

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE History

Candidate Exemplar Work (June 2009):

- HIS1B: Britain, 1483–1529



The following responses are not 'model' answers, nor are they indicative of specific overall grades, but are intended to illustrate the application of the mark scheme for this unit. These responses should be read in conjunction with the HIS1B Question Paper, Sources Booklet and Mark Scheme.

Copies of the paper and are available from e-AQA or the AQA History Department.

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AQA GCE History Teacher Resource Bank Commentaries on June 2009 AS answers

General Introduction by the Chief Examiner

The first June examination series for the new AS specification saw some excellent examples of well prepared candidates who were able to demonstrate their breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding by addressing the questions set directly and efficiently. Sadly, it also suggested that, whilst some candidates knew the material quite well, they struggled to apply it successfully to the questions asked. At the lowest end, there were, of course, some candidates whose knowledge let them down, but even these might have been able to achieve more highly had they thought more carefully about each question's demands.

The importance of timing for both Units needs to be stressed. In Unit 1 candidates should allow themselves approximately 12 minutes for the first part question and 25 minutes for the second. In Unit 2, they could spend 15 minutes on the first part question and 30 minutes on the second, but they are likely to need slightly longer for the source question. Good time keeping is essential in any examination. No matter how successful the answer to the first part question, an incomplete second part question will always mean a loss of marks (notes receive limited credit).

These commentaries are intended to help teachers and candidates to understand the demands of each question type and consequently to encourage students to perform at the highest level of which they are capable. Please note that errors relating to Quality of Written Communication (of spelling, syntax, etc.) have been reproduced without correction. Please note that the AQA convention for question numbering will be changing as from the June 2010 examination papers. Examples of the new format for question papers can be found elsewhere in the Teacher Resource Bank.

Unit 1

The first part of each question in Unit 1 (those questions labelled 01, 03 and 05 in the new numbering style from June 2010) asks candidates to 'explain why' an event, issue or development came about. The best candidates answered this question, not only with a selection of reasons (and a minimum of three well-explained reasons was expected for Level 3/4), but also by showing how those reasons linked together. This is essential to meet Level 4 criteria and can be achieved by prioritising, differentiating between the long and short-term factors, or showing how different categories of reasons, such as political, social and religious inter-link. It is not, however, enough to simply assert that the links exist – they also needed explaining.

Candidates who only performed at Level 2 often wrote too descriptively, whilst many achieved a good Level 3 by offering a range of relevant and clearly explained reasons but failing to make any links between them. As the exemplars demonstrate, answers did not need to be long but they had to be effectively focused and directed to achieve good marks.

The second part of each question (those questions labelled 02, 04 and 06 in the new numbering style) asked for a response to a question beginning 'how far, how important or how successful'. Each question stem invited candidates to offer a balanced response and this was the key to an award at high Level 3, 4 or 5. Most answers which achieved only a Level 2 or a low/mid-Level 3 mark contained too much description, were excessively one-sided or lacked depth and precision in their use of examples. Some candidates also failed to address the full question set, often

by ignoring starting or finishing dates. To achieve the higher levels, candidates needed to balance one side against another. For example, a question asking how far 'X' contributed to 'Y' demanded a consideration of the importance of other factors which also contributed to 'Y'. Sometimes questions, particularly 'how important' questions (e.g. how important was 'X' in bringing about 'Y?'), could be balanced by considering the ways in which 'X' was important as opposed to the ways in which it was not, rather than introducing 'other factors'; either approach was equally legitimate. The crucial test of an answer was, therefore, the degree to which the candidate was able to argue the issue and how well that argument was supported by accurate and precise evidence. The best answers at Level 5 managed to sustain a focus and convey convincing individual judgement.

Unit 2

The first part of question 1 (labelled 01 in the new numbering style from June 2010) asks students how far the views in two given sources (A and B) differ, in relation to a given topic. Perhaps the most common error was to waste time writing a paragraph or more about the source content before addressing differences. Levels were awarded according to how well candidates identified and explained differences of **view**. This was not simply an exercise in source comprehension, so such answers received an award of only Level 1/2. Contrasting 'views' required students to go beyond the mere words of the sources or their omissions, and to assess 'how far' the sources differed required some awareness of the degree of **similarity** they contained. To meet the full demands of the question and obtain an award at high level 3/4, candidates also needed to introduce some contextual own knowledge to explain the differences and similarities identified – possibly (but not necessarily) referring to provenance when it helped the explanation, and, more often, explaining references in the sources and drawing on their contextual knowledge to account for differing views.

