



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2H

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – January series

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Unit HIS2H

Unit 2H: Britain, 1902–1918: The Impact of New Liberalism

General Comments

Although there were examples of candidates simply reciting the detail to be found in the Sources in Question 1 rather than attempting to focus on the specific issues in the questions, these were relatively few in number. The majority did attempt to address the questions set but with very variable levels of quality displayed in the responses. A significant number of answers to Questions 2(a) and 3(a) did not go beyond Level 3. Candidates need to establish a clear awareness of how to construct effective links between the reasons they offer. There was clearly no problem with many candidates' knowledge. The issue is primarily one of failing to prioritise the factors or establishing themes which may connect them. This is an aspect of examination technique which would significantly enhance candidate performance if it were to be addressed successfully. The responses to Questions 2(b) and 3(b) were encouraging. Many candidates displayed a good knowledge base and the ability to establish balanced evaluations. There remained a number of responses which fell back on narrative and sometime drifted into irrelevancy.

Question 1

- (a) Some candidates appeared confused about the content of Source A. A number regarded John Redmond as an Irish terrorist willing to use violence as a first course of action. Many of these saw Patrick Pearse's statement as restrained and peaceful in its intent. This approach undermined such answers in terms of enabling them to accurately define differences in the views in the sources. Despite this there were many answers which successfully identified both similarities and differences. Many candidates were able to establish a common commitment to freedom but through differing routes. Many candidates were able to reinforce this understanding by drawing on well-selected knowledge, particularly that focused on the contrasting action and methods used by Redmond and Pearse.
- (b) There were a number of very good responses to this question. Many such answers were able to display an effective use of material in the sources and develop this through their own knowledge. Some candidates had a sound level of knowledge and understanding of the decline in the influence of John Redmond and his Nationalist movement. There were some good assessments of the Easter Rising and many such responses were able to show their understanding of the limited level of support for this amongst the masses of Irish Catholics. These often went on to develop detail about the impact of the British response to the Easter Rising. Such answers generally developed well formed balance in their assessments of the impact of the First World War in relation to other factors. Less developed responses often lacked balance and did not measure the relative importance of other factors beyond the impact of the First World War.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates were able to establish a range of relevant factors and developed explanations of them. Relatively few answers were seen which suggested limited candidate knowledge. Some answers drifted away from the point of the question and went on to consider, in some detail, why the Labour Representation Committee entered into the pact with the Liberals. A significant number of answers failed to enter Level 4 because they did not go on to develop links between the factors raised. The best responses were those that showed the interrelationship between the reasons and backed this with well selected knowledge.
- (b) There were some very good responses to this question. Many candidates were able to develop a wide range of relevant factors and the best answers were those that attempted to establish a balanced evaluation of their relative importance. There was some impressive detail developed on the importance of the tariff reform issue and divisions within the Conservative Party. Those answers that were less well developed tended to lack balance and range. Many of these drifted into detailed narratives on the impact of the Boer War for example. A relative small number of answers focused on the popularity of the Liberal Party. In doing so they often developed extensive irrelevancy.

Question 3

- (a) As with Question 2(a), there were some well developed responses to this question. The problem of not reaching Level 4 was also apparent in many responses. This was largely due to the same reasons as those apparent in Question 2(a). Many candidates were able to present a good range of reasons and with some detail. Some weaker responses dwelt on the issue of self-interest amongst the members of the House of Lords. This was often done to the exclusion of any other factors. Inevitably this type of approach prevented such answers moving beyond Level 2.
- (b) The best answers to this question were those that presented a wide range of factors and shaped these into a balanced argument. Many candidates challenged the premise in the question and argued that the social reforms were driven by New Liberalism rather than the quest for political gain. Some, but only a relatively small number, were able to explain the nature of New Liberalism and link this effectively to the reform programme. Many answers considered the concept of national efficiency. Other answers suggested that the reforms were superficial and made no significant difference to the groups who appeared to benefit. Consequently the reforms offered little political gain. The conclusion reached from this line of thinking was that political gain was never the aim. Some argued that the propaganda value of the reforms overrode the limited benefits the reforms offered. This suggested that there was a political motive. Some considered the political ambitions of Lloyd George. The weaker answers did not enter into a balanced analysis but relied on a basic narrative of the reforms.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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