



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2011**

**History 1041**

**Unit HIS1D**

***Report on the Examination***

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# Unit HIS1D

## Unit 1D: Britain, 1603–1642

### General Comments

The Examination Paper proved accessible to the vast majority of candidates with only a small number unable to attempt one or more questions. Questions 1 and 2 proved most popular though a substantial minority chose Questions 2 and 3. The overall standard seemed higher than last year with a smaller number of very weak scripts. When candidates fell below the E boundary this was often the result of not attempting one or more of the questions. The quality of writing was higher than in recent years with relatively few spelling or grammatical mistakes. A few candidates write in the present rather than in the past tense and ‘parliment’ rather than ‘parliament’ continues to occur quite frequently, but overall the standard of written English was better than in past years. As always the best answers were focused explicitly on the questions asked, were knowledgeable, balanced and well supported with relevant, precise evidence. Weaker answers often lost the focus of the question going off at a tangent, relapsing into narrative, answering only part of the question or becoming bogged down in description. Chronological confusion resulting in error and misunderstanding also continues to undermine the quality of some answers.

### Question 1

- 01** There were some very good answers to question 01 offering a variety of valid reasons supported with developed explanation and/or examples. The best answers either provided three or four distinct developed reasons, or five or six valid but less developed reasons, with some overall linkage or reasoned prioritisation at the end. Unfortunately some candidates tended to describe James’s peaceful foreign policy rather than to explain his motivation. Others got carried away with one or two reasons or began to answer question 02 instead. Some candidates tried to turn the question into one on relations with Spain rather than keep to a broader explanation of James’s reasons for wishing to be a peacemaker in foreign affairs.
- 02** This question also elicited some strong answers. Such answers were focused on assessing the degree of success and failure of both James I’s and Charles I’s foreign policy in these years. These answers had both range and depth and were able to differentiate between the two kings in their judgement. However, there were also a surprising number of candidates who did not seem to have a full grasp of foreign policy 1618 to 1629. A significant number of answers were weak on James I’s foreign policy down to 1625 and a minority were weak on Charles I’s foreign policy 1625 to 1629. There was a general tendency to get bogged down in the details of the Bohemian crisis of 1618 rather than concentrate on the more relevant Palatinate crisis of 1621. Candidates were often strong on James’s aims but weaker on assessing his degree of success in achieving them. Many, for example, pointed to the pressures on James in the early 1620s in trying to keep England out of the Thirty Years War but relatively few identified as a success his ability to avoid war until 1624–1625. Other candidates overlooked the focus on assessing foreign policy and became too engrossed in the two monarchs relations with their parliaments. Clearly issues like obtaining funding were relevant to success or failure but some candidates ended up writing far more about domestic politics than about foreign policy. A surprising number of candidates failed to assess fully the two wars on which

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Charles I embarked in the years 1625 to 1629 or to assess his marriage to Henrietta Maria of France. In some scripts there was a lot of factual and chronological confusion, for example between Bohemia and the Palatinate and between the Spanish and French marriages. In assessing success and failure candidates might find it helpful to ask themselves mental questions before writing, e.g. Was James successful in restoring the Palatinate? did he obtain a Spanish Marriage? Did he keep England at peace until the end of his reign? Was it sensible of Charles to be fighting Spain and France simultaneously? Such questions might help keep candidates focused on the question and deter lengthy descriptive passages.

