

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE History

Candidate Exemplar Work (June 2009):

- HIS1H: Tsarist Russia: 1855–1917



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 HIS1H Question Paper, Sources Booklet and Mark Scheme.

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

E-mail: history@aqa.org.uk

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 HIS1H: Tsarist Russia, 1855–1917

Responses to June 2009 Questions

Candidate 1

- 1 (a) Explain why many Russians were dissatisfied with the decree emancipating the serfs in 1861. (12 marks)

Many Russians were dissatisfied with the decree emancipating the serfs in 1861. The Nobility would have been the most annoyed as they lost people to grow and work on their land. They were particularly concerned with the emancipation as they believed that the peasants would resort to drinking on the streets and the source of upcoming violence. The Army wouldn't have been pleased with emancipation either as conscription (being forced into the army) was cut down to 6 years. High class People in the army such as the nobility again would be annoyed as the peasants (ex-serfs) could now get promoted to high levels in the army, commanding some nobles, who would have found this outrageous.

However; not all Russian's would have been dissatisfied as the peasants could now go into the cities and work and industrialize Russia.

Many people especially the nobility saw the peasants as only working people. They would not be good if they were set free, they would only resort to chaos on the streets.

Principal Examiner's Comments

This answer has some positive qualities, but the responses are not well developed. The candidate states that the nobility felt particularly betrayed by Emancipation and feared that violence would result. The assertion that this is the most significant factor is debateable, and the fear of violence was probably not the nobility's greatest concern. The comment about the Army's stance is somewhat vague (what is meant by the 'Army'? Its leaders? The conscripts?). The impact of Emancipation on the Army was significant, but to assert that it was the main cause of dissatisfaction is dubious. The obvious points about the burden of debt after Emancipation, lack of suitable land, and so on, are omitted. The brief section on those Russians who were not dissatisfied is not particularly relevant for this question. Overall, this answer merits Level 2 because it demonstrates some relevant knowledge, but the major discussion points about dissatisfaction are simply omitted. QWC is weak. The result is low Level 2 – 4 marks.

Candidate 2

- 1 (a) Explain why many Russians were dissatisfied with the decree emancipating the serfs in 1861. (12 marks)

The emancipation of the serfs in 1861 was meant to please the Russian peasantry, but instead created more problems that it solved. Tsar Alexander II, the Tsar Liberator, lost a lot of support nationwide from all classes of society. The peasants however did not. The nobility put some faith in the Tsar as they now had less income from serf farmers, and they had also lost power. However Alexander responded this by compensating the nobility with financial support. The serfs now had to pay massive redemption taxes, to buy the land they had farmed for many

generations. The taxes would take 49 years to pay back, leaving the serfs in a worse position from which they started, as they were now enslaved by debts. Many serfs did not believe the Tsar would do such a thing, and believed that the nobility and the landlords were lying to them. Throughout the following few years there were hundreds of riots which had to be quelled by the Russian army, most of which were conscripted serfs. This weakened national support of the Tsar Alexander.

Principal Examiner's Comments

This is a good answer: reasonably concise but analysing several factors competently. It is worth at least Level 3 because the answer outlines several reasons why there was dissatisfaction with Emancipation: dissatisfaction by nobility which lost cheap labour and influence; peasants who suffered the burden of redemption payments and resulting debt; a belief by the serfs that their masters were lying to them. Each point is briefly developed in the answer. Ultimately the answer merits the bottom of Level 4 since as well as being well focused, the answer begins to connect the issues, by relating the Emancipation measures to their impact, both at an individual and national level, in terms of the tsar losing support, although links are not developed sufficiently for a mark higher in the Level – 10 marks.

