



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2P

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – June series

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

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Unit HIS2P

Unit 2P: The Campaign for African-American Civil Rights in the USA, 1950–1968

General Comments

There were few rubric errors. Most candidates attempted two questions, although some did not finish. There were a number of outstanding answers on this paper gaining full marks.

Questions 2 and 3 were fairly evenly divided in terms of popularity. Some good contextual knowledge was displayed in answers to Question 1. There were some timing issues where candidates spent too long on Question 1. Also some answers remained unbalanced on the second parts of the question and so candidates did not get above Level 3.

Question 1

Question 01

The best answers made direct comparisons between the two sources and were prepared to use contextual knowledge as support on President Eisenhower. Most candidates were able to discuss the views in the sources. Some of the differences were well developed and not just a juxtaposing of views. A balance needs to be struck between context and the use of the sources. Answers will not get out of the lower levels if the sources are ignored in favour of writing out own knowledge on the topic. Extent through showing similarities was often well-developed. However, just showing it is about the same or different event will not be rewarded because it is the view in the sources that is the most important. The best answers realised the reluctance of Eisenhower to act but realised he did and tried to show the constraints on his actions with the South and the problems inherent in the American system of supporting the Supreme Court. Weaker answers asserted difference or similarity without actually using references from the sources.

Question 02

The vast majority of candidates used some of the sources. Sometimes use was made of only one source which is not enough to get into the top levels. Candidates need to be very clear when they are referring to a source either through using the letter of the source or a direct quotation. Also actual use of the source is important as opposed to a very thin passing acknowledgement. Actual knowledge of Supreme Court decisions in some cases was impressive where it was obvious that wider research had been undertaken. Many answers showed a good balance between the Supreme Court and other branches of the government. Some candidates brought in actions from African Americans especially with detail on the Brown v Topeka case. Weaker answers referred to laws made by the Supreme Court as opposed to decisions and were clearly confused over the role of each branch in the federal system. Also some candidates seemed to misunderstand the relevance of Source C and did not realise it was about university education as opposed to high school level tuition.

Question 2**Question 03**

This proved to be reasonably accessible despite the date error (the sit-ins at Greensboro took place in 1960, not 1961, as stated on the paper). Many had detailed knowledge of the sit-ins but weaker answers were just descriptive of events in Greensboro. Some were able to put the sit-ins into the context of the fight against segregation in public places. Also the youth of the protesters were seen as a reason for action. Others mentioned the spontaneity of the event. The better answers were able to link reasons of the wider Civil Rights Movement to the specifics of Greensboro. Some went on to explain why it was a success although this was not necessary with such little time available it is best to stay on the main focus. In the light of the error on the paper, examiners were told to treat sympathetically answers to this question which demonstrated confusion on the part of candidates. It appeared that few, if any, candidates were put off by the error.

Question 04

This question was not done as well as expected because candidates did not know what the Civil Rights Act of 1964 actually said. Many tried to turn the question into one on the Voting Rights Act of 1965 or the provisions of Johnson's Great Society programme. Many answers explained why it was passed but few really discussed the significance of the 'de jure' ending of segregation. This led to a lot of in balance. Also some candidates tried to turn this into a President Johnson against Martin Luther King issue which also led to answers not leaving Levels 1 or 2. Clearly Johnson's act was only a partial success in gaining equality for African Americans and the best answers not only showed this but also discussed where the lack of success still lay in both the North and South and of course referred to 'de facto' segregation and discrimination.

Question 3**Question 05**

There were some rather weak responses to this question. Although candidates understood that Martin Luther King was assassinated they could not explain reasons for unrest which might be connected to his death. A lot of vague assertions about African Americans being frustrated by life in the ghetto but there was a significant lack of detail. Better answers understood the gap that was left in the Civil Rights Movement and the lack of an iconic leader. Others did understand the despair that African Americans felt across the country as a much respected figure and successful leader had died. The best responses linked despair, hopelessness, conditions in city ghettos and failures in progress with Martin Luther King's death and the growth of militancy. Some outstanding answers even showed the impact the death had on white Americans and why there might be unrest there too.

Question 06

There was a very wide range of responses to this question. Some candidates were very well-prepared on Malcolm X. They were able to show the scale of his influence and how it grew and yet had been limited in the Muslim Church. They could show how his views changed in the mid 1960s and how this led to an increased impact. Also evidence was put forward to show his appeal to young urban blacks whilst alienating the mainstream. Some of the best answers kept a tight focus. Clearly a lot of research had taken place as many candidates were able to discuss his impact on celebrity and the media. Some discussed the long term impact due to the publication of his autobiography. Others took a wider view and tried to compare his impact to those of other leaders such as King. However there was a danger of imbalance amongst really weak candidates who tried to turn this into a Martin Luther King question. There were some erroneous assertions about Malcolm X being the founder of the Black Panther party. Since it was founded after his death it is best to avoid this sort of assertion.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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