a discussion of the motives behind the reforms, others focused on whether Disraeli was trying to uphold or implement 'Tory Democracy' and some focused on explaining why the Conservatives lost the 1880 election. However, in the higher levels candidates did focus on 'limited in their impact' and analysed a range of reforms and considered their impact, particularly on the working class. Many made good use of the Liberal comment that the Conservatives did more in five years for the working man than the Liberals had done in twenty.

7a) Although this question was quite popular it did prove to be challenging. Many were uncertain as to the meaning of 'issues' and also found it difficult to compare the Crimean War and Balkan Crises. In trying to adopt an analytical approach some just explained the reasons for British involvement in the Crimea and the Balkans without making any comparative comment. As a consequence many answers adopted a sequential approach with a limited comparative comment at the end of a paragraph in the second half of the essay or limited their comparison to a brief conclusion. Answers also tended to be very descriptive in their approach and many wrote substantially more about the Crimean War than the Balkan Crises. Candidates who did adopt a comparative approach were rewarded very highly. There were a variety of issues that did attract comparison, most were able to compare British concerns and reasons for involvement, writing particularly well about concerns over Russia, the route to India and the preservation of the balance of power in the region.

7b) This was quite a popular question and there were many very good answers, although some found it challenging to write in depth about humanitarian and missionary activity. Many answers were able to provide a wide range of supporting detail to explain reasons for British involvement and knowledge of the materials gained by Britain from across Africa was often impressive. It was very pleasing to see many candidates argue that the motives for British involvement changed over time or that humanitarian and missionary activity was often a cloak for other concerns. However, this was often balanced against the ideals of Cecil Rhodes or David Livingstone.

8a) Many of the responses to this question failed to focus on the whole time period and instead concentrated on the period after 1900 and as a result were very narrow in their scope. Other answers tended to be generalised and make sweeping, unsupported statements. However, some candidates were able to discuss a range of factors and weigh up their relative importance. These answers considered issues such as the extension of the franchise, union support for the Liberal party, working class attachment to the Conservatives as a result of Imperialism, lack of funding and Union legislation.

8b) This was not a popular question and any answers tended to be very weak as candidates were unable to apply their knowledge to the demands of the question and wrote very generalised answers.

9a) This was a very popular question and produced a very wide range of responses. At the lower end candidates tended to be very narrow in their coverage. Many were able to write about the legislation affecting children and pensions, but little else. Some answers simply described the terms of the legislation and therefore analysis was only implied and others focused more on the motives behind the legislation. Too many candidates were of the opinion that social legislation was a key part of the Liberal campaign in 1905. Candidates also went down the route of why they were not successful, rather than considering whether they were limited in their success.

There were also a considerable number who wrote in great detail about the Budget and the Constitutional Crisis without linking them to the demands of the question and others also argued that the reforms were limited because of the challenges from Ireland and industrial unrest.

However, there were many high level responses where the full range of legislation was evaluated and both sides of the argument were considered before a judgement was reached.

9b) Although not as popular as 9a this question still drew a considerable number of responses. However, many of the answers did not really get to grips with the demands of the question. The factual knowledge of many candidates was very limited and it was surprising how many failed to make reference to events such as the Larne gun running or the Curragh Mutiny, but more noticeable was the frequent absence of reference to events 1914-1916. Many were unable to see the danger that Conservative support for Ulster presented and simply took the line that the Liberal party were the party of government and therefore Ireland must have been a more dangerous threat for them. The focus of many answers was on the 'wait and see' policy of Asquith and the dangers that it created, without really being able to substantiate the claim. Where candidates did have sufficient factual knowledge there was a tendency for a narrative approach, this was acceptable if the answer included analysis or evaluation. At the top levels candidates did try and compare the dangers to the two parties.

10a) This was a very popular question and produced a very wide range of answers. The focus of the question, 'a strong Conservative party', did cause many candidates problems and often any reference was only implied. Better answers were able to make reference to the size of the Conservative membership of the coalition or Conservative success in by-elections giving them the confidence to believe they could win an election without Lloyd George. Knowledge of events at the Carlton Club was often confused and candidates seemed uncertain about Conservative leadership, the same was true of answers that considered the issue of Ireland. Most answers were able to discuss a range of other issues and were able to show that events such as Chanak or the Geddes Axe made Lloyd George unpopular with the electorate, but did not go on to show how this brought about his downfall. Many were able to argue that it was the unpopularity of his policies that brought about his downfall and wrote about Conservative disquiet over Chanak, honours, housing or Versailles. More emphasis could have been placed upon Lloyd George's style of government and his presidential nature, ignoring his cabinet and the use of 'special advisors'. Better answers were able to see 1922 in the context of a Tory party that was confident, well organised and able to fight on their own.

10b) This question was much less popular, but still attracted a wide range of responses. There were some well argued answers, but often candidate's precise supporting knowledge was thin. Many were unaware of the electoral position of the Labour government in 1924 and how this made any legislation very difficult. However, most were able to point to Macdonald's aim of showing the country that Labour was fit to govern and that extreme policies would not be

implemented. Factual knowledge of the policies of the first administration was weak and there was little mention of foreign policy, which might have been used to indicate areas of success. Most answers got little further than reference to housing. The Second Administration tended to draw less comment, despite the economic problems. Very few candidates seemed aware of Labour's electoral position in 1929 and the difficulties that this created for Macdonald. There was also little reference to the problems he faced in holding his party and government together in the light of the economic challenges. There were however, some who did suggest that the scale of the difficulties would have been a challenge for any leader and therefore adopted a more sympathetic approach.

11a) This was quite popular and attracted a range of responses, but many candidates seemed unsure about the content, range and issues that needed to be considered. Many answers focused on the period 1939-1941, which was outside the scope of the question, before writing about events of 1945. There were very few candidates who were able to take a comparative approach. Many candidates did not have precise factual support for their ideas and were often limited to comments about British reliance on the USA because of lend-lease. In commenting on the USSR most answers were limited to comments about the Arctic convoys or Russian desires for a second front.

11b) This question attracted some good answers and at the very top candidates challenged the statement, arguing that by the end of the period USA was encouraging closer UK integration in Europe. Many were able to discuss a wide range of factors, including British attitudes towards her Empire and national sovereignty as well as the impact integration would have on domestic policies, such as nationalisation. In many answers Suez appeared to be the turning point as Britain realised that it did not have US support and therefore needed closer relations with Europe and therefore these answers argued that it was not simply a change of attitude in the US that encouraged a closer relationship, but British needs also required such a position. There were very few answers that were unable to provide a list of reasons, even if they were unable to evaluate the relative importance of factors.

12a) There were a wide range of responses to this question. Weaker candidates were unsure what measure constituted 'social reforms' and wrote at length about nationalisation, without linking it to the question, whilst other answers were unable to link their knowledge to the focus of 'fulfil the expectations of the electorate' and simply described the reforms and stated they were a success or that these were the limitations. Better answers started from the Beveridge report and the 'giants' and linked these to the electoral hopes in 1945 and whether they were satisfied. Many spent a great deal of time considering the charges introduced in the Health Service to show that initial satisfaction was undermined. There were also many answers that argued that because Labour was defeated in 1951 the hopes of the electorate must not have been met.

12b) This question produced an encouraging series of responses as many candidates were able to 'assess' and explain at least a most important reason for Conservative electoral success. There were a number of answers that focused on Labour weakness, justifying this by arguing that once Labour had a strong leader in Wilson they were able to win the 1964 election, almost to the exclusion of Conservative strengths. However, many argued that it was the economic prosperity of the period that aided the Conservatives and supported this with excellent details about real wages and consumer goods. Candidates considered Conservative leadership and argued that this was less important as Churchill was old, Eden was not successful over Suez and Home was out of touch, therefore only Macmillan could be considered a success; this allowed them to conclude that it must have been economic prosperity as once it began to decline Labour was able to win the 1964 election.

2585 - 2586 European and World History

General Comments:

Candidate numbers were up a little on last year. In general candidates seemed to find the question papers accessible and there were relatively few answers that attracted Band VII marks. There were many good answers and it was refreshing to hear from some examiners that candidates do seem to understand better the command instructions to essay questions. It was particularly pleasing to hear some examiners comment that candidates appear to have a better understanding of the requirement to 'Assess', even if the ability to fulfill that requirement was often very modest. General advice on command instructions and what is required by them can be found in previous reports for this examination and I shall not repeat them here.

It does, however, bear repeating that the key discriminator between good and modest answers is the ability of the candidate to address the specific question asked – this requires careful attention not just to the general topic area, but also to the specific question focus (including any reference to key events or dates) and the command instruction. In this exam we are seeking to examine a candidate's ability to use what they have learned to answer the question set.

What follows is a summary of some of the weaknesses identified by examiners that centres should take note of both for the remaining sessions of this specification and in preparation for the new.

General comments about exam practice:

Question numbering: Many examiners are frustrated because it is not clear which question the candidate is answering because they have not put the question number clearly on the front page and/or in the margin at the start of their answer.

Coloured inks: Examiners report that there is an increasing tendency to use coloured inks – notably brown this year. This should be discouraged and candidates told that they should use blue or, preferably, black ink.

Language/grammar etc: Examiners noted a continued deterioration in the quality of written English, especially, but not exclusively, amongst weaker candidates. Slang generalization and colloquial expression continues to abound as does the inappropriate use of abbreviations. Sentence structure is often poor and punctuation and paragraphing increasingly absent. The quality of English can have a heavy impact on the ability of the reader to understand the candidate and have a depressing effect on the mark awarded.

Poorly organized answers: Many answers are poorly organized with examiners having to work through any number of asterisks and footnotes in order to understand what the candidate is trying to say.

Legibility: Examiners are reporting an increase in the illegibility of scripts. Too many candidates are unable to form their letters and words in a readable form under pressure. If something cannot be read, it cannot be marked.

Plans: Many examiners also continue to report that too many candidates are producing over-elaborate essay plans followed by short or unfinished essays. It is good practice for examinees to plan their answers, but such plans should be brief and not take more than 2 or 3 minutes.

Weaknesses in history:

Sense of chronology: Examiners report that candidates' sense of the sequence of events is often very weak (even in some otherwise stronger candidates). It is very important that candidates understand the need for accuracy and correct chronology.

Limited factual grasp: The above relates to this comment from examiners: too many candidates' grasp of the basic factual material is insecure or over-generalised. This has a clear impact on candidates' ability to explain, analyse or assess effectively and often leads to

confused or weak responses. The continued confusion between the hyperinflation of 1923 and the Depression following the Wall Street Crash (1929) in answers on Weimar Germany continues to amaze examiners. Similarly, the inability to spell the names of key historical figures is deplorable.

Formulaic answers: Examiners reported more evidence this year than in past sessions of formulaic and 'prepared' answers from candidates who thereby fail to respond as well as they might to the actual question set.

Weak Introductions: Examiners also report that candidates appear less able to write effective introductions to their essays. The introduction plays a key role in enabling the candidate to show a grasp of the question set and to outline the line of argument in answer to it.

Speculative argument: Examiners also report a growing tendency toward speculative argument in the place of real analysis and evaluation (If X hadn't done Y then Z would have been avoided).

Paper 2585

Question 1

- a) Too few answers to comment
- b) Candidates generally did less well where they started out with a chronological description of events at Cluny from its inception, rather than focusing on issues that allowed them to attack the question. Best results were obtained where candidates compared Cistercians and Cluniacs point by point to evaluate the reasons for the growing popularity of the former. Knowledge and understanding were often superb, and where accompanied by strong evaluation, produced some very good answers indeed.

Question 2 Too few answers to comment

Question 3 Very popular, with a) gaining more takers than b)

- a) Many weaker candidates were clearly expecting/wanting a question directly on the motives of those who went on Crusade and wrote accordingly; either that or they failed to read the question carefully. Successful answers focused on the issue in the question and evaluated the relative importance and links between reasons identified successfully. Such answers were able to link and discuss, inter alia, developments in the Middle East, the appeal from Alexius, the situation in Western Europe, the position of the Church, the precedents for a crusade, and the motives of Urban II.
- b) Less popular than a) but attracted a good proportion of able candidates who were able to identify and assess the seriousness of the problems. Knowledge and understanding in such answers was often impressive. Weaker candidates often had a poor grasp of chronology and weak understanding and got little beyond general description.

Question 4 Too few answers to comment

Question 5 This topic attracts a fair number of centres.

- a) This proved a good differentiator. The better answers combined very good knowledge and understanding of developments in Florence with sound assessment of relative importance. Weaker answers were often generalized with few supporting examples or little detail. Some weaker candidates sought to answer a different question on the causes of the Renaissance generally or a comparison with Venice and Rome.
- b) Less popular and too few answers to offer general comments.

Question 6 Very popular question with b) more popular than a)

- a) This was not as popular as b). There were a large number of weak responses displaying limited knowledge and understanding of administration and the economy. Some candidates reinterpreted the question by defining administration as royal power and the economy as royal income. The balance of answers tended to be on administration.
- b) Candidates often displayed an impressive knowledge of the policies of both Ferdinand and Isabella and showed their understanding of the question by examining a variety of motives to ascertain whether they were deserving of the title 'Catholic Monarchs'. Not all answers, however, demonstrated good use of this knowledge, providing only brief evaluation or just assertion in the conclusion. Some weaker candidates also tested the suggestion against somewhat modern/liberal criteria as to what a catholic monarch might be.

Question 7 A few centres.

- a) Many candidates tended to describe economic developments without linking them effectively to the Empire. Others gave economics scant treatment and then discussed other factors. There were weaknesses also of chronological exactitude.
- b) Less popular and to some degree better done. Better answers did set out Selim's policies and considered how Suleiman continued them. However few provided a full analysis of both continuity and change.

Question 8 A number of centres

- a) More popular than b). The best answers actively compared Portuguese and Spanish exploration and empire-building and displayed good knowledge and understanding of developments. Weaker candidates tended to describe reasons without effective distinctions being made between the two. Secure factual knowledge was often at a premium here.
- b) Effective knowledge of technological developments was often weak and this question tended to be poorly answered. Ship design tended to be dismissed in a short paragraph (despite its presence in the specification).

