



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS1M

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS1M

Unit 1M: USA, 1890–1945

General Comments

There is still a tendency for a number of candidates to write as much for 12-mark answers as for 24-mark answers which has major implications for timing and marks awarded. Timing also appeared to be a more general problem for those candidates who failed to get onto a second question.

Question 1

- 01** This question seemed accessible to most candidates, and a number of factors for the USA becoming increasingly isolationist were put forward. Level 4 answers provided at least 3 well explained factors and attempted to either cover the links between factors or to prioritise factors in terms of relative importance, with evidence to support such prioritisation.
- 02** The two wars covered in this question did create some organisational problems for some students, while better answers tended to adopt a thematic approach which identified factors common to both wars such as: economic motives, the role of the president, and 'the sinking of a ship', and then dealt with both wars in themed paragraphs alongside each other, rather than adopting the essay of two parts approach, dealing with one war and then the other. Stronger candidates showed a good grasp of the link between the Yellow Press (Hearst and Pulitzer) and public opinion. Weaker answers tended to list factors such as the Zimmermann telegram and the sinking of the Lusitania, without really attempting to analyse their significance in relation to the question and public opinion. There was also confusion for some candidates over which wars actually started in 1898 and 1917, and a number of candidates included the attack on Pearl Harbor and Hitler in reference to 1917, which was slightly alarming.

Question 2

- 03** A number of candidates scored zero on this question on account of having no idea at all of what the Palmer Raids were. Better answers tended to include the context of the Red Scare following the Russian Revolution and the First World War.
- 04** Candidates in the main did not really focus sufficiently on the extent to which attitudes towards immigrants changed, and almost answered this question as if it had been a 12-mark question on why people opposed immigration. Weaker answers often tended to focus solely on the negative attitudes to immigration. Better answers compared attitudes at the start of the 1920s and the end of the decade, or looked at positive and negative attitudes during the period, or even contrasted attitudes prior to 1920 with attitudes in the 1920s. Some stronger answers were organised along the lines of a social/political/economic approach which aided structure. Credit was given for any such approach so long as detail and analysis were present. Some candidates included African Americans as immigrants, or wrote in very generalised terms about immigrants taking jobs, being paid less and breaking strikes (which could be applied to anti-immigrant feeling in almost any country at any time), without citing specific examples from particular

industries; although government legislation seemed to be known in more detail. Generalised comments about certain ethnic groups drinking heavily need more detailed support.

Question 3

- 05** A good number of candidates broke answers down into 'Left', 'Right', and 'Judicial' opposition, which allowed coverage of a number of inter-related factors, or a decent attempt at prioritisation. There were a number of very long answers to this question, and candidates should try to focus on being more concise.
- 06** A number of candidates either did not read this question carefully enough, or had very little knowledge of opposition to the New Deal. Some attempted to answer a question about the success of the New Deal and included nothing at all on opponents, never mind what their aims were or whether they achieved them. Stronger candidates often adopted the 3-pronged approach to opposition they had set out in 05, and showed great discrimination in how they dealt with each type of opposition. Weaker candidates assumed that Huey Long's death meant that his opposition had failed, and did not consider the influence his ideas did have on FDR. There was also a tendency for weaker candidates to get caught up in irrelevant biographical details of Long and Coughlin, and to confuse the role of the Supreme Court with that of Congress, which emphasises the importance of candidates having a broad understanding of how the US constitution works.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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