



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2012**

**History 1041**

**Unit HIS1L**

***Report on the Examination***

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# *Unit HIS1L*

## **Unit 1L: Britain, 1906–1951**

### **General Comments**

The paper was accessible to the vast majority of students. The level of historical knowledge varied greatly from those with secure detailed knowledge to those who were confused about time and place. For the 12 mark questions most students answering Question 01 achieved marks in Levels 3 or 4. One third of those responding to Question 03 did so and about 40 per cent achieved those Levels in answering Question 05. Where there were three or more developed reasons Level 3 marks were awarded and, if there was also linkage and/or argument for prioritisation, responses received marks in Level 4. In the 24 mark questions approximately one third gained marks in Levels 3, 4 and 5 for Questions 02 and 04, but over half of those answering Question 06 did so. Knowledge, understanding and assessment were all better overall for Question 06 than was the case for Question 04 and, perhaps surprisingly, for Question 02 which was on a usually well-known topic (Lloyd George and his peacetime Coalition government).

Nevertheless Question 1 was the most popular with Question 2 somewhat less popular than Question 3. As in previous examinations, scripts which consistently achieved marks in Levels 4 and 5 (or with the odd mark for an answer at the top of Level 3), were distinguished by their features of focus on the question asked, secure knowledge, very clear understanding, explicit and developed explanation or balanced argument, judgement and were well organised. The weakest scripts were unable to demonstrate basic knowledge and/or were confused and/or were irrelevant. For example, a few responses to Question 02 looked at Liberal reforms from 1906–1914, and some in answering Question 03 wrote mainly about the Campbell Case and the Zinoviev letter in 1924.

As in previous examinations, some students chose, usually unwisely, to answer both of their 24 marks questions first before those with a 12 marks tariff. With each 12 marks question always linked to the 24 marks question which follows, many of those who adopted this approach provided answers to the 12 marks questions which were too thin in either the number of reasons provided for an explanation and/or those reasons were not developed, reading almost like a bullet point list.

Quality of Written Communication ranged from those students with an excellent command of written English to those whose sentences and paragraphs lacked clarity, or were ambiguous, and/or had little command of grammar and/or avoided using much correct punctuation. However, the standards of spelling and punctuation overall were reasonable. The main spelling mistakes of proper nouns were of 'Ramsay MacDonald', 'Beveridge', and 'Attlee', and even by a few of 'Lloyd George' (a name included on the paper). There were fewer misspellings of 'parliament' and 'Britain', but distinction between 'there' and 'their' remained a problem for some, as did that between 'Bevan' and 'Bevin' in Question 3. 'Heroes' was frequently spelt incorrectly in both parts of Question 1.

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**Question 1**

- 01** Overall this was the best answered question on the paper. Well over half of the responses gained marks in the two higher Levels with almost a quarter of the answers overall in Level 4. At Level 3, responses developed explanation about at least three reasons, for example on Lloyd George's wartime record and leadership, the Coalition's success in winning the War and the view that it could continue to be successful in peacetime, the 'coupon', the patriotic mood, the promises especially 'homes for heroes', support of women voting for the first time and political weakness of the opposition Asquithian Liberal Party and/or Labour. Where reasons were linked and/or prioritisation was indicated, answers moved upwards into Level 4. Only a handful of answers were placed in Level 1 because of lack of secure and relevant factors. Those responses gaining Level 2 marks did so because fewer than three plausible reasons were given, or there was little explanation beyond a list. Overall this topic was well-known, understood and produced sound answers. The main misunderstanding, which was not included only in weaker responses, was about the 'coupon', with many believing it was given to all voters supporting the Coalition rather than Coalition students. Also quite a few answers confused MPs and candidates.
- 02** Although over one third of those answering this Question received marks in Level 3 and above (with approximately one third of those in Levels 4 and 5), overall responses were disappointing on a topic (Lloyd George and the Coalition government from 1918–1922) which had appeared in previous examinations. The best answers identified a range of domestic problems (usually including most of the following: demobilisation; housing; financial problems and the Geddes Axe; industrial relations and the staple industries; unemployment; National Insurance and pensions; Ireland). There was in Level 4 and particularly in Level 5 answers a context of the deteriorating relationship between Lloyd George and the Conservatives. Reference was also made to the scandals. These responses had illustrative depth in detail and, above all, sound understanding, balance in assessment of how successful the government was in handling individual problems and at Level 5 overall judgement on the Coalition's performance backed by the evidence. The main weakness in responses in Level 2 (and to some extent at the lower end of Level 3) was a lack of range of problems. Most identified housing and Ireland, though on the former there was little mention of the Geddes Axe scuppering the 'homes for heroes' promise and on the latter quite frequently long narratives about the 'Black and Tans' and Lloyd George's changes in policy. There was often mention of debt from the First World War but little depth on the implications. There were too many answers in Level 1, either because they were very thin on range and development, or were mostly irrelevant, for example on Liberal reforms before the First World War or problems in the coal industry and the General Strike. Where there was comment it was generalised or assertive without clear evidence. Many responses across the range of answers referred to the Chanak crisis and some to the Treaty of Versailles, but most of these failed to connect the implications to domestic problems.