Question 9 Quite popular

- a) Many candidates reinterpreted this question to one about the problem of Protestantism rather than the problems created by it. Whilst not without merit such responses tended to a rather narrow treatment of the question focus. The wider problems relating to the princes and schism were often neglected. That said there were a number of very good answers which did focus directly on the demands of the question displaying a real understanding of a number of complex issues.
- b) Less popular than a). In general candidates showed reasonable knowledge and often dealt well with individual disagreements between Charles and France, the Ottomans and the German princes. However, there was little recognition of the inter-relatedness of these issues, nor was there a general appreciation of the size of his *monarchia*.

Question 10 A few centres

- a) Whilst there were a number of strong responses, a common problem here was that weaker candidates often wanted to answer a different question to the one set, describing Charles I's problems and mistakes rather than discussing them in relation to unrest. Generally it was the better candidates that displayed good knowledge of the revolts.

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- b) Less popular than a) and with few good responses. Many reinterpreted the question to be one about successes and failures, or an opportunity to provide some patchy descriptions of different aspects of Charles' reign.

Question 11 A few centres

- a) Too few answers to comment
- b) Often answered very well, with the best often defining absolutism and its features and testing their knowledge against it. Weaker candidates seemed to interpret absolutism as generally 'strong'.

Question 12 A very few centres

- a) Too few to comment
- b) Many candidates had a great deal of relevant knowledge and were often aware of the historical debate. However, the focus on argument and evaluation was less good and candidates tended to describe both their knowledge of military developments and historians' views rather than construct an effective argument.

Question 13 A number of centres

- a) A range of quality. Some described the problems in the Catholic Church other the challenge of Protestantism; few linked the two. Weaker answers tended to superficial knowledge and exaggerated claims about the state of the Church. Better answers focused more sharply on the question of need for reform.
- b) Similar range of quality. There were some very effective answers which showed good knowledge and understanding of the new Orders and were able to place them successfully in the context of other factors. Weaker answers tended to description of the Jesuits (with scant knowledge of other orders or awareness of other factors).

Question 14 Too few answers to comment

Question 15 A few centres

- a) Many candidates seemed uncertain about what 'centralisation policies' were and consequently did not assess them very well. Knowledge was often somewhat superficial and only a few were able to produce a genuine evaluation. Middling candidates demonstrated better knowledge but here whilst different factors were identified and explained they tended to be treated as separate and independent of each other.
- b) Some candidates chose to focus on William's role in the Dutch wars generally rather than his importance to success in the north, which although not without merit did lead to some loss of focus. Knowledge of William of Orange tended to be thin; this was often true of other factors, too.

Question 16 A few centres

- a) Successful candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of Philip's policies and were able to assess the role of religious beliefs against other considerations. Weaker candidates tended to describe some policies without effective analysis of what lay behind them.
- b) Tendency here, too, to descriptive answers rather than analysis in relation to the question focus. However, there were a number of good scripts which were able to evaluate different areas of the reign and come to a reasoned overall judgement.

Question 17 A few centres

- a) There were a range of responses here. Better candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of aims and religious policies and were able to assess 'how far?'. Most, of course, focused on policies towards the Huguenots and Catholic Dévots; some, generally less successfully, tried to draw in aspects of foreign policy.
- b) This question proved a pretty good differentiator. More modest candidates tended to describe French foreign policy with varying degrees of success and without effective focus on 'stronger international power'. Better candidates did focus on the key issue and the dates in the question as a means of comparative analysis.

Questions 18-21 Too few answers to comment

Question 22 A few centres

- a) Generally in better answers there was good discussion of the strengths and weaknesses and diversions of other powers in relation to France, with most concluding that France that the balance of power in 1661 was favourable to France. Weaker answers showed little understanding of the concept of 'balance of power', ignored the date 1661, provided some relevant information but little effective analysis, and/or focused on domestic issues.
- b) Rather than viewing 'defensive' as an overarching description of Louis' foreign policy, many candidates tended to treat this as one of a number of foreign policy 'aims' and discussed the question in these terms. Candidates often had good knowledge and the better were able to use it effectively in support of analysis. The best candidates argued that seemingly defensive policies could be seen as aggressive (securing natural frontiers) and that the balance between aggressive/defensive varied according to circumstance and over time.

Questions 23 and 24 Too few answers to comment.

Paper 2586

Question 1 A number of centres

- a) There were a good number of first rate responses here, arguing either that the war of 1792 acted as a catalyst or final straw leading to Louis XVI's overthrow or that the war was merely incidental and that Louis' overthrow was inevitable because of a range of other factors. In such answers the quality of knowledge and understanding of the period 1789-92 was very high. However, there were also a large number of weaker answers who did not seem aware that war broke out in 1792, or that 1792 had anything to do with Louis' overthrow – instead they wrote about the American War of Independence or the Seven Years' War and the revolution of 1789.
- b) Far fewer takers with very few good answers. Knowledge and understanding of this period tends to be patchy and answers tended to be generalized or descriptive.

Question 2 A number of centres

- a) Much less popular than b) with not many effective answers. Weaker candidates tended to interpret the 'middle classes' as 'the people' generally and wrote accordingly. Better candidates did discuss a range of policies and Napoleon's aims to come to a judgement about how the aim was to win the support of the middle classes.
- b) A good differentiator with a full range of quality. More modest responses tended to provide some patchy knowledge and descriptions of battles, campaigns and general features of Napoleonic warfare, or to provide somewhat one-sided 'arguments' (Yes he was a genius and here are some examples). Better answers tended to examine the arguments for 'genius' and set these against alternative explanations. A common argument was that Napoleon's generalship proved brilliant up to c. 1807 but its weaknesses were exposed by later campaigns.

Questions 3 and 4 Too few answers to comment

Question 5 Quite a popular topic

- a) More popular than b). Most candidates were able to identify a number of factors and produce some evidence to support them. Better answers did more than list factors and attempted genuine assessment of both the relative importance of different factors and the linkages between them. Better answers also tended to focus on the events of 1848-49 to demonstrate the significance of different factors (such as the role of Austrian strength/Radetsky or the impact of the Papal Allocution).
- b) There were also a good number of effective answers here which focused on the nature of the Kingdom of Italy and the degree of 'Piedmontisation' and balanced this against other factors affecting the degree of unity. However, there were also many modest responses that showed limited understanding or tended to generalized essays about the degree of unity in the new kingdom. The quality of knowledge and understanding here tended to be lower than in a).

Question 6 A number of centres

- a) Far more popular than b). Most candidates were able to say something about the power of the Prussian army and identify (at least generally) some other factors. There were a good number of strong responses that set Prussian military strength in the context of Prussian economic power (though here the role of the Zollverein is often overstated), Bismarck's diplomacy, the favourable international context and the relative weaknesses of Austria (and France). Good answers were able to demonstrate the links between the factors.
- b) Few takers and difficult therefore to comment.

Questions 7 and 8 Too few answers to comment

Question 9 A very popular topic

- a) Most candidates, at least in general terms, were able to identify some strengths and weaknesses. Good answers, and there were many of them, tended to a 'point-by-point' comparison and went beyond the superficial comparison of population or resources, for example, to look at it directly in the context of 1861. It was a feature of many more modest answers that they ignored the date 1861 and discussed strengths and weaknesses in the period to 1865 and/or that they simply listed different strengths and weaknesses without developed analysis or overall evaluation.
- b) Less popular than a) but this question did produce some high quality answers that evaluated the case for Gettysburg as the key turning point and compared this to other

potential candidates. Some linked Gettysburg to the victory at Vicksburg to argue that taken together they should be seen as the turning point. Others argued that it was only later that Union victory became likely. More modest essays said little about Gettysburg and instead wrote more generally about the reasons for Union victory.

Question 10 Too few answers to comment

Question 11 A few centres

- a) Most did a) and the quality of answers varied from the patchy and generalised description of the impact of mining and agriculture to the better quality answers which examined the impact of mining and agriculture, differentiated between them and set them in the context of other factors, such as transport and communications developments and federal policy.
- b) Too few answer to comment.

Question 12 A few centres

- a) This was much more popular than b). The best answers focused closely on the question set and assessed why there was relatively little improvement. Too often though candidates wanted to describe improvements or ignored the timeframe (1863-77) by introducing material from outside the period.
- b) Again, the ability to bend material to the question set was the key discriminator and too many simply described developments.

Question 13 A very popular topic

- a) Far less popular than b). There were few good responses. Many responses simply described policies without assessing success. Other weak candidates appeared to know very little about either Witte's or Stolypin's policies.
- b) Very popular and eliciting a wide range of responses. The best answers, of which there were a good number, were able to demonstrate the linkage between the impact of the War and the February Revolution and set its impact in the context of longer term developments in Russia. Knowledge deployed here was often detailed and apposite. Direct linkage with the February Revolution seldom occurred in more modest answers, many of which were able to explain something of the effects of the First World War in Russia (particularly in terms of economic and social costs) but said little about the events of February 1917. Other weaker answers dwelt on Rasputin or on developments before the war.

Question 14 A number of centres

- a) There were some very good responses here from informed and thoughtful candidates who were able to discuss a range of impacts – even here though very few went beyond 1918. There were many more less impressive responses – these often simply described some of the more obvious effects or dealt in generalizations.
- b) This was the more popular of the two options. There were some impressive answers which analysed carefully the different motives of the peacemakers and came to a reasoned judgement. However, there were a good many fairly superficial responses that generalized about the aims of the Big Three.

Question 15 A very popular topic

- a) This was more popular than b). Although weaker candidates grasp of the basic factual material was insecure, many candidates were able explain the process of the Mussolini's consolidation of power after 1922. However, only better candidates

- focused adequately on the reasons behind Mussolini's consolidation and the best were able to show the linkages between them and provide an overall assessment. Mussolini's own abilities were set in the context of, for example, the attitude of the King, the weaknesses of the opposition, the attitude of the Church and so on.
- b) Less popular than a) even though arguably more straightforward. Most candidates were able to show at least some knowledge of some domestic policies. The best answers assessed success of the policies included generally against aims and results.

Question 16 A very popular topic

- a) Less popular than b) but attracting a large number of candidates. Despite the popularity of this topic and the wealth of published material available, the quality of knowledge of too many candidates that attempt questions remains weak and insecure. Whilst there were some good answers to the question which focused on the key issue in the question and did deploy apposite knowledge of the period, too many showed little or no knowledge of the period 1929 -33 and focused their answers on at best patchy knowledge of the early 1920s. Confusion over the sequence of events, between hyperinflation and the Depression, over left and right abounds in weaker answers. Others could write only in generalizations about weaknesses in the constitution and the problems of coalitions without being able to relate these to actual events and developments.
- b) More popular than a) but a problematic question for many. Typically candidates simply described some methods of propaganda. Better candidates were able to differentiate between propaganda and indoctrination and indicate something of its impact by explaining its scale and the relative lack of opposition. The best candidates attempted to deal more fully with the question of impact, bringing forward some of the limited evidence about impact, noting the difficulties in assessing effectiveness and setting this in the context of the machinery of the police state and the apparent benefits of Nazi Rule.

Question 17 A few centres

- a) Few candidates attempted this question and the general quality was weak. Candidates seemed to know very little about Locarno itself or other developments in the 1920s.
- b) There were some generalized answers focusing on lists of reasons for the weaknesses of the League of Nations, but there were surprisingly few who could deal effectively with the issues of Japanese and Italian aggression.

Question 18 A few centres

- a) More popular than b). At the top end the most successful answers were clear about the successes and failures of the NEP and used this as a foundation for further analysis of Stalin's aims in replacing it, such as his political ambitions and the need for rapid industrialization. Some answers were able to use their knowledge of why collectivisation and the Five Year Plans were introduced to analyse the weaknesses of the NEP. Weaker answers demonstrated weak knowledge of the NEP or confused it with the Five Year Plans.
- b) This was less effectively done in the main. Whilst there were some effective answers that demonstrated good knowledge of Soviet expansion of control and the reasons for it, the answers of many were based on inadequate knowledge and understanding and generalizations unsupported by relevant examples.

Question 19 A few centres

- a) A range of answers here. The best answers displayed good knowledge of the post-war period and evaluated the role of the USSR against other factors such as ideological differences and US/western policy. A feature of weaker answers was a failure to deal effectively with the given factor – knowledge of events and developments in Eastern Europe was at a premium.
- b) Again a range of responses, generally of higher quality than for a). There were successful answers that linked Gorbachev to reforms that allowed satellite states to break free, the need for détente, and the impact of US policy under Reagan. Candidates, on the whole, demonstrated some sound knowledge of the period.

Question 20 A number of centres

- a) This was done less effectively in the main than b). This was because many candidates failed to obey the parameters in the question ('outside Europe' and 'in the 1950s') and discussed the Vietnam War, Cuba and other developments. Better answers did deal with the context of US and Soviet policy and Korea.
- b) Whilst many weaker responses did little more than give an account of the Cuban Missile Crisis, there were a good number of better quality answers demonstrating good knowledge and understanding of the breakdown of relations between the US and Cuba, the nature and changes in relations of both with the USSR and the tensions created by the preparation of missile sites.

2587 - 2589 Principal Examiner's Report Historical Investigations

General Comments

The June session for these units produced some excellent scripts where candidates were able to use their considerable knowledge to evaluate the relevant historical debate in all their answers. Reports tend to focus on where things went wrong, but this should not obscure the fact that many candidates produced well informed, supported evaluation in the Passages question and clearly argued assessments of historical debate in the essays. The writing of narrative is generally seen as being in decline.

However, examiners did report some candidates who did not succeed in meeting the demands of the questions in a variety of ways. Some examiners felt that the lack of factual detail was disappointing leading to some strong arguments being poorly substantiated. Another comment often made by examiners was that candidates had learned answers to questions which were different from those set and could not adapt their responses to meet the question. Candidates continued to label the views expressed in the Passages as if this in itself comprised evaluation. Some candidates clearly had no idea what terms like *revisionist* or *traditional* actually mean and used the terms inappropriately and often inaccurately. Candidates who tried to argue through a series of rhetorical questions rarely got their point across successfully as their meaning was not clear.