Candidate 3

- 1 (b) How important was the backwardness of agriculture in contributing to weaknesses in the Russian economy in the years 1881 to 1914? (24 marks)

The backwardness of agriculture in Russia between 1891 and 1914 is a large factor in explaining the weakness of the economy, as yeild was very low and grain was their main export. The Great Famine didn't help as there was no surplus food to export. However, other factors such as lack of industrialisation should be factored in. Also, it could be argued that the Russian economy did grow between 1881 and 1914, due to the work of Vyshegradsky and Witte, which caused the Great Spurt.

In 1881, farmers were still using backwards methods such as strip farming, and using hand held sickles and ox carts to plough. Modern machinery wouldn't fit on a single strip even if they had enough money to buy such machines. The soil quality was poor due to over farming and the fact that modern methods such as crop rotation were unknown, and they had little access to fertiliser. When the mineral content in the soil dropped, farmers dug up the fallow lands, which meant herd sizes had to be reduced and caused further over-farming. This decreased yeild, meaning that less grain could be exported, so Russia's economy suffered.

These factors also contributed to the Great Famine of 91/2, where only 1-6 kgs of Rye was produced per person as opposed to the usual 240 kg. Grain stores that could have fed the peasants disappeared abroad before the ban on exports was imposed. The ban was a huge blow to the economy, and the lack of grain caused the deaths of 1.5-2 million peasants. Aid was limited, as a village would have to show 'proof' that they couldn't feed themselves before food was distributed, by which time it was usually too late. Vyshegradsky was widely seen as responsible for these decision, as his slogan was "we must go hungry but export grain".

However, some might argue that although Russia's economy was backward it still made progress during these years, despite the backwardness of agriculture. Vyshegradsky managed to get grain exports to 15%, but his increase on indirect tax meant that peasants had no excess income to buy consumer good and support the economy. 50 million roubles was spent every year that Vyshegradsky was Minister of Finance, between 1887-92, and this helped to transport grain and other goods to the western markets quickly. Vyshegradsky wanted to export so that he could build up gold reserves and introduce currency reform, which Witte did in 1897, introducing gold standard for the rouble. Witte also fixed the exchange rate which encouraged foreign investments. Industrial growth did take place during these years, as industrial capacity reached 80 % and the economy grew by 8 % annually.

Despite this, the foreign investments was not all good. Foreign investments made up 50 % of total investments in industries, and this destabilised the economy, as foreign investments were unreliable and threatened to drag Russia into and expensive war.

Grain exports was Russia's main source of income, so in 1906, Stolypin, the Minister of the Interior, tried to increase productivity. He put all land belonging to the Tsar or the State in a Peasant Land Bank, which could be bought by enterprising peasants. This land would be given out as a plot instead of strips, making it more efficient and allowing heavy machinery to be used. Since 1903, taxes no longer had to be paid through the mir, so peasants could leave the commune without permission. Stolypin also tried to encourage people to move to Siberia and make it into a food producing area. However, the reforms didn't really work, as people who moved to Siberia often came back as it was uninhabitable and from 1909 onwards fewer and fewer were getting into the scheme. In total, only 850,000 left the mir, as many were afraid to leave it's security. By 1914m, 90 % of land was still strip farmed. This didn't help the economic growth at all and unhappiness added to overall instability of the regime.

The evidence shows that although there was some economic growth between 1881-1914, the economy was still in a fragile position. As agriculture propped the economy, low yeilds and the backwardness of the agrarian system was definitely the main factor in the weakness of the economy.

Principal Examiner's Comments

This is a substantial answer, balanced in its approach and also containing supported judgement, and as such it merits Level 5. The candidate makes several valid points about the inadequacies of Russian agriculture: including a lack of sufficient production, resulting in famine; the backwardness and lack of technology; the poverty of much of the land. there is a reasonable amount of supporting detail, particularly about the famine. The answer is also balanced. The candidate goes on to argue that there was also evidence of progress in the economy, thereby beginning to challenge the question, by pointing out the growth of agricultural exports. The candidate also examines Witte's contribution to economic progress, especially industrial growth, for example through encouraging foreign investment. Further detail is provided about Stolypin's reforms, with a brief evaluation of their impact on agriculture, showing good use of knowledge. There is good balance of knowledge and analysis throughout the answer, and also evidence of judgement throughout, as well as being evident in the conclusion. Overall this is a well-informed, pertinent and supported analysis. Level 5 – 23 marks.

