



**General Certificate of Education
January 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS1L

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS1L

Unit 1L: Britain, 1906–1951

General Comments

This was the fifth sitting of examination for Unit HIS1L of the current History Specification. The paper was accessible to the vast majority of candidates. All scripts were marked in accordance with the Mark Scheme and where there were responses which did not fall neatly into that Scheme the principles of it were applied to these more unusual answers. The level of historical knowledge was generally good. At least a third of candidates were at ease with the skills and techniques required especially in answering the 12 marks questions with most openly looking for three clear and focused explanations, giving them marks in Level 3 or Level 4. Question 1 was the most popular and Question 2 the least popular. Overall both parts of Question 1 were answered reasonably successfully with many being very familiar with the topic of changes in the role of women in Question 02. Many answers to Question 3 were competent gaining marks in Level 3 and above. The exact circumstances of Churchill's succession to the premiership were not always known in detail in Question 05, but Question 06 produced responses which had range on factors beyond the issue of social reform in the 1945 General Election. Question 2 was the least popular, but nevertheless attracted a substantial number of candidates. Both parts were less well answered than their equivalents in the other two full questions. On the whole Question 04 was answered more successfully than Question 03, though a minority performed less well on the former than on the latter.

Most candidates found the time available for answering both parts of two questions manageable. A smaller minority than in previous examinations did not do so. They spent more than the appropriate twelve minutes on one 12 marks question, normally Question 01 and consequently failed to leave sufficient time for completing their other three responses. An even smaller minority failed to complete four answers and thereby 'threw away' 12 or 24 marks. As in previous examinations, a few candidates chose to answer both of their 24 marks questions first before tackling those with a tariff of 12 marks. A handful of candidates possibly benefitted from this approach, but most employing the tactic did not. Their answers to the lower tariff questions were either brief and/or repeated, often irrelevantly, material deployed in the response to the 24 marks questions. A very small number of candidates ignored or misread the rubric and answered all three full (i.e. all six from 01 to 06) questions. In those cases marks awarded were for the best two full questions and marks for their lowest scoring full question dropped. Marks awarded to individual candidates ranged from the maximum of 72 to those in single figures. As previously the very best scripts, that is those achieving Levels 4 and 5 marks, were distinguished by their features of secure and appropriate knowledge, explicit understanding including historical interpretations, clear and developed explanation or balanced argument, judgement, and were well organised and presented. The weakest scripts were those unable to demonstrate basic accurate knowledge of topics and/or were confused and/or wrote about matters irrelevant to the question. Those who had very little basic secure knowledge, for example confusing developments in the two world wars, whilst answering Question 1 or Question 3, or both, provided the weakest responses, scoring very few marks because there was little, or on occasion nothing, worthy of credit. On the whole it was these candidates who, without secure knowledge, lacked understanding and did not argue, but asserted without supporting evidence.

Quality of Written Communication was generally better than in previous examinations of this option. Poor grammar, including the lack of appropriate punctuation, undermined the responses of just a few candidates. Again the handwriting in a few scripts was poor making it difficult to follow argument being made. The main spelling mistakes of proper nouns were of 'Lloyd George' (in just a few cases), 'Ramsay Macdonald', 'Snowden', 'Chamberlain' and 'Attlee'. Quite a few candidates used the word 'of' instead of 'have'. Use of phrases such as 'this could be' or 'this may have been a reason' was quite extensive and, when deployed, gave the impression that the candidate was far from confident or certain in formulating an argument.