In the Passages question increasingly candidates were sequential in their references to the Passages and described their content, rather than analysed it. Candidates who begin *Passage A says* are not on the right track. A much better ploy is to begin *Passages A and B agree that Napoleon was a very effective general, while Passages C and D are much less convinced that he was a military genius*. This approach does not require huge insight and a reading of the steers summing up the argument of the Passages should enable candidates to do this easily. Candidates should demonstrate from the Passages how the writer agrees with or challenges the statement in the question. Candidates do need to read the Passages with care to avoid misreadings and to allow for good cross referencing. Examiners felt in several cases that cross referencing was a dying art. There were also questions where the Passages were largely ignored and more examiners commented about this than in previous sessions. Several instances have been indicated in the detailed report on individual questions. It cannot be over stressed that the focus of these questions is THE PASSAGES. Some candidates used each Passage to extract just a single point and so missed nuances and developed arguments. Candidates are expected to come to a judgement to reach the higher Bands but too many concluded that *some people say this and some people say that* and left the judgement hanging.

The common factor leading to poor answers in the essay questions was a failure to keep to the terms of the question. If the question ends in 1929 there is no point in writing about the 1930s. If it is about domestic policy, then foreign policy is irrelevant. These statements are so obvious that it seems almost insulting to include them in the report were it not for the numerous examples where candidates seemed to think that no-one would notice. There were, too, several instances where the terms used in the question were not understood by candidates. Many of these were basic to the topic and *conservative* or *liberalism* or *sound financial policy* or *turning point* should be familiar to candidates. Candidates often began their essays with outline of the debate but then fell back on listing factors and did not build on their introductions. Candidates could be less reluctant to reach a judgement. Professional historians may be very eminent figures but debate and coming to an independent judgement are integral parts of history.

The quality of written English remained very variable and some of the comments from the January report remain pertinent. There are candidates whose inability to express themselves

clearly is a serious drawback, as examiners cannot be expected to make a close textual analysis of what they read, to discern its meaning. Many candidates waste time by including phrases such as *I would argue that*, or *as I believe*, or *It is my contention that* and in conclusions they state what their view is, implying that the fact that it is their view is sufficient to validate the view. The use of *would* as in *an orthodox historian would argue that* is also superfluous. Either the historian argues that or the historian does not. Some candidates needed to be more careful in their use of tenses, diverting at times into the present tense and few seemed to be aware that the past tense of *may* is *might*. Fewer candidates resorted to abbreviations like Parl. or Bols. But N. and EI made an unwelcome appearance. Recognised abbreviations like FDR or PG are more acceptable. Some candidates were careless about numbering their answers correctly and filling in the grid on the front of the booklet. Standards of handwriting did not improve either. Spelling of words like separate, definite, pursue, criticism was often inaccurate and statements like *this argument is floored* were seen. There is still too much use of informal language. *Napoleon did not deserve the moniker of a genius. Disraeli was out of sync with his party. Well, I should say not.*

Very few candidates were short of time and those who had to finish an answer in note form or conclude abruptly had usually spent overlong on their first answer.

2587

There were 540 candidates, one third answering on Charlemagne and two thirds on King John. No letters of complaint were received about this paper.

Charlemagne

1 Generally this question was well answered. Better candidates were able to group the Passages and often did so in their introductions, a sound technique. Passage D was less clearly understood than the other Passages with some candidates seeing it as showing good government and some as poor government. Evaluation of the Passage was less strong, depending on its content alone. Passage A was mostly well interpreted although the *followers* puzzled some candidates. In Passage B candidates could pick out the bad administration as significant but missed some of the detail such as references to *individual and collective violence*. Passage C was familiar to some and carefully used. But there were candidates who missed the impossibility of saying *whether these abuses were the rule rather than the exception* and so missed a useful evaluative point. The evaluation from contextual knowledge was surprisingly thin, given the evidence available such as the role of the missi, oaths, the scabini and the Capitularies. Some candidates focused on poor government after 800 rather than on the attitudes of nobles and so were assessing a different debate.

2 Candidates were generally well prepared on this topic. Most candidates began with a discussion of the given factor and were aware of the debate about the nature of the forces raised. Some dismissed this factor too readily. Other factors included the declining prospects of loot, the size of the armies which could pose logistical problems and Charlemagne's other preoccupations. Good candidates set these factors against the nature of Saxon society and the problems of distance and terrain, about which Charlemagne could do less. Conclusions were divided between those who felt the main fault lay with Charlemagne and those who felt the factors relating to Saxony were too much for him. Less good candidates had lists and lacked detailed, accurate knowledge. Others had hoped for a question on why the conquest took so long and answered it anyway.

3 This was less popular but there were some strong answers. Weaker candidates wrote accounts of Charlemagne's successes. Candidates tended to discuss the conquests, not always well illustrated, his innovations in warfare, the Carolingian Renaissance, his methods of government, coinage and the economy. A selection of aspects was all that was expected, but there were some surprising omissions: very few candidates mentioned his Coronation and his role as the founder of modern Europe was hardly discussed.

King John

4 This question was well answered by some candidates but there were also less successful responses. Some candidates analysed the causes of the rebellion and made use of the Passages but to illustrate their arguments, rather than making the Passages the focus of the answer. Such responses rarely scored above a low Band III. There was also reference to historians other than those cited in the question to evaluate the interpretations, sometimes at the expense of cross referencing and using the Passages which, again, should be the focus of the answer. For example Passage A was evaluated using Gillingham, whereas Passage D could be used to assess views about John's government or factual evidence could have been evoked. But other candidates picked up references to the cost of efforts to regain Normandy in B and D, to John's predecessors in A and D, to unpopular financial burdens in all the Passages, although some missed the *grievances over debts* in Passage C. There was useful evaluation by invoking the monastic writers, one candidate describing Passage A as *Wendoveresque*, and by naming Fitzwalter and de Vesci as the conspirators in Passage C. The de Braose family, spelled in a variety of ways, usually got a mention and the possible murder of Arthur and John's marriage were frequently used to indicate his wickedness, although these examples were some time before 1214. Evaluation of Passage B sometimes centred on the debate about whether John or Philip Augustus had the greater resources and this could lead to loss of focus on the question set here. There were also general descriptions of the historiography loosely aimed at the question. Alternative explanations which were not in the Passages, although the reference in passage A to the 'in and out barons' was often missed, sometimes proliferated. Contextual knowledge should be used to evaluate the views expressed in the Passages, not as an opportunity for the candidate to write all that is known.

5 This was a popular and straightforward question and some strong answers were read. The question differentiated well between candidates who could marshal a clear, sustained argument and those who wrote randomly. Weaker candidates could not maintain one view but mixed together arguments for and against John being to blame, which meant their answers lacked coherence. They also were confused and did not always see that Langton's background as a churchman and a scholar justified Innocent's choice and reduced his blame, but his associations with France and Philip Augustus, well known as this featured in a recently set paper, justified John's opposition and mitigated against his blame. The monks of Canterbury came in for some harsh words, but some candidates were aware of the issues between the monks and John which worked in their favour. Knowledge on Innocent as a reforming Pope was variable; some could give examples of other monarchs whom he had tamed and knew about the controversy over investiture. The name of Becket came up at times. There were equally spirited answers blaming Innocent as an interfering foreigner or John as an irreligious despot. Some candidates wrote at length on the later stages of the quarrel almost focusing on why it was so drawn out, rather than who started it. There was relevant quotation from several historians although the statement that *John's handling of the Canterbury succession crisis was masterful* was attributed to at least five different authors. But there were a few candidates who did not seem to have even the most basic knowledge about the conflict and did not name John de Gray or mention the monks. Some candidates used Frank McLynn's recent popular history of the reigns of Richard and John extensively in their evaluation, whereas the recognised academics like Gillingham, Turner and Warren would be preferable.

6 Fewer candidates attempted this question and fewer still answered it well. These few were fully informed on the events of 1215-16 and the annulment of the Charter, the invasion of Prince Louis, the unresolved issues and the *ultras* and the military situation were all cited. Most of these candidates blamed the unsatisfactory nature of the settlement for the Civil War and the term *inevitable* was often used. Weaker candidates wrote about events leading to the Charter or about its clauses and evaded the question. They also referred to Magna Carter, which showed their limitations all too clearly. Some did not seem to know when John died.

2588

There were 3183 candidates for this paper, a slight decrease on June 2007. There were more candidates attempting the questions on Elizabeth I than on the other three topics combined. 531 for Philip II, 1778 for Elizabeth I, 644 for Oliver Cromwell and 230 for Peter the Great. A letter of complaint was received about question 11.

Philip II

1 Candidates seemed to find Passage C more difficult to analyse successfully given the reluctance of the Passage to apportion blame. Some picked out one view and neglected the parts of the Passage which did not fit their argument. Passage D's reference to Alva was ignored by a surprising number of candidates, while Passage B was disregarded by candidates who could not fit it into their argument. Evaluation tended to be by using contextual knowledge, rather than by cross reference. Philip's absence was in Passages A and D, his inheritance in Passages A and B, religion in Passages A and C and the grandees in Passages A and D to mention a few points. The main problems in the question came from candidates who did not focus on the outbreak of the revolt and went well beyond 1572, and those who wrote an essay on the causes of the revolt with a passing glance at the Passages. This latter technique, as has already been noted, can rarely reach a mark above a low Band III.

2 This was the more popular of the essay questions and there were some well argued and relevant answers. There were several ways in which candidates could go astray. Some saw the question as being about how far religious policies strengthened or weakened the Spanish church and only considered that aspect. Some had descriptive paragraphs which concluded with the assertion that this strengthened or weakened the Church and so strengthened or weakened Spain. Some forced the question into an historiographical straitjacket, often involving description of limited relevance. The debate on the impact of the Inquisition on intellectual life in Spain could be half the answer. Some argued that Philip's religious policy weakened Spain because it gave rise to the Black Legend which was bad for Spain's image. Material from Philip's foreign policy was usually well known and appropriately used, but, even here, there were candidates who diverted into the debate about how far Philip's foreign policy was motivated by religion. Relations with the Papacy were the weak spot : the Inquisition and the Council of Trent were more effectively evaluated.

3 This question was less well answered. Candidates did write about Lepanto, but often more about why Philip won than about the impact. The whole concept of a turning point was missed by some who saw it as an important event but not always one leading to a change. There was also the issue of what changed – his aims, his policies, his success ? Candidates had problems in juggling theories about Philip's aims about which they wished to write and the idea of a turning point. Some strange alternatives were advanced, such as 1558, 1568, 1572 and 1595 but most concentrated on 1580 and 1588 as the rivals to 1571. For those who did examine the impact, 1580 usually won out. Candidates who tried to assess four or more alternatives were unable to develop detailed analysis. It was possible to produce an excellent answer adjudicating between the results of Lepanto and the outcome of the conquest of Portugal. There were fewer candidates who believed the Netherlands to be included in foreign policy.

Elizabeth I

4 Candidates found Passage C harder to use effectively and as in question 1 often missed the opportunities for cross reference. Elizabeth's generally unfavourable attitude to MPs featured in Passages A, *contempt*, C *waste of an intelligent woman's time* and D, *harshly rebuked*. The analysis tended to be sequential, even if the Passages had been grouped in the introduction. The word *personality* was a source of some confusion as candidates argued that Elizabeth controlled the Parliament personally or that her council did so, rather than seeing the council as a method of control. Better candidates used Passage B as the key and linked the other Passages to it. There was some relevant contextual knowledge about the role of ministers like Burghley, Hatton and Mildmay and the men of business like Thomas Norton. Neale came in for the usual abuse but was not always relevantly used since the question assumed Elizabeth did

control Parliament and focused on her methods of control, not on the extent of opposition. Some candidates evaluated by arguing that other historians agreed with the interpretation in the Passage but did not produce any evidence in support, such as actual events in the House of Commons. Confusion about the Council, Parliament and the Court seemed to be diminishing but there were references to Elizabeth flirting with Councillors or throwing her shoe at Walsingham to illustrate how her personality controlled Parliament. A nice evaluative point was that MPs could not really have been *idle brains* as so many of them had been to university.

5 This was a popular and generally well answered question. The main differentiation came between those who described a series of reasons, often quite a number of them, and those who tried to assess whether these were valid reasons or not. The latter tended to have a shorter list of reasons. Some candidates used named historians but did not attribute their views accurately. Susan Doran was credited with supporting virtually all explanations bar the psychological by different candidates. If candidates are not certain about who believes what it is better to refer to the debate rather than to its protagonists. Even the weakest candidates could come up with some explanation of Elizabeth's single state. Examiners were pleased to note that the psychological theories were largely rejected by candidates as having no concrete evidence or as *fanciful speculation* as one candidate put it. However, there were candidates who used the recent Cate Blanchett film as contextual knowledge to evaluate some of the theories. The general conclusion was that no suitable candidate emerged. There were some good accounts of the roles of Burghley and Leicester in sabotaging courtships which seemed likely to work to their respective disadvantage. But there was one candidate whose knowledge was not up to the demands of the question who argued that Burghley wished to marry the queen but was prevented by William Cecil.

6 This was a less popular question and there were several ways in which candidates failed to demonstrate their abilities. While it may be useful to define the term, lengthy descriptions of types of Puritan at the start of the essay were not necessary or even always very relevant and were often not referred to again in the body of the essay. There were some candidates who believed the terms Puritan and Protestant were synonymous. Some spent too long on the settlement and the Neale thesis and so had no time for anything after 1580. Others were determined to write at length about the Roman Catholics, arguing that they were more of an influence than the Puritans or that the persecution of Catholics showed the influence of the Puritans. The other less happy approach was the usual one of preferring to examine the threat posed by the Puritans as opposed to their influence. Some more relevant answers left the evaluation of the influence to the reader, for example mentioning prophesyings and the attempts to suppress them but not explicitly showing how this reflected Puritan influence. But there were well supported arguments which recognised fully that, while formal attempts to influence the church largely failed, informal influence was greater and the seventeenth century made this plain.

Oliver Cromwell

7 Candidates found the Passages accessible but some went through them sequentially and did not attempt to group them. Others saw that A and B could be used against C and D and came to differing conclusions, some arguing that Cromwell was not significant, one asserting that if he was 41 and still an unknown he was clearly of no significance while others argued with equal fervour that he was an important figure who had suffered a few misfortunes. On the whole the former were more convincing, but there was some poor evaluation of the views of Christopher Hill as a Marxist historian and thus inherently unreliable. Better evaluation pointed out that attracting notice in Parliament does not necessarily indicate significance. Some candidates noted that passages A and B were about the Short parliament while C and D related to the 1630s. The various references to family connections were generally well picked up and detailed contextual knowledge helped with the references to events in Huntingdon. Some tried to use Cromwell's religious experiences to show he was significant, but this was less effective. Some candidates used material from after 1642 in their evaluations.

