



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS1B**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2010 examination – January series*

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# *Unit HIS1B*

## **Unit 1B: Britain, 1483–1529**

### **General Comments**

The quality of response from candidates was generally consistent and secure. Most candidates made effective use of the time available; relatively few scripts were incomplete. Standards of organisation and presentation were usually good, a minority of chaotic and less well written responses stood out in sharp contrast to the norm. Many answers were based on an appropriate determination to respond to the specific wording of the questions.

There were also, however, shortcomings needing to be addressed. A substantial minority of candidates relied upon relevant but generalised assertions, lacking appropriate supporting evidence and often revealing inadequate knowledge. A number of more able candidates wasted marks by failing to observe the key dates in the question and straying into irrelevant material – this was particularly evident in answers to Question 1(b). The importance of effective use of language must be re-emphasised, many candidates would have achieved significantly more marks if they had been able to write with greater accuracy and clarity. These weaknesses should not be overstated. Most scripts showed evident signs of commitment and enthusiasm for the subject. The work of the best candidates was impressive.

### **Question 1**

- (a) Answers to Question 1(a), on Henry VII's marriage to Elizabeth of York in 1486, were mostly very sound, with an appropriate range of reasons explained in the context of secure knowledge. The best answers went beyond outlining three or more reasons to provide depth and differentiation on issues, such as the weakness of Henry Tudor's claim to the succession and the reasons why he delayed fulfilling his promise to marry Elizabeth.
- (b) In Question 1(b), on challenges to Henry VII's authority between 1487 and 1497, there were many well-informed answers attempting to present balanced arguments about the extent to which Henry was threatened and the methods he used to strengthen his position. Many candidates wrote confidently about various pretenders and other rebellions. It was also pleasing to note that most candidates were determined to use their information purposefully, rigid descriptive accounts were rare. There were two main causes of under-achievement. The first was a tendency to write a rather general account of Henry's policies towards the nobility and finance, without focusing directly on the key issue in the question. The second was a widespread disregard for the key dates, 1487 and 1497. All too many answers began with extensive irrelevant material prior to 1486, a lesser number went on past 1497 to cover the reign as a whole. Candidates need to be reminded that the key dates in a question are just as important as any key words; they must be addressed directly.

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**Question 2**

- (a) In Question 2(b), on the marriage alliance with Spain, most answers were based on sound knowledge of Medina del Campo and were focused on explaining the motives behind the marriage of Arthur and Catherine. A large number of candidates achieved a mark in Level 3 or higher. However, many candidates were tempted into writing about the results of the marriage in later years. Questions of this nature are specifically targeted at the explanation of motives and causation, any discussion of the consequences can only be irrelevant and unnecessary.
- (b) Answers to Question 2(b), on the expansion of overseas trade, were of mixed quality. A minority of effective answers showed confident grasp of issues such as the cloth trade, the Navigation Acts, Bristol exploration, trade with Burgundy, Venice and the Hansa and so on. Most candidates were well informed on foreign policy and on Henry VII's inclusion of trade clauses in many of his treaties with foreign powers; unfortunately there were numerous very unbalanced answers in which the key issue of overseas trade was given little attention because little was known or understood about it.

**Question 3**

Only a minority of candidates attempted this question and the quality of the responses was very variable. Some were clearly well-prepared and used their material confidently. Others were vague in the extreme. It was difficult to avoid the impression that candidates had either concentrated their efforts on Wolsey's foreign policy while ignoring domestic affairs, or had failed to cover the later years of the specification content at all. The years from 1509 to 1529 form a significant part of this Unit and should be treated accordingly.

- (a) Answers to Question 3(a), on the Amicable Grant of 1525, were often sound on the general point of Wolsey raising money for Henry VIII's war against France but the knowledge shown was much less convincing than in answers to the other 12-mark questions. Only a small minority of candidates showed understanding of issues such as Parliament, or Wolsey's relationship with the King in 1525.
- (b) In Question 3(b), on domestic policies and Wolsey's role in strengthening the authority of Henry VIII, successful answers were rare. A few answers showed some knowledge of policies such as enclosure and legal reforms but without linking their material to the specific question. Most relied upon vague assertions or retreated into hopeful and irrelevant description of Wolsey's foreign policies and the attempts to provide Henry VIII with an escape from his marriage to Catherine of Aragon.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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