



**General Certificate of Education
January 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS1G

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS1G

Unit 1G: Britain, 1815–1865

General Comments

The quality of response to this paper was mixed. The work of the best students was directly argued, fluently written and supported by confident knowledge. It was pleasing that most answers, at all levels of ability, showed willingness to respond to the specific wording of the questions; unrelated factual description for its own sake was relatively rare. There were, however, widespread weaknesses that led to under-achievement. Many answers were rushed and uncontrolled, lacking clarity or accuracy of expression. More successful answers were concisely expressed and selective in the use of supporting evidence.

A second weakness was poor grasp of chronology and lack of attention to the key dates of the question. This applied to several questions but above all to *Question 1.02*, where a majority of answers focused exclusively on the years to 1820, ignoring the end date of 1827, and *Question 3.06*, where many students either did not notice the key dates, 1830 to 1846, or just did not know anything about foreign policy during those years. It was hard to avoid the impression that many students had gambled on covering only parts of the specification.

Question 1

- 01** Answers to *Question 1.01*, on the introduction of the Corn Laws, were mostly sound. The situation at the end of the Napoleonic Wars was often well explained and a number of answers showed convincing analysis of the influence of landed interests on Liverpool's government.
- 02** Answers to *Question 1.02*, were all too frequently unbalanced in coverage. A sizable majority of students provided extensive, but not always precise, evidence about the repressive phase of Liverpool's government to 1820 but had little or nothing to offer on the 1820s. Responding appropriately to the key dates of questions is essential requirement. A minority of fluent and confident answers, assessing the effectiveness of repression and of the more liberal policies from 1822, showed what was possible given the right balance and sense of relevance.

Question 2

- 03** The response to *Question 2.03*, on the reasons for passing the Great Reform Act, were often secure on the defects of the electoral system before 1832 but tended to rely on extensive description without linking their material to the motives of Grey and the Whigs in pushing through reform. Better-quality answers provided a range of explanations based on a good understanding of the political context in 1830–1831.
- 04** The quality of the response to *Question 2.04*, on the impact of Whig reforms on the working classes between 1833 and 1841, was variable. Many effective answers were based on solid knowledge of the legislation and made determined attempts to focus on assessment of how people's lives were affected. A large number of adequate answers provided a more-or-less accurate account of Whig policies but with only very limited and uncritical comment – for example, there were many references to the abolition of slavery

in 1833 but few attempts to link this measure to the key theme of the question. A substantial minority of inadequate answers lacked accuracy or basic coherence.

Question 3

Relatively few students chose to answer this question, preferring to tackle *Question 2*. Of these few, about half were well-prepared to write about foreign policy; the rest were not.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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