8 Some candidates were not absolutely certain what the parliamentary cause was. Others, or possibly the same candidates, wrote about the reasons for the execution of Charles I or why Cromwell dissolved the Rump. The structure of answers was largely chronological and so some candidates did not reach 1653. Equally others strayed well beyond it and the Major Generals made regular appearances. One candidate combined questions 8 and 9 and wrote about how Cromwell became increasingly conservative in this period.

9 Answers to this question were quite effective if candidates knew what conservative meant and when the Protectorate began. It was legitimate to set the scene to indicate the nature of the pre Protectorate government but not to spend half the time on this aspect. Some candidates turned the question round to assess how radical Cromwell was, presumably because they felt happier with this term. Problems arose over the need to argue clearly as candidates tended to explain what Cromwell did and then assert that this was or was not conservative (or radical). This was not a coherent approach. Some episodes like the Naylor case, confused candidates who could not decide if this demonstrated conservatism, as it arguably does, or not. Similarly some asserted the Major Generals were a sign of conservatism because they were repressive. But some candidates did address the issue of *increasingly* and some concluded that, even if he declined the crown, as Cromwell grew older he became more conservative as, said one observant candidate, people tend to.

Peter the Great

10 Some candidates had difficulty in finding sufficient contextual support and references to beards and scythes could be all they could muster. There was some misunderstanding, for example some candidates believing that the colleges were where the children of nobles went unwillingly to school. Candidates steeped in the schools of thought approach were taken aback by Passages C and D, published a mere 2 years apart and thus being post revisionists, but putting forward contradictory views about the reforms. Candidates did not always focus on government but discussed the military reforms or conditions for the peasantry.

11 In the past candidates have been eager to include the debate about how much reform in Russia predated Peter's reign in answers where it was not really required. Given a clear opportunity to rehearse these arguments, most failed to do so effectively. But there were some welcome exceptions who had the knowledge and the ability to assess the state of Russia in 1696. Some candidates saw the word westernised and ignored the reference to Peter's accession.

12 This question mostly produced relevant answers with good assessment of the extent, candidates often arguing that some aspects were clearly reformed but the practices of the faithful remained largely untouched. Other candidates lacked sufficient information to write at any length but the Most Drunken Synod usually had an airing, although some candidates could not distinguish it from the Holy Synod. Some spent too long on discussion of Peter's personal beliefs.

2589

There were 10904 candidates for this paper, a slight increase on June 2007, 689 for Napoleon, 725 for Gladstone and Disraeli, 557 for Bismarck, 1196 for Roosevelt, 2065 for Lenin, 1410 for Chamberlain and 1088 for the Cold War. No letters of complaint were received about this paper.

Napoleon

1 Generally candidates found the Passages accessible and understood the debate they contained. They were able to assess Napoleon's reputation and often use detail from various battles effectively. A few seemed, however, to have little knowledge of his military engagements and some focused on a limited section of Napoleon's career, such as the early years, which made for an unbalanced conclusion. Genius as opposed to a good general was not always addressed. Evaluation of passage C could be weak with few going beyond Connelly's view of blundering to glory and some asserting it was just blundering.

2 Candidates found it much easier to argue that order was Napoleon's prime objective than to make a convincing counter-argument. Some diverged into how far France was a police state or how far Napoleon's rule benefited France.

3 Most candidates were able to make a case for the continental system and for other factors. Some argued well that the continental system impinged on all the other main factors such as the role of Britain, campaigns in Spain and Russia and the Fourth Coalition but some completely failed to make this connection. There were some candidates who wrote well about discontent within France as a key factor in the fall of Napoleon. Weaker candidates listed the reasons and some wrote very little about the factor in the question. Some of these had a wealth of detail on the horrors of the retreat from Moscow. The Peninsular War was not mentioned by some candidates.

Gladstone and Disraeli

4 Some candidates did not observe the dates in the question and moved on to the Second Reform Act, although some used this relevantly by pointing out that this marked a big success for Disraeli and changed perceptions of him and thus supported the view that his success before this date was limited. Candidates missed the point of the question which was to consider the idea that Disraeli's later success was very unexpected and would not have been foretold in 1865. But some did see this and wrote effectively that despite his many talents as analysed in Passages B and C, Disraeli was a failed politician in 1865 as Passages A and D made clear. There was some good cross referencing for example over the problems Disraeli had with Derby in Passages A, B and D.

5 This was the less popular of the essay questions and candidates did not always understand what was meant by sound financial policy, a sign of the times perhaps. Biographical accounts of Gladstone's career before 1859 were one way out for weaker candidates and some moved on to his first ministry.

6 Candidates preferred to write about this topic and some were able to build up a sound case for or against the proposition. Those who argued Disraeli's government was Tory Democracy in action had the harder task but there were some spirited defences of Disraeli, using his early career relevantly to show his commitment to social reform and defining the term in a broad way to encompass his aims. The more prosaic listed the legislation and stated it showed or did not show it was Tory Democracy. One candidate referred to the Partisans Dwelling Act, possibly housing for true Tory Democrats.

Bismarck

7 Liberalism was too much for some candidates and beyond manhood suffrage they had little knowledge of the principles of liberalism. Others wanted to analyse Bismarck's role in drawing up the constitution. But there were effective answers with some strong cross referencing of the Passages. The least well used Passage was B where the argument was often accepted and not questioned in any way. Good candidates had a sound knowledge of liberalism and of the German Constitution and were able to make the necessary links.

8 Some candidates spent too long on pre 1866, while others concentrated on the crisis with France in 1870. The strongest answers examined the main episodes in the period and linked

these to the debate about Bismarck's intentions to good effect. Knowledge was strong here, although Bismarck's intentions with the defeat of Austria were a little less well discussed.

9 There was a range of quality in the answers to this question. Some candidates produced the usual list of factors leading to unification and barely touched on the international situation. Indeed they may not have known much about it judging by the candidate who wrote in parentheses (I cannot remember the names of the territories in dispute but I think one begins with H and one with S). Some candidates knew much more and made good links between the international situation and the military and economic factors in Prussia and the role of Bismarck. Candidates could refer to Austria, Russia, France, Great Britain and the German States but were not expected to mention all of these in order to reach higher Bands.

Roosevelt

10 Schools of thought made an appearance here with Keynes being described as a Marxist because he was a critic or as a liberal left wing historian for the same reason. This suggested candidates could not understand Passage A and it was rarely well evaluated. Examiners commented that summarising the contents of the Passages was particularly prevalent in this question. There were also answers which focused on what the first New Deal achieved but with minimal reference to the Passages and maximum description of the Alphabet agencies. A single point might be extracted from each Passage. Again this type of answer scored a low Band III at most.

11 This question did generally result in a balanced argument with candidates putting one case and then the other. Many of these concluded that US economic interests dictated how far they were prepared to abandon isolationism. There was good knowledge of the Far East and Latin America. Some took the period chronologically and after each aspect asserted this was isolationist or not. One or two believed Roosevelt was President in the 1920s.

12 This question was less popular and tended to lead to discussion about Hoover's role in causing the Depression rather than in worsening it. Candidates who did this often blamed Hoover entirely and no counter argument was put forward. Some candidates did have a good understanding of the issues and could set factors resulting from Hoover's policies against those over which he had no control. Weaker candidates simply listed the causes of the Depression.

Lenin

13 The Passages seemed to be understood by candidates but the references to disunity among the White forces were not well picked out, despite being explicitly mentioned in Passages A and B and briefly referred to in Passage D. Surprisingly few candidates could give examples of White generals and armies to support their disunity and missed the opportunities for cross reference about peasant hostility to the Whites in Passages B and C. Better contextual knowledge was used to evaluate Passage D with Trotsky's train, his stiffening of Lenin's resolve and his administrative brilliance often mentioned. Candidates were expected to consider the role of the factor in the question and some argued that it was not the worst problem faced by the Whites. Most candidates were able to weigh up Red assets against White defects and many concluded that the advantages enjoyed by the Red Army would have enabled it to defeat stronger forces than those of the Whites. Candidates who diverted into schools of thought found this a self-defeating exercise, especially if they persisted in the belief that one of the Passages must contain the Soviet view.

14 This was the more popular of the essay questions and was at times overtaken by the schools of thought approach at the expense of analysis of the factors. But this seemed less prevalent than in previous sessions and the balance of the defects of the Provisional Government against the positive appeal and bold actions of the Bolsheviks was set out by most candidates. The problem came in evaluating the relative importance of these factors and there was some unsupported speculation. A few weaker answers made the error of thinking the Bolsheviks overthrew the Tsar and one or two used the Passages to illustrate Bolshevik strengths, but from a period after 1917. Listing of the factors was again the mark of the less able candidates.

15 This question was not often answered effectively. Candidates could write reasonably about the early period but they had little to contribute about the regime after 1920. Some answers were largely narrative, with evaluation of the debate bolted on. The term brutal was not always analysed. Some candidates strayed into whether Lenin was a Red Tsar or whether he was acting out of necessity or for ideological reasons.

Chamberlain

16 The analysis of the Passages was generally competently done. Some candidates preferred to analyse why appeasement ended rather than when it ended. There was some careless reading. Answers described Henderson as a member of the cabinet or as Foreign Secretary in Moscow. Passage D was said to argue that Chamberlain knew a war was coming and it was likely to lead to a Grand Alliance with Russia. The statement that he was without enthusiasm for this Alliance was skimmed over. One or two confused candidates thought Lloyd George was a member of Chamberlain's government. But some candidates were fully conversant with the debate about when appeasement ended and supported evaluation was often well done. This was particularly so with Passage A where candidates could argue clearly why this Passage had its limitations. There was abundant contextual knowledge about defence spending, but less on the Polish guarantee.

17 Candidates did not always appreciate that the question ended in 1929 and ran on into the 1930s about which they knew more. The debate about the impact of the Treaty of Versailles was well known, but after that candidates could find little to say. Some wrote in general terms about British foreign policy without making much reference to relations with Germany. References were made to the needs of the Empire, but the detail was often drawn from the 1930s.

18 This question was not handled well with narrative on 1937-8 and little information about the earlier period. Some candidates did not know when Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister and asserted he did nothing when the Rhineland was demilitarised.

Stalin

19 The Passages proved to be largely accessible, but candidates did not always keep to the issue of the crisis in Berlin and wanted to include the causes of the Cold War in more general terms. Paraphrasing or describing the content of the Passages was quite prevalent here. The opportunities for cross referencing in Passages A, B and C about Stalin's fears and supporting this with reference to past invasions of the USSR were not always well taken. Similarly all the Passages had references to economic or currency reforms and contextual knowledge could explain why these were seen by Stalin as a threat. Some candidates were able to do this and set the issue of Berlin in the context of the developing Cold War.

20 This question saw plenty of good answers as there was a range of issues, such as the second front and the liberation/occupation of Eastern Europe which candidates could discuss. A few candidates strayed into events after 1945.

21 This question led to some solid two-sided arguments, but weaker candidates wrote generalisations about US policy and dollar diplomacy and were particularly prone to describe the schools of thought rather than to make an analytical argument. Some candidates tried to use material from the Passages to evaluate American policy but there was little of relevance to be found. Better answers examined US motivation and often had some sympathy for Stalin's reactions in view of US activities at the time.

2590 - 2591 Themes in History

General Comments

Each of the synoptic units worked well and produced effective differentiations. The overall quality of performance was weaker than in recent sessions and, although there were several excellent answers, the majority of candidates produced only a modest standard. As in previous years, the key dividing line between good and moderate responses hinged on the issue of comparative synthesis versus chronological narrative. The weaker candidates follow the chronological sequence of events before offering a few cursory lines of comparative evaluation. Stronger candidates in contrast maintain a broad synoptic pan-chronological and comparative approach throughout. On a more positive note, it is encouraging to report that most Centres now address the key features of this synoptic paper and comparatively few candidates resort to pure narrative or description. However, candidates who are able to 'group' similar and contrasting ideas, events and personalities whenever possible, tend to score much better, especially if they adopt a thematic structure. This session saw far too many candidates lose sight of the question set, misinterpret key elements or write an answer to a pre-determined question. This tendency proved to be a serious limitation on the work of several talented candidates. Centres must encourage their candidates to think carefully about a question's needs and to avoid writing a rehearsed answer if they are to fulfil their potential.

Candidates will significantly improve their performance if they give attention to the following issues. First, they must either learn the dates of events or make better use of the Insert (which incidentally will not be available in the new Specification). One of the prime aims of the synoptic paper is for candidates to show an awareness of change and continuity over a hundred-year period. If their knowledge and understanding of when events occurred is weak, then they are unlikely to score good marks. Second, when candidates answer a 'turning point' question, they must do more than just evaluate the importance of an event or its immediate aftermath and claim that this proves it was a turning point. Comparative assessments of developments before and after the event are required, as well as a synthesis of other key developments. It is also appropriate to remember that turning points can be negative as well as positive. Third, candidates must focus on the question set and cover most of the period in their answer. While past questions are an essential indicator of the kind of questions that can be asked, Centres should discourage their candidates from relying too much on past essays when they are revising for the exam. Finally, candidates need to practise organising their knowledge more effectively. Within each paragraph points need to be explained, supported with relevant examples and linked to other developments in the period. One-sentence paragraphs or a listing-of-points approach result in simplistic analyses. The best candidates engage the question head-on and synoptic essays frequently range back and forth across the period within clearly defined areas of debate.

Several examiners reported this session that candidates were unable to finish their second essay and that, in a number of cases, essay plans were over two sides long. Centres are strongly urged to teach candidates how to construct brief, relevant and focused plans in a few minutes. Some candidates appear to have concentrated upon writing a good first answer to the detriment of the second. The quality of written English continues to be disappointing. Far too many candidates still use abbreviations instead of proper nouns, and fail to arrange their arguments into paragraphs. This session the use of colloquialisms such as 'awesome', 'majorly', 'full on' and 'cool' was widespread - this should be discouraged.

