



General Certificate of Education

History 2041

Specification

Unit HIS3L

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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Unit HIS3L

Unit 3L: From Defeat to Unity: Germany, 1945–1991

Question 1

- 01** Most candidates wrote carefully constructed essays in which they considered the actions of the Western powers and balanced these against those of the USSR, and in some cases, the East German Communist leaders or even the German people themselves, in bringing about division in Germany. It was interesting to note that the majority tended to agree with the quotation. There was nothing wrong in this, of course, but arguments were sometimes more vigorous and persuasive from those who chose to disagree, or at least modify its premise. Some spent too long on the war time conferences, to the exclusion of post-1945 developments and a few ignored the Berlin Blockade altogether. Awareness of the chronology of division was also variable, with muddles in its evolution and details going beyond 1949. The best answers, however, had a clear focus, avoiding irrelevant detail to concentrate not only on the crucial developments but also to consider the motivation behind those developments and so apportion responsibility.

Question 2

- 02** There were many excellent answers to this question which assessed the GDR's degree of stability in all its various forms – principally, political, social and economic. Such answers distinguished between periods of apparent stability (for example after the construction of the Berlin wall) and those of instability (as in the workers' risings of 1953). They also looked at the apparent outward stability and tried to reconcile this with degrees of internal discontent. Good candidates generally referred to the idea of the 'niche society', although there was by no means unanimity as to whether a 'niche society' should be considered stable or not. Less successful answers failed to define stability and tried to provide a history of the GDR with comments. These less thinking candidates were often in danger of equating stability with success and instability with failure. A few also strayed beyond the final date of 1971 and tried to write about Honecker.

Question 3

- 03** Leaving aside a minority of candidates who wrote pure narrative or whose selection of policies was extremely thin or one-sided, there were two basic approaches adopted to this breadth question, the second of which worked better than the first. A large number opted to give a chronological coverage of West German policies throughout the period and then tried to balance these with reference to 'other factors'. Although such essays had an element of analysis, they lacked rigorous debate and candidates found it difficult to move from an explanation of Ostpolitik to consideration of Kohl's policies, whilst detail on 1989–1990 was often omitted because it proved almost impossible to analyse events from the Western angle only. The second approach, whereby, candidates divided the period into sections, considering Western policies in relation to other factors at each stage of development fared rather better. These candidates generally provided a more balanced evaluation and dealt successfully with the issue of who or what was the prime mover in the eventual reunification between 1989–1990. There remains some misunderstanding about the 'inevitability' of reunification, but, for the most part students were knowledgeable and were often able to cite the views of historians to back their claims.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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