Question 1

- 01** This was answered quite successfully overall with about fifty per cent of responses being awarded marks at the very top of Level 2 or in Levels 3 and 4. The fact that this question covered the whole of the war period and not just the early months in 1914–1915 helped candidates to show clear understanding and many were, in the main, able to produce clear explanations. Most saw the key reason as control of the economy by the government as absolutely necessary in fighting what developed into a 'total war'. The shortages of both labour and ammunition were popular explanations for interventionist economic management, about which there was generally a high level of knowledge and especially of the needs of production in a wartime economy and of the contribution of Lloyd George. Less emphasis was placed on the direction of labour and the need to work together with the trade unions. Some candidates, those normally gaining marks in Level 4, also considered broader economic issues, such as nationalisation, trade and the balance of payments, and the need for Britain to approach self sufficiency especially in 1917-18. DORA received some mention though many were uncertain of its provisions, for example citing it as 'introducing' conscription. On the other hand many dealt competently with the need for conscription and its consequences for production such as the requirement for even more female workers. A few considered security issues such as the need to seek out German spies, but these were not usually successfully linked to the control of the economy. Those responses receiving marks in Level 2 normally contained fewer than three clear reasons for governmental control of the economy, or in a few cases lacked much development but simply and briefly just listed basic reasons. Level 1 marks were given when a response was unduly generalised and/or assertive containing hardly any, or just descriptive material.
- 02** Well over half of responses gained marks in Level 3 and above. Most of the remainder fell into Level 2. Those which inter-linked changes in economic, social and political spheres and covered the whole period of the Question received marks in Levels 4 or 5. They also acknowledged that changes could be understood in a longer term perspective and that the experiences in the War acted as an accelerator. The changes to the economic role of women during the First World War were understood by the majority of candidates. There was exemplification of the range of employment, its temporary nature for many women and the lack of equality in pay. Social changes received attention in most responses, though material varied from sound understanding of the advantages brought about by new or increased income, more responsibility for the household and freer social activities to generalisations which frequently overstated the extent of women's liberation during and just after the War. Weaker answers tended to put the emphasis on description of sexual behaviour, dress, smoking and visiting 'pubs' rather than evaluating the extent of the changes. Some wrote of romantic attachments to GIs confusing 'goings on' with change in the Second World War. In terms of political change quality of responses was generally sound. Most answers put the activities of the suffragettes, and especially their suspension of activities from the beginning of the War and demand 'to serve', into the context of the Question. However, weaker answers gave descriptions of

suffragette activity especially before the War. Many responses pointed out that the 'munitionettes' did not receive the vote in 1918 and a few that the terms of the 1918 Act enfranchised women in a way of which Mrs Pankhurst approved given her solid regard for property. Those responses which did deal with the 1928 Equal Franchise Act showed valid knowledge of its equalisation of women with men in the right to vote and also why it had been introduced to honour an off-the cuff remark made by Joynson-Hicks. Stronger answers did point out that the class system more or less emerged intact after the War and that this continued to have profound implications for women especially during the 1920s when those most directly affected by American films, prosperity and fashion tended to come from a relatively small and elevated social stratum. The main flaw in answers across the range of responses was a failure to go beyond 1918 and ignore the 1920s and the 1928 Enfranchisement Act. It seemed that this either happened because the Question was misread or of a conscious decision to stick with material with which they were familiar.

Question 2

03 Overall this was the least well-answered 12 marks question on the paper, although 31 percent were awarded marks in Levels 3 and 4. Rather more than one-third were placed in Level 2. The Specification is mainly concerned with problems of the economy and industrial relations under Labour (and Conservatives), though only better responses gave economic difficulties and especially the problem of dealing with unemployment as one of the reasons for the fall of the Labour government in 1924. Rather more, however, did connect economic, industrial and unemployment problems to Labour's 'relationship' with communism and the Soviet Union. Those candidates who had knowledge of the record of the first Labour government, given the indication in the Specification about the emergence of the Labour Party to play an important role in British politics, were able to gain marks in Level 4 or at least at the top of Level 3. On the other hand there were some candidates who had little knowledge about the first Labour government beyond generalisations about links with communism or the fact that it was a minority government. These responses gained marks in Level 2. Indeed for this Question answers were either very good with development on relevant reasons or relatively weak and in some cases confused. A few confused the Labour government with the downfall of the Coalition in 1922, and Lloyd George with MacDonald. However, most answers did give the minority status of the government as a reason for its downfall. Those with knowledge and understanding were able to link Labour's problems with the 'Red Scare', both internally and externally, by reference to the Campbell Case, links with the Soviet Union as evidenced in the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement and the Zinoviev Letter.