Comments on Individual Questions: 2590

The Government of England 1066-1216

1. There were many good answers with clear comparative assessments and a variety of factors considered. Most candidates focused on the importance of continental possessions and linked these to financial needs. They also examined the office of Chief Justiciar and argued that its establishment was a result of continental possessions. Many wrote about changes to the legal system and argued that the monarch used these to raise money. Weaker answers made little attempt to focus on comparative assessment, or attempted this only in the conclusion. Some described various methods of government used and failed to make the link with 'financial needs'. Several had little clear idea of kings' financial needs and a few did not mention them at all. The focus was often on the reigns of Henry I and Henry II and many candidates omitted any reference to Stephen's reign, so that their attempts at synthesis were uneven.

2. This was the least popular question of this trilogy. However, it produced some excellent responses with very clear assessments of the degree of change in the role of feudalism in the military organisation of England. Many argued that feudalism was always a part of the military system but that its application changed. Most were able to discuss the issue of scutage and mercenaries, and a definition of feudalism helped stronger candidates' answers. Weaker candidates found it difficult to focus precisely on the question, typically writing either about changes in the role of feudalism in the organisation of the kingdom, or about changes in the military organisation of England before and after the Conquest, without focusing on the role of feudalism.

3. This was the most popular of the three questions but often not so well answered. The best responses concentrated on the reasons for government coming close to breakdown in the reigns of Stephen and John and used examples from the rest of the period by way of comparison. Frequent comparisons of the personalities of William I and William II were made. Many concluded that personality was not the most important reason and focused on other factors such as the issue of inheritance and the loss of continental possessions. Weaker essays focused on rebellion, which equated to the breakdown of government, or only considered Stephen and John. Some candidates failed to discuss personality or launched into a discussion of other factors without putting them in the context of an overall argument.

Crown, Church and Papacy 1066-1228

4. There were few good essays which offered a detailed comparative evaluation of Becket's work in strengthening the English Church, comparing him not only with Lanfranc, Anselm and Langton, but also with Theobald and Walter. Many candidates seemed uncomfortable in defining 'strengthen the English Church', while others drifted from the work of archbishops into other factors, such as the role of the Papacy. Some candidates failed to deal with the contribution of more than two archbishops even though four are listed in the Specification. Weaker responses made a few general points about Becket and then a little about the other archbishops, or made sweeping assertions about each archbishops' contribution.

5. This was the most popular question of the three but candidates often had difficulty focusing on 'increasing' papal intervention, failing to realise that this implied a growth in intervention across the period rather than simply a change from the situation in 1066 to that in 1228. Some focused too much on the reasons for papal intervention rather than evaluating the extent over time. Some candidates attempted a thematic approach, assessing lay investiture, primacy, canon law and Gregorian reform but had little or no grasp of chronology, which made any synthesis of continuity and change hard to establish. Some candidates discussed only examples of change or described changes, and too many produced uneven coverage of the period, omitting the first third of the twelfth century, the reign of Henry II or 1215-1228. The best answers examined both change and continuity, and realised that change was not consistent across the period.

6. This was the least popular of the three questions and the worst answered. Several candidates found it difficult to focus on the concept of turning point and produced essays based more on reasons for the development of English monasteries than on the significance of the flourishing of new monastic orders in the reign of Henry I. Some concentrated on the reign of Henry I as a turning point rather than the flourishing of the new orders. Many left any comparative assessment until the conclusion. There were, however, some good answers that compared the new orders with other turning points, typically the rapid expansion of the Cistercians in the period after Henry I.

Rebellion and Disorder in England 1485-1603

7. This was a very popular question but produced a large number of average answers. Many candidates were unable to distinguish between aims and causes or did not know what was meant by 'nature' and often used the term as an excuse to write about causes. To discuss rebellions with an economic or religious nature was regarded as acceptable but other aspects were more debatable. Being a failure or having support from abroad is not necessarily 'nature', and reactions of the crown were definitely not part of the nature of a rebellion. In fact candidates who wanted to write about causes needed only to take a small step from, for instance, 'opposing a tax' to 'demanding its withdrawal', but it was a step too far for many candidates. In terms of aims, the focus was often on the desire to replace the reigning monarch and this was shown to be a constant, or to stop a specific tax and this was shown to have ended during the reign of Henry VIII. Some of the better answers were able to show that the nobility were aiming to recover their positions of influence. When looking at 'nature', issues such as the size, leadership, aggression, and scale of the rebellions were considered and many argued that the period witnessed a decline from the Pilgrimage to Essex. Candidates also considered the issue of composition and showed that gentry leadership ended post-1554 and that even the commons became less willing to rebel after 1549. Some answers also examined location or the methods used by the rebels and compared force with negotiation.

8. This was a popular and generally well-answered question. Candidates needed to understand the term 'political faction' (and not all did) and to compare it with religious changes in respect of their threat to stability. Many of the better responses suggested that when political factions and religious changes combined, the threat was greatest, and the Pilgrimage of Grace was used to illustrate their argument. Some argued that political faction was the greater threat because it was present throughout the period, though many candidates failed to identify the Yorkists as a faction, while others argued that religious change attracted greater support and was therefore a more serious threat if only during the period from 1536 to 1569. Some candidates seem to have been prepared for 'Why did some rebellions present a more serious threat than others?', and proceeded to a more general answer evaluating the relative threat of rebellions caused by political and religious factors. Weaker answers tended to describe the factional and then religious rebellions but not to balance them in terms of the gravity of the threat to stability. Several candidates wrote about political factors rather than factions and consequently missed the thrust of the question. One approach that worked well was to structure the answer around factors important for stability, such as the strength of the monarchy, the loyalty of nobles, legislation, local government and centralisation, the Church and popular support. The least effective way was to structure the answer around rebellions.

9. Although this was a popular question the quality of many answers was poor, largely because candidates failed to discuss 'increasingly skilful' or gave insufficient attention to 'the later Tudor period', while some tried to mould pre-determined ideas to fit the question. Many essays therefore became an explanation for the decline in the frequency of rebellion, and not necessarily large-scale rebellions. Many answers suggested that Henry VII and Henry VIII were as skilful as Elizabeth whereas Edward and Somerset were uniformly criticised. Elizabeth was, of course, warmly applauded but better essays examined other factors at work in her reign, notably the increasing use of parliament, the loyalty of the gentry, an increasing desire for stability and a realisation that after 1549 rebellion did not work. Weaker essays often asserted that 'centralisation and the modernisation of politics' were the key to dispelling rebellion without

explaining how these developments may have led to greater stability. Many omitted to focus on extent or were content to accept the premise of the question without attempting to evaluate it. A common fault was to devote a disproportionate amount of the answer to one or two rebellions, particularly the Yorkist pretenders, to the detriment of coverage of other issues, and many candidates failed to see that the question referred specifically to 'large-scale disturbances'.

England's Changing Relations with Foreign Powers 1485-1603

10. This was the least popular of the three questions in this set and was also the least successful. Many candidates had difficulty interpreting the word 'shaping', or wrote very little on royal marriages and wanted to get writing about other reasons. Some argued that marriage was often simply a confirmation of existing policy, while others suggested it was important, particularly to Henry VIII and Mary. Most candidates however suggested that there were other more important factors in shaping policy. For Henry VIII personal glory, which can also be seen under Somerset. Under Elizabeth some candidates argued that national security was the most important reason but that she used marriage negotiations to help achieve this. There was generally more known about Elizabeth than other monarchs. The key to a good response was to link royal marriages to other factors and to gauge the extent to which they shaped foreign policy.

11. This was a very popular question and generally well answered. Most candidates offered a number of reasons why relations changed. The better essays analysed them and made comparisons over the whole period. Weaker responses narrated changing relations, while some looked at the factors that shaped Anglo-Scottish relations rather than why they changed. Many simply assumed that there was only one change, which occurred in Elizabeth's reign, and did not consider the amity that existed under Henry VII following the Treaty of Ayton and the subsequent breakdown under Henry VIII. Candidates were often well informed but limited in their ability to use their knowledge effectively.

12. Another popular question that produced a mixed response. Some answers that took a thematic approach and compared defence with other reasons across the whole period were excellent. Weaker essays often took each reign chronologically and explained why each monarch went to war, which prevented any substantial level of synthesis. Many candidates ignored the 'went to war' and simply considered defence of the realm as the main factor that influenced foreign policy. Some even rejected 'defence' as a silly idea. Better answers often concluded that defence of the realm was the main factor for both Henry VII and Elizabeth, but was certainly of less importance under Henry VIII who went to war for glory. The reigns of Edward and Mary proved more controversial. Some argued that Somerset was concerned with security while others suggested it was to consolidate his position. As far as Mary was concerned, some argued that it was to support her husband while better responses suggested it was in response to the French threat following support for Stafford.

The Development of Limited Monarchy in England 1558-1689

13. There was a wide variety of approaches to this question which generally produced some very good answers. Some candidates only focused on 1688-1689 in their discussion of James II and failed to consider the fact that the monarch was extremely 'great' between 1685 and 1687. A small number of candidates also had difficulty deciding what was meant by 'power' and too many essays ignored the reign of James I altogether. Most candidates concluded that the power of the monarchy was greatest under Elizabeth. Many saw the execution of Charles I as important as it destroyed the concept of Divine Right and there was often good discussion of Charles I's ability to rule without parliament in the 1630s. Many answers could have made more of the Declaration of Breda and the period from 1681 to 1685 to show that, despite limitations, Charles II was able to ignore the Triennial Act. The best essays looked at prerogatives, finance, religious and military powers, and compared James II with other rulers thematically.

14. The least popular question in this set and poorly answered. Many candidates focused too heavily on Catholics and to a lesser extent on Puritans but with any discussion on Nonconformists a rarity. Several essays ignored 'more effective' and instead wrote about the

reasons for the growth of religious opposition. Knowledge of particular periods, especially 1625-42 and 1660-89, was alarmingly weak, and there was a strong tendency to write too much on the reign of Elizabeth. Several candidates considered the monarchs' religious policies as a cause of opposition, rather than focusing on religious groups.

15. This was a popular question but too many candidates allowed themselves to write about Elizabeth's ability to govern England rather than focusing on her management of parliament. Other answers focused too much on explaining reasons but gave an insufficient assessment. Some asserted that Elizabeth's main asset was her personality but did not show how this was more effective in dealing with parliament than the presumably defective personalities of the Stuarts. The latter was almost axiomatic and the idea of Charles I as 'King and Martyr' was rarely considered. James I was omitted from many essays and coverage of the later Stuarts was often totally ignored. Sometimes the term 'the Stuarts' was used collectively and without reference to any specific monarch.

Dissent and Conformity in England 1558-1689

16-18. An insufficient number of candidates attempted these questions to comment.

The Development of the Nation State: France 1498-1610

19. A minority tackled this question. Candidates struggled to assess 'effectively' and too many described how French monarchs dealt with religious issues. The focus for many was the Wars of Religion and most candidates suggested that Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III were not effective but Henry IV was. Some mentioned Francis I and his handling of humanist developments but knowledge of religious issues was generally weak. While some could talk at length about French Protestants, they were not so competent in their discussion of Catholics in France before the Catholic League.

20. Most candidates interpreted economic problems solely in terms of royal finances and several answers were limited to taxation. Analysis of trade and industry was generally poor and, though agriculture received more coverage, there was often little understanding of the relationship between landholders, peasants and agricultural conditions. The effects of population change were better assessed.

21. There were several excellent answers that set the successes and limitations of Henry II's reign in the context of the period and clearly linked them to the development of the nation state. However, not all candidates handled the concept of turning point effectively. The better responses challenged the premise in the title; some saw Francis I's reign and others viewed Henry IV's reign as alternatives. Weaker essays gave a narrative account of each reign with little attempt to link themes synoptically.

The Catholic Reformation in the Sixteenth Century

22. This question produced several very good answers. The best essays avoided a narrative/chronological survey and provided a thematic assessment centred upon how particular popes tackled specific issues, such as combating Luther, reviving Catholic orders, supporting the Inquisition, reforming the Curia, improving the city of Rome, and leading the General Council. Weaker answers trawled through each pontificate describing the high and low points of the period. Some candidates could only write about Paul III and after a few lines drifted from his calling the Council of Trent to its significance and then the significance of a range of other factors.

23. This was the least popular question in this set. Several excellent answers were able to identify particular European states – notably Spain, Italy, Ireland, France, the Southern Netherlands, Southern Germany and Eastern Europe – and use them to illustrate the reasons for Catholic successes. They often discussed the role of the Papacy, Emperor and secular rulers, social and economic conditions, and the impact of new orders. The existing strength of

Protestantism was the factor least often mentioned. Weaker essays tended to describe Catholic achievements and only synthesised their explanations in the conclusion.

24. A very popular question and generally well answered. Two broad approaches predominated: one, an argument that agreed with the premise and endeavoured to show the links between Lutheranism and Catholic revival but which also made allowances for Catholic reforms that preceded the Protestant movement; two, a view that argued the Catholic Reformation occurred independently of the Protestant Reformation and owed very little, if anything, to it. Both interpretations were valid. A good approach was to establish themes by which to judge the impact of Protestantism on change. The best candidates had a sound grasp of theological issues and dealt confidently with doctrinal ideas. Weaker answers paid insufficient attention to the Protestant impact and so had difficulty synthesising developments.

The Decline of Spain 1598-1700

25. The small number of centres who answered this topic produced several good responses. Most took the view that Spain's condition fluctuated and was not always one of decline. Several adopted a thematic approach, often assessing economic, financial, political and international issues. The strength of more successful essays was an ability to focus on continuity and change. Weaker answers described Spain's problems without linking them to or assessing decline.

26. This was the least successful of this set of questions. Many wrote long narratives of what happened to Spain internationally in the 17th century with little or no analysis of explanations for its decline. Some even spent their time speculating whether Spain declined rather than analysing the reasons for it. Better essays recognised the importance of the role of the Dutch in bleeding Spanish finances in the first half of the century and then compared it with the role of France in the second half of the period.

27. The focus of Spanish kings was often the determining factor for the quality of the answer. The better essays were able to link the weaknesses of the kings to other problems in order to assess how far they were to blame for the problems. There were several interesting points made about royal appointments and whether the monarch had any choice but to continue with war. Weaker answers described problems rather than attributed blame.

