



**General Certificate of Education
January 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS2B

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2B

Unit 2B: The Church in England: The Struggle for Supremacy, 1529–1547

General Comments

The overall quality of responses to this paper was very good. Whilst there were some unprepared answers, the majority of candidates continue to impress with their detailed knowledge and understanding of the period. There is a greater appreciation of how to deploy interpretations; there is much less indiscriminate naming of historians. Many candidates are structuring their responses to maximise the marks and clearly demonstrate the skills of analysis required. The importance given to precise evidence is more obvious in answers and there is an attempt to demonstrate judgement.

Question 1

- 01** Candidates responded well to the comparison of the two sources which focused on Thomas Cromwell. Most were able to contrast the view of Elton which was sympathetic to Cromwell with the more balanced view of Lucy Wooding. The majority of responses were able to distinguish between Source A which placed the responsibility for his downfall on his enemies and Source B which suggested that Henry VIII was responsible for the final decision. Differences were also noted about Cromwell's religious views and the significance of the Cleves marriage. The most significant similarity, that of Cromwell's responsibility for change, was also identified. Candidates were also selective in their use of own knowledge to contextualise the sources. It is encouraging that the majority of candidates are structuring their responses to identify similarities and differences between the two sources, supporting these comparisons with apposite quotes from the sources and own knowledge, and then making an assessment of how far the sources agree. There are still a few responses which do not recognise that the sources will agree in some areas and disagree in others. A few students still mistakenly write out each of the sources in their own words and then offer a comparison. Amongst the responses to this question were a small number of candidates who compared the sources, not with each other, but with other historians' views; to do so is not answering the question.
- 02** This question elicited some high level responses. Encouragingly, candidates structured balanced responses based on their own knowledge and the sources. There were only a small number of responses which did not examine more than one side. Interestingly, not all candidates chose to compare the changes which strengthened royal authority with those which diminished authority. Some candidates chose to focus on the role of Cromwell in increasing royal authority, others argued that it was the personal authority of Henry which was increased and some chose to focus specifically on changes to the Church which increased Royal Authority rather than government. Such responses were supported with material from the sources and own knowledge reached Level 5 as they showed judgement throughout. Candidates were very familiar with Elton's argument that there was a revolution in government and were able to adapt that to this question. The majority made good use of Source C which provided some basic information about changes to government especially relating to the extension of the King's powers. Very good use was made of knowledge relating to the establishment of the Royal Supremacy. There were some responses which were based almost entirely on the sources, perhaps from candidates who were re-taking the module and who had done insufficient revision. A

small number of responses decided that this was the Pilgrimage of Grace question and wrote almost exclusively about that. There was some uncertainty about 'government' which some equated with 'parliament' rather than the king's government and also some vagueness about 'royal authority'.

Question 2

- 03** Perhaps, unsurprisingly, the question on religion was by far the most popular of the two options. Candidates are generally more familiar with material from the earlier part of the specification. Issues relating to the state of religion are still the focus of lively debate and the most able candidates were able to identify why the clergy were being criticised and to suggest that recently historians have argued that the majority of the clergy were respected. Where this explanation was developed it was sufficient to achieve Level 4, offering as it did, depth of explanation and comment on the relationship between factors. Others reached Level 4 by stating what the most significant criticism of the clergy was. Others, clearly demonstrated how Wolsey personified many of the reasons why they clergy were criticised and that 1529 was the year in which he was brought to account. There was some very interesting material presented relating to the Hunne case and comparisons made with what was happening on the continent. A number of candidates interpreted the question very narrowly and regarded it as an opportunity to write about the reasons for Henry wanting an annulment. Credit was given for this as one reason, but it was insufficient, in itself, to reach the higher levels. Candidates scored highly on this question but it is important that the reasons should be stated precisely and that detailed evidence should be given in support. Some responses were written in sloppy and salacious terms more evident in the worst types of tabloid newspapers.
- 04** This question did elicit some detailed balanced answers. This is a popular topic and enables candidates to present a range of interpretations. Whilst there were some rehearsed responses, the majority of those who attempted it presented considered responses. Encouragingly, the details of the Acts are well known by most candidates and they are able to demonstrate the individual purpose of each as well as discussing overarching intentions. Most chose to argue that, whilst the Acts enabled Henry ultimately to gain the annulment of his marriage, despite his failure to pressure the pope into granting this within the Church of Rome, once Head of the Church of England, religious changes occurred. Others demonstrated the significance of Cromwell and Cranmer to achieving this objective and the influence which they gained. Some argued that Henry wanted an Erastian settlement and advocated the interpretation of George Bernard. The importance of a House of Commons keen to condemn Wolsey and moderate the powers of the Church were also well presented. There is clearly an argument that Henry want to increase his income, but it is difficult to argue that his key objective in the period 1529–1535 was to dissolve the monasteries acquire a war chest and attack France. Whilst this was posited by some of the weaker responses, it did mean that some of the stronger candidates lost focus. Focus is key when there is only 30 minutes to construct a balanced response which demonstrates judgement.

Question 3

- 05** The question on the marriage of Henry VIII to Catherine Howard was not done well. Some candidates knew which Catherine she was, but these were in the minority. Those who did were able to relate the marriage to the downfall of Cromwell and the resurgence of the conservative faction, most notably the Duke of Norfolk. The correct answers were able to state the attraction of Catherine's youth and personality compared to the difficulties Henry had experienced with Anne of Cleves. Unfortunately, many candidates offered a composite of the last three queens, which presented a more interesting profile than even

Holbein could manage. Most were able to identify that Henry wanted another male heir, which is always a safe bet. The majority who got the wrong queen were describing Catherine Parr, although there were some strange explanations of her religious leanings. The general problem was vagueness and sweeping generalisations.

- 06** There were a small number of responses to this question which examined the stages which Henry VIII went through to ensure the safe succession of his only son who was a minor and at the same time to protect the Church of England from falling into the hands of those, both internal and external who wanted to return to Rome. The majority of the responses viewed the succession very narrowly in terms of acquiring another male heir. A number of these believed that Catherine Parr was chosen for her child bearing hips. The material presented as a contrast to the succession was limited, although some did consider foreign policy. Interesting links were made by some of the better responses with the invasion of Scotland.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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