



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1G

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – June series

This Report on the Examination uses the [new numbering system](#)

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Unit HIS1G

Unit 1G: Britain, 1815–1865

General Comments

There were some excellent answers produced by candidates and the general standard was high, reflecting the hard work undertaken in centres in preparation for the new specification. Very few candidates sat the module in January and therefore this was the first major cohort of candidates. The general impression was that candidates coped more effectively with a paper which required four responses than the old six task paper. The vast majority of candidates produced answers of approximately balanced length but there were, as might be expected, a significant minority who struggled to complete a fourth answer – practising timed answers may help some to eliminate this problem.

It was clear that the majority of centres had carried over their expertise from the legacy unit 2Q, and the quality of answers to Questions 1 and 2 reflected the general standard of those topics – both the strengths and weaknesses. Questions 1 and 2 accounted for some 90% of responses. However, the standard of responses to Question 3 was poor.

Question 1

- 01** In general, this question was answered very well with candidates drawing on a wide variety of knowledge relating to the issues confronting Lord Liverpool. Appropriate credit was given both to those who offered a selection of reasons, such as ideology, economic disruption and revolutionary threats, and to those who developed a response around a core theme such as fear of revolution but offered a genuinely differentiated answer explaining why individual policies were adopted. The latter sometimes led candidates more directly into Level 4 as they tended to make clearer links whereas a lot of candidates reached 8 or 9 because no effort was made to link the reasons together. Most candidates were very clear on ‘reactionary’ and only a few ignored the reference to 1815–1820, though a few of the weakest did not understand that 1815 marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars. With these few exceptions, the impact of the end of the war was very well-understood.
- 02** The vast majority of candidates answering this question did so effectively and scored according to the level of analysis they brought to their knowledge of the reforms. Candidates need to be reminded that the Metropolitan Police Act was passed in 1829 and is not therefore relevant to Lord Liverpool. It was encouraging to see a larger number of answers which could correctly interpret the trade reforms, especially those who saw this as ‘moving towards’ Free Trade. Candidates may also wish to consider that Huskisson had been advising Liverpool regarding economic matters prior to joining the Cabinet in 1822. It was very good to see a number of centres had covered the banking reforms. One of the joys of 2009 was the number of answers which, having enumerated and analysed reforms, tackled head on the neglect of the key issues of Parliamentary Reform, the Corn Laws and Catholic Emancipation leading to strong balanced answers. Some candidates erred in suggesting Liverpool reformed the Corn Laws. A few candidates insisted on including details of the Whig Reforms which were irrelevant.

Question 2

- 03** In general this question was very well answered with a lot of candidates demonstrating a thorough grasp of the issues of the period. Some candidates focused very clearly on the period immediately prior to 1832 but the long term focus was treated equally in terms of reward. Candidates do need to remember that the examiners are looking for a range of reasons and that therefore they should present a selection of *different* factors. Some candidates may be disappointed when they find that three different ways in which the electoral system was unrepresentative have not been seen as separate reasons. The unrepresentative balance of seats, the rise of the middle class and Catholic Emancipation, for example, offer three distinct factors which, through linkage, offer a good route to Level 4.
- 04** As was the case in the legacy unit 2Q, Chartism was a popular topic and generally is very well-known and better understood than some other topics. One of the relatively under-exploited approaches was to look at the types of Chartist and to link this to the question of motives, e.g. support for the Land Plan stemming from a desire to escape the impact of industrialisation. There are still some candidates who err in insisting that the Great Reform Act includes the major Whig reforms up to 1837 which leaves them little to argue against. There were some very balanced and thoughtful responses from candidates – for many this was their stronger essay.

Question 3

- 05** Having seen good responses to similar questions on 2Q it was very disappointing to read the often thin responses made in June 2009. Some candidates simply said there was a threat of civil war whilst some even left out O’Connell. Given the popularity of Questions 1 and 2 it may be that a disproportionate number of very weak candidates attempted this question. There were, as always, those centres whose candidates produced responses denoting that Irish History is a cherished subject.
- 06** This question was, with the exceptions noted above, generally answered poorly with relatively few reaching Level 3 and many on the boundary of Levels 1 and 2. Despite the inclusion of the Famine and Irish Nationalism, there seemed to be little knowledge of either and hardly any linkage of embittered immigrants in America giving rise to a new group of Irish Nationalists prepared to use violence. Some candidates did offer some knowledge of the longer term issues relating to the Act of Union and the land issue.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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