The Ascendancy of France 1610-1715

28. Candidates generally understood what this question required and attempted to balance the help/hinder elements in their answer. Assessments however were variable. Few mentioned the effect on the nobility and analysis of economic effects was often rather simplistic. Weaker candidates often wrote narratives of French wars and their effects on France but offered little by way of assessment or analysis, and links to 'a great power' were often absent. The best responses used themes such as territorial expansion, the strengthening of borders, personal and national prestige, and set them against financial losses, domestic impact and the alienation of opponents.

29. The majority of candidates approached this question thematically and concluded that the statement was correct. Better candidates were aware that in practice Louis XIV faced rather more limitations to his power than might be thought. The best candidates kept the key words 'illusion' and 'reality' at the forefront of their minds and used them for evaluative comments throughout the essay. Weaker responses wrote lengthy descriptions particularly on the reign of Louis XIII and Richelieu, without engaging effectively with the idea of 'illusion'. Most candidates were more convincing in their discussion of whether absolutism was a reality under Louis XIV. There were also lengthy discussions of the power of the nobility and religious issues of the Huguenots and Jansenists but few synthesised their arguments.

30. A popular question and generally well answered. The best essays produced a focused, thematic comparison, linked to the ascendancy of France, that combined analysis and detail. Weaker candidates tended to list the achievements of Richelieu, Mazarin and Colbert, with a

brief point of synthesis at the end of each section. Knowledge about Richelieu was often impressive whereas Mazarin received limited attention. Many overlooked the Frondes and several candidates failed to credit Mazarin for the Treaties. Another common error was to regard Colbert as merely a finance minister. Most argued that Richelieu laid the foundations of later absolutism and, as others built upon his achievements, he contributed the most.

From Absolutism to Enlightened Despotism 1661-1796

31. Not a popular question and not well answered. Weaker candidates tended to focus on the early period, wrote descriptive accounts and struggled to make any links to the ideas of absolutism and enlightened despotism. Some wrote about the Enlightenment rather than 'enlightened despotism' and a few focused solely on the decline of absolutism. Better essays contrasted and evaluated the extent to which absolutism changed.

32. This was the best answered question in the set. Many candidates took a thematic approach and compared the problems of each ruler. Some weaker responses turned the question into an analysis of how each ruler dealt with their problems, and some wrote about problems generally and failed to link them to 'maintaining absolute power'. Many answers were sequential essays which reduced the opportunity to be synoptic.

33. Very few candidates attempted this question. A minority produced excellent answers that focused on the theoretical ideas and showed a very good understanding of the concepts of reason and tradition. More basic responses described what various rulers did during the period and were unable to comment on the theories and ideas of writers during the Enlightenment.

Comments on individual questions: 2591

Britain and Ireland 1798-1921

1. This was a popular question and most candidates were able to discuss the merits of several leaders. The best responses considered the different aims of constitutional nationalists before constructing a comparative analysis and synthesis leading to a judgement. Most compared Parnell with O'Connell and Redmond, and several answers tried to make a case for de Valera, Griffith and Collins being the most effective but such arguments stretched the definition of 'constitutional'. Some responses revealed a lack of understanding of the term 'constitutional nationalism' or wanted to compare constitutional with revolutionary nationalism and some spent too long on Gladstone and gave too little attention to Butt and Redmond. Others only compared two leaders and so struggled to achieve a synthesis across the period.

2. There were several good answers many of which took the line that the Tories/ Conservatives did more for Ireland than the Liberals/Whigs but several argued the reverse and made a good case for Lloyd George's Coalition Government. Weaker responses often failed to make the necessary distinction between various governments or drew their evidence from a narrow range of ministries, usually Peel and Gladstone, and lacked the range of knowledge to cover the period effectively. Some took a chronological approach and described each ministry in turn. Others turned their essay into an assessment of coercive and conciliatory practices. The best answers defined their terms, integrated direct comparisons usually thematically, and demonstrated a clear synthesis of what Ireland 'gained and lost' over the period.

3. This was the least popular question in the set, and least successfully answered. Most candidates, who confined their answers to 'land issues', described or narrated developments over the period with little sense of change. Many focused almost entirely on the agricultural problems and the Famine rather than on issues like land tenure, ownership and eviction. Few candidates went beyond 1903 and Wyndham's Act, and many paid insufficient attention to developments before 1845. A large number of scripts drifted away from land issues into other areas, especially political, religious and educational issues, and correspondingly scored low marks.

War and Society in Britain 1793-1918

4. Neither popular nor well answered. Many candidates concentrated on the more general issue of the conduct of war and paid inadequate attention to the concept of the media in either hindering or helping the British government. Some answers dealt competently with the Crimean War and World War One but few candidates covered the early part of the period.

5. This question produced a disappointing set of answers. Few candidates focused on the importance of trade and Empire to produce a comparative and synoptic answer. Knowledge and analysis were often superficial and a number of answers were clearly pre-prepared and listed reasons for war without attempting any synthesis. Better candidates were able to discuss 'balance of power', security, and strategic issues as a further reason for war.

6. Generally this was a poorly answered question. Candidates failed to deal with the idea of 'responsive' and preferred instead to focus on how technological developments affected warfare. Many spent too long on World War One at the expense of the rest of the period and failed to produce a synoptic argument. Better candidates developed the key issue well by showing how both the army and navy responded to technological changes.

Poor Law to Welfare State 1834-1948

7. The key to a successful answer lay in whether or not candidates fully understood the concept of 'laissez-faire'. Those who did – and there were many – went on to show how poverty was tackled through state intervention and collectivism, demonstrated good knowledge of the Liberal reforms 1906-14 and of Attlee's reforms post-1945, and were able to compare and synthesise other factors over the whole period. Weaker answers narrated developments rather than analyse a range of factors that influenced government policies. Several essays betrayed a limited understanding of what constituted the problem of poverty and instead wrote about changes that affected the poor. Knowledge of the 19th century was generally stronger than of the 20th century.

8. A popular and generally well answered question. Most candidates were able to say something about a number of Education Acts and so make a case for at least one being a turning point. In weaker essays analysis was often simplistic and comparisons superficial, so that few essays were genuinely synoptic. Instead there was a tendency to list and describe Acts. Several essays contained serious factual errors concerning the 1902 Act and confused it with the terms of other Acts. Those candidates who did respond effectively usually compared the 1902 Act with the Acts of 1870, 1918 and 1944, and many challenged the premise in the question.

9. A poorly answered question. 'Political pressures' were rarely addressed and there was a tendency to focus on and describe the effects of cholera, diseases and slums, and to devote too much of the essay to the early period and not say much about the World Wars or the 20th century in general. Some offered vague comments about politics, trade unions and the Labour Party, or wrote about the 'health of the population' rather than about 'public health'. Better candidates examined 'political pressures' with reference to national and local developments and compared them with other influences such as war and the economy.

The Development of Democracy in Britain 1868-1992

10. This question produced several excellent answers. A range of factors was skilfully moulded into the requirements of the question in a consistently synoptic approach. Weaker candidates displayed only limited knowledge of party organisation and preferred instead to move the thrust of their essay away onto other factors, the most popular being the extension of the franchise.

11. The best scripts were able to establish a series of synoptic themes such as morality, political expediency, the personality of prime ministers, and to deploy their knowledge in these categories in a sophisticated response. Several candidates had difficulty comparing the role of the prime minister with other factors and many, after a brief discussion of the role, moved quickly on to imparting information on the main developments of democracy. Even in the weakest answers, however, candidates had something to say about Mrs Thatcher.

12. A comparison of reasons was required and most candidates had little difficulty imparting knowledge on a range of factors. Weaker candidates did not make effective use of their knowledge and tended to write a chronological account of educational reforms or avoided education altogether in favour of 'other factors'.

The Development of the Mass Media 1896-1996

13. The term 'popular press' caused problems for a number of candidates. The majority made extensive references to the growth of radio and television, and gave rather less attention to the changing importance of newspapers. Many candidates, however, either deliberately or unwittingly changed the focus of the question from 'to what extent' to 'explain the reasons for the changing significance of...' which inevitably scored lower marks. A lot of essays failed to cover an adequate number of years and were unable to make effective synoptic judgements. There were, nevertheless, a small number of excellent essays that set the press against other forms of media or developments in society.

14. Candidates generally had difficulty evaluating the role of the media during the two world wars in comparison with other times of national crisis in the context of the whole period. They tended to narrate different crises and comment on the role of the media in each case. Such an approach glossed over elements of continuity and change and usually failed to produce any synoptic judgements. Some candidates focused solely on the world wars; others did not go beyond Suez and so lacked a balanced coverage. Many used examples of a national crisis that simply did not fit the criteria.

15. This question was done least well. Candidates frequently listed the techniques and programmes rather than assessing their influence, and a lot of general knowledge rather than historical material was offered. Discussions of 'I Love Lucy', 'Friends' and Jazz, predominated, and only a few essays were able to illustrate the impact of America upon the British media. The more effective answers focused first upon weighing the American influence and then offered some comparisons with other factors.

The Changing Nature of Warfare 1792-1919

16. Generally well-answered question. Most of the better essays assessed several turning points. There was a tendency for candidates to begin in 1793 and write a narrative essay rather than give an evaluation of 'to what extent' technological changes occurred during this period. Few candidates included Italy in the Wars of Unification and many concentrated their argument on post-1850 developments. Several weaker responses wrote too much on the Wars of Unification and largely ignored the use of new weapons; others gave too much attention to Napoleon, too little to the Wars of Unification or completely omitted World War One. Many ignored analysing the concept of turning point even though, by inference, their examples indicated that changes had taken place.

17. A popular question and generally well answered. The best candidates evaluated the importance of alliances, illustrated them with a good range of examples from the whole period, and then made a case for another factor, such as the quality of leadership, level of technology, size of armies, economic and human resources, strategy and planning. Not all candidates addressed the concept that alliances may have produced a successful outcome. Few included Austrian alliances in their answer and several wrote too much on the Napoleonic era. Weaker responses wrote only about alliances and did not consider other factors in their evaluation.

18. Candidates who understood that this question was more than just about the effects of industrialisation were able to write a comprehensive analysis that covered the whole period. They tended to include the mobilisation of resources, production capacity, and the rate of industrial growth as well as an analysis of other factors that enabled states to wage a successful war. The best essays were firmly focused on 'always' in the question title. More general accounts were confined to a narrow discussion of 'industrial power', such as railways and

weapon technology, or focused too heavily on factors other than the issue of superior industrial power.

The Challenge of German Nationalism 1815-1919

19. The least popular of this set of questions yet one that produced several excellent answers. Understanding the concept of 'nationalism' was at the core of the analysis showing how Prussia and Bismarck commandeered the movement for their own ends. Not all candidates defined 'the aims of German nationalists' or understood how to apply the term 'undermined', but the role of Prussia was generally well assessed. Weaker essays produced a chronological account of events, commenting on Prussia's involvement as they progressed. Several weak essays did not advance beyond 1890 and some started in the 1830s.

20. A very popular question. Some candidates compared relative influences on the development of nationalism rather than fully focusing on the extent of encouragement or hindering of German nationalism by industrialisation. Most answers wrote too much on Bismarck and William II and needed a better balance to their argument. How the Zollverein strengthened Prussia's position was often not explained or its importance exaggerated, and the links between Germany's industrial power and Prussian military success were not always clearly examined. Weaker candidates often struggled to apply the question to the period before 1848 or said little about socialism post-1871. There were however some excellent answers that linked solid knowledge of economic, industrial and commercial growth to broader socio-economic developments across the period. Change and continuity were usually well engaged in these scripts.

21. There were several first class answers that focused on 'effective management' from the outset. They set out their criteria for defining each leader and were able to produce a consistent synthesis. Weaker candidates adopted a chronological approach, described the main developments and then answered the question in the conclusion. Many of them clearly failed to appreciate that German nationalism came in different forms that changed in the course of the period. Too much attention was generally given to Metternich and Bismarck and too little to William II. While most candidates argued in favour of Bismarck, many ignored the problems he faced after 1871, especially socialism and Catholicism.

Russian Dictatorship 1855-1956

22. This question was a very good discriminator and produced some of the best and weakest answers. Many candidates approached it thematically but not all made links across the whole period. Examples were often very specific to a particular time frame or event, thereby indicating the candidate's limited skill at synthesis. Some approached the question by looking at each leader in turn; some focused solely on Russia's desire to catch up with the West and ignored other reasons for reform; and others identified and asserted alternative reasons without providing an explanation. A number of candidates struggled to come up with a range of reasons and found themselves offering a variation of the same reason. The most common weakness among candidates was to disregard the question set and to embark on a pre-prepared essay that examined as many reforms as possible in the time available. These essays rarely produced a synthesis and often had little relevance to the question. Only the best candidates analysed and compared the motives of rulers across the period and discussed the role of ideology. Many were able to demonstrate, often with statistical data, how the West was ahead of Russia and why this was such an important issue for most Russian leaders.

23. A popular question that encouraged candidates to compare Alexander II with other Russian rulers thematically. The best answers did so. Some candidates examined different aspects of living and working conditions and saw how these changed according to a ruler's ideology, the structure of the Russian state, the impact of war, and economic and social imperatives. Many responses, however, were unable to discuss any of Alexander II's reforms apart from Emancipation, and knowledge of Lenin's and Stalin's reforms was often surprisingly thin. Some even claimed they had no reforms! At the other end of the spectrum, many candidates wrote solely about Alexander II and so failed to provide a reasonable coverage of the period. Weaker

responses produced a chronological list of rulers and rated them in terms of what they did to improve conditions. Some examined peasant conditions only and gave limited attention to urban working and industrial conditions. Many of these essays lacked appropriate details with which to argue a case and resorted to vague descriptions of life in Russia.

24. Many candidates failed to read this question carefully or knew much about Russian government and so produced partially or wholly irrelevant answers. The focus was on the 'development of Russian government' yet many chose to write about 'the development of Russia' and so focused on Russian policies. Clearly there was some overlap in this interpretation but too many essays contained material that only had a tenuous connection with the question set. There were nevertheless many excellent responses that charted the changes from tsarist/dynastic autocracy through liberal democracy 'dual power', through Bolshevik Party government to a one-man / party government to the Politburo/party collective leadership. Some identified the Five Year Plans and Collectivisation as innovations in the scope and degree of enforcement and state control. The concept of turning point was generally only addressed effectively by better candidates, yet many of these ignored 1917. Weaker candidates saw every new development and reform as a potential turning point or discussed these without reference to the development of Russian government.

