



**General Certificate of Education
January 2012**

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** This question was reasonably well answered with most students identifying at least one difference between the two sources in relation to the impact of Brown. Own knowledge was often deployed but this was frequently of little direct relevance to the question posed (reference was frequently made to the fact that LBJ had not signed the Southern Manifesto, for example). The identification of similarities remains somewhat hit and miss, with students frequently asserting that the sources are totally different and failing to appreciate that there are macro similarities in the fact that both sources assert that significant change was resulting from Brown. In addition, students are still trying to explain **why** the sources differ in terms of bias or when they were written despite the focus of the question being on **how far** they differ.
- 02** This was a very accessible question with balance provided in Source C; however this balance was not as well used as might have been expected and few students engaged with the idea that King felt that the approach to civil rights should be multi-faceted. All students appreciated the importance of Brown but relatively few were able to name other significant Supreme Court cases in the 1950s such as *Sweatt v Painter*, *McLaurin v Oklahoma* or *Cooper v Aaron*. *Browder v Gayle* was also often cited despite being a District court judgement. Pleasingly, the best students are increasingly able to structure their responses and cover three arguments, in this case in favour of the Supreme Court's role, arguing against the Supreme Court's role and finally arguing that other factors were more significant.

Question 2

- 03** This question was answered well and there was a clear appreciation of the reasons why the Voting Rights Act was passed. Statistical support in terms of the number of registered black voters in Mississippi or Alabama was frequently cited and there was discussion of the failings of both the 1957 Civil Rights Act and the 1964 Civil Rights Act along with the Selma campaign. The most consistent reason for a failure to gain the top level was a lack of linking through the answer and, in particular linking paragraphs together as distinct but consequential reasons. Prioritisation was credited but this often seemed like an afterthought in a short conclusion rather than being woven into the answer.
- 04** This question was the poorest answered on the paper and showed that many students did not fully appreciate the nature of the political system in the USA. Students referred to the Southern Manifesto extensively or brushed the issue of 'in the South' under the carpet. Very few students were able to refer to specific Southern Democrats such as James Eastland, Richard Russell or Strom Thurmond. Perhaps more surprisingly was a failure to realise that George Wallace and Orval Faubus were both Democrats or to bring in the reasons behind the Freedom Summer and the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Balance was usually provided but this was often generalised discussion about the re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan and the activities of White Citizen's Councils. However students were often able to build convincing arguments around the radicalisation of the Civil Rights Movement as a potential barrier to Civil Rights.

Question 3

- 05** This question was well answered and students had a clear appreciation of the influence of Malcolm X on young blacks and the effect of Stokeley Carmichael's leadership. Less well known was the resentment of the federal government engendered by the events surrounding the Freedom Summer. Again the major reason students failed to make the highest level was a lack of linking of factors.
- 06** This question was well answered from the perspective of the negative impacts of the growth of radicalism but few students managed to defend the radical movement and effectively argue that it actually managed to make a significant contribution to the advancement of the movement by keeping civil rights in the public eye and advocating black pride. Students also failed to offer much precision when arguing that other factors contributed to the decline of the movement; the Vietnam War was frequently mentioned but the reasons why it contributed to a decline were discussed only in vague terminology. The very best students were capable of distinguishing that federal efforts to provide political rights were far less economically costly than addressing financial disadvantage in housing, education and employment. In addition, they showed considerable awareness of the fact that the attention of the media was increasingly moving to other protest movements, notably the anti-war and feminist movements.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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