In the second part of question 1 (labelled 02 in the new numbering) candidates were asked to answer a question beginning 'how far, how important or how successful' with reference to the sources as well as their own knowledge. The best answers to these questions maintained a balanced argument (as explained for Unit 1 above) and the information given in the sources was used in support of that argument. Poorer answers tried to address the sources separately – at the beginning or end of the answer, or sometimes as an asterisked afterthought. Those who omitted them altogether could not obtain more than top Level 2. Whilst the main criteria for the higher levels was the degree of argument, the precision of the evidence and the judgement conveyed, in addition to these, good source use could ensure that students were placed higher in a level than those who used the sources in a perfunctory way. Source use needed to be explicit, and the best candidates appreciated that Source C was provided to give further ideas and/or information that was of direct relevance to this question.

In questions 2 and 3 (03/04 and 05/06 in the new numbering) candidates were asked to respond to an 'explain why' question – on which comments will be found under the Unit 1 commentary above – and a short, provocative quotation about which they were invited to explain why they agreed or disagreed. The demands here were similar to those for the second part of Unit 1 (b) questions. In adopting a view about the quotation, candidates were expected to examine the opposing arguments in order to reach a balanced judgement on the extent of their agreement/disagreement.

Sally Waller Chief Examiner December 2009

GCE History HIS1B: Britain, 1483–1529

Responses to June 2009 Questions

Candidate 1

- 1(a) Explain why the death of Henry IV caused political instability in England in 1483. (12 marks)

Edward IV's death caused political instability in England for a number of reasons. Both of Edward's sons Edward V and Richard were underaged and therefore could not rise to the throne. There was great factional rivalry in England between the Woodvilles and the Glousters. The Wars of the roses were still not fully over with Henry Tudor still in Brittany. Finally, Edward had a premature death.

Both of Edward's sons were too young to take the throne when he died. Edward V the eldest was 11. This meant that a council had to rule for Edward V. Recent changes to Edward IV will had made it unclear who should be in the council and who should get the crucial role of protector over the two sons. This helped encourage the faction rivalry between the Woodvilles and the Glousters.

Two noble families, the Woodvilles led by the king's wife Elizabeth and the Glousters led by the king's brother Richard, both wanted to look after the princes and have control of the council due to the power they would wield. Since the two largest noble families were against each other, when before Edward's death they had been family, this created great political instability.

Also the War of the Roses was still not over, meaning that many Lancastrian saw this as a chance to get Henry Tudor on the throne. Last time there was a young king, Henry V, he had been usurped by a Yorkist king, Edward IV.

Finally Edward died very suddenly of a stroke – this meant that very few preparations had been made for his death. This helped fuel all parties in trying to grasp power because it was unclear who deserved it.

Principal Examiner's Comments

The answer is not always elegantly expressed (e.g. "noble" is misspelled and Henry V appears in error for Henry VI) but it is clear and concise, deploying precise knowledge and understanding of a range of factors in the political context of Edward IV's premature death. Comment and evaluation are limited but the answer shows good appreciation of the links between the various factors and merits mid-Level 4, a mark of 11.

Candidate 2

- 1 (a) Explain why the death of Henry IV caused political instability in England in 1483. (12 marks)

Edward IV was a very successful king. He did not have any major problems throughout his reign and was very secure in his position.

Edward had a good relationship with the nobles and with his brothers. He also had two sons for potential future kings. Unfortunately, aside his marriage the only incident to ruin what seemed to be a perfect reign was his unexpected death. He died alot younger than expected, people had thought he would reign for at least another 15 years so when he died in 1483 it was a great shock.

The death being unexpected meant that there was no preparation. Any alliances he had made or treatys proposed would now be at risk. People had trusted Edward himself.

Also Edward had declared that his son would follow him to become Edward VI king of England, but the regent, Edwards brother, Richard III had other ideas. He usurped the throne and locked the boys in the Tower of London. It was very much thought amongst people that he murdered them. Richard was somewhat different to his brother, people did not like him as much causing distrust.

Edwards death was a complete surprise as was Richard taking his throne both of these things along with others led to political instability.

Principal Examiner's Comments

The answer lacks depth and relies on generalised description, including some irrelevant background before 1483. The attempts at explanation are often implicit rather than direct. However, there is enough overall understanding of relevant factors in context to merit mid-Level 2, a mark of 4.