**Question 2**

- 03** Both parts of Question 2 were the least well-answered on the paper. In part 03 many students wrote about the problems and/or the downfall of the second Labour government and in many cases answered a question along the lines of 'why the Labour government fell from power'. In effect they were responding to a previous question on an earlier examination paper. Such answers, which did not progress beyond Ramsay MacDonald's defection, received marks in Level 2. About two-thirds of all responses were placed in Level 2 or below. Those answers which contained reasons beyond Labour being blamed

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for its record on finance and the economy for winning so few seats in the 1931 Election gained marks in Levels 3 and 4. They included: the patriotic 'national interest' appeal of MacDonald and Baldwin with parties working together in the National government; the actions of that government before the Election (such as gaining of a foreign loan, implementation of some of the May Committee recommendations, abandonment of the gold standard and the Conservatives' adoption of protection); support from the press; the weakness of the Labour Party and/or the Liberals with both being split. Amongst these answers which focused on the Election results several pointed out that Labour's share of the national vote held up reasonably well, but that the 'first past the post' system led to the great loss of seats.

- 04** This proved to be the most difficult question on the paper, perhaps because the topic had not appeared previously. Marks were not awarded beyond Level 2 if evidence on Labour recovery/strengthening its position from 1932-1940 was generalised, as it was in so many responses. For higher Levels some specific evidence was required, for example on leadership especially of Attlee, the Party's moderate image, policy changes, performance of the National governments, relative weaknesses of other opposition parties (including the BUF and the CPGB), electoral results in the 1935 General Election, parliamentary by-elections and local elections and, at the end of the period, inclusion of Labour ministers in Churchill's Coalition government. There were some very sound answers which did consider several of these factors and made an assessment of Labour's political position in 1940 compared with the disastrous position in 1931-1932. They pointed out that if there had been a General Election in 1940 Labour was in a possible position to win it due to appeasement, as well as domestic issues. Some students knew more about the work of Attlee and Bevin from 1940-1945 and some about the *Beveridge Report*, than about Labour in the period of the question, resulting in largely irrelevant answers. Another approach in weaker responses was to write about (some of) the actions of the National governments such as the Special Areas Act, unemployment and the means test, and then state, assertively, that Labour benefitted from their unpopularity. The Jarrow March was cited as a reason for Labour revival, but usually without convincing linkage to the question. Some accredited Labour's improved position essentially on the failures of Chamberlain and appeasement., but with little other evidence.

### **Question 3**

- 05** This question was answered reasonably successfully. Many students identified what were almost certainly the main reasons for opposition: costs; opposition of the BMA and the medical profession; opposition of the Conservatives. One eighth of the total number of responses achieved Level 4 marks where there was informed development, for example on debts from the war and levels of government spending, Conservative ideological opposition, or fears of the doctors, as well as linkage of the reasons given (often of Conservative concern about costs). Responses at Level 2 failed to identify three developed reasons, in many cases omitting either opposition of the Conservatives or of the doctors. Apart from the small number whose responses were placed in Level 1 because of lack of knowledge, at all other Levels reference was made to Bevan's eventual approach to the doctors by 'stuffing their mouths with gold'. Far less relevant in quite a high proportion of answers was reference to the introduction of prescription and other charges by Gaitskell due to rising costs of the NHS and the resignation of Bevan. Credit could not be given for this, even in otherwise sound responses, as the question was clearly about the 'establishment of a National Health Service.

**06** This was by far the best answered of the 24 marks questions. Many, especially those achieving marks in Levels 4 and 5, set the issues in the context of creating a welfare state along the lines advocated in the *Beveridge Report*. Most responses at these Levels considered the crucial social problems of health, housing and the need for welfare benefits. They and many answers in Level 3 also considered education. Some answers across all Levels made reference to nationalisation, but only stronger responses connected it with maintaining full employment and/or helping to avoid the problems of unemployment seen in the 1930s. Weaker answers believed unemployment was a major problem, or wrote about nationalisation without understanding that it was in the main an economic policy and not essentially social. There was some misunderstanding around education, who had introduced the 1944 Act and how it was implemented by Labour. Criticisms were made about the tripartite system, which were not widespread in the 1940s and many stated erroneously that Labour raised the leaving age to 16. A few answers in Level 1 omitted the establishment of the National Health Service even though it had been the topic in Question 05. (This was particularly noticeable in the scripts whose authors had chosen to answer Question 06 before 05.) Indeed the main weakness of responses placed in Level 2, as in Question 02, was a lack of range of problems. Some omitted housing, others elements of welfare, for example mentioning National Assistance but not other benefits introduced or expanded. Another weakness was simply to describe the findings of Beveridge. However, overall there was a preponderance of competent answers, often using the 'giants' of the *Beveridge Report* as a template for identifying social problems and how Labour tackled them, or putting all issues within the context of creating a welfare state. Answers in Levels 4 and 5 provided overall balanced assessment about the degree of Labour's success in dealing with problems such as costs of the NHS, the number of dwellings constructed and the levels of welfare payments, as well as a context of post-war debt and financial problems. At Level 5 overall judgement was also clearly evident.

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

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