



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS1K

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS1K

Unit 1K: Russia and Germany, 1871–1914

General Comments

Candidates performed well in this examination and seem to be increasingly familiar with the relevant material. The German section of the course seemed to be particularly well known although there is still a tendency for some students to include a huge section on Bismarck no matter what the question is. Candidates are also increasingly focused on meeting the question demands, although dates remain problematic for some, and are often ignored if this is the case.

Question 1

- 01** Question 01 was narrowly the most popular question but the German section was less overwhelmingly popular than in previous years. Despite this it was well answered and candidates appeared to be very familiar with the material, with a high percentage achieving either Level 4 or the top of Level 3. Most students seemed to know Caprivi very well and were able to give a range of reasons for his downfall. In many cases candidates were able to gain Level 4 by explaining how the Kaiser's desire to 'Rule, not Reign' was a long-term problem for Caprivi; they were also able to explain how the views of the Kaiser, which had initially coincided with those of Caprivi, changed, helping to cause Caprivi's downfall. Impressively, many candidates were also able to give detailed explanation as to how Caprivi's policies had alienated the landowners and military groups who surrounded the Kaiser. There was also reference to the influence of the 'Camarillo' on Wilhelm's thinking and very often reference to anti-socialist policy as a catalyst for resignation. At Level 3 there was good and clear explanation of the factors leading to Caprivi's resignation often with an emphasis on Wilhelm's desire to rule. At Level 2 although there was some understanding of the causes for Caprivi's resignation, this often only covered one factor or was vague with some inaccuracy.
- 02** Again this was a popular question and showed that candidates had a good knowledge and understanding of some of the key issues. Candidates knew a great deal about the organisation of German government and about the policies of the Kaiser and the chancellors. A mistake made by some candidates was to write a great deal about Caprivi, which usually gained no marks unless they made a valid reference to the implications of his resignation in 1890. A less frequent error was to write almost exclusively about Bismarck, which some candidates still do for many of the German questions. Nearly a third of the candidates who answered this question gained Level 4 or above, reflecting a good understanding of the subject matter and the issues raised by this question. Good answers included detailed knowledge of the chancellors of this time period and also made a supported assessment as to the extent of the influence of the chancellors balanced against other factors. Key to this was understanding the role played by Wilhelm II and how this had an impact on the influence wielded by the chancellors; candidates in these levels realised that this changed over time and were able to explain the various factors that affected this. Many candidates at these levels also evaluated the influence of the Reichstag and examined how well the individual chancellors were able to deal with this in particular the rising influence of the SPD. Candidates at Level 3 had a reasonable knowledge of the chancellors in this time period but whilst they did make an overall assessment of their influence, they tended to be limited in developing these ideas. Many candidates also adopted a very chronological approach to the issue. At Level 2

candidates produced some relevant material on the chancellors but this tended to be descriptive and thin.

Question 2

- 03** This was another popular question and was also well-answered, with many candidates showing a good knowledge of the issues. Most candidates showed a solid understanding of the problems facing the Russian economy in this time period, although some did struggle to explain why this led to a desire to promote industrialisation. Many candidates achieved either the top of Level 3 or Level 4 and were able to explain the reasons for the desire to industrialise. At Level 4 candidates linked and prioritised the reasons, often referring to the influence of Witte or the need to protect Russia's status as a great power. Many referred to the growth of Russia's rivals and also linked this to the humiliation of defeat in the Crimean war in the 1850s. Some candidates referred to the international situation in the 1890s. At Level 3 candidates gave a range of reasons for the desire to industrialise; Russia's backwardness in comparison to other powers was given as a key reason. At Level 2 most candidates gave a description of Russia's backwardness which included the lack of industry. Some answers at this level described industrial development and a few described issues from the later time period. Some Level 1 answers gave very general comments, e.g., Russia needed to industrialise because it was very backward.
- 04** This was a popular question with a number of candidates producing effective answers; however it was less well-answered than question 02, primarily because some candidates seemed to struggle in providing some material within the time period. At Levels 4 and 5 candidates produced a range of material to support the arguments that Russian governments were or were not successful in achieving economic success. Candidates referred to Stolypin's reforms of agriculture and gave some assessment of their success. There was also discussion of the growth in the Russian economy weighed against the problem of foreign debt. Candidates referred to the expansion of the rail network, yet added the assessment that other countries still had more mileage. Many candidates at these levels also referred to continuing unrest and poor conditions and the inequality that affected the domestic market. Candidates at Level 5 were able to use this material to reach an effective judgement. At Level 3 there tended to be a great deal of emphasis on the agricultural reforms and an assessment of their success. Candidates usually included some material on the industrial economy but this was quite limited. There was also a tendency at the bottom of this level, and more so in Level 2, to refer to the work of Witte in the 1890s. At Level 2 candidates gave rather generalised comments on the Russian economy and had a very thin focus on this time period. Otherwise quite a few described Stolypin's reforms, another section claimed that nothing was done to reform agriculture in this period.

Question 3

- 05** This was a well-answered question with many candidates achieving the top of Level 3 or Level 4. Many candidates seem to know a great deal about Bismarck's foreign policy. The candidates who gained Level 4 were very clear about why Bismarck wished to maintain good relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary. They prioritised with many pointing out that the isolation of France was a key foreign policy aim. They linked this to the desire to prevent any kind of alliance between Russia and France and Bismarck's need to maintain good relations with both Russia and Austria-Hungary. These candidates also gave a detailed explanation of how the situation in the Balkans could make this difficult. At Level 3 most candidates were able to explain the importance of keeping France isolated and the need for Bismarck to maintain good relations with Russian as well as with Austria-Hungary. At this level some errors which had an impact on the validity of answers began to creep in, some candidates claimed that Germany had already formed

the Dual Alliance with Austria. At Level 2 candidates were mostly clear that Bismarck wished to keep France isolated but were not clear on how this linked to his relationship with Russia and Austria-Hungary. There were also mistakes and inaccuracies, as shown above.

- 06** This was the question that caused most problems for candidates. Firstly, many could not stick to the time period at all and, as has been the case with many foreign policy questions, focused on events in the Balkans in the 1870s and 1880s. Such material could not be rewarded. Other candidates stuck to the general time period but struggled to stop in 1909 and continued to include material up to 1914. An attempt was made to reward these candidates if they had made an effort to link this material to the question demands, e.g., some candidates referred to the German military, highlighting the Balkans as an area where war might break out in 1911 and then pointed out that war did indeed break out there in 1914. There were many candidates who did answer this question effectively. At Levels 4 and 5 answers provided a range of material referring to the Bosnian crisis in 1908 and assessing the impact on the relationship between Russia and Germany. These candidates went on to assess the impact of the alliance system, military build up, the role of the Kaiser and specific events such as the two Moroccan Crises. At Level 5 this provided a judgement on the issue. At Level 3 there was some reference to the Bosnian crisis and an attempt to assess its significance, there was also a consideration of other factors. At Level 2 there was an attempt to deal with the issue but the amount of relevant material was very thin and often included a focus outside the time period.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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