



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1E

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Unit HIS1E

Unit 1E: Absolutist States: The Reign of Louis XIV, 1661–1715

General Comments

There were a large number of very pleasing responses to this paper which displayed both an excellent grasp of essay technique and also a very good understanding of the set period. Most impressively, the majority of candidates seemed very comfortable in deploying specific knowledge in support of analytical work. There were however some heavily narrative responses, but there were far more responses that tried to argue a case without being able to deploy much support. Equally disappointing were the candidates that decided to make reference to the views of historians. Whilst historiographical reference can often enhance the argument, this of course should not be used as a substitute for good, specific knowledge of the period. Indeed, some candidates' work came very close to simply being a précis of historical interpretation. What is clearly required here is a balanced, analytical argument from the candidate, supported by good knowledge of the period. Without the use of facts, most answers tend towards heavy assertion- this type of answer did not do well.

There seemed few candidates that ran out of time and there was no clear preference for any of the set questions. Most candidates seemed comfortable with the allocation of marks between questions, although there is still a notable minority that write far more in response to the 12 mark question than to the 24. The key to a good answer to the 12 mark question remains the ability to offer breadth with support. The candidate that only looked at one possible factor, even if in some depth, rarely acquired a sound mark.

Question 1

- 01** This was answered very well indeed by the vast majority that clearly had an excellent grasp of the topic. It was rare for candidates to resort to the general, although it was much more common for candidates to use the question to simply recount the failings of the financial system in general. Most candidates were able to offer at least three reasons for the fall of Fouquet with some relaying very impressive knowledge of the rivalry between Fouquet and Colbert. Equally impressive were the high number of candidates able to name Fouquet's palace and the personal reasons that Louis XIV may have had to remove him. The very impressive responses linked together these factors suggesting that Colbert's own ambition combined with obvious doubts about the success of Fouquet's financial policies and Louis XIV's own fear of over important nobles.
- 02** The good answers to this question tended to be very good indeed. There was some excellent knowledge of the Trading Companies with a number of candidates able to name each one and link each to a specific area of the world – in fact this was quite common. Far rarer was the candidate able to relay exactly what the companies did and how they may have helped in the economic reforms of France. The weaker response clearly had little if any knowledge of the Companies and resorted to general commentary on mercantilism. However, Colbert remains a popular choice for candidates and many were able to give good descriptions of what economic reforms Colbert embarked upon. The more impressive moved beyond simple description and argued a case about why one particular reform was more important than any of the others. As ever, any question on Colbert tends to result in a small number of candidates that fail to read the precise focus and offer detail on financial reforms when economic is what is being asked for, or vice

versa. It is difficult to give any credit to a candidate that details reforms to taxation, but fails to explain how this might be linked to the economy.

Question 2

- 03** This was a central question that drew some very impressive responses. Most candidates did not struggle at all to offer a range of reasons that had links or were prioritised. This question did serve as a good indicator of those who had not acquired enough subject knowledge. There were some noble, but largely futile attempts to give general reasons such as glory or the desire for natural frontiers which could reasonably have applied to many of the conflicts in the period. The good responses were those that were able to offer reasons specific to the conflict, or if they referred to glory explained why this was especially relevant to the Nine Years War. Some very impressive answers began by mentioning the more general factors but made it clear that these were not the spark/short term reason for the conflict – this style of response also tended to achieve good marks.
- 04** There was quite some range in the quality of response to this question. The better type of response clearly considered the precise demands of the question and spent some time focusing on how the security of France might have been improved or damaged by Louis XIV's policies. For some, this question simply became a prompt to produce a prepared answer on how successful Louis' foreign policy was without considering at all the notion of security. Unfortunately there were also quite a number of responses that wasted time referring to events outside of the period set by the question. It was surprising in fact that a number of candidates were able to name and even discuss individual wars but seemed to have little idea of when they took place even suggesting that the War of Spanish Succession occurred before the Nine Years War. This question also prompted quite a number of narrative responses which limited the analysis to a short sentence at the end of each paragraph.

Question 3

- 05** This question was answered well and seemed to offer few challenges to most candidates. In fact, there were some exceptionally impressive answers that not only related Louis XIV's desire for control, but were able to give precise details about why he may have found the theology of the Jansenists or Quietists so objectionable. Some of the very good answers also illustrated how Louis XIV's motives changed over the course of his reign, especially with regard to the Huguenots, and mentioned the role of ministers and of course Madame de Maintenon. These very strong response were balanced by a minority of cursive answers that were unable to deploy any specific knowledge and seemed limited to general reasoning such as ' he did not like those that were different to him' or ' he was a bigot'. Thankfully such answers were rare.
- 06** The better type of response tended to define Louis XIV's objectives in this period and then assessed how far religious policies achieved them. If objective was taken to include the desire for glory or indeed international prestige/security then many candidates made very worthwhile distinctions between the impact within France and that abroad. At the other extreme there were again those that relied upon the excessively generalised and simply asserted that since Louis XIV wanted uniformity and had revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, he had plainly achieved his objectives. This type of response stood in sharp contrast to that which gave a good range of policies with specific information on how effective they were, including details of the Camisards Revolt. Whilst a comprehensive overview of the period is not required, and is indeed probably not possible in the time given, some ability to support argument is clearly important.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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