



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1K

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – January series

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Unit HIS1K

Unit 1K: Russia and Germany, 1871–1914

General Comments

Overall responses to this paper demonstrated a good knowledge of the subject areas examined. Candidates were particularly knowledgeable on the content of Question 1 where they drew on a considerable amount of supporting material. A key issue revealed by the paper was a need for candidates to give careful consideration to the time period required by questions, many candidates failed to gain marks because of the inclusion of material not required by the question. There was also a need to directly answer the question rather than narrate relevant material. The 12 mark (a) questions were answered more effectively than the longer (b) questions indicating that candidates have a solid understanding of the demands of explanation questions. Most candidates' answers showed an understanding of the need to give a range of factors with some development of explanation. Links and prioritisation needed to be developed. The longer questions requiring some assessment were generally supported by a range of material but many candidates needed to be more specific in terms of addressing the question, particularly in recognising the relevant time frame.

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates attempted Question 1 and the responses revealed a good knowledge of the material. Question 1(a) was looking for responses which recognised the long-term reliance of the Chancellor on the approval and support of the emperor, (showing knowledge of the German constitution) and the short-term differences between Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm II in particular. Many candidates showed a solid understanding of the differences between Bismarck and Wilhelm in terms of a clash about who should rule and also an issue of policy differences. Those candidates who were able to link this effectively to Bismarck's overall position without support from the Reichstag or the emperor were rewarded at the top levels.

There were a number of candidates who used the question as an opportunity to discuss the whole of Bismarck's political career, it was sometimes possible to reward candidates who had taken this approach for a recognition that Bismarck had lost political support, however many of these candidates did not provide a relevant response to the question.

- (b) This question required candidates to build on the knowledge of the Imperial German constitution needed for question (a). Top level responses made some assessment as to the extent of the influence that Wilhelm II was able to exercise over German **domestic** policy, most candidates did recognise this and there were few attempts to base the answer on foreign policy influence. Successful candidates were able to provide some discussion of the Kaiser's ability to influence domestic policy through the appointment and (effective) dismissal of German chancellors in the time period. Many good candidates recognised that this was the emperor's main influence. These candidates also referred to the influence of the Reichstag and made some reference to Wilhelm's general preference for foreign policy.

A large number of answers were rewarded in the middle of the mark range for largely chronological accounts of the fortunes of Wilhelm's chancellors, but with some

assessment of the Kaiser's role. There were few candidates who did not have a reasonable knowledge of this subject, however the question was not answered as effectively as the first part of question 1 because of the tendency to adopt a narrative approach rather than engaging directly with the demands of the question.

Question 2

- (a) In this question candidates again demonstrated a good understanding of the demands of explanation questions and there were many good responses which made an attempt to link a range of factors in order to explain why Russia experienced rapid industrial growth in the 1890s. Many of the candidates were able to do this by explaining the impact of Witte's policies and by citing him as the most important factor leading to change. The best responses recognised the general conditions for economic growth in Russia at the end of the 19th century and were able to identify the short-term causes (including the role of Witte). Candidates who were rewarded at the lower end of the mark scale either failed to explain why factors helped to lead to growth or to provide sufficient range. There were also some candidates who simply described economic growth rather than explaining the reasons for it.
- (b) This was the best answered of the (b) questions, although only by a small margin. Candidates who performed well made some attempt to assess the success of the tsarist regime in dealing with political problems during the time period. These candidates also recognised that the industrial growth mentioned in question (a) led to political problems for the regime. Candidates at Level 4 or 5 were able to provide some balance showing that the regime had experienced both success and failure. Most candidates did make some attempt to engage directly with the question demands however, many lacked range and effective support and provided no balance. A few responses showed no attempt to deal with political issues at all and simply described the problems caused by economic growth. These candidates were rewarded for any attempt to show government efforts to deal with these issues.

Question 3

- (a) This was the least popular question but was still attempted by a reasonable number of candidates. Again candidates showed understanding of the demands of an explanation question. However, in this question they were slightly hampered by failure in some cases to know what the Reinsurance Treaty was. There was a tendency for some less able candidates to get the Treaty confused with the Dreikaiserbund, in this case it was difficult to reward them. At the top of the mark range many students were aware of the main reasons for the treaty and most highlighted the danger of a possible friendship between Russia and France as a key German motivation for the Treaty. Encouragingly many candidates also gave some reasons why Russia wished to sign the Treaty. However, there was an overall failure to prioritise or to link factors effectively which diminished the number of candidates achieving the highest marks.
- (b) This question showed most candidates appreciating the demands of the question in terms of the relationships between Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary. The majority were able to provide some assessment on the impact of the alliance between Austria-Hungary and Germany on relations between Russia and Germany. However, many candidates found it difficult to deal with the question time period and instead concentrated on earlier, and obviously better known events such as the Congress of Berlin. Where possible candidates were rewarded for any relevant points, and in some cases responses which covered a time period from the 1870s up to 1914 were rewarded for an attempt to address

the issues. These responses often covered events after 1890 with considerable assessment and good supportive material. Some responses concentrating on the later period provided little in terms of assessment or support and relied on German support for Austria-Hungary on the outbreak of war in 1914. This was rewarded, but greater range was required for the higher levels.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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