Candidate 4

- 1 (b) How important was the backwardness of agriculture in contributing to weaknesses in the Russian economy in the years 1881-1914? (24 marks)

The 1902 economic depression, the agricultural famines and especially the Russo Japanese War caused the weaknesses of the Russian economy.

The backwardness of agriculture did contribute to the weaknesses of the Russian Economy. The peasantry took up 85% of the Russian population and Russia took up a third of the world. Russia needed and relied on the peasantry, as they were the ones with potential to dramatically boost economy, and could make Russia the great country it could be. In this sense the backwardness of agriculture was very responsible. The fact that Russia also lacked a middle class and had a small working class put the responsibility on the peasants shoulders.

The peasants were tied to the land and traditional backward farming methods, they didn't want change. When new farming methods and equipment were offered many peasants said no to high prices and the fact it was frowned upon.

The backwardness of agriculture meant that very few peasants moved to cities, and therefore industrialisation ie, economic development was useless, without a workforce.

The fact that the areas granted were too small ruled out the possibility of a 'prosperous class of peasant consumers'.

The famines and droughts due to the peasantry squeeze by Witte caused even less of a chance of the peasantry contributing to economic development. Peasant unrest became stronger as time went by.

However, there were far more important factors than the backwardness of agriculture that contributed to the weakness of the economy.

The Russo Japanese war was a huge factor, it caused loss of lives, cost vast amounts of money, and vast amounts of pride. It greatly dented the economy and plunged Russia further into the lingering economic depression of 1902. 25 out of 35 battleships were lost.

Industrialisation also affected the economy, Witte got Russia into huge debts due to foreign policy. Exports exceeded imports and vast amounts of money were being taken from the peasantry (peasantry squeeze) to pay for industrialisation showing that agricultural backwardness was due to faults of the Tsar rather than faults of the peasants.

The economic depression of 1902 lingered, this was a huge factor as to why there were weaknesses in the Russian economy, rather than due to the peasantry.

The reactions to the Bloody Sunday; the 1905 revolution was also a huge 'risk' to the economy. By February 1905 over 2.7 million workers were on strike, there were strikes all over Russia, suspending the Russian economy for quite a while.

Principal Examiner's Comments

This answer is reasonably focused and relevant. It goes straight into examination

of agriculture and the importance of peasants to the economy. There is a brief examination of peasant conservatism and backwardness and factors such as famine. The points made are relevant but hardly developed: there are undeveloped assertions and references to Witte, not followed through. There is an attempt to provide balance by explaining 'other' factors which affected the economy: for example the Russo-Japanese war and following economic depression. The answer also pinpoints the Tsar's responsibility for allowing an industrialisation programme which squeezed the peasantry. A reference to the 1905 Revolution being a 'risk' to the economy is not followed through. major aspects, such as Stolypin's agricultural reforms, are ignored. The answer peters out without a clear conclusion. The answer merits a high Level 2 mark because it is mostly relevant to the question, but it is short on relevant detail, showing a limited breadth of knowledge and limited quality of informed analysis. Level 2 – 11 marks.

Candidate 5

2 (a) Explain why Nicholas II issued the October Manifesto in 1905. (12 marks)

In October 1905, Tsar Nicholas II produced the October Manifesto that proclaimed basic civil liberties, freedom of the press, freedom of speech and a 'legislative' elected parliament.

Growth of the opposition was of course one of the main reasons the Tsar issued the Manifesto. Liberals were becoming increasingly discontent with the Tsar's lack of democratic and political reform and this contributed to the 1905 revolution. The Mensheviks also demanded a Constituent Assembly and knew the Tsar was unwilling to provide this. After the 1905 revolution, the Tsar knew he was obliged to quell unrest by providing opponents with some satisfaction of reforms.

