



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS2H

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2H

Unit 2H: Britain, 1902–1918: The Impact of New Liberalism

General Comments

It was a pleasure to assess many of the scripts submitted for this unit and to note the generally high level of knowledge and understanding that students have gained during their studies of Britain during the period 1902–1918. Despite students' enthusiasm in demonstrating what was often a wide body of knowledge, most still managed to complete the paper in the time allocated. Some students had plentiful specific and precise supporting evidence but would have scored more highly if they had demonstrated a willingness to make links in 03 and 05 and to 'take sides' in 02, 04 and 06, which is needed to achieve a mark at the highest level. Across all but question 05 there was evidence of a small but significant number of students choosing to simply describe the Liberal social reforms, often in some detail, rather than addressing the question set. Students must be reminded that they need to revise **all** of the content of these 'depth' units, particularly since this paper features one compulsory question which can be drawn from any part of the specification content.

Question 1

- 01** It is encouraging to note that the majority of students readily identified the differences and similarities between the views of Source A and Source B. Most were able to provide a range of differences before noting that both sources appreciated the growing influence of the working classes. Many students went on to address 'how far' the sources differed by explaining that the sources offered different opinions as to why the working classes did not support the Conservatives, and those that did so achieved Level 4, where contextual knowledge was also present. This topic is clearly a part of the specification which is well taught and well understood, as extensive own knowledge was often included, leading to some very long responses to this question. Although this did not seem to prevent students from completing the full paper, many would have still achieved full marks with less own knowledge and their time may have been better spent on the longer 24 mark questions. Although there was a better use of own knowledge this series, some students continue to incorporate knowledge which did not assist them in addressing 'how far' the views in the sources differed. In some cases, knowledge was deployed which was of little direct relevance to the question posed. On the other hand, there remains a small number of students who were prohibited from achieving Level 4 as their answers were completely void of own knowledge. Few students noted that whereas Source A indicates the loss of the non-conformist support, Source B is focused on the Lib-Lab pact and the loss of support from the working classes. In addition, some students were able to find similarities and differences of views but did not refer specifically to the Lib-Lab Pact. A small number of students became overly focused on the provenance of the sources, rather than assessing the difference of views, explaining **why** the sources differ in terms of bias, despite the focus of the question being on **how far** they differ.
- 02** This topic was very well-known and understood by the great majority of students. As in January, most students were aware of the need to incorporate the use of the sources and there were relatively few students who were restricted to Level 2 for failing to observe this requirement. It was pleasing to note that many students made effective use of each of the sources within their responses. However, there were a small number of answers which were heavily reliant on the sources, offering relatively little own knowledge. Such answers

at best only reached lower Level 3. Other answers awarded a mark within Level 3 tended to take a 'policy by policy' approach, explaining tariff reform or 'Chinese slavery', but often making explicit links that lacked conviction. However, there were also some excellent answers which displayed a very thorough knowledge about why the Conservatives had lost the support of the working classes and the significance of this. Students often explained how Taff Vale, 'Chinese slavery', tariff reform, or a lack of social reform in the wake of social studies by the likes of Booth and Rowntree, led to the loss of working class support. Many students used Source B to note that the loss of working class support was particularly significant as they made up the 'bulk of the electorate'. Many answers offered a wide range of factors for the Liberal landslide election victory of 1906. Many effective answers involved a confident command of source material and own knowledge to balance the idea that it was the loss of working class support which led to Conservative decline, with an argument that it was the loss of support from the non-conformists or liberal unity versus Conservative disunity. Such answers, where there were effective links to the question, were often comfortably in Level 4. Answers that combined good depth and balance with a clear line of argument scored very highly and there were some very convincing arguments about why ultimately the decline of the Conservatives rested either with the working classes or with Balfour.

Question 2

- 03** Many students were able to offer a range of relevant and accurate reasons to explain why the Liberals introduced Old Age Pensions. This meant that many students comfortably reached Level 3. However, some students either wrote descriptively about the Liberal reforms in general or wrote a brief paragraph which addressed the question, before going on to describe at length the successes and failures of the Liberal reforms. Students for a future session may need reminding of the need to focus on providing and explaining relevant reasons. In addition many students referred to National Efficiency as a reason without linking this directly to pensions. However, there was also some very good answers which were able to develop links between factors and therefore comfortably achieve a mark in Level 4. For example, many students explained how the reports by individuals such as Booth and Rowntree made New Liberalism more acceptable. Some argued that pensions were a political strategy; to introduce reforms where the Conservatives had failed, whilst appeasing their Labour allies, but also preventing the further rise of Labour.
- 04** This question was significantly more popular than question 06 and had a higher mean mark, perhaps because the topic has appeared on a previous paper. There were a small number of wholly narrative responses to this question and also a number of responses where students described the crisis in detail *before* directly answering the question. The responses awarded Level 3 and above often considered the People's Budget, the two Elections of 1910 and the Parliament Bill/Act. Those awarded marks in Levels 4 and 5 often balanced this by emphasising the importance of the loss of the Liberal majority in the Commons, the fact that the Lords still had a delaying power and that they remained dominated by the Conservatives, and the concessions which had to be made to the Irish Nationalists. A large number of students identified the concessions which had to be made to the Labour party following the crisis, yet fewer were able to provide evidence for this. Those that did often explained how the payment of MPs and the Trade Union Act were contributing factors in the further rise of the Labour party, which ultimately weakened the Liberals. A significant number of students were able to see the opportunities to develop a reasoned judgement in response to this question and many produced a sustained argument based either on agreeing or disagreeing with the proposition in the question.

Question 3

- 05** This question was attempted by significantly fewer students, although answers were generally as effective as answers to 03. Many students demonstrated an impressive body of knowledge on the topic and gave many appropriate reasons, including the growth of the German navy, the ententes, events in Morocco and Agadir, and the introduction of the *Dreadnought*. However, some responses were restricted to Level 3 as there was an absence of linkage and explained prioritisation, despite the students conveying a detailed understanding of the material. Nevertheless, those including a range of reasons with links were awarded Level 4. Examples of such links include the increase of ‘Germanophobia’ and the fear of invasion, which led to calls of ‘we want eight and we won’t wait’ in 1908.

Some students used the idea that Britain became involved in the naval race because issues such as *Weltpolitik*, the German Naval Law of 1912 and German refusal to ration ships, was evidence that Germany was a growing threat to the British Empire, to trade and to the Royal Navy’s command of the North Sea itself.

- 06** This question was attempted by significantly fewer students and answers were generally less effective than answers to 04. This proved to be the most difficult question on the paper, perhaps because the focus of it has not appeared on a previous paper. A significant number of students drifted into irrelevancy by ignoring the dates in the question, in particular by focusing on the People’s Budget. Surprisingly, given the dates in the question, some students decided to omit Lloyd George’s role in First World War completely from their answers. Some students included evidence which lacked both depth and range and others failed to introduce balancing factors. Where students did provide balance, they often referred to Asquith’s weaknesses or Lloyd George’s commitment to the war effort, but again the depth of evidence was often weak. However, there were a number of very convincing and analytical responses which focused on the question and did include depth and range of evidence. Such responses tended to have an excellent grasp of the role of Lloyd George as Minister of Munitions, Asquith’s failures as a war leader, the fall of Asquith, and the role of the Conservatives in Lloyd George’s move into power.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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