



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS2S

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2S

Unit 2S: Liberal Democracies: Power to the People?

General Comments

There was a significant number of pleasing aspects to the examination. Chiefly, there continues to be a very secure appreciation of the key concepts that underpin the content and an ability to apply an understanding in each historical setting and, again, a continuing improvement in understanding of the complex course of events in revolutionary France. Source material and the essential demands of each of the questions were understood at all levels. It was pleasing to see that the responses to both 05 and 06 demonstrated explicit understanding and relevant support. The range of responses indicated that the paper was both accessible and an effective discriminator in terms of the subject matter and analytical demands of the paper. Very secure knowledge and understanding was demonstrated and responses were framed in an appropriate structure. Invariably, all of the students were able to attempt an answer to the questions and substantial responses, that were focused on and relevant to the questions, were produced. Essay questions at the higher level were hallmarked by a range of relevant detail, explicit understanding and a balanced argument. However, it was also the case that students did not always have the depth and range of knowledge to develop a sound understanding as fully as they might have.

Question 1

- 01** The question was answered well with level three reached by the vast number of students. All students were able to draw out differences between the sources and the vast majority were able to add a key similarity to this. With regard to this aspect, it was very pleasing to see effective use made of Source B and it was pleasing to see the students demonstrate secure contextual understanding and to add appropriate knowledge of the topic and of the provenance of the sources in order to develop answers. An awareness of Inglis's background and of the radical nature of the Poor Man's Guardian enhanced a significant number of answers, as did knowledge that drew on the inconsistencies of the pre-reformed Parliament and on the resistance to reform. In some cases, support for arguments made was not as precisely as it might have been. There remains a tendency, particularly at the lower levels, to paraphrase, or even copy out sections. In contrast, it is worth making the point again that higher levels were reached where a secure contextual understanding was used to deploy and structure responses. There is a need to develop the ability to see the whole picture as well as drawing out differences and similarity in terms of detail. In general, the source question proved to be an area of strength for the majority of students.
- 02** The concept of land-owning and self-interest within the context of 1831–1832 was a focus that was understood and responses to it were both relevant and focused, challenging and supporting the issues raised by the question. Answers at all levels were able to show an explicit understanding of the topic. Indeed, at higher levels, there was evidence of very good understanding and an ability to develop from the sources. However, such clarity of an understanding of the source was not always the case and at the lower levels, use of the sources was uneven and knowledge proved elusive. Arguably, Source B was the most subtle, but this was a source used well when, disappointingly, key arguments within the sources were often not developed to any real depth, and, knowledge not deployed well in support and to develop. With regard to Source B, a good number pointed out that the

working classes opposed the bill because it did not do enough for them as well as securing the rights of property. Yet, for example, the determination to maintain the status quo and satisfaction with the constitution as it stood were aspects of the course that might have been drawn upon. It was at times the case that a small number of students took refuge in the sources, depending too much on them not synthesising sources and knowledge. Also, a small number of students focused almost exclusively on the passing of the bill within Parliament.

Question 2

- 03** The response to this question was disappointing. As a counter to a previous question that asked why there was opposition to the Articles and which was well-known, this question asking why the states were happy with the Articles proved rather elusive. It is to be remembered that a dual system operated in America before the Philadelphia Convention and that individual states were happy with this arrangement. It was this idea and concept that was not as well understood as it might have been. At the higher levels, responses were good, but at the lower levels knowledge and understanding were not so secure of the constitutional arrangements and the benefits that the states enjoyed.
- 04** The question produced a wide range of responses and proved to be an effective discriminator. There were some points of confusion. It was, for example, in a very small number of cases interpreted as a question about the Philadelphia Convention itself and in some linked to the earlier period. However, the majority of answers were able to display an assured grasp of the limitations of the constitution, the fears of the federalist, economic issues and internal pressure such as that illustrated by Shay's Rising and discrimination was a consequence of the quality and depth with which these were dealt. At the lower level there was a lack of depth and range of such knowledge, whereas at the higher level, there was good support and structure to such answers with responses retaining a direct focus on the question and achieving a balance to their answers.

Question 3

- 05** Students responded to this question well. It was clear that the events leading to revolution in France were well known. Many answers analysed the intricacies of the Estates-General and its repercussions, while others opted for a review on long-term issues that led to the crisis of 1789. It has to be said that complex aspects of revolutionary France, such as the attitude of the nobles and the failure of reform, were handled with admirable assurance and perception by many students. In general, this proved to be a popular question and students had the depth of knowledge and understanding at the different levels to do it justice.
- 06** At all levels, students invariably produce answers that showed a balance between the progress that had been made toward democracy in France and the extent to which it was limited during this time. There was an appreciation with good support, for example of voting restriction and the king's position, that France was not yet a full democracy. While some concentrated on political change, it was very pleasing to see many students dwell on a wider definition of French society and attempt, with success, to tackle the Church, local government and the judicial changes. However, it was limited support and the ability to sustain a clear structure that, at the lower levels, prevented students from developing answers fully.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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