



**General Certificate of Education
January 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS2F

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2F

Unit 2F: Challenging British Dominance: The Loss of the American Colonies, 1754–1783

General Comments

On the whole this paper caused few major problems, with no candidates obviously concerned at the prospect of a compulsory question on the French and Indian Wars. The relatively small number of candidates was quite evenly balanced between the two optional questions.

Question 1

- 01** Most candidates were able to identify both differences and similarities across the two sources. All but the weakest were aware that Source A was gloriously patriotic, hailing Quebec as a major triumph, and extolling the virtues of Pitt and Wolfe; in contrast, Source B adopted a more restrained approach, pointing out that the French were far from destroyed after Quebec. More observant candidates noted that the sources also differed concerning the immediate future of the French forces: according to Source A they retreated to Montreal, but Source B mentioned that ‘the French still had a large force stationed outside Quebec’. Better candidates also pointed out that, according to Source A, ‘the British fleet returned to England’, whereas Source B referred to the continuing presence of the navy in North America, mentioning that the freezing of the St Lawrence caused problems for the British navy, interfering with the provision of supplies to the forces in Quebec. With similarities, most identified joint reference to the adverse impact of the winter of 1759–1760, and (less frequently noted) the fact that Source B, despite its overall restraint, conceded, following the battle, that the British were ‘masters of Quebec’.
- 02** Most candidates were able, based on source extraction and own knowledge, to produce reasonable responses to this question. Better candidates started with the impact of the navy, then proceeding to identify other factors such as the impact of Pitt the Elder and the limitations of French forces in North America. Highest marks went to those who were able to provide genuine detail of the changes implemented by Pitt, and the way in which he used European alliances as a distraction for the French, whilst also cultivating native and colonial assistance in North America. Weaker candidates often neglected Pitt, sometimes omitting reference altogether, and also demonstrated reluctance to make a judgement about which factor contributed most noticeably to success.

Question 2

- 03** The main distinction here was between candidates who concentrated entirely on the events of 1765, and those who appreciated the importance of earlier developments to the emergence of protest. Whilst exclusive concentration on the Stamp Act and its various implications could well result in a decent mark, the highest marks went to those who were able to set the Stamp Act in the context of the impact of the 1763 peace settlement, the challenge to the concept of ‘salutary neglect’, and legislation such as the Sugar Act, the Currency Act, and the Quartering Act. There were a number of weak responses which were largely generalized and often failed to deal specifically with the events of 1765.

- 04** This question tended to be a good discriminator between candidates who had specific understanding of the role played by George III in 1775, and those who saw British policy very much in general terms, with no real capacity to distinguish between the roles played by George and the various ministers who served under him from the early 1760s. Many stressed the role of Lord North, whilst failing to indicate that North largely reflected the views of his monarch, George III. George's consistent refusal to acknowledge the genuine concerns of the colonists, and in particular his refusal to consider the 'Olive Branch' petition, often eluded the weaker candidates. Candidates were entitled to take any starting date after 1763, but those who failed to proceed beyond 1770, still a surprisingly common tendency with this Alternative, did not escape Level 2.

Question 3

- 05** This question produced a variety of responses. Candidates who demonstrated specific knowledge of events in the opening stages of the war (such as Lexington and Concord, Bunker Hill and the British retreat from Boston, Howe and the defeat of Washington at Long Island) were much more likely to perform well than those who merely produced generalized comment about British military limitations which could have been applied to any period of the war. Such factual material alone did not guarantee a high mark, but candidates were usually able to produce relevant deductions based on factual evidence, for example criticising Howe for the heavy loss of life at Bunker Hill, and for the failure to pursue and destroy Washington after the expulsion from New York.
- 06** Possibly the most successfully handled question on the paper. Candidates are now very familiar with the reasons for British defeat in the War of American Independence, and are usually able to produce a wide range of factors. The most effective responses usually focused initially on Saratoga, and the military background to it, before proceeding to comment on foreign intervention, Washington and the tactics of American forces, and the weak performance of British military and naval forces.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.