The Struggle for the Constitution 1763-1877

25. The least popular of this set that produced a wide range of answers. The best candidates looked at pre-revolutionary groups and went through the period to the end of Reconstruction. Weaker responses did not address 'groupings and parties', described the different political groups and, instead of assessing their relative significance, wrote far too much on other factors.

26. Knowledge of the Missouri Compromise and other turning points was usually good although comparisons were not very well developed. Coverage was also quite narrow in a number of cases, assessing the period from 1820 to 1861 only. Omission of the Civil War was a common oversight. Some Centres attempted to apply a formulaic approach, which clearly disadvantaged weaker candidates who could not discriminate between developments and so described every significant event in the period.

27. Many candidates were well prepared for this question and responded accordingly. They presented a synthesised analysis of the roles of the Supreme Court, Congress and Presidents across the period. Others produced a prepared answer that failed to focus on the question set and drifted into irrelevance. Some candidates were confused about the role of the states and Congress, and many knew very little about the Supreme Court. In general there was a lack of understanding of constitutional developments as well as weaknesses in knowledge of the period 1800-1820 and 1865-77.

Civil Rights in the USA 1865-1980

28. This was the most popular question in this set and generally well answered. The best essays looked at the positive and negative features of Martin Luther King's role and provided a consistent comparison with leading African Americans. They made the valid point that the relative importance of each figure was often a reflection of the changing context in which leaders operated. Some analysed pressure groups or less prominent figures, which was a valid approach, but others gave too much prominence to federal involvement, presidents and Supreme Court judgements without sound links to African Americans. Some candidates focused solely on King or gave little attention to other African Americans, and so failed to provide a reasonable coverage and synthesis. Many ended their essay with the death of King and ignored the period after 1968; others largely ignored the period from 1865 to 1900. A common weakness was for candidates to write about individual African Americans without explaining how they 'advanced' their rights. Assertion rather than evaluation was the keynote here.

29. The least popular of this set. Many candidates handled the New Deal with confidence and were able to evaluate it and compare its significance with other turning points. The most favoured were the 1920s and 1960s. Some essays gave more attention to levels of employment

and labour conditions than to union rights and trade unions. However, the majority of candidates had only a limited grasp of the New Deal and did not advance their argument beyond the Taft-Hartley Act. The opportunity to compare the 1930s with later periods was often ignored. Weaker essays tended to be narrative, often chronological, accounts with little evaluation of turning points and no synthesis.

30. This question produced a wide range of responses but many were weak. Most essays were generalised narratives that showed better knowledge of Native Americans than Hispanics – many did not know the difference between a Hispanic, Latino, Chicano and Mexican American – but failed to provide a comparative synthesis. Instead a sequential, often chronological, approach was followed but in both Native Americans and Hispanics, coverage was often patchy and asserted. There were notable gaps in discussing the Native Americans after 1945 and Hispanics from 1865 to 1914. Some candidates wanted to compare Native Americans and Hispanics with other minority groups, and did so. At the lower end of responses, there were many simplistic ideas and statements that revealed a lack of real historical understanding of the topic.

2592 - Principal Examiner's Report 2008

Independent Investigation

[Passages in italics are extracts from examiners' reports]

Section A: Introduction:

- This component continues to provide impressive examples of historical enquiry. Candidates who engage fully with its varied requirements communicate a sense of intellectual freedom and purpose that are rarely visible in other forms of written examination. This happens when candidates of differing basic abilities set out genuinely to address a historical question – testing a claim, attaching significance or offering an explanation. What the best scripts have in common is this sense of investigation, of a journey undertaken, as it were, without full knowledge of the destination. Some candidates carry out their own research - speaking or writing to individuals, visiting museums, specialist libraries and universities; others take more conventional routes, seeking out nuances in more familiar controversies; all of them end up with something more than they started with. *“In the current climate of prevailing scepticism, let it be a matter of public record that many candidates in this unit do produce work that bears most favourable comparison with that of past generations and which, at least in the memory of some older examiners, exceeds the gold standard of the ‘old’ A-levels”.*
- On the other hand, the ‘prepared essay’ persists– sometimes worthy, but usually predictable in both process and outcome. One cannot help but feel that some candidates are being sold short, when the entire entry from a centre is seemingly obliged to write on more or less the same topic, using more or less the same raw material, rehearsing more or less the same arguments.
- The former, more positive experience is not limited to candidates in well-endowed schools and the latter experience is not limited to those in less well-endowed schools. The critical distinction is not one of ability or privilege, but of enthusiasm, commitment and freedom of enquiry. In other words, it is about the spirit in which the investigation is embraced.

Section B: Preparation and title selection:

- The Independent Investigation cannot be completed in a rush at the end of the A2 process. It needs time to complete and at least some reference to ‘big books’. One examiner commented on the need for the shape of the argument to ‘simmer’, observing that candidates ‘will never get to heaven on *Access to History* alone’. This being the case, it seems sensible to suggest that the task should be part of a candidate’s on-going work throughout the year. It seems equally sensible to exhort teachers to take more of a supervisory role in the process - discussing work-in-progress (informed by knowledge of the generic mark scheme and familiarity with the annual report), reminding candidates about word limits and telling them how to observe conventions such as footnoting and the compiling of a bibliography. What they must not do, of course, is mark either draft copies or the finished work.
- It may be worth quoting from the report of one examiner, commenting on the quality of teacher intervention in two of the centres he marked: *“All of the candidates from one of my centres had clearly been taught by a teacher who had studied the mark scheme carefully and had conveyed the importance of source evaluation and clear argument within an analytical structure. On the other hand, all of the students from another centre had obviously been taught by someone who left candidates to their own devices. Also, whereas some candidates had been taught by teachers who endeavour to keep abreast of recent research, others were still using the books I used when I did my A-levels”.*
- Several examiners found a clear relationship between poor titles and failure to take advantage of the coursework consultancy process - or, in the case of centres that did, failure to act on good advice given. Centres are, of course, free to reject the guidance given - after all, it is a voluntary process rather than a requirement. However, it is also a service that is

free to each user and draws on the extensive experience of senior examiners who have been responding to submissions and marking coursework for several years.

- According to one examiner, some of the best studies – though not invariably – were on less mainstream topics, such as the failure of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, or the loss of the American colonies. Another praised a manageable explanation of the French defeat at Waterloo (as opposed to sweeping but superficial studies dealing with the downfall of Napoleon), the defence of Malta during the Second World War, a justification of Churchill's 'wilderness years', a fascinating study of Marat, and one of prostitution in London in the 19th century.
- It is pleasing to note an increase in local studies this year, but the examiners who reported this tended also to observe that too many of these were uncritical or descriptive in approach. There may be a wealth of fascinating source material available, but it has to be capable of supporting a viable argument.
- A common shortcoming in title selection occurs when the candidate does not fully understand what is being proposed. For example, a great many candidates offered an opinion about whether or not Hitler was a 'weak dictator', but only a minority seemed to engage with the paradox that lies at the heart of the issue or grapple with the intricacies of government and administration in the Third Reich that the question requires. Instead, we are treated to the crudest sort of reductionism: 'Hitler's habit of rising late and watching films, together with his apparent lack of interest in the day-to-day machinery of Nazi government were clear signs of his weakness as a dictator' – Q.E.D.
- It is critical to bear in mind – this cannot be said too often – that the examiner will judge the investigation against its title. Consequently, failure to answer the question posed in its entirety can have unfortunate consequences. This was the case when a (clearly able) candidate, in writing to the title: "How far was the political skill of the Nazi Party responsible for the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor in January 1933, and their consequent establishment of a dictatorship?" ended his account in January 1933, instead of August 1934 - or even beyond.
- It is generally not a good idea to opt for 'either/or' questions (e.g. "Mary Queen of Scots: Saint or Sinner?") The problem is that the alternatives are presented as mutually exclusive – one or other can be demonstrated separately *but not the relationship between them*. So, in this example, the extent of Mary's saintliness or vulnerability to temptation can both be established, but not whether one was the cause of the other, or whether one or other definition is more appropriate at different points in her life owing to changing circumstances. This makes it very difficult to arrive at a viable synthesis (i.e. one that attempts to *define* this relationship). Far better to build an argument around one of these alternatives and use the other in counter-argument – e.g. "How valid is the view that Mary was a martyr to the Catholic cause in England?"
- Amongst weaker candidates, conspiracy theory (the Kennedy assassination, the identity of Jack the Ripper, Elizabeth and marriage etc.) and hagiographical biography (Martin Luther King, Churchill etc.) continue to feature prominently. The former rarely succeed because the investigation is either speculative or second-hand and consequently does not give a sense of belonging to the candidate. The latter rarely succeeds because the investigation lacks any kind of argument. This is always surprising – even in the case of weaker candidates – because there are revisionist works available and it is arguably no more difficult to write a basic, two-sided argument than it is to write a one-sided hagiography – the process is essentially the same, merely repeated.
- Titles inviting assessment of the *reputation* of, say, Richard III or Stalin, resulted in long lists of historians' views set against each other and very little assessment of acknowledged facts and actions – or signs of the candidate's own argument.
- Topics that cover several disciplines can be stimulating but candidates need to be careful in how they approach both the argument and the evidence. Typical of the *genre* might be Shakespeare's treatment of Richard III. However, new this year was the influence of Wagner and Nietzsche on Hitler, and the use of art and literature as sources for both women's history and castle building. The danger is that candidates can stray too far into the other discipline, forgetting that the rules of critical evaluation (i.e. in conventional historical enquiry) need

equally to be applied to the use of sources of evidence that might otherwise be classified as 'literary' or 'artistic' or 'musical'.

Section C: Quality of argument:

- Introductions should be to the argument, not to the topic in general.
- A few blatant attempts at plagiarism were more common this year, all of which were severely dealt with. 'Blatant' is deliberately chosen, because plagiarism is not difficult to detect; typically, candidates suddenly switch to a quality of expression that is manifestly not their own, and are unable, later on, to make use of ideas from the plagiarised sections that they only dimly understand.
- A characteristic of weaker scripts is where candidates set themselves one question but answer another one - sometimes clearly due to group teaching of the coursework topic in another module. This always happens when a centre guides candidates into attempting a number of slightly different questions on the same, over-arching topic – e.g. Appeasement or Peter the Great. This is allowable but not particularly encouraged because candidates using their notes or collections of sources from the taught unit in most cases produce the same arguments, supported by the same body of evidence (typically used in the same order). Whilst sympathising with centres and/or candidates who do not have access to an appropriate range of evidence sources, it is very difficult to see any sense of *investigation* in this sort of approach – an impression that is usually confirmed by the 'flatness' of what is produced.
- The difference between speculation and counter-factual reasoning is not well understood. An example of the former could be: 'If Charles I had been more given to compromise, the Civil War might have been avoided'. An example of the latter could be: 'The critical causal factor of the Civil war was the Irish Rebellion of 1641. This is because, by the middle of 1641, the leaders of the Long Parliament and the king had more or less reached accommodation on all outstanding issues between them, except control of the militia, and there was every prospect that this, too, might also have been resolved in time. However, if Charles were allowed to raise an army to crush the rebellion, he might well then turn it on Pym and his men. This could not be allowed. Consequently, the Militia Bill (and the constitutional challenge it contained) marked the point beyond which a political settlement was no longer possible - and war became unavoidable'.
- A recurrent problem is the *implicit* argument – one in which relevant points are concealed by what appears to be a dominant narrative. The old essay-writing skill of deploying a key sentence (relating to the title) at the head of each paragraph seems worth reviving... an examiner normally expects there to be a clear argumentative link between each paragraph and the title. One examiner offered an extension of this advice: "A simple formula, such as PESEL, would have helped many to utilise more successfully some very decent ideas and material (**P**resent, **E**xplain, **S**upport, **E**valuate support material, **L**ink to next paragraph)".
- It was pleasing to record this year improvement in the quality of causal explanation – in particular in the work of candidates who set out to *demonstrate* – as opposed to simply asserting - the relative importance of causal factors. This involves reasoning, not only about the importance of a given factor, but about why it was more or less important than another factor in bringing about the outcome in question. Some argued that one factor was dominant with the rest dependent; others used counterfactual analysis (see above); others employed empathy to explain what would have seemed more important to people at the time etc... The important development is a reduction in the tendency either to assert relative importance, or opt out of a judgement altogether – 'They were all important, really'.
- Attempts at synthesis were, on the whole, less successful – indeed, it was rare to find this consciously attempted. Some candidates seem to think that synthesis is synonymous with 'summary' but it is more than this. It is axiomatic that there will be a tension or conflict between the component parts of a two-sided argument. Synthesis occurs when the conflict is resolved in some way – to form a new hypothesis. In its simplest form, a synthesis will combine the competing elements and show how they were *both* true - perhaps extending this by explaining that one or other element was more influential at different times, or for different groups of people. For example, 'Elizabeth I's view of religion was essentially Erastian – she

did not wish 'to make windows into men's souls' (thesis); 'Elizabeth was intolerant of religious opposition – and particularly ruthless in her persecution of Catholics' (antithesis); Elizabeth became less tolerant of Catholics later in her reign as the plots and threats to her life intensified' (synthesis). Alternatively, the candidate might show how one side of the argument accounts for the other: For example, 'Stalin was the saviour of Russia' (thesis); 'Stalin was a ruthless tyrant' (antithesis); 'Stalin had to employ ruthless methods in order to save Russia' (synthesis).