Candidate 3

- 1 (b) How far was Richard III's downfall the result of his own mistakes? (24 marks)

Richard III's usurpation was unpopular from the start. With rumours such as the murder of his nephews abundant, with hindsight his downfall seems inevitable. However, his own mistakes combined fatally with many circumstances beyond his control and therefore his downfall was not merely of his own doing.

Some might argue that Richard III's usurpation was not a mistake as he could not have acted differently in that situation if he wanted to protect himself from the Woodvilles. However, the probable murder of his nephews is an atrocious act that caused many to turn against him, including such loyal Yorkists as Hastings who was even an enemy of the Woodvilles.

Other mistakes which cost him popularity include the fact he used Northern nobles to control areas in the South where he was not liked. He trusted these nobles, but here lost any support of those who considered those lands to be their right.

While he was liked in the North, proven by his success on his progress especially in York, he never adequately reconciled himself to those in the South. Sometimes there were uprisings and a close companion Buckingham defected to lead them. Richard's mistake was great here in losing what should have been a loyal friend. Some blame the fact on the murder of the princes, others that Buckingham was not sufficiently rewarded for his role in the usurpation. Whatever the reason, Richard was to regret it as although his rebellion was crushed and Buckingham executed, many leading Yorkists such as Giles Daubeney fled to join Henry Tudor after this debacle. Moreover, Henry Tudor learned valuable lessons from Buckingham's mistakes which led to his ultimate success such as where to land (near Milford Haven in ground that would support him.)

Other factors leading to his downfall such as the death of his wife and son seem at first beyond his control. However, if his mistakes had not already lost him much sympathy, these deaths were less likely to incline people to deduce that Richard was being punished by God and spread rumours that Richard had poisoned his wife in order to have an incestuous second marriage with his niece, Elizabeth of York. These rumours allowed Henry Tudor to appear a more credible alternative.

Richard's ultimate mistake was his impetuous charge to kill Henry personally at Bosworth which resulted in his death. Before this his greater experience of war had meant it was in his favour. However, his lack of support from the nobility, illustrated by Lord Stanley's last minute defection to Henry's side saved him from Richard and proves that, in the end, Richard's unpopular mistakes were to blame. His usurpation resulted in such unpopularity that combined with forces beyond his control and no attempt to allay the South resulted in his downfall.

Principal Examiner's Comments

The answer is concise and direct, showing superior skills of organisation and written communication. There is very little effective introduction but an excellent conclusion, revealing differentiation and judgement. Precise selected evidence is deployed to support a confident and balanced argument in response to the question. This is a fluent, integrated answer. It clearly merits top Level 5, a mark of 24.

Candidate 4

1 (b) How far was Richard III's downfall the result of his own mistakes? (24 marks)

Richard III's downfall was partly his own fault as he should have gotten a proper marriage in which he would have had his sons as heirs to the throne in the event of his death.

Richard II also should have treated his nobles better to gain more support and backing as he would need it with being king.

Richard III also should have done more to help himself financially as he tended to get himself in a lot of debt and this was not a good thing for a king as peasants would look down on him and he will come across as weak.

There was also the Buckingham rebellion which could have also contributed to Richard III's downfall, however this rebellion was soon put down and didn't cause too many problems for Richard III.

Despite Richard III's army was double the size of Henry Tudor's in the battle of Bosworth he was still defeated. Perhaps the men who he felt supported him were just not courageous enough or perhaps their army was just not strategic enough.

Richard III's claim to the throne was never stable enough so there was always going to be the day when somebody would come and take his title as king from him, it was just a matter of who and when because some might say he was never fit to be king as the title was never rightfully his at all.

Principal Examiner's Comments

This is a slender and very superficial answer, lacking depth of either evidence or expression. The material presented is mostly accurate, if very underdeveloped, and addresses a range of relevant factors but a lack of depth and substance, and relatively weak QWC, places it firmly in the lower reaches of Level 2, a mark of 8.

Candidate 5

2 (a) Explain why Henry VII passed laws against retaining. (12 marks)

Henry passed two laws against retaining in 1489 and 1504 with the latter being very severe. There are many reasons for this.

Firstly, it was to prevent nobles becoming overmighty. With armed men a noble was much more powerful and was a threat to Henry. They also used their retained men to intimidate juries at court cases against them. This was called maintenance.

Secondly, it is often argued that Henry disliked the nobility. Therefore this was a way in which he could be harsh on them. He had little natural support at the start of his reign and thus needed to prove his authority over them. The 1504 law was harsher as he was becoming more insecure after the death of his wife and two sons, Arthur and Edmond.

