



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2012**

**History 1041**

**Unit HIS1H**

***Report on the Examination***

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# Unit HIS1H

## Unit 1H: Tsarist Russia, 1855–1917

### General Comments

Most students completed the paper and wrote answers of an appropriate length for the marks available. They divided their efforts fairly equally between the three questions on offer and knowledge was broadly acceptable, although the depth of detail and precision of example varied tremendously. The greatest cause of lost marks, however, came less from limitations of knowledge than from a failure to focus on the exact wording of the questions. This was true of all three 24 mark questions where crucial ‘key’ words or, in the case of 06, dates, were all too frequently ignored. The importance of engaging with the question set cannot be stressed enough if students are to do themselves justice. Some otherwise very good students also need reminding of what putting forward a ‘judgement’ in the 24 mark questions actually means. Judgement is not something that can be ‘tacked on’ in a conclusion. The very best students set out their own view in the introduction to their answer and referred back to it more than once as they wrote. These were the students who demonstrated an ability to think for themselves and so justly deserved the highest marks.

### Question 1

- 01** Although there were many good answers to this question, some ignored its specific wording, which invited students to consider why ‘further’ reforms were passed after the Emancipation Edict. Although answers which considered the broad reasons behind Alexander’s reforming impulses received some credit, the highest marks went to those who saw the connection between Emancipation and the need for further reform.
- 02** Most students were able to offer some comment on the success, or otherwise, of Alexander II’s reforms, but rather fewer were able to link those comments to the strength of the Tsarist regime. To answer this question well, students needed to be familiar with the workings of autocracy in Russia and to appreciate that some of the more positive reforms from a modern perspective, actually weakened the autocratic regime – the creation of the Zemstva being a prime example.

### Question 2

- 03** Whilst many students knew what the Fundamental Laws were, some wrote about the October Manifesto and some spent too long providing description of the 1905 revolution. Even those that focused on the laws were apt to write descriptively, often listing the detail of the laws or describing them in practice after 1906, rather than considering the reasons behind them. The best answers explained the immediate reason for their issue, with reference to both the Tsar and the opposition forces and the context in which they were deemed necessary. Some also looked at the specific powers which the Tsar wished to confirm and clarify through their terms.
- 04** As with question 02, the majority of students had no difficulty in writing about the successes and failures of the Tsarist regime, 1906–1914, in general terms, but rather fewer focused on successes ‘in bringing political stability’. Although a good number talked

about stability, they included economic and social, as well as political stability and therefore digressed into irrelevance in parts of their answers.

### **Question 3**

- 05** The greater number of answers included some comment about the Provisional Government's desire to continue to victory, to raise morale and to show that earlier sacrifices had not been in vain. Many also mentioned the temporary nature of that government and its inability to make long term decisions, whilst the best answers linked the government's need for British and French money to the precarious position of the government and showed how these combined to keep Russia in the war. Surprisingly few noted that the government had very little choice.
- 06** Knowledge of the main developments of 1917 was generally adequate or better and the majority could balance Lenin's message in the April Theses against the Provisional government's weaknesses and consequent lack of support. Answers varied, however, in the degree of attention they gave to October/November 1917 and Lenin's involvement after April 1917 was too often ignored.

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

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