



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2011**

**History 1041**

**Unit HIS2P**

***Report on the Examination***

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## Unit HIS2P

### Unit 2P: The Campaign for African-American Civil Rights in the USA, 1950–1968

#### Question 1

- 01** Candidates had few difficulties identifying basic differences of view between the sources although some candidates' answers were laboured and there were still some who wrote out Source A before turning their attention to Source B. This wasted time and space and earned no credit. A number erroneously tried to suggest difference where one source omitted to say something which the other mentioned and there were some attempts to generate valid differences from the dates of the extracts. Similarity was handled rather better with obvious similarities such as the reference to the success of the NAACP being picked up by most candidates who had been instructed to look for both similarity and difference. Candidates also need to remember that their own knowledge is required when answering this question; few sought to put the achievements of the NAACP into their context or added anything of significance to the source material provided, and this prevented them from gaining the higher marks available for a good understanding. The best candidates provided precise detail to support or refute the views presented, notably in the NAACP's decision to choose the Rosa Parks case rather than that of Claudette Colvin as evidence that the organisation had a preference for middle class blacks.
- 02** The majority of candidates attempted to use all three sources to address the question of the importance of Civil Rights groups in challenging segregation in the years 1950–1960 but few candidates engaged with groups not mentioned in the source. CORE, the SNCC and, to a lesser extent the MIA would all have earned credit here. Most students attempted to introduce an element of balance into their responses in order to address how important the work of the civil rights groups was in challenging segregation; better answers went beyond the sources to do so and drew on the role of the Presidents, Supreme Court and individuals/grass roots actions. There were some excellent, thoughtful and well argued responses to this question, but equally, there were some weaker ones which relied on misplaced source references and assertion.

#### Question 2

- 03** The best answers to this question combined both specific detail on the origins of the Freedom Summer and contextual detail on the status of the Civil Rights Bill in Congress and the status of Mississippi as perhaps the most segregated state. Some students confused the Freedom Summer with the Freedom Rides and this highlighted the importance of a clear understanding of all the key events in the period. Students who lacked specific knowledge on the Freedom Summer were able to earn marks by using their contextual knowledge to bring in the importance of the media in sustaining pressure on government through exposing the situation in the South. It was clear that many students had seen the film *Mississippi Burning* and this had been used as a stimulus to study of the events of the Freedom Summer and other key aspects of the course.

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- 04** Many answers addressed the question in a generalised way, lacking the specific knowledge required to focus on political rights. However, what separated the good from the average was the degree to which candidates considered the words, '*political rights*'. It was clear that some candidates did not understand what was meant by political rights outside of the narrow focus of voting rights. Better candidates were able to relate other aspects of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in particular to the acquisition of political rights and the very best candidates were able to provide figures and/or names of black representatives who went on to hold positions of political power between 1964 and 1968. Strong candidates were also able to adapt their knowledge from other areas of the course, arguing that the admiration expressed towards the aims of the Black Panthers signified continuing political disenfranchisement, as did the succession of riots in urban centres from 1964 on.

### **Question 3**

- 05** Many candidates showed a keen appreciation and enthusiasm for the life of Malcolm X but limited understanding for the events leading up to his departure from the Nation of Islam. Descriptive answers were often the result and there was some confusion over the order of events surrounding the departure, with many students suggesting the Malcolm was still a member of the Nation when he left for Mecca. Good answers focused on Malcolm's ill chosen words on the death of JFK, resentment from other ministers over his profile, Malcolm's increasing realisation of the hypocrisy of the movement, and the death threats to his family that characterised his final days in the NOI. The best answers were able to link these effectively and again it was clear that some students had been guided through the Spike Lee biopic and had found the experience useful.
- 06** Students were often undecided about what constituted 'radicalism' in response to this question with many focusing exclusively on the Black Panthers and/or Nation of Islam. Better answers also examined the increasing radicalisation of CORE and the SNCC and the damage this did to the movement in the South. The commensurate decline of the non-violent movement in the later half of the decade was only infrequently linked to the growth in radicalism but a large number of students did engage with the idea that the radical civil rights movement could lay claim to far fewer concrete achievements than the non-violent movement in the South. Several students attempted to introduce historiography to this and other questions but often this amounted to little more than description and was credited as such.

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

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