



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1G

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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Unit HIS1G

Unit 1G: Britain, 1815–1865

General Comments

Some excellent answers were produced by candidates and the general standard was higher than in previous sessions, reflecting the hard work undertaken in centres in preparation for the new specification in the light of the 'real' questions now available from the three previous sittings. The vast majority of candidates managed to produce answers of approximately balanced length but there were some who struggled to complete a fourth answer – practising timed answers may help some to eliminate this problem.

All the questions were successfully answered by many candidates and the evidence from last June that some candidates seemed to just give up was not seen this year.

Question 1

- 01** In general, this question was answered very well with candidates drawing on a wide variety of knowledge relating to the causes of discontent under Lord Liverpool. Appropriate credit was given to both those who offered a selection of reasons, such as ideology, economic disruption and revolutionary threats, and those who developed a response around a core theme such as poverty but offered a genuinely differentiated answer not just a list of economic grievances. There was evidence in some answers that candidates knew that they could offer a hierarchy of causation as a route to Level 4 but they executed this by simply opening the first paragraph with 'The most important reason was' but offering no reason for their opinion. These candidates therefore did not get beyond Level 3 unless they offered further explanation elsewhere.
- 02** Many of the answers to this question were a pleasure to read as they carried the general theme of radicalism into their assessment of Chartism's causes. The British radical tradition of Paine and Hunt was well represented and Rostow's index was also widely quoted. Students were clearly aware of the economic difficulties of the late 1830s and some, without losing focus, used the subsequent decline of Chartism in more prosperous times to reinforce their case for the importance of economic factors. The problems caused for the working class by the Whig Reforms also featured in many answers. Some of the less effective answers offered little detail and generalised points regarding economic difficulties which did not relate specifically to the period. The overall standard was high and this topic has clearly been very effectively taught to arouse the interest of candidates, some of whom made good use of local examples.

Question 2

- 03** In general this question was very well answered with a lot of candidates demonstrating a thorough grasp of why Peel repealed the Corn Laws. Some candidates focussed very clearly on the period immediately prior to 1846 and quoted Peel's remark that he could not answer Cobden's arguments. Some of the strongest responses looked back to Peel's membership of Liverpool's 'liberal' phase and the tariff reforms taken at that time. Candidates were not expected to know that Lord Ripon, Peel's President of the Board of Trade, was indeed the same "Prosperity Robinson" with whom Peel had always enjoyed a close working relationship but clearly this supports a view that Peel was not a sudden

convert to Free Trade. Whilst many pointed to Peel's background in manufacturing, some candidates had not grasped that he was still very wealthy and that he shared a manufacturer's desire to hold down the price of bread and therefore limit upward pressure on wages. The treatment of the Irish Famine varied but some students did confuse the view that the intention was to help the Irish with the impact of the measures. Stronger candidates could differentiate between motive and outcome and therefore offered more cogent responses than those which simply saw repeal as an instant humanitarian response.

- 04** As used to be the case in the legacy specification unit HS2Q, candidates showed that they had a thorough grasp of Peel due to having been prepared well. Some good answers suffered a little from being the candidate's fourth response but in the main a wide range of reforms were considered and a genuine attempt was made to assess them. Some candidates did limit themselves by writing about the Corn Laws which had been covered in 03 and were excluded by the dates in the question being 1841–1845. Examiners inevitably use dates in History examinations in order to divide up material and candidates need to look more carefully for these signals. The other main weakness lay not in ignoring the dates but in simply drawing upon material from the 1820s – sometimes offering dates for acts to fit, for example, the 'Goals Act 1843'. Some candidates who answered at length may be disappointed to find much of their response was marked as irrelevant for these reasons.

Question 3

- 05** This question was also generally well done. Candidates had a broad grasp of Castlereagh's intentions and showed a good understanding of foreign policy in general. Some weaker responses were chronologically insecure in placing the Congress of Vienna. The main weakness of some otherwise strong answers was the failure to offer specific supporting evidence. In general the evidence relating to the balance of power was more specific. Stronger candidates used their knowledge of domestic problems to underpin the aim of peace and linked the resumption of trade to wartime dislocation.
- 06** This question was clearly welcomed by many candidates and it was clear that a large number had been very well prepared. Some answers were thin but this often seemed to reflect the 'fourth answer' issue as the quality of understanding was high but the supporting evidence was thin. The best responses were able to support their answers with appropriate evidence for both Castlereagh and Canning; answers which answered exclusively on either were restricted to Level 2. The crisis in Portugal was clearly very well known but some weaker answers saw the Monroe Doctrine as a master stroke initiated by Canning. Canning's interest in trade was often forgotten as were Castlereagh's, e.g. the acquisition of Ceylon at Vienna.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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