Principal Examiner's Comments

The answer is limited in scope but concise and focused on explanation, rather than description. It has very good understanding of the context but lacks analysis of a range of specific factors – this places it in mid-Level 3, a mark of 8, when a mark in Level 4 might otherwise have been considered appropriate.

Candidate 6

- 2 (b) How far was Henry VII's government threatened by rebellions in the years 1485 to 1509? (24 marks)

Henry's government suffered a number of rebellions in the years 1485 to 1509, each of which threatened the king in different ways, and at times in which different factors predominate. As such, further analysis is required.

One of the first rebellions Henry had to deal with was the Lowell rebellion in 1496, led by Viscount Lowell and Thomas and Humphrey Stafford. This rebellion proved to be of little threat and ultimately a failure. Henry's forces easily crushed the rebels. However, the rebellion demonstrated to Henry that there was still a Yorkist threat and that rebels would go to great lengths in order to topple the king, thereby also demonstrating to Henry that he needed to secure his dynasty on several fronts. He also dealt with the rebellion very seriously, arresting the Stafford brothers and beheading Humphrey. This, therefore shows at least that Henry felt threatened by the rebellion.

Perhaps the most serious popular disturbance in Henry VII's reign was the Cornish rebellion in 1497, which began due to Cornish resentment of a tax imposed on them for something which would be implemented far away. Again, the rebel forces were easily crushed by Henry's forces, but the scale, geographical extent of the rebellion and the fact that they were able to gain over 10,000 men implies that it could, potentially, have been much worse for Henry. Henry's severe response also suggests it was a threat – he mustered an army of 30,000, beheaded the leaders and hired those who thought played a part – becoming his preferred style of dealing with rebellions. In doing so, he also managed to gain much wealth and land, which would be invaluable in helping to quash any subsequent rebellions.

The Simnel affair was another rebellion that Henry was forced to deal with during his reign, and the first of the 'pretenders' – so called because Simnel, under orders of John de la Pole, impersonated the Earl of Warwick whom Henry had imprisoned after Bosworth. From the beginning Henry knew Simnel was an imposter – he had the real Earl of Warwick in the Tower of London – so knew that the claim was ridiculous – implying it was not a threat. However, Simnel gained considerable support from foreign powers: he was crowned Edward VI in Dublin Cathedral and Margaret of Burgundy took him in, giving him 2,000 men to add to his army. By the time Simnel landed in Lancashire he had 10,000 men – more than Henry had invaded with – and indeed his whole rebellion followed the same pattern as Henry's a decade earlier. All of this implies Simnel was a threat, as does Henry's severe response (mustered an army of 12,000), though ultimately Simnel's forces were defeated, and John de la Pole and Viscount Lowell were killed. As such Henry had also removed most of the Yorkist threat in one battle.

The second pretender, Perkin Warbeck, also proved to be a threat. His claim to the throne was more sensible than Simnel's – he impersonated Richard, Duke of York (Henry did not know his fate) – and gained a large amount of support from foreign powers – France, Scotland, Ireland and Burgundy. As such, Warbeck dominated Henry's foreign policy for nearly 10 years, and in the end cost him over £13,000, which, as a new king, was financially crippling. These factors suggest Warbeck was a threat, which he potentially may have been, particularly if he had timed his invasion right to coincide with the Cornish rebellion, but Henry's skillful diplomacy meant that Warbeck inevitably failed in his attempt. The 1492 Treaty of Etaples meant France dropped her support for him, and the 1497 Treaty of Ayton

meant Scotland also dropped support. When he did manage to invade, his military backing was underwhelming – only a few hundred men – and the fact that the whole thing lasted over 9 years is a testament to poor planning. As such, his troops were easily defeated and Henry locked Warbeck up in the Tower. It seems, then, that Warbeck could potentially have been a great threat, but ultimately proved not to be.

In conclusion, Henry suffered a number of rebellions that illustrated that there was still Yorkist support, as well as showing he had little support in the localities – the nobles acquiesced to each rebellion. Ultimately, however, Henry was able to deal with each swiftly and effectively.

Principal Examiner's Comments

The answer is well controlled and has a consistent focus on the question. The narrative approach rarely slips into description and there is a consistent thread of comment and assessment throughout, culminating in a simple but effective conclusion. There is an adequate depth of specific knowledge of a range of rebellions and challenges to Henry VII, both at national level and in the localities. The answer merits mid-Level 4, a mark of 19.