



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS1G**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2010 examination – January series*

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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. The general impression was that candidates coped more effectively with a paper which required four responses than the previous six task paper. The vast majority of candidates produced answers of approximately balanced length but there were, a significant minority who struggled to complete a fourth answer, practising timed answers may help some candidates to eliminate this problem especially not spending too long on the twelve mark questions.

It was clear that the majority of centres had carried over their expertise from the old 2Q or 5Q 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 70% of responses.

### Question 1

- (a) In general, this question was answered least well, although better candidates put forward a wide variety of knowledge relating to why Lord Liverpool's government was prepared to offer more liberal reforms after 1822. Appropriate credit was given to both those who offered a selection of reasons, such as new ministers, economic stability and the influence of theorists, and those who developed a response around a core theme such as a desire to avoid revolution but offered a genuinely differentiated answer explaining why individual policies were adopted. The former tended to lead candidates more directly into Level 4 as they tended to make clearer links whereas a lot of candidates reached Level 3 but did not rise further because no effort was made to link the reasons together. The vast majority of weak responses arose from candidates ignoring the date in the question and offering an analysis of the reasons for discontent prior to 1822 or attempting to convince examiners that the conditions which prevailed before 1822 still prevailed afterwards.
- (b) 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 reasons for the reform act. Some candidates limited themselves by enumerating a range of weaknesses in the old electoral system even though this was effectively only one reason for the Reform Act. Weaker responses were often characterised by limited specific knowledge, for example, Wellington reluctantly passing the Reform Act, possibly confused with Catholic Emancipation. Some weaker candidates lumped the Whig reforms together as the Great Reform Act and therefore referred to the Poor Law, etc.

### Question 2

- (a) In general this question was very well answered with a lot of candidates demonstrating a thorough grasp of why Peel introduced tariff reform. The links made to his earlier career and the influence of his background were often of high quality and the best of these responses were very impressive. Some candidates again ignored the dates in the question and focussed upon the Corn Laws. The dates are included in questions to help candidates to focus their responses and key dates need to be more systematically learnt.

- (b) This question was the first designed to extend into the domestic events towards the end of the specification. The majority of candidates opted to explain how a range of Peel's reforms, such as the railway act, repeal of the corn laws and general tariff reductions to increase trade all contributed to the Mid-Victorian Boom. Perhaps due to current events, quite a number of candidates pointed out that cutting tariffs had increased the amount of money that people could spend and that this created the positive cycle of falling unemployment and greater growth. One area that was less well understood was that the fears of farmers proved wrong in the short term and that due to a period of higher prices in Europe, the price of grain in Britain stayed higher than farmers had feared.

### **Question 3**

- (a) The understanding of British foreign policy aims and objectives in this early period was strong. The most organised candidates focused on three key points and then moved to a balanced conclusion. One area that students do find more difficult is to grasp that the balance of power is a British policy rather than one that is agreed upon by all the powers.
- (b) This question was answered well by those students who had read the dates and did not simply write about the early period. The best answers decided that there were four main themes and then provided evidence for each. The strongest responses made sure that there was evidence drawn from all parts of the period. Palmerstone is clearly popular and this means he made regular appearances in responses. Students may find it easier if they learn examples rather than try to plough through their answers from start to finish. It would be a help to students if they were more comfortable with the idea that some episodes have more than one facet but it is good to see that there is a growing recognition of this, for example, in attitudes to Russia.

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

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