### **Question 2**

- 03** This question brought out two different kinds of answer. There were those answers that not only set the Petition of Right into its context but also knew the main terms of the petition and were able to explain such aspects as the forced loan, the Five Knights Case, Charles's handling of it, and the issues of billeting and martial law. Such answers were often factually and conceptually impressive. Others were only able to explain the general reasons and background but lacked any specific knowledge. Some candidates misinterpreted the Petition and confused it with later events such as the Three Resolutions, the Grand Remonstrance or the Triennial Act. Others claimed far more for the Petition than was actually the case.
- 04** Some answers to this question were disappointing. There tended to be much description of Charles's financial policies in the 1630s but relatively little assessment even of Ship Money. There was also confusion in weaker scripts between financial policies from an earlier period and those of the Personal Rule. Thus Hampden's Case 1637 was sometimes confused with Bate's Case 1606. Candidates did not always concentrate on those policies, which were specific to the 1630s such as ship money, forest fines, distraint of knighthood, or on the economic and financial benefits of peace. Some candidates ended their answer with Hampden's Case in 1637 rather than assessing the impact of the Bishops Wars on the finances of the Personal Rule. However, many answers saw the difference between Charles's financial and legal success and his political failure. Unfortunately candidates often lacked the knowledge to assess this effectively. Though knowledge of the 1630s has improved there continue to be misunderstandings. Ship Money receipts, for example, do not seem to have dropped dramatically after Hampden's Case but kept high until 1639, when the extra burdens required for the First Bishops' War led to a 'tax-payers strike'. Ship Money seems to have been a very effective tax that raised large amounts of money and aroused relatively little direct opposition at the time though it was abolished by the Long Parliament in 1641.

### **Question 3**

- 05** Answers to 05 were often very good with candidates not only able to explain the fears that drove Parliament to impeach Strafford but also why Pym was determined to have him beheaded despite the reluctance of both the House of Lords and Charles I. Better answers were able to refer to Ireland as a testing ground for 'Thorough' and to the army Strafford was building up there. Some of the best answers also understood the difference between impeachment and attainder, and could explain why Pym was able to achieve the latter despite the failure of the former. Weaker answers only asserted the fear that many MPs had about Strafford but were not able to explain why that fear was so intense as to support execution. Candidates might note that Strafford's rule was authoritarian rather than brutal, that he was trying to reassert royal control in a distant kingdom whose Anglo-Irish nobility had long been used to running Ireland in their own interests. They might also

note that his refusal to confirm the Graces may have upset Irish Catholics but Catholics did not exert much influence in the Westminster Parliament in 1641.

- 06** There were more strong answers to question 06 than in the past. Candidates were more focused on the 1641–42 period and were able to explain the impact of the Irish Rebellion on English politics in terms of panic and distrust of the king. Some were able to write about the issue of the army and who should command it and a few were able to link this to the Grand Remonstrance, the Militia Bill and thus to the division of Parliament. Many were able to compare this to other factors and events such as the role of Pym, the actions of Charles I and the rise of constitutional royalism in late 1641 and the first half of 1642. More stress needed to be put even in the best answers on the implications of Charles's flight to York and the establishment of two centres of authority in England as well as events of constitutional significance such as the Militia Ordinance and the Nineteen Propositions. There is still a tendency for candidates to see the civil war as inevitable even as early as 1640 whereas research suggests that few wanted a civil war even as late as the summer of 1642 and that most contemporaries were reluctant to take sides. When the question is focused on the 'outbreak' of civil war candidates would be advised to concentrate their answers on 1641–42 rather than seeking long term causes as far back as the 1630s or even, as a few did, to 1625 or even 1603. The Personal Rule and Bishops' Wars did undermine royal authority and forced Charles to keep the Long Parliament but the issues arising from them were largely settled well before the outbreak of civil war in England. Candidates should not be so ready to leap from 1640 to 1642 without considering factors and events in between. Candidates should also avoid lengthy explanations of the Whig and Revisionist interpretations in answering questions on this period. Such interpretations could be used in support of an argument but not as a substitute for an argument.

Overall, there were some impressive and pleasing answers to various questions. As always candidates need to know their material well including an accurate grasp of relevant chronology. It is important to answer a question directly especially given time pressures, ensuring that factual material is explicitly and clearly linked to the focus of that question. Such relevant, explicitly linked arguments, supported by some precise evidence and with reasoned judgement, all help to ensure high marks.

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

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