



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1L

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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Unit HIS1L

Unit 1L: Britain, 1906–1951

General Comments

This was the fourth examination session for Unit HIS1L of the current specification. The paper proved to be accessible to the vast majority of candidates. All scripts were marked in accordance with the mark scheme and where there were responses which did not fall neatly into that scheme the principles of it were applied to these more unusual answers. Question 1 was the most popular with Question 3 a little more popular than Question 2. In general both parts of Question 1 were answered successfully. Question 3 seemed to appeal to many of the stronger performing candidates with part 05 overall being the most successfully answered on the paper. Indeed there was a marked contrast with the strong standard of response to part 05 compared with much weaker performance in the overall standard of response to part 03. It was encouraging to witness that many candidates were able to tackle Question 3 which covered topics at the end of the chronological period of the specification content and many responded to that Question as confidently as they did to Question 1 which covered topics near the beginning of the Specification. In Question 2, part 03 was the least successfully answered on the paper and many candidates were probably attracted to the overall question because part 04 was about the popular topic of the role of women in the First World War. This part was answered relatively successfully overall and was broadly in line with the standard of responses received to questions 02 and 06.

Most candidates found the time available for answering both parts of two questions manageable. However, as in previous examinations, a few did not manage time as successfully. They clearly spent more than the appropriate twelve minutes on one (usually answered first) or in some cases both of the 12 marks questions, an approach which led to brief and relatively inadequate responses to the 24 marks questions. A few candidates chose to answer both of their 24 marks questions first before tackling those with a tariff of 12 marks. A handful of candidates possibly benefitted from this approach, but most employing the tactic did not. Their answers to the lower tariff questions were either brief and/or repeated, usually irrelevantly, material deployed in the response to the 24 marks questions. The change in the 'numbering' system of questions in this examination did not seem to produce problems and where there was contravention of the rubric (in a very few cases) this could have been due to other reasons.

Marks awarded to individual candidates ranged from the maximum of 72 to those in single figures. The very best scripts, that is those achieving Levels 4 and 5 marks were distinguished by their features of secure and appropriate knowledge, explicit understanding including historical interpretations, clear and developed explanation or balanced argument, judgement, and be well organised and presented. The weakest scripts were those unable to demonstrate basic knowledge of topics and/or were confused and/or wrote about matters irrelevant to the question. Without a secure base of knowledge there was minimal understanding and poor demonstration of historical skills.

Quality of Written Communication was generally satisfactory. Poor or weak grammar, and in particular indiscriminate use of the wrong punctuation, undermined the responses of some candidates. The handwriting in a few scripts was very difficult to decipher making it very difficult for the examiner to follow argument being made. The main spelling mistakes of proper nouns

were of 'Chamberlain', 'Attlee' and 'Bevan', the last being confused with 'Bevin'. Significant minorities used the word 'where' when they meant 'were', and others 'of' instead of 'have'. The tendency to use phrases such as 'this could have' or 'this may be a reason' was not as extensive in this examination series, but nevertheless occurred in a significant number of scripts giving the impression that the candidate was far from confident in putting forward an argument. Similarly the use of phrases such as 'I feel', 'I believe' or 'I think' gave the impression that the argument was assertive rather than based on evidence.

