



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS1M**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2009 examination – June series*

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

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# Unit HIS1M

## Unit 1M: USA, 1890–1945

### General Comments

There were a number of rubric errors this year, the worst of which being that a few candidates only attempted one question, which impacted on their overall result. It is important that candidates answer two questions rather than three or one to give them a reasonable opportunity to show what they can do.

Of the three questions the second and third one were the most popular and question one was the least popular. There was a full range of answers on all questions. The best answers were clearly focused on the question and set out an explicit historical argument supported with detailed own knowledge.

In general, on the first parts of the questions (01, 03, 05) some candidates still did not prioritise their reasons or make a clear judgement or inter relate the reasons given and so did not get into Level 4. Also some artificial links were made on weaker answers. In the second part questions, one of the main weaknesses was a lack of focus on either the period or the main factor in the question which inevitably led to loosely linked description or assertion. It is not necessary to refer to Historians or make vague assertions about 'some historians' or even text book writers and some times these references were used to mask a lack of knowledge and/or led to confusion.

### Question 1

- 01** This was done really well by only a few candidates since there seemed to be confusion over 'Open Door' in trade. Many suggested it was connected it with immigration. The best answers recognised the China context and the rivalry with European nations and in particular Great Britain. Also the threat to China from Japan was also recognised and the Boxer Rebellion was also supplied as additional contextual detail. Too many students were confused with Dollar Diplomacy and ignored the date in the question.
- 02** The answers to this were very wide-ranging. The weakest seemed to know little about 'big business' and were content to merely assert its importance. The best answers were able to recognise the link between some of the entrepreneurs, such as Andrew Carnegie, J D Rockefeller, J P Morgan and Henry Ford, and the growth of the economy. Really outstanding answers were able to talk about how monopolies and the finance of the banks such as J P Morgan propelled trade and the growth of the USA as a world power. There were many references to immigration but few actually connected the immigrants to the question other than to say they were exploited. Better answers were able to connect the backgrounds of the immigrants with the skills they brought. Natural resources were mentioned as a factor but few could actually name what these were and got confused with steel. One of the most popular factors was the use of the railroads but often Vanderbilt was cited and he is simply not relevant to this period, especially since the most important rail links had long been established prior to 1890. Some candidates recognised that 1914 was the start of the war and brought in loans and armaments, but care needed to be exercised here since it was only the first 6 months of the war. A few tried to talk about events post war which again were not relevant. Some of the best answers also linked the

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development of the economy to foreign policy. Weaker candidates tried to turn the question into one on foreign policy, leading to heavy imbalance and irrelevance.

### **Question 2**

- 03** This proved very accessible for those who answered it. Many candidates were able to discuss a wide range of long and short-term reasons. Many were able to talk about the actual detail of the Vested Act. Occasionally in weaker answers candidates became a little confused over where beer came from and didn't seem to realise that brewers of Germanic origin made the beer in the USA. Weaker answers tended to assert all sorts of moral laxity without connecting this to pressure groups and lobbying from the Anti Saloon League which left answers unsupported. The best answers linked pressure to events and reasons to produce rounded answers.
- 04** There were some very good answers here. Candidates were able to explain a range of reasons for lack of success and range across the period. There were some candidates who were able to use an impressive amount of detail on law enforcement, corruption, organised crime, home made 'moonshine', government taxes and farming problems. The best answers were able to show the divisive nature of prohibition and the effects it had on society. However, the lack of balance tended to keep otherwise good answers out of Level 4. The better responses did show the difference between the rural South and urban North, the fact that non-drinking had existed before prohibition and carried on post-prohibition. Also the impact on the soft drinks issue was seen as a success. Some candidates had clearly researched the success element and were able to show that drinking fell in the early period and better diets led to health benefits through the use of statistics, as opposed to just assertion. Furthermore positive benefits were put forward for the impact prohibition eventually had on law enforcement in the USA.

### **Question 3**

- 05** On the whole this was really well-answered. Candidates were able to show why Hoover lost and Roosevelt won. The reasons were supported with detail from Hoover's poor responses to the Depression to Roosevelt's early political career. The main weakness was where candidates wandered on to the actions Roosevelt took after being elected. Although the New Deal was an idea it lacked substance until he was firmly in office. The most impressive answers just naturally linked the election together and developed a range of reasons for each candidate. Answers which lacked one of the principals tended to stay in Level 2.
- 06** Of all the questions on the paper this had the most variable responses. Weaker candidates could not relate what they knew of the New Deal to the 'depression in rural areas'. Many asserted it was an area which Roosevelt ignored or that it was less important than industry. This is surprising considering some of the key provisions of the New Deal were aimed at agriculture. Some missed the connection between banks failing and farmers losing their savings. Loans tended to be dealt with quite well although there was some assertion. The significance of the Tennessee Valley Authority was sometimes omitted from answers. Better answers were able to differentiate between small and large farms and the development of agribusiness. Share croppers were also discussed and the often negative impact the New Deal had on African American farmers was developed. Weaker answers tried to explain the role of the Second World War but failed to make a connection with grain as opposed to armaments and loans. Again there was evidence of wider reading where outstanding candidates were able to discuss success and explain how the 'New Deal' was not really new and that Roosevelt's bold experimentation was likely to fail. Some of the best answers on the whole paper set out and created an

argument from the very first sentence and came to a sustained judgement on success or failure.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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