



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2011**

**History 1041**

**Unit HIS2D**

***Report on the Examination***

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## *Unit HIS2D*

### **Unit 2D: Britain, 1625–1642: The Failure of Absolutism?**

#### **General Comments**

The standard of most scripts was, if not as strong as the June series, generally good. Few candidates failed to use the sources in their responses to Question 1(02) and the majority were able to make some attempt at the questions they selected. Most showed a sound overall grasp of the periods in question. Question 2 period 1625 to 1629 was far more popular than Question 3 on the causes of the civil war.

#### **Question 1**

- 01** Most candidates dealt with comparing the sources well. Ship Money is clearly a central topic and therefore many were able to deploy their own knowledge. Sometimes this use of own knowledge was not always integrated as part of source comparison. It is clear that most candidates worked their answer to a structure of considering differences and similarities before bringing their answer to a conclusion. The best avoided summarising the sources before beginning a real comparison. The strongest answers made sustained comparisons, pointing out the differences and similarities while paraphrasing key source content and supporting this with specific own knowledge.
- 02** The vast majority of candidates used the sources although some still relied too heavily on them or had their 'use' of the sources as a stand alone section. The best responses integrated reference to the sources as part of an argument. Most candidates were able to provide some balance in their answers, notably by pointing to the financial success of Charles's measures, while pointing out the problems with religion. The strongest responses dealt more clearly with the idea of surface success and the creation of growing discontent in response to Charles's financial and religious policies. Many needed to put more detail into their consideration of Charles's measures but the key area that needed a fuller consideration as part of a judgement on success was opposition. Candidates needed to give examples of opposition but, more importantly, comment on the nature of this opposition. A key part of this, which the best responses did, was to comment on the Scottish rebellion as the trigger for Charles initiating the Hampden Case and the subsequent examples of more open opposition in the crisis years of 1638–1640. Some very good responses also used the evidence of the attitude of MPs in 1640 to comment on Charles's alienation of the political nation.

#### **Question 2**

- 03** There were many good responses to this question that warranted full marks. There were, however, some candidates who were unable to provide a definition of Arminianism and were thus not providing any clear context for the root of concerns at Charles's promotion of it. Some who did point out that the concern derived from perceptions of Arminianism as a form of Catholicism then failed to develop this with reasons focused in the period 1625 to 1626 as demanded by the question. As well as providing a clear explanation of what Arminianism appeared to be and why this was a concern for the majority of a Calvinist nation, let alone the Puritans, candidates should have centred their reasons on the examples of Montagu, the York House Conference, or even reference to Laud.

- 04** This question was handled competently by the majority of students. Most could address Charles as a key factor and, to varying degrees, consider the other factors of the period, finance, foreign policy, Buckingham and religion. Fewer were able to deal with Parliament as a source of tension. The key areas for development remain the precision and weight of support for each factors and comment on the inter-relation of the factors. As in previous years some candidates fail to mention anything significant after 1627 apart from the assassination of Buckingham. In considering this period candidates should address the Petition of Right (1628) and the Three Resolutions (1629). This can be done as part of a consideration of the role of Parliament and should also be linked back to other factors/events such as the Forced Loan, the Five Knights' Case and Arminianism.

### **Question 3**

- 05** Not many candidates chose this question and it produced the weakest responses. Some simply did not address the question or show understanding of the Root and Branch Petition. The best responses were able to explain what the Petition was and from this the reasons why it caused concern for moderates. Most focused on the threat to episcopacy being a threat to order. There were a few excellent responses that linked this to the concept of the 'great chain of being' and even James I's statement of 'no bishop, no king' from the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. Other key reasons addressed were the 15,000 signatures as part of concerns about the 'London mob' and the people's involvement in politics, reserved to the political nation, or the role of Pym and Puritans as sign of his and their political and religious radicalism.
- 06** Despite the focus of the question being the Irish Rebellion there were still many scripts that did not really illustrate a clear grasp of the development of the two sides necessary for civil war in the key period October 1641 to August 1642. Some candidates did not link the Irish Rebellion to the Militia Bill and the consequent division in Parliament. For questions on the causes of the civil war candidates should have a secure knowledge of the key events of the period post October 1641.

- Irish Rebellion
- Militia Bill
- Grand Remonstrance
- Five Members' Coup
- Exclusion Bill
- Militia Ordinance

The better responses were able to see this process as part of the development of Constitutional Royalism as moderates became increasingly wary of 'King Pym'. Candidates should also be aware that while the Militia Ordinance was passed in March 1642 civil war in England did not break out until August 1642. It was the activism of religious radicals in the localities, a key example being Oliver Cromwell, that destroyed the last attempts of moderates at settlement through the 22 county neutrality agreements.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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