



**General Certificate of Education  
June 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 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. Questions 2 (03) and (04) on the period 1629 to 1640 were more popular than Questions 3 (05) and (06) on the causes of the civil war.

#### **Question 1**

- 01** Most candidates dealt with comparing the sources well. Most were able to point out some differences. A few unfortunately did not deal with the similarities in the sources. Others failed to support their comparison with 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 other factors such as finance or Charles. Most answers ably demonstrated Buckingham's central role from his position as favourite as well as commenting on his role in foreign policy as Lord High Admiral and religion through the York House Conference. Stronger answers dealt with the issue of Buckingham as a scapegoat and Charles's refusal to sacrifice him to Parliament's calls for impeachment. Many were able to link finance directly to foreign policy and commented well on the key issue of the Forced Loan. The weakest element of many responses to this question was the failure to address central issues in 1628 and 1629, notably the Petition of Right and Three Resolutions. The best answers did so, sometimes by looking at these in relation to Parliament as a factor in the tension of these years or how the relationship dissolved to the point that the Petition and Resolutions emerged. Covering the date range of the questions is important.

#### **Question 2**

- 03** There were many good responses to this question that warranted full marks. Candidates commented on the question of whether there was an emergency, the extension from coastal to inland or the financial success of the rate and therefore Charles' potential absolutism. There was a mix of responses who attempted to use Hampden's Case. Some, unfortunately, just provided a narrative. The best shaped the case as evidence of concerns about the raising of ship money. Some also commented well on the concerns from the point of view of Charles.

- 04** This question was handled competently by the majority of students. Most could address examples of opposition and make some judgement on success. Some candidates achieved full marks without any reference to Scotland but the vast majority of candidates did use the Scottish Rebellion as part of their answer, with many doing so in a very focused way to assess the nature of opposition in England. The strongest answers were able to write confidently about the nature of opposition in England and in particular the growing underlying discontent. In order to do this the stronger answers had a greater grasp of examples of opposition across the period, for example, St. Gregory's Case, John Williams, Prynne, Burton and Bastwick, Lilburne, emigration through the Providence Island Company, the diaries of the Kent gentry and Hampden's Case. Some candidates were also able to comment on the problems of opposition, especially for conservatives caused by the absence of Parliament, the forum by which the political nation expressed its grievances. From this some used the general unity of MPs against the abuses of the Personal Rule as a sign of the discontent. In judging success most, however, argued that English opposition had little impact on Charles and it was the Scottish Rebellion that really proved decisive in undermining his rule and forcing him to call Parliament.

### **Question 3**

- 05** There were many good answers to this question. Most could explain why the document was radical, as a direct attack on the monarch and his prerogative. Most could also comment on Pym's role in relation to this. Many also commented on the closeness of the vote, 159-148, as a sign of division. Some also took this a stage further and explained the division caused, after the vote, by the debate on whether to publish the Grand Remonstrance. The best did this in relation to the fear of 'King Pym' and his use of the 'London Mob' by moving politics outside of the traditional arena preserved for the political nation. Others provided useful context to their explanations by firmly setting the Remonstrance amidst the heightened political atmosphere at Westminster created by the need to discuss the Militia Bill because of the Irish Rebellion. It was the division on the Militia Bill that had forced the introduction of the Grand Remonstrance.
- 06** Despite the focus being the period 1604–1642 there were still many scripts that dealt with too much before 1640. Some candidates took a good thematic approach to the question dealing with religion, parliamentary radicals, Charles and constitutional royalism as their themes. In illustrating religion candidates used:
- Root and Branch Petition
  - iconoclasm
  - Irish Rebellion
  - Nature of Parliamentary radicalism
  - The Exclusion Bill
  - The actions of radicals such as Cromwell after March 1642

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. Explaining this process is vital in explaining how civil war was possible. 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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