



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS1F**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2010 examination – January series*

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# Unit HIS1F

## General Comments

Most candidates completed the paper successfully and allocated their time effectively. Nearly all candidates opted for Question 1, with a fairly even spread between those attempting questions 2 and 3. Most seemed to have understood the need to produce factors (reasons) in response to the (a) questions and inflexible narrative was comparatively rare. Where candidates gained less credit, it was more often through lack of knowledge than through faulty technique. The (b) questions produced some well-balanced answers, although, again, the degree of support was variable and there are still too many candidates who feel it is adequate to write in a generalist fashion, without precise examples to back their comments or dates to provide a secure chronological framework. There were few misreadings of questions, but some chose to ignore the date in 1(b) and the focus, economic and social policies, in 3(a).

## Question 1

- (a) The majority could identify at least one reason behind the summoning of the Assembly of Notables which was financial problems. Some candidates went on to explain the reasons for France's financial difficulties, rather than keeping strictly to the reasons for the summoning of the Assembly, but a good number were able to link this to the failures of finance ministers, the obstruction of the Paris Parlement and issues such as Louis's own indecisiveness and apprehension which led to the coming of the Assembly. Better answers included comments on why such an Assembly was preferred to an Estates-General and detailed exactly what Louis hoped it would agree to. Among weaker responses were some that described the breakdown and looked at the consequences of the Assembly's failure, rather than focusing on the reasons for its meeting. A small number of candidates confused the Assembly with the Estates-General and wrote accordingly.
- (b) It was pleasing to see some in-depth knowledge of Enlightenment ideas in the better scripts, although there was also some misunderstanding of the principles of the Enlightenment seen, most particularly in relation to the *philosophes'* attitude to the Church. Furthermore, there were some candidates who had obviously misunderstood this movement altogether, referring to the Enlightenment as a 'policy' designed to create revolution. Some candidates answered the question by looking at the ways in which Enlightenment ideas were important in the causes of the French Revolution and balancing these against the ways they were not, usually stressing the limited spread of such ideas. Other candidates weighed up Enlightenment influences against other factors challenging the Ancien Regime and producing revolution in 1789 and this approach was equally acceptable and gained high marks. Unfortunately, there was a tendency, even in some otherwise good answers, for candidates to stray beyond 1789, particularly when assessing the impact of the Enlightenment.

## Question 2

- (a) Most candidates used their knowledge of what had happened in France during the Terror, the fears roused by Robespierre's semi-dictatorial position and the Thermidorian reaction after July 1794 to explain the setting up of the Directory. Some went into detail about what the new constitution was trying to achieve and some looked more broadly at the position of France as a country at war, with continuing unrest in some provinces, to explain the

attempt to provide greater stability. Any combination of three or more relevant factors qualified candidates for an award at Level 3 or 4, the latter being reserved for those who, in addition, showed the inter-linkage of these reasons, usually by looking at the broad picture as well as the more specific catalysts for change.

- (b) Many candidates were able to identify a range of problems facing France from 1795, but they varied in the degree to which they were able to comment on the Directory's response to these and thus assess its success. More candidates believed it unsuccessful than otherwise and a lot relied on their knowledge of the coup of Brumaire and so over-emphasised political instability as an unresolved problem. The best answers included detail about the Directory's management of finance, the quelling of internal revolt, foreign successes and its ability to resist extremism over 4 years. Whatever line was taken, a balanced response considering both success and failure and offering some relevant argument was rewarded at Level 4 or higher.

### **Question 3**

- (a) This was the least well-known topic on the paper. Many candidates struggled since they had little idea what the Civil Code was and a good number believed it to be the constitution, about which they were equally hazy. Some marks could be credited for an appreciation of the context, with Napoleon's desire to strengthen and stabilise his rule and introduce measures applicable to his whole Empire. However, for candidates to gain higher Level 2 and above, there needed to be explicit reference to the need to codify and standardise law after the revolution and, for example, to reassert the rights of the male and Father. Candidates should be aware that the 'explain why' questions will be on narrow, although important areas of the Specification, and that the Civil Code should be ranked among the major achievements of Napoleon and therefore well-known.
- (b) Many candidates wrote effective answers which not only examined Napoleon's economic and social policies but also focused strongly on their contribution to 'strengthening' France. For some, however, the essay was narrowed to become an assessment of Napoleon's success as a ruler and even, in some cases, of whether or not he provided stable rule, which are different questions altogether. Some candidates also made the mistake of writing about all of Napoleon's policies indiscriminately and a number struggled to identify what was implied by 'social'. A broad view of this was taken in the marking, but it was comparatively rare for a candidate to attempt to define a 'social' policy in their answer.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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