



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS1M**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2010 examination – January series*

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# Unit HIS1M

## Unit 1M: USA, 1890–1945

### General Comments

There were few rubric errors this year. Some candidates only attempted one question which impacted on their overall result. It is important that candidates answer two questions to give them a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge.

Of the three questions, the second was the most popular. There was a full range of answers on all questions. The best answers were clearly focused on the questions and set out to analyse rather than provide a description.

In general, on the (a) parts of the questions some candidates still chose to provide a description which meant they did not achieve above Level 2. Others did not prioritise their reasons or make a clear judgement or interrelate the reasons given and so were more unable to attain. Also some artificial links were made on weaker answers. Candidates need to explain at least three well developed reasons for Level 3 and these need to be clearly set out. In part (b), one of the main weaknesses was a lack of focus on either the period or the main factor in the question which inevitably led to loosely linked description or assertion.

It is not advisable to refer to Historians or historiography or make vague assertions about 'some historians' or even text book writers and some times these references were used to mask a lack of knowledge, wasted time and/or led to confusion.

### Question 1

- (a) This was answered well by a number of candidates. A range of reasons were provided. Better answers referred to the sinking of the Maine as the catalyst. They also provided a well written conclusion explaining what they thought was the most important reason. Weaker candidates wrote about Spain invading Cuba, or even confusing Cuba with the Philippines or the USA wanting to set up Guantanamo Bay.
- (b) There were some very good answers to this question. The best answers were able to examine both isolation and interventionism across the twenty year period and balance the answer. Some judgements were very thoughtful and supported with precise evidence. The answers which were only just in Level 4 tended to be those that concentrated on the events surrounding World War One. Level 3 answers did not include enough information although were explicitly trying to answer the question. Also description of events left many answers in this level or if there was substantial reference to pre 1900 or post 1920. The weakest responses tended to confuse the period. It is important that candidates read the question carefully before beginning the answer since this was not about events prior to World War Two. Also care should be taken about using Imperialism as a reason for actions in this period.

### Question 2

- (a) This proved reasonably accessible for those candidates who answered it. The better answers stayed focused on the years 1919–1925 and were able to provide three clear wide ranging reasons. There was a tendency to link too much to the arrival of immigrants and little to the activities of the Klan themselves. Some candidates wanted to give too

much back ground information on the nineteenth century development of the Klan. When providing information about the 'Birth of a Nation' it was of ten not linked to the period. There seemed to be some confusion over African-Americans as immigrants rather than as migrants.

- (b) There were some wide ranging answers to this question. Candidates were able to explain some reasons for the significance of immigrants as cheap labour, plentiful work force and as consumers. Balance with other factors was often achieved and Republican presidents and policies, increased mechanisation, easy credit and loans from debtor nations were included. Judgements were also balanced and some responses argued against the proposition. Weaker answers which were often in Level 2 or 3 concentrated on 'Big Business' and wanted to use information more suited to the nineteenth century. Also many answers do not recognise the recession after World War One and tend to launch into how well the USA did straight away.

### **Question 3**

- (a) This question was not answered well. Candidates found it difficult to find three reasons. Some were able to display knowledge about the atomic bomb but few could develop the argument considering why its use strengthened the position of the USA. Although better answers did realise that at the time it was unique to the USA, it had great power and the threat that it posed to other nations. Better answers had a good understanding of the period and events in Japan at the end of the war to argue for the most important reason.
- (b) Of all the questions on the paper this had the most variable responses. The Level 5 answers were able to cover the period 1933–1945. Candidates could explain why the New Deal was important under Roosevelt, the decisions he took and events he orchestrated towards the end of the war. Balance was explained through actions from other nations such as Japan, Great Britain and Germany and President Truman. Some answers provided an argument which was both positive and critical on Roosevelt which the 'how important' question stem is designed to facilitate. There was some impressive supporting period detail. Answers were usually tightly focused on the period. Weaker answers just wrote a description of the New Deal and failed to link it to the question or described some events. Unfortunately some candidates wrote about President Theodore Roosevelt and the Panama Canal and this shows how important it is to read the dates in each question carefully.

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

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