Question 1

- 01** This was answered quite successfully overall with over half of the candidates gaining marks in Levels 3 and 4. Those in Level 4 identified the three key areas of legislation concerning free school meals (and its permissive nature until 1914), medical inspection of children (and lack of facilities for treatment until 1912) and the 'Children's Charter'. More significantly they provided a range of at least three reasons for the introduction of the reforms. These included the influence of the *Reports* of Booth and Rowntree, the poor health of recruits for the Boer War, the drive to improve 'national efficiency, parental neglect of children and the impact of the 'New Liberals'. In the context of 'national efficiency' a few also mentioned the extension of the Free Place scheme allowing more bright working class children to go from elementary to grammar schools. Surprisingly not many mentioned the emerging political threat to the Liberals of the LRC, even though the initial proposal for school meals had been made by a 'Labour' MP. There was a relatively small number of answers in Level 1. Those receiving marks in Level 2 in the main explained what the reforms did, though many missed the 'Children's Charter' and/or the initial limitations of the other reforms, but failed to provide a range of reasons for their introduction. Most mentioned Booth and Rowntree and/or the impact of the Boer War, but often went no further. Some responses believed that the Balfour Education Act was a Liberal reform of 1906 or 1907. Others claimed incorrectly that the Liberals had promised a range of reforms in their 1906 Election campaign.
- 02** About a third of responses gained marks in Levels 4 and 5 with another third receiving marks in Level 3. Most of the remainder fell into Level 2. Most candidates overall did restrict themselves carefully to social reforms, but some in Level 2 wrote, sometimes extensively, about the constitutional crisis from 1909 to 1911. Stronger responses often referred to it but in the context of assessing how successful the reforms were. Some answers in Level 2 tended to repeat material from part 01 and did not otherwise progress too far beyond school meals and medical inspection, although most did mention pensions. Overall the pensions' provision was seen as a success of the Liberals, but the limitations in eligibility were also cited. Some of the best answers developed argument from pensions to assess the impact of the reforms generally on the lives of people to point out that there was no attempt to get rid of the Poor Law and also there was neglect of reform to achieve better housing (which undermined attempts to improve health). Generally there was sound knowledge of the National Insurance schemes both for health and unemployment. Stronger answers were aware of restrictions on eligibility with reference, for example, to unemployment benefit only for those in 'cyclical trades'. Such responses also showed sound knowledge of Trade Boards and Labour Exchanges with evaluation of how the former were restricted to certain 'sweated workshops' and the limited success of potential employees finding work through the latter. Better responses also referred to other attempts to improve working conditions, for example for miners, shop workers or merchant seamen. Many knew about the Workmen's Compensation Act, though were sometimes confused about its correct name and what it did. Clearly those with an attempt at evaluating the overall success of the Liberals' social reforms, as well as assessing the impact of individual reforms, if developed and balanced, received marks in the two highest

Levels. Some mentioned the 'lifebelt' rather than the 'safety net'. Responses in Level 5 evaluated the degree of overall success achieved by the Liberals by making judgements in the context of improving national efficiency as well as the lives of children, the elderly and workers by the use of state intervention.

Question 2

- 03** This was the least well-answered question on the paper with relatively few responses receiving marks in Level 4. Nearly one third were placed within Level 2 and one fifth in Level 1. Most candidates had a very limited knowledge of DORA and its provisions in the context of the question itself which asked for an explanation as to why it was introduced in 1914. The stronger answers did draw out its enabling clauses to allow them to refer legitimately to later developments such as establishment of the Ministry of Munitions, introduction of conscription and even rationing. Weaker answers alleged that such developments were introduced directly by clauses in DORA, sometimes inferring that these developments happened in 1914. Some made copious references to events in 1915 and 1916, sometimes going off at a tangent to describe how Lloyd George replaced Asquith. Overall most responses did refer to the need for government control of 'the economy', though only better answers developed the point in relation to the need to control the means of production or for the direction of labour, as even in 1914 at least some in government foresaw a titanic struggle with the forces of Germany and her allies. The best answers in Levels 3 and 4 did demonstrate the difficulty for Liberals in reconciling the level of state intervention and much stronger government powers necessary for needs of national security in the context of traditional Liberal beliefs. Not many, even in responses gaining marks in the higher Levels, mentioned the need for government control of food production and agriculture, or of transport. Many answers overall did mention censorship, though only those in the higher Levels explained that it was introduced for reasons of security and helping to maintain the nation's morale.
- 04** This question was much better answered than part 03 with the distribution of proportions of candidates broadly similar to those responses to Questions 02 and 06. Overall the topic was well-known, though explicit and balanced answering of the question about the importance of the First World War in changing the role of women proved to be a good discriminator. Responses awarded marks in Levels 4 and 5 followed the question closely by attempting to assess the importance of the War, either by total focus on that issue or by also considering other factors. Where the latter approach was adopted references to the suffragettes (and suffragists) were usually in context and particularly noticed suspension of 'operations' for the duration. Any detailed mention of the pre-war suffrage movements displayed sound knowledge of negotiations about the franchise. Only a few weaker answers were tempted to go into detail about the pre-War suffragette campaigns. The stronger answers referred to the increasing numbers of girls in secondary schools, and to women attending universities and entering certain professions such as medicine before 1914. The First World War experiences of women were placed in a valid longer term perspective. The role of women during the War itself was generally well-handled with the better answers covering economic, social and political advances together with limitations especially after the War had ended. Less strong responses focused in the main only on war work such as in munitions factories or in fewer cases almost exclusively on the franchise issue. Nearly all answers emphasised the impact of conscription on the need for the female workforce. Some of the responses in the higher Levels made valid references to class differences and the ways in which they affected work undertaken by women. Very strong answers linked this with the Sex Disqualification Act of 1919 which aided the career prospects of the middle classes. There was an understanding of the lack of equal pay and the way in which the dilution process worked. These points were then

