



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2F

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – January series

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Unit HIS2F

Unit 2F: Challenging British Dominance: the Loss of the American colonies, 1754–1783

General Comments

On the whole there was a mixture of positives and negatives with this paper. On the positive side, there was evidence that centres had heeded the comments in the June 2009 Report, and had made some attempt to better prepare candidates for the source comparison exercise. On the negative side, overall marks were depressed by relatively limited responses to Question 3(b), where candidates were often apparently unaware of the starting date for Lord North's Ministry. One unexpected and slightly disappointing contrast with June 2009 was the relatively small percentage of candidates (approximately ten per cent) tackling the question on the French and Indian Wars (Question 2).

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify some differences between the sources, though rarely did individual candidates identify more than two. For example, Source A mentioned French intervention having a dramatic impact on the course of the war ('completely altered the War of American Independence for Britain'), whilst Source B suggested that French intervention had less significant immediate impact ('did little to improve the immediate prospects of the American colonists'). Also, Source B stated that Britain continued to fight on the American continent, merely shifting the emphasis from the Northern colonies to the South, whilst Source A refers to an immediate shift of emphasis to the West Indies. Although both refer to the growing importance of the West Indies in British strategic planning, Source A suggested that this development was immediate, whilst Source B regarded it as a more gradual shift of emphasis. Finally, there were some differences of content: Source A mentioned that naval considerations were pushed to the forefront, that the security of Britain itself was now at stake, and that British troops were no longer sent to North America, none of which were mentioned in Source B.

Candidates were usually aware of the need to address the concept of 'how far' by identifying similarities, such as the reference to the increased emphasis on the West Indies, and the clear suggestion that foreign intervention seriously damaged British prospects.

- (b) Most candidates were able to merge source extraction and own knowledge to produce at least satisfactory, and in many cases quality, responses to this question. 'British leadership' was interpreted in different ways: sometimes political leadership, sometimes military/naval leadership, and sometimes both. Credit was given to capable responses regardless of the definition applied. In any case, most candidates went on to contrast their definition of 'British leadership' with a range of other factors, usually including any aspects previously omitted. There was usually a good range of own knowledge on display, with relatively few candidates relying predominantly on the sources.

Question 2

- (a) The small number of candidates who attempted this question was able to deal with it without any serious difficulty. Most candidates commented on the shifting nature of Indian allegiance between the two sides, and mentioned how the Indian leaders regarded Britain, with its desire for land and territorial expansion, as a more serious long-term threat to their interests than the French, whose interests were largely confined to trade.
- (b) On the whole, candidates found this question more demanding than had been the case with part (a). Very few details were advanced about the actual terms of the Treaty of Paris concerning North America; instead, candidates moved directly to the implications for Anglo-colonial relations of the disappearance of the French from North America, and the high National Debt. Such responses were favorably considered, but the lack of real detail on the terms of the Treaty precluded candidates from reaching the highest grades. Appropriately, no details of the European settlement were supplied by candidates, but reference to the continuing French presence in the Gulf of St Lawrence, the retention of fishing rights off Newfoundland, and the logistical problems of policing a sizeable French Canadian population, would have supplied candidates with a clear link between the Treaty and the subsequent deterioration of Anglo-colonial relations.

Question 3

- (a) There were some good responses to this question, with candidates often able to offer a good range of reasons for colonial resentment of the Stamp Act. Mention was made of the more incisive and widespread nature of this tax, contrasted with previous measures, the growing resentment of 'taxation without representation', and the feeling that colonial interest were being sacrificed in order to appease French Canadians. However, some candidates, usually those with limited background knowledge of the Act, lengthened their responses with reference to the subsequent history of the Stamp Act, often going as far as the Declaratory Act and Townshend's Duties, measures clearly outside the terms of this question.
- (b) This question gave candidates more problems than any other question, mainly because too many were unaware of the date of the formation of Lord North's Ministry. Quite often candidates regarded North's Ministry as synonymous with long-term British government, and comments such as 'Lord North's government introduced the Stamp Act in 1765' were not unusual. Since Lord North is a reasonably prominent figure in the history of Britain's relations with North America, it is not unreasonable to expect that candidates should be aware of the date of his emergence as the head of government. The question as posed gave candidates the opportunity to examine the role played by the British government from 1770 onwards in the drift to war, contrasting this with the attitude/response of colonists and their leaders, the legacy of the French and Indian Wars, and the role played by earlier British governments between 1763 and 1770; failure to appreciate the significance of 1770 seriously limited the ability of candidates to perform that exercise.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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