



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2J

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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Unit HIS2J

Unit 2J: Britain and Appeasement, 1919–1940

General Comments

In this fourth sitting of examination for Unit HIS2J of the current History Specification the paper proved to be accessible for the majority of candidates. All scripts were marked in accordance with the Mark Scheme. All candidates attempted the compulsory, sources-based question (Question 1), whilst approximately an equal number of students attempted Question 2 or Question 3.

As in previous examinations, the vast majority of candidates found the time allowed of one and a half hours manageable in terms of answering two full questions. A few spent rather too much time on answering the questions (01, 03 or 05) which carried 12 marks each to the relative neglect of the higher tariff questions (02, 04 or 06) carrying 24 marks each. In most cases where this became a problem it was the first question, (01), answered which had too much time devoted to it. In some cases this left the final question, (04 or 06), with a very brief response, which on many occasions achieved depressed marks. Another small minority chose to answer each longer question before its accompanying shorter question, or in a few cases to answer both longer questions before the shorter questions. These approaches are not recommended. As reported on in previous examinations, answering the part questions in the 'wrong order' led to loss of continuity (in terms of knowledge and understanding) between the two parts of each single full question.

Marks awarded to individual candidates ranged from 72 to those in single figures. As in 2009, scripts which achieved high marks, or indeed those responses to part questions with marks in Levels 4 or 5, were awarded them because they addressed the assessment objectives within the context and content of writing about particular historical issues with relevant deployment of knowledge and effective communication of their understanding. Answers which received the lowest marks almost always displayed very limited secure knowledge, or were confused, or generalised. Most candidates performed fairly evenly across their responses, although for a significant minority performance lacked balance in that Question 1 was decidedly better answered than the other. This was usually caused by relative lack of knowledge for the 'weaker' response and the sensible use of source material to gain marks for Question 1. Again there were some candidates who achieved a relatively higher Level of Response in one part of a question than in the other. Some of them answered the parts (01, 03 or 05) better than (02, 04 or 06). This was particularly evident in responses to Questions 2 and 3, where many candidates struggled to provide a valid interpretation of the question set.

Quality of Written Communication was generally satisfactory. No scripts were illegible to the point of the examiner not being able to follow the argument or point being made. The main spelling mistakes of proper nouns were of 'Sudetenland', 'Czechoslovakia' and 'Hoare Laval'.

Question 1

- 01** Question 1 was the compulsory, source-based question. Marks awarded for the full question ranged from 36 to low, single figures. The main weakness in many responses was to either paraphrase the Sources A and B with no commentary or to write two separate paragraphs (one on Source A and one on Source B) without explicitly stating differences or similarities. Better candidates were able to clearly state differences and similarities, both quoting from the two sources and using their own knowledge to evaluate them (accessing Levels 3 and 4). Many candidates' responses got no further than Level 2 because they failed to identify both differences and similarities. Others were only able to use the sources and did not apply any own knowledge. Again better candidates made intelligent use of own knowledge to highlight good historical understanding-'the Peace Ballot', 'the Munich meetings', 'Fulham by-election' were all usefully deployed. Candidates accessed Level 4 by developing their comparisons, therefore demonstrating a good historical understanding of the views expressed in Sources A and B.
- 02** The overall standard of responses was only slightly weaker than those of part (01). Most candidates were able to use Sources A, B and C to argue how far Stanley Baldwin was responsible for Britain's appeasement policies during the 1930s. Also, candidates deployed their own knowledge in order to enhance their responses. A common mistake was for candidates to promote a one-sided argument (maximum L3/16 marks). Better candidates produced more balanced answers making sensible use of the sources and deploying their own knowledge to good effect, thus accessing both Levels 4 and 5. Responses at both the higher levels contained intelligent use of both traditional and revisionist historians' views to enhance their answers. Weaker candidates concentrated on the appeasement of Germany in particular and failed to assess the appeasement of Italy and Japan. Others confused appeasement with Britain's role in the League of Nations and therefore produced unfocused answers.

Question 2

- 03** This question proved to be a good discriminator. Many candidates failed to successfully deploy a good knowledge base because they did not interpret the question sharply enough in terms of chronology. They simply wrote generally about Collective Security during the 1920s, thus failing to access Levels 3 and 4; specifically, explained reasons why Britain supported the idea of Collective Security in the early 1920s, Britain as a supporter and leading member of the League of Nations, differing views of the British governments and political leaders, lack of disputes threatening world peace, etc. Weaker candidates wrote in detail about Britain and the League of Nations in the early 1920s and therefore included a lot of material of dubious relevance.
- 04** Again this question proved to be good discriminator. Some candidates found it quite difficult to keep within the parameters of the question and therefore wrote generally about British foreign policy during the 1920s. However, there were a good number of strong answers that explained the Locarno Treaties of 1925 with regard to being a triumph of British foreign policy (Level 3) and went to explore factors such as the achievements of Briand and Stresemann in setting up the Locarno Treaties, the treaties did not include Germany's eastern borders and Germany voluntarily agreed her western frontiers (Level 4). A feature of better responses was balanced argument supported by a good range of appropriately selected evidence and a good understanding of historical interpretations. A significant number of candidates produced an explained judgement based on a range of explained factors (Level 5). Weaker candidates made no link between the Locarno Treaties and future international events. A few candidates attempted the question with no idea about the Locarno Treaties of 1925.

Question 3

- 05** Most candidates were able to identify a range of reasons why Britain made a naval treaty with Germany in 1935. Better candidates moved on to explain these reasons including; initially after Hitler came to power he expressed a desire for peaceful understanding with Britain, many politicians and public opinion believed the Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh and Hitler had a genuine case for rectifying some of the excesses it contained and in the shorter term, German conscription and breaking the disarmament clauses of Versailles caused British policy to become hesitant and contradictory. Top answers included this explained range of reasons, whilst differentiating between long and short-term reasons. Weaker candidates struggled with the chronology of the period and therefore confused the dates of various events (the Naval Treaty pre-dating the Austrian Putsch for instance).
- 06** This part question was less well answered than 04. Some candidates struggled with the rather complex nature of foreign affairs during the mid-1930s. Others introduced the appeasement of Germany during the 1930s and wrote rather general essays. However, there were some good quality answers which examined the key incidents of the mid-1930s (including short-term positive relations with Italy, the invasion of Abyssinia, the Hoare-Laval Pact and the League's condemnation of the Italian invasion) and explained their relevance in relation to the collapse of the Stresa Front (i.e. agree/disagree), thereby accessing Levels 4 and 5. Some candidates grasped the full complexity of the question and with the aid of appropriate historical interpretation explained clearly the demise of the Stresa Front in relation to the Anglo-German Naval Treaty and other relevant factors (Level 5).

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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