Section D: Use of sources:

- Before launching into faults and errors, let us be reminded of the words of one senior examiner: *"The best candidates were those who asked sharp questions about the evidence and the extent to which interpretations are convincing"*.
- Critical evaluation had undoubtedly improved over the years, but too many candidates use a limited *range* of critical moves. Cross reference of two or more sources (usually secondary) is the most common, followed by the testing of single sources for reliability. However, there is another move that is equally valid but seldom used, at least not *intentionally*. This is where the candidate uses evidence from a single source and goes on to show how this evidence can inform the argument or debate – in effect, demonstrating a simple claim for *utility*. Candidates who do this, however, need to be explicit about their intentions, so that the Examiner can see that they are not simply using the *content* of the source at face value to illustrate something that has been said in the text. The crucial distinction here is between source content used as illustration and source content used as evidence of something.
- Nor do reliability claims need to be couched in cumbersome *ad hominem* terms ("This is a reliable source because..."). Consider the following extract, using the circumstances of its production to evaluate a sycophantic interpretation of Churchill: *"One must be wary, however, of accepting too readily the interpretation of a text authorised and written to mark the hundredth anniversary of Churchill's birth and consider the risk that it treats its subject far too generously as a result..."*
- Superficial cross-reference continues to expose lack of real engagement with either argument or evidence. The 'fault of the season' (i.e. the most common reported shortcoming) is the practice of candidates offering 'paired lists' of historians (in agreement or disagreement), in the belief that this counts as critical cross-reference. In order for this cross- or counter-reference to be rewarded, the outcome (i.e. the *evidence* derived from the cross-reference) has to be either evaluated in terms of the argument or used to advance the argument in some way (preferably both).
- In the best work, there appears to be a seamless but inter-dependent relationship between evidence and argument. In other words, if the argument is driven by the evidence (rather than the other way round) it is difficult for the use of evidence *not* to be described as 'critical'.
- Part of the baggage that some candidates bring with them from GCSE history is the belief that anyone who wrote anything in or about the past is 'biased' in some way and, by extension, guilty of deliberate distortion of the truth. Of course, chroniclers, commentators and historians *are* biased, but in much more subtle, less harmful ways. 'Positioned' is perhaps a better word to use and this can be defined as a predisposition – by belief, interest or other contextual influences - to interpret the past with particular emphasis (by commission or omission). To accuse J.J. Scarisbrick of 'taking a Catholic line' on the English Reformation would be fair enough; to accuse him of distorting the truth in doing this would be ridiculous.
- Few candidates explore the grey area where reliability and utility can be intertwined – but this can result in more measured evaluation of secondary sources. Consider the following example of a typical *ad hominem* judgment: *"Richard Pipes was an adviser to Reagan and is, therefore, unreliable"*. This may be true, but evidence from Pipes can still be *useful*, since it is representative of 'Western' interpretation of the Cold War (in much the same way that the views of Scarisbrick can be useful as representative of 'Catholic' interpretations of the English Reformation).
- Candidates should also be wary of the 'schools of thought' approach, beloved of the authors of tertiary sources. Attaching labels to historians as 'Structuralists, Intentionalists' or 'Marxists' may be useful as a means of broad categorisation, but does not amount, in itself,

to critical evaluation. The only way to do this - and be rewarded for it – is for the candidate to comment relevantly on the value of what a historian has written as evidence for a line of argument being developed by the candidate. It is not, therefore, the historian that needs to be classified and/or evaluated, but the evidence content of what he/she has to offer.

- Tackling the provenance of a source still seems to baffle quite a few candidates. For example, one candidate claimed that material from broadsheet newspapers was reliable because they were ‘serious publications’; another labelled Eric Hobsbawm a ‘Thatcherite’.

Section E: Rubric, presentation and expression:

- The strange death of the apostrophe continues apace – and a coffin is meanwhile being prepared for the laying out of the capital letter.
- Candidates should
 - use double spacing with wide margins on single sides;
 - staple the script top left with no cover except the OCR one;
 - have footnotes (including page numbers) at the foot of each page;
 - include appendices only when they are really relevant;
 - not use folders with acetate pockets for separate pages of text.
- Teachers should ensure that
 - they have signed every cover sheet;
 - none of the studies contains more than 3,000 words;
 - form CCS 160 is submitted for each unit (especially where units 2592/11/12, and 13 are submitted from the same centre).
- Many errors could be eliminated with a little careful proof reading of finished work. Elementary spelling errors and incomplete sentences could be avoided if candidates simply read through the submission – using a spell-checker and/or ‘literate other’ (but not the teacher) as appropriate. The period allowed for writing the study spans several months – there really is no excuse for shoddy presentation of this sort.
- Candidates must use footnoting as a means of verifying claims made in the body of the text. In doing so, they should ensure that
 - they attach page references to all footnotes;
 - they otherwise include author’s name, title and date of publication;
 - they distinguish between direct quotation and quotation ‘cited in’ another work (usually a tertiary source)
 - they do not use the Harvard method of referencing, since it is not as text- or page-sensitive as footnoting;
- Where the claim of a historian is presented in the main text and footnoted, the relevant footnote *must contain a page reference*, if use of the claim is to be credited as critical use of evidence. As the following example shows, footnoting *without* page numbering cannot be credited, no matter how scholarly it appears, because it lacks precision. “*Authors such as Bullock² and Fest³ in their biographies of Hitler painted a picture of the Third Reich being brought to life by him.... Other historians tried to take a wider view in the development of the Intentionalist viewpoint. The studies of Bracher⁴ and Jackel⁵...etc*”. In each case, the reference was linked to a footnote such as “²Alan Bullock, ‘Hitler: A Study in Tyranny’ (1962). Without a page reference, the reported claim cannot be verified. This sort of passage is acceptable as part of an introductory paragraph, in which different or competing views on the topic are being laid out in summary form, but it is too broad-ranging to count as supporting evidence for the candidate’s actual argument. Moreover, in its current form it could have been ‘lifted’ from a tertiary source. This may do a disservice to this particular candidate, but the simple way to remove the suspicion is to be more precise in the selection of the quoted extract and include a page reference in the footnote. (i.e. What did Bullock actually say about this, and on which page of ‘Hitler: A Study in Tyranny’ can his words be found?)
- It is gratifying to note that repeated advice on word limits is at last being heeded: this year, fewer candidates exceeded the limit (honestly or otherwise) than in previous years; and even fewer produced overlong footnotes that contained elements of argument (as a means of

circumventing the word limit). As in previous years, examiners stopped reading at 3,000 words and crossed out any writing that exceeded the limit.

- The message about careful use of websites has still not got through in most cases; indeed, it is a rare candidate that applies any sense of critical evaluation to these. For example, one candidate writing about the Arab-Israeli Conflict made extensive use of the Israeli Government's website without any sense of provenance. Surely teachers have a role to play in preventing this?
- Although it may be useful as a source of basic information – or as an entry point to the topic – *Wikipedia* should not feature in footnotes or bibliographies, since the provenance of its entries cannot be identified and authenticated. On the other hand, it is permissible to use internet material of a more scholarly nature – but only if the authorial provenance of the source can be established. A footnoted reference containing only the web address is not sufficient.
- 'Class handout' and 'college powerpoint' are not acceptable as footnotes.

2593 'OPEN BOOK' EXAMINATION

Introduction

There were a lot of high quality answers this year, but there is a feeling that more able candidates are being disadvantaged in some centres by the practice of excessive coaching. Several examiners commented on the depressing effect of all candidates from one centre offering the same question and the same focus within it. This usually means that the department has provided the candidates with a template and access to a common bank of source material. The effect of this is arguably to inhibit the more able, without covering up the shortcomings of the less talented.

Adaptation of titles

It is pleasing to record that remarks in last year's report about the 'customising' of Board-set titles seem to have had a good effect – but a small minority of candidates were still penalised for modifying the wording of the original questions, in ways that actually changed the sense of the questions themselves. Candidates need to answer the question as set and should not try to customise it. There is usually a need to relate the question to a person, an event or a particular war, but it is dangerous if this leads to a modification, as well as a rewording, of the question. This is because the examiner will be marking the answer as if it is the question on the exam paper. Probably the most sensible approach is for the candidate to write out the actual question (numbered in the margin) and provide a simple sub-title announcing the chosen focus. Hence, 'How far would you agree that, 'No individual can alter the course of history?'' might be followed by 'Focus on Lenin'. No more is needed.

Quality of argument and use of evidence

Issues about the quality of argument tend to be more clear cut on this component than on the longer Investigation. In the best work, there is a tendency to lay out the structure of the argument succinctly, engage with its competing elements in a manner that is consistently analytical and evaluative, introducing evidence in cross or counter-reference as appropriate. The work of less able candidates, however, tends to be starkly narrative, accompanied by overlong, illustrative quotations and drifting away from the requirements of the question. These candidates should be reminded to pay exact attention to 'how far?' and 'How true?' in the question stems.

Presentation issues:

The most significant problem to arise this year was a 'technical' one. It concerns the attachment of sources to the essays as appendices. Appendices cannot be accepted as part of the essay written in the examination hall, yet some candidates clearly believe this to be the case in referring to the appended sources by letter, as if it were the examiner's duty to locate and read them in order to make sense of the reference. The relevant source passage needs to be written into the text, so that the contribution to the text is explicit and so it is clear what is being evaluated or cross referenced. When the quotation is short this will take no time at all and the addition of a number will register it as a footnote (assuming the list of sources is similarly numbered in the appendix). When the quotations are longer, the key phrase needs to be extracted for the purpose of the essay, but the number of the source will still establish it as a footnote.

Report on individual questions**Question 1:**

Choose a painting from any period you have studied. How far does it give an accurate insight into the values, ideas or beliefs of the age in which it was painted?

The key to this question is realising that representations contained in the pictures had to be tested by cross-referenced to more conventional historical sources. Hogarth was a popular choice – plenty of detail on which to focus, and lots of social commentary which could be tested by reference to evidence from the time. Those who chose portraits of Elizabeth or Michelangelo's work on the Sistine Chapel showed good ability to interpret the works, but were less successful in evaluating them as representations

Question 2:

To what extent have trade and exchange been the critical factors in the economic development of any city, country or region you have studied?

One candidate was successful in writing about the development of the Spanish Empire, showing that trade was important but that other factors like the extermination of the native population also had a huge impact. Others chose, with good effect, to compare commercial, religious and political factors in the development of the British Empire. A few candidates focused on internal trade, for example comparing factors responsible for the growth of Lincoln in the Middle Ages.

Question 3:

How far would you agree that, 'No individual can alter the course of history'?

As ever, this was the most popular question, but candidates attempted it with mixed success. The main failing was not answering the question. On weaker scripts, focus kept drifting from the causes, extent and consequences of change to assessment of an individual's achievement, or, worse still, to biographical narrative. Lenin and the October Revolution and Stalin and the reforms of industry and agriculture tended to work well. Churchill, Cromwell, Alfred the Great, Henry V and Bismarck were all less well used as their entire careers were analysed, or, quite often, merely described. Their impact was not fully considered, or evaluated in relation to more conditional factors working for change. One of the best was on Nixon with the candidate arguing that Nixon tried to alter the course of history in his policies, only to end up altering it in a far less commendable way, quite different from his intentions. Margaret Thatcher was another good example, as was Pol Pot (for different reasons!). William the Conqueror was an obvious choice but those who chose him missed the debate about how far Norman England was different from Saxon England. Some used two examples, others a range – these rarely worked well. Some candidates produced their stock essays on Martin Luther King. On the whole, answers gave little attention to impersonal forces and/or mass movements (as alternative agents of change). No one actually challenged the terms of the question.

Question 4:

How far was geographical position the main factor in explaining the development of any historical site you have studied?

A small group of candidates attempted this question with pleasing results. Focus on 'geographical position' was sharp and persistent and other relevant factors were weighed in the balance. Particularly interesting were pieces on Cardiff and Chatham docks and there were some interesting studies of Nottingham castle and of the reasons for industrial development in Yorkshire in the 19th century. There were also a number of studies that were impressively sourced but offered no realistic alternative argument.

Question 5:

How true is it of any military conflict you have studied that 'wars are always won by the side with the most resources'?

Common examples on this question were the English Civil War, Vietnam, Korea, Suez, John's campaign of 1206, the First Crusade, Waterloo, Trafalgar and the American Civil War. Vietnam and the two civil wars were particularly good choices but Suez came out surprisingly well, too. In a number of competent answers candidates were prepared to assess a range of factors and work towards well argued judgments as to their relative importance. Weaker responses explained why one side won or lost, losing their focus on resource difference as the key nominated factor.

Question 6:

'The end justified the means'. To what extent can this be said of the actions of any political leader or political movement you have studied?

Peel, Hiroshima and the militant suffragettes worked well and there were some well argued approaches to Stalin's policies of collectivisation and industrialisation. Surprisingly, perhaps, those who chose Margaret Thatcher produced very effective arguments about how short-term measures involving strike-breaking, industrial shake-out and unemployment prepared the way for the longer-term benefits of economic recovery. Other candidates clearly could not distinguish between ends and means and did not fully understand the question.

Question 7:

For any period studied, assess the reasons why religious enthusiasm either increased or declined.

This question attracted rather fewer takers. Examples included the First Crusade, the French Wars of Religion and the Protestants under Mary I. The Norman Church worked less well as it was difficult to match with the notion of 'religious enthusiasm' in the question. Surprisingly, perhaps, there were no reported takers selecting the Interregnum or Methodism.

Question 8:

Assess the historical significance of a single discovery or invention from any period you have studied.

Very few candidates chose this question. Those that did, tended to describe the invention or discovery and not assess its significance.

Question 9:

For any period studied, how easy is it to determine the conditions of life for ordinary people from the available evidence?

There were some interesting answers focusing on the working class of industrial England, on working women in the early 20th century and on the experiences of Londoners during the Blitz. Less successful answers – for example on the Irish Famine – tended to be purely descriptive.

Question 10:

Assess the achievements of any African leader.

Popular choices were Mandela and Nasser, of which the latter proved to be by far the more fruitful. Nasser's achievements were more clearly balanced and therefore more suitable as the focus of an argument. Mandela, on the other hand, tended to attract fairly uncritical narrative. One or two chose Malcolm X – a rather contrived approach.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE (Subject) (Aggregation Code(s))
June 2008 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2580	Raw	60	43	38	33	28	23	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2581	Raw	60	43	38	33	28	23	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2582	Raw	60	43	38	33	28	23	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2583	Raw	45	35	30	26	22	18	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2584	Raw	45	35	30	26	22	18	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2585	Raw	45	33	29	26	23	20	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2586	Raw	45	33	29	26	23	20	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2587	Raw	90	68	61	55	49	43	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2588	Raw	90	68	61	55	49	43	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2589	Raw	90	68	61	55	49	43	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2590	Raw	120	88	79	70	61	52	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2591	Raw	120	88	79	70	61	52	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2592	Raw	90	72	64	56	48	41	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2593	Raw	90	72	64	56	49	42	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3835	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7835	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3835	18.22	41.55	66.17	83.98	94.03	100.00	14917
7835	22.56	52.07	78.13	93.76	99.03	100.00	13220

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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