



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1C

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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Unit HIS1C

Unit 1C: The Reformation in Europe, c1500–1564

General Comments

This option attracted a wide range of responses. There was much work of a high standard, including a healthy proportion of scripts which combined excellent levels of knowledge, skilful organisation and time management with a mature conceptual awareness. Timing proved to be rather less pressing an issue than it had been in summer 2009. In particular, far fewer candidates this year threw away marks by writing excessively long answers to the 12 mark questions which then brought about an inevitable penalisation with an excessively brief final answer. There was a gratifying fall in the number of scripts which demonstrated patent under-preparation for the examination. Even at more modest levels of achievement there was ample evidence to suggest that candidates had prepared carefully.

Question 1

- 01** This question was answered outstandingly well with over 80% of the candidates achieving marks in the highest two levels. Such responses were not only sharply focused and well-informed but also demonstrated an impressive ability to link the various parts of their explanations. The best answers were often also crisp and succinct, thereby maximising the effectiveness of such candidates' time management. Most candidates had a grasp, albeit at varying levels of sophistication, of the dynamics of the situation whereby the Church was transformed from its originally blasé attitude into a resolute attack on heresy. There were two main weaknesses in responses to this question: either candidates focused too much on what Luther was doing instead of explaining the Church's reaction to what he was doing, or went beyond the period of the issue of the papal bull of excommunication. In this context it should be noted that Luther had already been excommunicated by the time of the Diet of Worms and that the Diet, as the assembly of a secular authority, had no authority to issue excommunications.
- 02** A healthy proportion of candidates achieved Level 4 or 5 marks for their responses to this question. There were two fundamental routes by which these could be achieved. Candidates could write extensively about the papacy during the period, offering detailed evaluation of the contributions of a number of popes to the process of reform. Alternatively, they could place the papacy in a wider context of factors which brought about reform. Either approach was acceptable, though the latter proved more popular. The best answers showed a keen grasp of the nature of Catholic reform and of the papacy's role in that process. Most candidates could offer sensible comments about Paul III. Some, however, proved unable to discuss any other popes, whilst there was some confusion about the importance of Paul IV; some candidates do need to be more aware that Paul IV's version of reform differed considerably from that of his predecessors. The wider context of reform – involving such factors as the Council of Trent and the importance of the Jesuits – was generally discussed confidently, though the quality of evaluation and linkage did vary.

Question 2

- 03** This question elicited a large number of impressive responses. Many candidates were able to demonstrate the interplay of religious, political, social and economic factors which underpinned peasant discontent in 1524–1525 and led it to boil over into rebellion. Often, such answers were supported by impressive detail on, for example, the influence of Thomas Müntzer or on the influence of the Twelve Articles of Memmingen. Weaker answers tended to rely too much on information which was fairly generalised, whilst a minority of candidates chose to devote most of their answers to explaining Luther's response to the revolt, which was not what the question was asking.
- 04** Many candidates showed themselves to be formidably well-informed on the reasons for Lutheran success from 1531 to 1555. The influence of the League of Schmalkalden was well-understood by a large proportion of candidates. Many candidates showed an impressive understanding of the contributions of such princes as Philip of Hesse and Maurice of Saxony to Lutheran success. At lower levels of response, candidates were able to demonstrate a general understanding of the contribution of German princes to the success of the Lutheran movement, but without being able to offer any specific evidence drawn from the period covered by the question. Thus, for example, Frederick the Wise, who died in 1525, appeared in some answers and, in some cases, was the only prince referred to by name. A clearer understanding of the political structure of the Holy Roman Empire would benefit the work of many candidates as would an understanding of the reasons for the failure of the Augsburg Interim, which, significantly, was rejected as much by public opinion as by princely activity.

Question 3

- 05** Though many candidates proved able to offer powerful analyses in response to this question, there were some generalised responses which lacked the specificity offered in many answers to Question 2(a) in the summer of 2009. One weakness was the tendency of candidates to focus on Calvin's early career in Geneva. The critical factor here was an ability to understand the nature of Calvin's opposition to Servetus and its wider political repercussions which culminated in the fall of Perrin and the Libertines.
- 06** The nature of the question was such that candidates were credited for offering a focus specifically on Geneva. Alternatively, they were credited for attempts to focus more widely on the early development of Calvinism as a religious movement across many parts of Europe. Most candidates were perfectly able to focus on evaluating Calvinism's success in Geneva, though there was, perhaps, a tendency to assume that the path to success was rather easier than Calvin himself found it. Many candidates were able, in addition, to discuss the early spread of Calvinism in France, the Netherlands and Scotland with the influence of John Knox figuring widely in some responses. It would be useful at this point also to re-emphasise a recommendation contained in the report for summer 2009 which recommended that candidates have a greater awareness of the *Consensus Tigurinus*, which brought about a substantial consensus between Geneva and Zurich and which greatly enhanced Calvin's prestige both within and outside Geneva.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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