04 This was the least well answered of the 24 marks questions on the paper. For most candidates tackling Question 2 this Part was better answered than Part 03, although for some the reverse was true. There was a variable degree of knowledge of the economic, financial and political crises of 1931. Most candidates were aware of the importance of the Wall Street Crash and its effects on the British economy, notably the rapidly rising unemployment. Responses which did gain marks in Levels 4 and 5 made absolutely clear the dilemma for the Labour government of the deepening financial crisis with increasing expenditure on benefit payments due to rising unemployment (with often reference to Snowden's determination to keep a balanced budget and Britain on the gold standard) and the expectation of Labour Party members and supporters, and the unemployed, to receive an adequate level of 'dole' money. They were well aware of Labour's working class electorate. Such answers were also aware of the two committees set up by MacDonald to consider unemployment and the economy, and government finance. The most confident answers were knowledgeable about the findings of the May Committee

and its demands on the government. There was valid understanding of the way in which this split the Labour Party as well as some creditable understanding of MacDonald's actions in setting up the National government. Weaker responses confused the two committees with some making Mosley a member of the May Committee. Some of these, and indeed answers of better quality which achieved Level 3 marks, 'forgot' that this second Labour administration was also a minority government even when they had made this a key aspect of their responses to Question 03. The internal conflicts within Labour were the subject of misunderstanding in answers placed in Level 2 or Level 1. Some believed Keynes to be a member of the government with a few erroneously describing him as the main participant in a mission to the USA to elicit a loan, obviously confused with Britain's financial problems after the Second World War. However, these responses which did achieve marks in Levels 4 and 5 did evaluate how far rising unemployment was the reason for the fall of the government whilst considering the associated problems in depth and with judgement based on evidence.

Question 3

- 05** This Question was the best answered of the 12 marks questions on the paper. 40 per cent were awarded marks in the two higher Levels. Candidates were able to find valid reasons for Churchill becoming Prime Minister. Most articulated his opposition to the Nazis and to the National government's appeasement policy in the 1930s. They also explained his advantages over Halifax, who was a member of the Lords and associated with appeasement policy. Many also mentioned Halifax's ultimate reluctance to become Prime Minister. There was considerable material comparing Churchill's skills of oratory and leadership with the relative weakness of Chamberlain. However, those who generalised about those skills only or dominantly received marks in Level 2. This was also the case for answers which focused on appeasement policy and its popularity until 1939. What most candidates missed, although not those gaining marks in Level 4, was the deteriorating military situation in May 1940 (the date specifically mentioned in the Question) and in particular the failure to save Norway from German invasion. Particularly sound answers, often receiving maximum marks also pointed out that, despite Churchill being First Lord of the Admiralty, Chamberlain received the blame. Again only the best responses mentioned the difficult vote of confidence for Chamberlain or the Labour Party's refusal to serve under him but to do so under Churchill.
- 06** This question was answered fairly successfully overall with some close attention to the wording of the Question. Many candidates were aware of the importance of the Beveridge Report for citizens in wartime Britain and of the Labour Party's support of its proposals. However, only the stronger answers indicated that Churchill's Coalition government had commissioned the Report and had carried out some of its recommendations, for example through the 1944 Education Act and by introducing family allowances. Responses which achieved marks in Levels 4 and 5 were normally those suggesting that the beginnings of social reform came from Labour wartime ministers, notably Attlee, Bevin and Morrison rather than the Treasury which was in Conservative hands. Most responses considered factors accounting for the Conservative defeat in 1945 other than Churchill's attitude towards social reform. Particularly 'popular' in terms of these factors were the weak Conservative Election campaign, its over-dependency on Churchill's wartime record, his 'Gestapo' speech, Conservative lack of planning for peacetime, the role of wartime nationalisation and the greater readiness to accept socialism. On the last factor many responses acknowledged the influence which came from the Soviet Union as a successful ally of Britain. Many comprehensive answers emphasised how the Conservatives were haunted by 'the ghost of Chamberlain' and the record of the Conservatives on unemployment during the 1930s. Such responses also

alluded to the leftwards shift in public attitudes and the appeal of the Labour campaign and manifesto. Answers which had depth in dealing with social reform and broader electoral issues received marks in the higher Levels. Those which focused too narrowly, either just on social reform as a general concept (with some not even mentioning the Beveridge Report) and/or on a narrow range of other factors received marks in Level 2.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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