



**General Certificate of Education
January 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS2B

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2B

Unit 2B: The Church in England: The Struggle for Supremacy, 1529–1547

General Comments

There were significantly fewer students entered for this alternative in January 2012 compared with January 2011. The entries were from a large number of schools and colleges, which entered fewer than five students, suggestive of re-take students. There were a small number with larger entries. Whilst there were some very good scripts, which demonstrated a rounded grasp of a range of issues and were able to present a balanced and well-supported analysis in response to the extended writing questions, there were also a significant number of scripts which struggled to support quite generalised responses. The source based question was well-answered, as was 05/06 but the alternative question attempted by the majority of the students was poorly answered and so reduced the mean mark of student performance. The quality of writing of some students causes concern: the absence of capital letters, even for 'Henry', is quite striking. There is a heavy emphasis on the conditional tense; in the majority of cases, things either happened or they did not. Students also need reminding that in the years 1529–1547 Henry was king of England, not Britain.

Question 1

- 01** Although there had not been a contemporary source on the paper for a number of series, students coped well with the comparison of the letter written to Thomas Cromwell and the extract from *The Age of Plunder*. The majority of students do clearly compare the views of each source, as instructed, rather than comparing the factual information. The comparison of the two sources suggesting a disagreement because Source A states that the Abbot was sent to the tower whereas in Source B he was strangled is **not** a comparison of views. Nor is it a valid comparison to state that a piece of information contained in one is not included in another. However, the majority of students did identify the similarity that wealth was a cause of the suppression of the monasteries, in both sources. There were clearly different views: Source A arguing for the corruption of the monasteries including the lack of learning, whereas Source B argues that Glastonbury was a venerable and respected monastery. Own knowledge was used to explain how Pollard was doing the dirty work for Cromwell, often fabricating the evidence to provide a justification for the suppression. Students should try to develop the extent to which the sources disagree or agree; in this case both sources agree about the process of the dissolution but disagree about why it happened.
- 02** There were some very good responses to this question, which presented balanced supported analysis with a use of all three sources. It was probably a topic which students had written essays on in preparation for the exams; a small number of students wrote convincing responses with no reference to the sources. A few students completed the essay and then, recognising that they had failed to include any reference to the sources, tried to add them in to the margin. The sources provided a wide range of reasons for the dissolution, not only wealth, but religion, corruption and the influence of heretical councillors. Much was written about Henry's need to finance the building of defences against a possible invasion and, later, to fund an attack on France to gain noble support for a potential minority. The reference to the Pilgrimage of Grace in Source C was not to

facilitate an essay on the topic, as some students believed, but to allow students to write about the two separate stages of dissolution. The supporting evidence used by a significant number of students enabled them to access the higher levels, and some demonstrated judgement throughout. Some students conflated events and reasons; the dissolution of the monasteries had little to do with helping Henry to divorce Catherine of Aragon, although the removal of potential papal influence from the political process could be justified. Students do need to learn that the monasteries were 'suppressed' or 'dissolved' they were not 'dissoluted' or other mangled versions of the verb. Credit must however go to the student who wrote that the monasteries 'were in a diabolical state'. Clearly a supporter of Cromwell.

Question 2

- 03** This question was answered well by a number of students who were able to identify what the Act in Restraint of Appeals was and link it to the very immediate need to marry the pregnant Anne Boleyn to ensure that the 'boy' she was carrying would be the legitimate heir. The wider context was then developed linking Henry's requirement that the annulment should be granted to enable him to separate from Catherine of Aragon, and the continuing tactics by a pope in the control of Charles V to grant his divorce. Such students were well informed about the process Henry had initiated to pressure the pope, but at the same time avoided simply recounting the chronology of the Break with Rome. Unfortunately not all students were sufficiently well informed; for some there was confusion as to what the Act in Restraint of Appeals actually was, and for others the presentation was vague and the reasons were not clearly explained. The mark scheme is clear in expecting three well-supported reasons for Level 3 and a contextualisation or prioritisation for Level 4. Those students who made clear the immediacy of the pregnancy and considered the longer term impact of the pope's intransigency alongside Catherine's determination to appeal to Rome following the hearing at Blackfriars, were clearly able to do this.
- 04** A small number of students produced excellent Level 5 responses to this, which showed a sophisticated understanding of the developing importance of parliament and the increasing power of the king. The majority of responses struggled either because they had a limited knowledge base to support a reasonable understanding of the powers of king and parliament, or because they did not understand the respective institutions. The first type of response was at best top Level 3; the second struggled within Level 2. Interestingly, the corresponding question last January, which considered how the respective powers changed in the 1530s had been done well. Students are generally sound on the struggle for supremacy, which is, after all, the title of the module, but in answering this question they seemed to flounder to assess the power of parliament. Some students didn't seem to know what parliament actually was, confusing it with the Privy Council and, in desperation, writing an essay on factions. The better students were able to use their knowledge of the legislative process to demonstrate that the king was strongest when he acted through parliament and that parliament gave the Break with Rome legitimacy. However, they also argued that although parliament was called more frequently and sat for longer, it was dependent for its very existence on the prerogative of the monarch. Whilst the scope of parliament's involvement changed with the establishment of an Erastian state, the king's access to the financial resources of the Church undermined its control of the monarch's access to taxation. Whilst it is often difficult in an examination to address unexpected questions, students should be encouraged to use their knowledge rather than reproducing learned responses.

Question 3

- 05** A much smaller number of students attempted the 05/06 combination, however, the standard of the responses was much higher. There were some very well-informed answers to the question on the Earl of Surrey; only one student did not know who he was, confusing him with Cromwell. All students were able to identify Surrey's calumny in producing a coat of arms/portrait with the three lions stating his claim to the throne. Most were able to link this to Henry's vulnerability as he grew weaker with Edward still a child. There were discussions of the role of faction, particularly for Surrey the adverse influence of the reformist faction. A number of students were able to link Henry's displeasure with Surrey's lack of success and military capability in the French campaign to Henry's willingness to execute the close friend of his illegitimate son. The sophistication of many of the responses resulted in one third of them being placed in Level 4 in comparison with a fifth for 03.
- 06** This was very competently answered with balanced analysis and detailed supporting evidence. Students responded well to the question, which had a focus on why Henry was at war over a period of time, which enabled them to explain how aims changed over time. This was particularly key with the war against the Scots, the aim of which changed from an attempt to put James V in his place to the 'rough wooing' to achieve the marriage of Edward and Mary Queen of Scots. Students were able to make valid links between aims and to assess which was the main aim and why. The supporting detail used was generally well-developed and precise.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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