



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS1J**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2010 examination – June series*

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# Unit HIS1J

## Unit 1J: The Development of Germany, 1871–1925

### General Comments

Once again the paper proved to be an effective discriminator as a broad spectrum of candidate responses was seen, however the overall quality of scripts was improved reflecting the growing confidence with the new format of the AS examination. There were few timing issues and the vast majority of candidates completed two questions. However, as in January, the second 24 mark question often suffered in length and quality due to the unnecessarily lengthy responses to the 12 mark questions. It is worth restating that 24 mark questions are worth twice as many marks as 12 mark questions and should therefore be substantially longer. In order to achieve Level 4 for 24 mark questions, answers should be balanced with a 'good range of appropriately selected evidence'; this was unachievable for many due to the brevity of their answers. Once again the most effective 12 mark responses were often less than a side long. They clearly identified reasons why and often had thematic division, e.g. economic factors, political factors, short term factors, trigger events etc. Candidates still have an aversion to dates and many had a lack of secure understanding of chronology. There are a number of key issues centres need to address in order to ensure their candidates achieve their full potential in the future:

- stress the importance of chronology, particularly for key events such as Bismarck's break with the Liberals in 1878, the period of the Kaiser's personal rule and the German Revolution
- stress Bismarck's relationship with the Reichstag in the 1880s
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Republic and the opposition that it faced in the period 1919 to 1925.

These issues are dealt with in more depth through discussion of individual questions below. Questions 1 and 3 were the most popular, whilst Question 2 was the least popular.

### Question 1

- 01** There were a significant number of responses which secured Level 3 as they were able to give a range of reasons why Bismarck broke with the National Liberals. However, there were a good many candidates who lacked development and range which resulted in Level 2 marks. Weaker responses tended to explain why Bismarck worked with the National Liberals.
- 02** As stated in previous reports candidates must be prepared to use evidence beyond 1878 in order to achieve higher levels of response on this paper. The mantra for candidates must be 'there is more to Bismarck than just his persecution of the Catholics and Socialists'. A significant number of candidates underperformed on this question because they knew little beyond Bismarck's struggle with the Catholic Church and socialists in the period 1871 to 1878. Centres are yet again reminded of two central bullet points on the specification for Bismarck's Germany 1871–1890:

- political struggles after 1878, including the Anti-Socialist Law and State Socialism
- Bismarck's relations with the Kaiser and Reichstag.

Therefore questions will be set up to 1890 and candidates will be required to illustrate an understanding of Bismarck's Germany in the 1880s in order to achieve the higher levels of response.

Some candidates were able to engage fully with the question and the key to their success was a secure definition of conservative interests with a balanced evaluation of Bismarck's success and failures ranged across the period.

### **Question 2**

- 03** A common weakness of responses to this question was that candidates were somewhat generalised in their treatment of socialism and failed to relate specifically to the German Socialist movement. These responses secured Level 2. The best answers could specify the rapid rise in SPD seats in the Reichstag from 35 in 1890 to 110 in 1912 and the significance of the Erfurt Congress.
- 04** The responses to this question varied from weak and assertive to closely argued and very well-directed. A significant number of candidates under performed on this question. They were limited to Level 2 because their responses were descriptive about the Kaiser's relationship with his Chancellors and offered little else. Very weak responses obsessed about the Kaiser's sex life and disabilities, one can only presume they misread 'personal rule', for 'personal life'.

### **Question 3**

- 05** Responses which described the Treaty of Versailles were awarded Level 2. In order to achieve Level 3 responses had to attempt to link the Treaty to opposition to the Weimar Republic.
- 06** The majority of responses were secure in their understanding of the Weimar Republic. There were, however, few Level 4 responses due to a lack of range and balance across the time period. Most responses focused on 1923 to 1925, when the Republic became more stable. Better responses looked at the question thematically over the entire time span of 1919 to 1925.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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