



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS1D

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS1D

Unit 1D: Britain, 1603–1642

General Comments

The examination paper was accessible to the vast majority of candidates, with only a tiny minority failed to attempt two full questions. Given the pressure of time answers were generally well-written though mis-spellings such as ‘thrown’ for ‘throne’ and ‘Armenian’ for ‘Arminian’ are still common. Grammatical errors still occur notably ‘of’ for ‘have’ and ‘highered’ for ‘raised’. As usual, there was a wide range of candidates though fewer at the bottom of the range than in previous years. The best scripts were outstanding, with explicitly focused, evaluative answers sustained throughout the question and supported by precise evidence and examples. Such scripts were able to demonstrate balance and show an understanding that historical events had multiple causes and could be variously interpreted. They were presented in a concise, clear style, employing appropriate vocabulary and reaching a reasoned judgement after a sustained argument clearly linked to the question. However, many scripts were weakened by several failings, which candidates should try to correct in future. One was answers which drifted off the focus of the question and despite accurate material did not address the question asked. In the sub-questions, two common faults were to confuse effects and causes, and to spend an unnecessary amount of time on a question with a maximum of twelve marks. It should be possible with average handwriting to produce a concise, focused, supported answer to the first part of the question in a page; it should not require three pages. Vague phrases such as ‘James tried to keep Puritans happy’ also weaken the quality of a script, as do sentences whose meaning cannot be determined. Assertions, often beginning with ‘I feel’ or ‘I believe’ are not as convincing as reasoned statements supported by evidence, i.e. ‘I think this because...’ Candidates should not waste time summarising what various textbooks or historians say. Rather they should select the evidence from their reading and deploy it in their answers. Unsound chronology continues to be a pitfall for many candidates because it leads candidates to write about events which did not occur within the time frame of the question. It can also lead candidates to confuse cause and effect.

Question 1

- 01** This was a popular question and there some excellent answers providing a range of background and immediate reasons which were explained and rounded off with some overall, reasoned assessment. The commonest fault was to lose the focus of the question. Thus most candidates mentioned the Gunpowder Plot but not all brought out why it was so frightening. Candidates either got bogged down in the details or wrote at length on how James dealt with the aftermath which was more relevant to Question 02. A surprising number of candidates failed to mention the ‘Powder Plot at all and spent much of their answer writing about the Millenary Petition, Hampton Court Conferences and Bancroft’s Canons. Puritan concerns were more a result of their fear of Catholics than a cause of it.
- 02** The overall response was quite often disappointing. Many candidates either wrote only or mainly on the period 1603 to 1611, or turned their answer into a question on James’s foreign policy from 1618. There was often too much description and not enough evaluation. Assessment of the Hampton Court Conference was particularly weak. Few made the point that James succeeded in keeping a broad Church by making few concessions to the Puritans. Even fewer made the point that he succeeded in squashing

hopes of a Presbyterian system in England for the next forty years. The new translation of the Bible, in which James played an active part, was not only a literary and religious triumph but enhanced his authority in theological disputes; it was, after all, called the 'King James' Bible'. Similarly Bancroft's Canons removed around ninety of the most extreme Puritan clergy not only from the Church but also eventually from England which enabled James to maintain his aim of a broad, balanced Church. Candidates did not always see that failure for the Puritans might be a success for the king. Similarly though James may have contributed to the bitterness felt by Catholic extremists in 1605 his later policies ensured that there were no more such plots. Candidates should be careful when describing James as 'tolerant'. It is true that fewer religious dissidents were executed under James than under Elizabeth but James expected everyone to attend the State Church and punished those who refused. In general, candidates were stronger on the later period than the earlier but some turned their answer into an assessment of his foreign policy in Europe, rather than keeping foreign policy linked to religious discontent at home.

Question 2

- 03** This question was generally done well. It was pleasing that candidates were using terms such as 'patronage', 'nepotism' and 'favourite' in their answers. However, there were misunderstandings. Candidates were confused about Villiers' background which was varyingly described as 'very humble', 'working class', and 'son of a Lancashire merchant' whereas he came from minor Leicestershire gentry. James I was not a 'pacifist' – though he was 'pacific' i.e. preferring peace to war. The question covered the years 1618 to 1623 and so material on Cadiz or La Rochelle was out of the time frame.
- 04** This question was also generally done well. Most candidates were able to bring out the ways in which Buckingham's foreign policy caused discontent in Parliament and between Parliament and Charles I. Candidates were also aware of a range of other factors such as religion, finance and Charles's personality. Candidates however, sometimes got bogged down in the details of the Cadiz and La Rochelle expeditions instead of focusing on why these created opposition in Parliament and how they led, especially through finance, to legal and constitutional conflicts. Nor should they neglect Parliament's own responsibility e.g. its wanting war to free the Palatinate and harass Spain but not voting enough money to equip a proper military and naval force. Nor should they overlook the provocative actions of MPs such as Eliot and Coke in 1625 over the customs, 1628 over the Petition of Right or 1629 over the Three Resolutions, nor Parliament's paranoia about a Catholic threat. Some candidates rightly pointed to fundamental weaknesses in the English State in the 1620s, e.g. its lack of experienced commanders, lack of a professional army/navy and lack of an effective taxation system capable of meeting the needs of government as the real cause of Crown-Parliament tension. It was, and is, tempting to make Buckingham a scapegoat for these deeper problems.

Question 3

- 05** There were some very comprehensive answers to this question, albeit some in a rather narrative form. The best answers focused on 1639–1640, explaining the reasons why Charles had little choice but to summon the Long Parliament given his defeat in the Second Bishops War, the terms of the Treaty of Ripon, the failure of the Short Parliament to vote subsidies and the collapse of the taxes used in the 1630s. Clearly the background factor was the Scots Covenanter rebellion sparked off by the Prayer Book, but some candidates became so obsessed with this that their answer became why there was a rebellion in Scotland rather than why Charles called the Long Parliament. Focusing on the question asked is essential for the best marks. Many candidates continue to have a weak grasp of the order of events in 1637–1640 and especially in 1639–1640.

06 Answers to questions on the outbreak of the Civil War have become noticeably better in the last few years. Candidates seem more aware of the key events of 1640 to 1642 and are less likely to write too much on the period before 1641–1642. Candidates are also more aware of the importance of considering why Parliament divided in 1641–1642 and who or what was responsible. Although there are still candidates who see the Civil War as Charles versus Parliament, more are recognising that it was a war between Charles and part of Parliament versus the rest. As long as Parliament was united, which it was in late 1640 and early 1641, the king could not find enough support to challenge it. He had to agree to the beheading of Strafford and the Legal Revolution, and only when the parliamentary radicals went too far could he begin to attract support within Parliament and the country. However, candidates do need to give more attention to the events of 1642. There is a tendency to assert that after the attempted arrest of the 5 MPs in January 1642, civil war was certain. Yet war was not formally declared for another eight months and Charles's action temporarily reunited Parliament after the divisions at the time of the Grand Remonstrance. Charles's flight to York creating two centres of authority, Pym's Militia Ordinance 'which suggested that Parliament could make law without the king', Henrietta Maria's raising troops abroad, printed propaganda, the extreme demands of the Nineteen Propositions and a combination of Commissions of Array and threats of sequestration, all divided Parliament and country, forcing Englishmen to take sides. Many candidates continue to need a firmer grasp of the order of events in 1641–1642 to produce convincing answers. Some candidates continue to give summaries of the Whig and Revisionist views on the Civil War when they would be better employed using their own knowledge to answer the question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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