In the long term, industrialisation also may have had an impact. Poor living and working conditions led to rural misery, combined with Witte's economic policies of squeezing the peasants with high indirect taxes and low wages, made people more susceptible to revolutionary propaganda. Industrialisation also made people more educated and so were more likely to question the way the government runs. As a result, The Tsar had to produce the Manifesto to satisfy the opposition and therefore stabilise the Tsar's position.

Principal Examiner's Comments

This is a valid answer, outlining some reasons for the issuing of the October Manifesto. There is reference to Liberal dissatisfaction with the lack of political reform. There is recognition of a desire for an assembly, although this is apparently wrongly linked to the Mensheviks, possibly confused with the Liberals. The candidate develops another factor: social problems associated with working class dissatisfaction following industrialisation, combined with growing political awareness resulting from developing education. These points are relevant, without being particularly well developed. The answer suddenly peters out. Overall the partial development of two or three relevant points shows some understanding and merits a low Level 3 mark, certainly not higher, because the factors are not effectively linked. Level 3 – 7 marks.

Candidate 6

- 3 (b) How far were the weaknesses of the Provisional Government responsible for the Revolution of October /November 1917? (24 marks)

The Provisional government took control of Russia after Nicolas II's abdication in February 1917, yet it was heavily flawed, contributing greatly to the Bolshevik's opportunity to seize power in October. However, there were other factors that must be considered, including the war (WWI), the Kornilov affair and the lack of military loyalty.

The Provisional Government was weak because it had no real power, having been hastily assembled from members of the progressive bloc after the Tsar's abdication, and unable to make any decision without the approval of the Soviet. It wanted to leave any major decisions on Russia's future to an elected constituent assembly, but this meant many issues were left unaddressed. Many peasants had hoped to have the land redistributed in their favour after the Tsar's abdication, but no decisions were reached, making many peasants turn against the provisional Government.

The issue of the war was also not resolved. The Provisional Government decided to continue with the war, backed by many groups in the Petrograd Soviet. This angered the majority of the population as the war was causing massive shortages of fuel and food in both the cities and the countryside, and also created more support for the Bolsheviks, as they were the only party in the soviet to have vocally been against the war from the start.

Alexander Kerensky's leadership was also flawed and further weakened the Provisional government. When he learned of Kornilov's intent to stage a military coup and take over Petrograd, he turned to the Bolsheviks for support, and gave them weapons. However, Kornilov was diverted by rail workers, leaving the provisional Government, to face an organised, armed group of revolutionaries intent on taking power, and with popular support on their side. Kerensky was unable to call on the military for support as they were no longer loyal to the provisional Government, so the Bolsheviks were able to take over Petrograd, and therefore the control of Russia, quickly and easily.

It is clear that although there were a multitude of issues and problems facing Russia that caused unrest, it was ultimately the Provisional Governments inability to handle them effectively that led to the Bolsheviks being able to seize power in the October revolution of 1917.

Principal Examiner's Comments

This is a good answer. The candidate does focus on the question, immediately identifying both weaknesses in the Provisional Government and 'other' factors responsible for the October Revolution. The candidate demonstrates secure knowledge of the Government's record, examining its lack of authority, its failure to address key issues such as land reform, its continuation of the war and associated economic problems. The answer goes on to examine Kerensky's weaknesses, particularly shown in the handling of the Kornilov affair. There is brief development of 'other' factors, notably the Bolshevik's opposition to the war and their growing support, which is linked quite effectively with the Government's weaknesses to explain the success of the revolution. This is a solid Level 4 answer, being focused, relevant and showing a good combination of analysis and appropriate

knowledge. It does not merit Level 5, since the 'other' factors could have been further developed, which might have led to a more balanced and substantiated judgement. Level 4 – 19 marks.