



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2011**

**History 1041**

**Unit HIS2A**

***Report on the Examination***

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# Unit HIS2A

## Unit 2A: Conqueror and Conquest, c1060–1087

### General Comments

This paper proved to be accessible to most candidates with virtually all attempting two full questions and their respective parts. Most scripts were quite well presented and the majority paid attention to the wording of the question and tried to address it in their answers. There were very few purely narrative answers. Overall the demands of Question 1 were mostly understood, while Question 2 and Question 3 attracted roughly the same number of responses. Most scripts showed signs of preparation and good time management with the length of answers generally appropriate to the marks allocated. It was pleasing that very few candidates made the mistake of failing to use the evidence of the sources in their answers to 02. Lower level answers were those in which there was inadequate knowledge/use of evidence to back up arguments or failure to address the full range of the question. Most of the weaker scripts relied on vague assertion, particularly in 01, where little was presented beyond the actual content of the sources. This continued assertion is demonstrated by the continued use of 'I feel' or 'I believe' rather than by presenting a substantiated argument. However, there were some very good responses at the higher end demonstrating a good grasp of context, strong factual knowledge and some excellent essay writing skills, reflecting both the evident enthusiasm of the candidates and effective teaching and preparation.

### Question 1

- 01** This question was, on the whole, well tackled. Almost all candidates identified a number of similarities and differences which enabled them to judge 'how far', although this was not always explicit in all cases, often limiting candidates to lower Level 3. However, the focus of most answers remained on the situation in the Church pre-conquest and it was obvious in the majority of answers that the context of the situation was well grasped and explained which meant that some Level 4 answers were seen, but there are still too few candidates who attempt to explain the reasons for the similarity/difference which would help to gain them the highest marks.
- 02** This question was also tackled well by some candidates and it was pleasing to see the level of integration between the sources and own knowledge. There were very few who failed to reach Level 3. On the whole, answers were well organised and attempted judgement. They were however rather limited in the range of own knowledge used. Some candidates whose knowledge was secure, still showed far too much reliance on the content of the sources and as a result failed to present a fully balanced argument which limited them to low Level 4. Weaker candidates attempted to place a different interpretation on 'success' and dealt with the question 'from William's point of view' which was not its focus, nor that of the sources. Such answers remained in Level 2.

### Question 2

- 03** The majority of candidates demonstrated sound knowledge on the situation in the North, considering its separatism, the existence of the Danelaw and threats from Scotland, explaining the implications for William. These answers gained at least high Level 3, dependent on scope and relevance of explanation. Those who became involved in 'how'

rather than 'why' tended obviously to narrative, concentrated on 1069 and achieved little more than Level 2.

- 04** For many candidates this was their best answer. There was strong knowledge and understanding of the reasons why rebellion against William failed and the range of reasons was well covered and supported, resulting in debate and balance. These obviously achieved the highest marks. Some approached the answer well but failed to go as far as 1075 which limited them to Level 3. Also, there were possibly too many answers that failed to provide sufficient detail to support the points they made and so were also limited to Level 3. Those who began to formulate a balanced argument and place the issues within the context of the whole period defined and the argument relating to the balance between disunity and the nature of the responses were awarded at least Level 4. Responses that showed impressive detail and evaluation of reasons both for and against the premise together with well-supported judgement on how far the lack of allies and effectiveness of the Norman military machine contributed reached Level 5.

### **Question 3**

There was a more mixed response to this question than to Question 2. Knowledge was less secure for the majority of those who answered this question.

- 05** The majority of candidates who answered this question were able to mention financial, judicial and military reasons. However, little supporting evidence in the context of the threatened Danish invasion or the situation relating to landholding since 1066 which limited such answers to Level 2. Most answers fell into Level 3 or low Level 4 as there were few who attempted to link the reasons effectively either in this context or that of the Oath of Salisbury.
- 06** The response to this question was often poor, lacking focus and far too general. There was some description of government in this period but this often lacked focus on the 'local' aspect demanded by the question and there was a good deal of irrelevant focus on the Curia Regis and the chancellery. Other answers dealt simply with this to the almost complete exclusion of local justice. Such answers did not achieve beyond Level 2. There was some confusion relating to justice when it was considered, relating to what was change or continuity and almost no mention was made of feudal courts. Those who could deal with some aspects of both achieved low Level 3. The major problem was that very few could begin to make explicit links and explain the reasons why William employed continuity or change was the theme which limited judgement and virtually no candidate achieved 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.