



General Certificate of Education

History 2041

Specification

Unit HIS3J

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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Unit HIS3J

Unit 3J: The State and People: Britain, 1918–1964

General Comments

There were nearly a thousand entries for the paper, with almost all of the candidates answering Question 01 on Lloyd George. Question 03, the breadth question covering the long and short-term causes of the Labour election victory in 1945, was clearly the second most popular question, with about 75% choosing the question. Just less than a third of candidates answered Question 02 on the economic policies of the Conservative governments between 1951 and 1964. Question 03 was the best answered question, with several full mark awards and just under half of the marks awarded being in Levels 4 and 5. Question 01 was slightly less successful, with the mean mark being around 1–5 marks less than Question 03's mean mark. Question 02 was the least successfully answered question in terms of the mean mark awarded, which was 4.5 marks less than the mean on Question 03. The distribution of marks awarded was also noticeably wider than the other two questions, with a slightly smaller percentage of Level 4 and Level 5 awards, but a markedly weaker bottom end with 20% more candidates being awarded Levels 1 and 2 than was the case in either Question 01 or Question 03. This suggests that the economic policy question was either a topic that students with excellent understanding were hoping came up, or was the last resort of the desperate.

Centres are reminded that the format of the paper is for two depth questions and one breadth question which will cover some part of at least three of the four periods identified in the specification (1918–1931, 1931–1939, 1939–1951 and 1951–1964). In addition, they are reminded that candidates need to demonstrate understanding of different historical interpretations, but that this is not the same as simply quoting a historian, or asserting that 'X, an historian, agrees with this'. Asserting historians as evidence is a low level skill and will be rewarded as description. An apposite quote to summarise an argument that has been made and supported by evidence is always valuable, but slavishly learning quotes which are used without explanation or evidence is of limited value.

Question 1

01 Lloyd George's period as prime minister is clearly a popular area for study and centres and candidates were very well prepared for a question on his fall from grace in 1922. Candidates were able to offer a range of reasons, including the collapse of the plans for housing and the resignation of Addison, the post-war economic problems in the staple industries, especially the coal industry, the impact of the Geddes Axe, the failure of policy in Ireland, dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Versailles and the disaster of Chanak. Candidates were free to choose which were Lloyd George's mistakes, and different interpretations were offered including those who saw Lloyd George making mistakes in all these areas and those who believed he was a victim of the post-war economic context. Most answers made reference to his personal style, with the Garden Suburb and the cabinet meeting in Inverness appearing with the greatest regularity, as well as the honours scandal and Lloyd George's marital infidelity, though candidates living in a world of tabloid exposes preferred to refer to 'Cash for Honours' and 'Sleaze'. What marked out answers at Levels 4 and 5 was the understanding of the political context and how each of these factors undermined his standing with the Conservative Party upon whom he was reliant for support. Too many good answers at Level 3 referred to the 'loss of support' for

Lloyd George as the result of a mistake or policy, without any appreciation of whose support was lost; the public and the Conservative backbenchers had very different reactions to the use of the Black and Tans and the Geddes Axe, for example. Such answers also failed to properly understand the nature of the post-war government and Lloyd George's position as the 'prime minister without a party', or indeed the importance of Chanak as a short-term trigger. The very best answers showed sophisticated synoptic understanding by demonstrating how a policy tarnished the image of the 'man who won the war' and therefore led Conservative backbenchers to question his value as an electoral asset, which made mistakes, specifically Chanak, terminal.

Two further errors are worthy of reporting. Candidates undermined their responses by writing excessively about the Liberal split and the events of the First World War. Centres are to be reminded that background knowledge is clearly useful, but the examined specification starts in 1918. A minority of candidates seemed to think the question was asking about the decline of the Liberal Party and wrote their answer without any understanding of the context of the coalition government. One assumes that understanding this context will be significantly easier for the 2010–2011 candidature.

Question 2

- 02** Many candidates were able to achieve Level 3 through a balanced response that covered examples of the success and failure of Conservative economic policy across the 13 year period. Answers worked better where they considered success and failure separately, either in a bi-partite structure or within discrete paragraphs on the different Conservative governments. Responses towards the bottom of the Level tended to structure their response around each different government and described aspects of policy that frequently ran across the different governments and therefore lacked some clarity and precision. At Levels 4 and 5 answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the issue of 'economic management' and were able to assess the success of the policies by considering how far 'stop-go' economics were really successful economic management, or how far the post-war economic context and the growth in the economies of trading partners was more responsible for success than any government measures. Low level responses tended to describe certain aspects of policy, for example the initial decision not to join the EEC and the later failure to persuade de Gaulle, and there was a small minority who appeared to be describing some general points about life in the 1960s, with the impression being that they had studied HIS2R at AS. Centres are reminded that the AQA Specification does not allow overlap from AS to A2 and therefore whilst a centre can study both HIS2R and HIS3J, material from one is relevant in the examination for the other paper.

Question 3

- 03** The popularity and success of candidates in answering this question was partly because most candidates were well-prepared for a question on the 1945 General Election and therefore depth of analysis on 1945 was strong and in itself was rewarded at Level 3. The question was the papers breadth question though, which meant candidates were required to consider the long-term causes of the Labour victory, with some reference to the Conservative record in the 1920s and the 1930s. Candidates were free to chose which episodes they focused on in the period, but the most popular and most effective were the General Strike and the impact on the working class and the Trade Union movement, the response to the economic crisis in the wake of the Wall Street Crash and the ensuing political and economic crisis in the 1930s, and the 'ghost of Neville Chamberlain' with reference to appeasement. The best answers were able to careful consider the impact events had on the outcome of the 1945 election. Outstanding synoptic understanding was

demonstrated by those who argued that the impact of the depression was regional and that many did not suffer in the 1930s, but those who did were predisposed to vote Labour already, or that the status of Churchill as the man who won the war was more significant than memories of Chamberlain – the problem was that Churchill ran an underfunded campaign that focused on the war and the past, in contrast to the forward looking Labour campaign. Candidates were not expected to demonstrate the same depth of evidence in Question 03 as they were in the two depth questions, and therefore answers with high level analysis, range across the period and some evidence were rewarded more highly than those answers which skipped over the 1920s and 1930s (or, occasionally, 1940–1945) and wrote a response with depth of evidence, but which focussed on 1940–1945.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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