linked to accounts of the failure of many women to retain their employment after the War. Overall not enough attention was given to the political subtleties of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, for example not enfranchising most of the munitions' workers. Ultimately those answers which sustained a balanced argument about the importance of the wartime experiences of women and especially their effects received the higher marks.

Question 3

- 05** This question was the best answered on the paper. Two thirds of candidates were awarded marks in the two higher levels. Candidates were able to give and also develop more reasons in explanation than they were able to do compared with answers to part 03, or even to part 01. Indeed many found it straightforward to give, for example, three reasons such as the Conservatives' lacklustre campaign, concern over Churchill as a peacetime leader and changing views about society or state action during the War. Answers receiving Level 3 marks developed argument about such reasons or added others. A third of responses received marks in Level 4. They provided a range of explanations which were highly effective with a balance between the shortcomings of the Conservatives, whether historic in relation to the depression of the 1930s and appeasement, or immediate with reference to the election campaign (with weaker as well as stronger responses normally referring to Churchill's 'Gestapo speech'), and the reconstitution of the Labour Party both in the late 1930s and during the War. Labour's role in the Coalition was emphasised with reference to the work of Attlee and Bevin with some also mentioning Morrison, and/or Cripps and his work with the USSR. Reference was often made to views about the *Beveridge Report* in a context of plans for post-war reconstruction or Labour's manifesto, *Let Us Face the Future*. Some answers in the two higher Levels noted the political swing to the Left with one factor accounting for that being Britain's relationship with the Soviet Union as an ally, as well as the success of collective state action by government in prosecuting the War. Hardly any responses were placed in Level 1 and those in Level 2 tended to feature just one or two, usually not well-developed, reasons for Conservative defeat, or provided a mixture of a few valid points but were otherwise somewhat confused.
- 06** This question was answered fairly successfully overall with the standard being broadly in line with that achieved in responses to parts 02 and 04. One quarter of answers received marks in Levels 4 and 5. Such responses provided comment on a wide range of reforms introduced by Labour and provided a balanced overall assessment about how successful Labour was in establishing a welfare state. For example, the success and popularity of the National Health Service were balanced against it being a victim of its own success and the undermining of the principle of free treatment at the point of delivery by the introduction of prescription charges, with many referring to Bevan's resignation over the issue. Such responses also nearly always referred to the mixed performance of Labour in providing for housing needs following the War. These stronger answers also considered the benefits and allowances introduced by Labour especially under the much-expanded National Insurance scheme. Links were made with the proposals in the *Beveridge Report*. The main shortcomings of responses in the lower Levels were a lack of range. Most knew much about the NHS and accounts of it were generally accurate and provided relevant context. However, some did not go beyond the NHS. Others did make reference to housing but with limited detail as evidence in seeking an evaluation of how successful Labour was. A significant number assumed, probably as a result of recent culture, that most of these houses were built for sale. It illustrated a problem for less strong candidates that they often lacked historical perspective and saw issues in the context of today rather than in that of their period of study. There was some confusion over the

location of some new towns, the failure of the governments to reach housing targets and the reasons for that. In some weaker responses there was copious material about Butler's Education Act with criticisms of its shortcomings which owed more to those made in the 1970s rather than the position in the 1940s. Few referred to the raising of the school leaving age and those who did frequently believed that it was 16. Again in weaker answers Family Allowances and National Assistance were heavily neglected as was the universal application of National Insurance. A number of candidates, some at length, wrote about nationalisation, but only a few linked this to the policy of maintaining full employment. Some candidates had obviously prepared for a question on the economy, but reference to the American loan and Marshall Aid were only relevant when linked to the establishment of the welfare state. A few candidates in the higher Levels actually did this, showing that the Marshall Plan money helped with the launch of the NHS in 1948, but that part of the later price was Britain's participation in the Korean War which indirectly produced the imposition of prescription charges.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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