

History

Advanced GCE A2 7835

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS 3835

Report on the Units

January 2009

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Chief Examiner's Report

AS HISTORY [3835]

A2 HISTORY [7835]

General Comments

This Report can be read in conjunction with the Mark Schemes that are available from OCR and Centres are encouraged to discuss the Report with their candidates. The amount of detailed comments in the reports on the Units varies because some questions attracted many answers while others were attempted by few or even no candidates. The Introduction to most Units contains valuable advice for Centres and candidates, and Centres who have taught topics on which there are few comments are advised to read other parts of the Report as well as the Introduction.

There were very few complaints about questions from the large number of Centres that entered candidates this session. Each complaint, together with any other matters raised by Centres concerning the exams, was discussed by Principal Examiners at their standardisation meetings and by the Chief Examiner and Awarders at the grade award meeting. None of the complaints was upheld.

As might be expected for AS legacy papers, the size of candidature was much smaller than in previous January sessions.

Session	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586
Jan 2008	431	1502	5090	3052	2947	1305	5207
Jan 2009	165	928	2960	1925	1998	961	3179

In contrast there was little change in the numbers sitting A2 Units, though there was a pleasing increase in the entry for the Medieval Option in Unit 2587.

Session	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591
Jan 2008	108	788	2526	463	972
Jan 2009	238	695	2568	388	1021

The quality of work of both AS and A2 candidates was a little weaker than in previous January sessions. The mean mark for most papers was lower than in January 2007 and 2008, and much lower than in June 2008, and only Unit 2588 component 12 (Elizabeth I) saw a significant improvement. Overall the proportion of candidates who achieved Grades A and B was correspondingly lower than in previous assessments, while there was a pleasing increase in the number of candidates who scored Grade E and above.

Comments on individual Units follow this Introductory Report but some general points, many of which have been made in previous reports, are worth repeating. In Units 2580, 2581 and 2582 (AS Documentary Studies), the main weakness in answering sub-question (a) was that candidates often failed to compare two sources as *evidence*. Sources were not read carefully enough and candidates tended to compare them sequentially. Sub-question (b) similarly elicited weak techniques in which the evaluation of contemporary sources generated stock responses and each source was treated separately rather than as part of a set. Many candidates still use their own knowledge as an appendage to any evaluation and so frequently produce an answer in two parts. Units 2583, 2584, 2585 and 2586 (AS Period Studies) produced few purely narrative or descriptive answers, which is most encouraging and a feature of the improvement in technique in recent years. Most candidates now try to answer the question set and have a reasonable body of knowledge upon which to base their essays. The performance in Units 2587, 2588 and 2589 (Investigations) was disappointing. Candidates still show limited skills in

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

addressing the question, often give insufficient attention to the Passages and many continue to learn pre-packaged essays. Similarly, most candidates in Units 2590 and 2591 (Themes in History) struggled to handle the synoptic requirements. Many have sound historical knowledge but few are capable in the January session of showing the maturity necessary to demonstrate synthesis as well as analysis. Many weaker candidates cannot apply their knowledge flexibly enough and instead write essays on questions that they have written before rather than focus on the question set.

Few examiners reported candidates having difficulties in the timing of answers due to their writing lengthy plans, which has been a problem in the past, or to their misjudgement of the rubric requirements. Most AS candidates, the majority of whom were re-sitting one or more papers, appear to have been reasonably well prepared whereas several A2 candidates were clearly under-prepared and consequently failed to fulfil their potential.

The quality of English remains variable. It is to be expected that in a literary subject, candidates who can express their ideas, knowledge and understanding clearly will score more highly than candidates who, through weaknesses in grammar, spelling, punctuation and construction, struggle to write coherently. The quality of handwriting can also have a bearing on a candidate's clarity of expression and explanations. Unfortunately the standard in many scripts remains weak. Finally Centres should discourage candidates from using abbreviations when referring to proper names and historical events. This practice seems to be most prevalent in topics on twentieth century USA and Russia, and does not endear the candidate to examiners.

2580 - Document Studies

General comments

Questions for this Unit worked well. Candidates were able to produce good responses and some were able and willing to stand back from the four extracts and to see them as a set, with inherent strengths and limitations. Conversely, some used the part (b) question as a trigger for an essay-style of approach which could not be well rewarded. As has been observed for previous entries, Source D was commonly the source which was least well handled, either in terms of it being a secondary source, thereby inviting stock evaluation, or ignored on the grounds of it coming at the end of the paper. As ever, effective pairing or grouping of the sources was a major help to the construction of a good response to the part (b) question. Candidates who were able to see that a particular source could be used to support both an argument and a counter-view were likely to be well rewarded for this analysis.

Alfred's Kingship

Most candidates were able to discern points of agreement and disagreement here for the (a) question. The provenance of Source A, Asser, was handled with some simplistic comments. Better responses were able to tease out from the extracts analysis of good fortune, or external events, or other factors which could be weighed against the (b) question's focus on royal personality.

Norman Rule over England

Source C was not well understood in some cases, either in terms of the messages it gives us about Norman abuses of monastic life and privileges or in terms of its nature as a source, namely a writ. Conversely the limitations and merits of both William of Poitiers and Orderic Vitalis were well known and adeptly used in responses. The opportunities offered by the extract from David Walker's book were not always taken up. There are useful remarks about the strengths of Anglo-Saxon administration and practice, echoed in Source A, which were overlooked by weaker candidates, some of whom may also have chosen to wax lyrical about Domesday Book, following Walker's prompt, at some risk to their focus on the actual question set. Contrariwise, stronger responses explored the difficulties inherent upon the appointment of regents to rule a cross-Channel empire.

The First Crusade and its origins 1073-99

The part (a) question worked well, with a variety of hardships identified and the captions and glosses to the two sources well deployed. As can be the case, the part (b) question produced some responses which offered a surfeit of contextual knowledge at the expense of rather than an enhancement of the extracts provided. Looking again at the final extract, from Christopher Brooke, we see rich opportunities to discuss Muslim disunity and Crusader difficulties, thereby directly addressing the question set, but these chances were not always taken, or Brooke was dismissed on the dubious grounds of not having been present at events. More happily, stronger responses ranked and prioritised causal factors within the context of the extracts and focussed unremittingly on the key term 'mainly' in the question.

2581/01 - Document Studies 1450-1693.

General Comments.

As might have been expected, this session's entries were dominated by small centres with five or fewer candidates, and it may be assumed that many of these candidates were re-sitting the examination. The size of the overall entry had fallen from over 1500 in January 2008 to around 850, which again was not unexpected for a legacy paper. The overall quality of answers was somewhat disappointing, with relatively few attaining more than 50 marks, and a tendency for an average mark in the thirties being noted for most centres and across most questions. Despite these general observations, the presence of some assured and well-supported answers at the higher bands was noted.

What is clear, however, is that many candidates could have improved their performance significantly with a little more attention to the manner in which questions are approached. The first point concerns the **wording of the question**. It must be remembered that although this is a document study, it is a history examination, and that documents are to be used as evidence to address certain historical questions. Thus in Sub Question (a) documents are to be *compared as evidence* for a particular aspect of the historical topic under examination. Many candidates were noted as still making fairly mechanical comparisons between the two extracts. While comparisons of date, authorship, audience etc. are of course necessary components of an answer, they contribute little if at the end of the exercise we are no wiser as to why former Church lands were important in 1554.

A related point is the need for candidates to **read the sources carefully** before answering the question. This has been advised on numerous occasions, but is still often neglected, and leads to common errors such as the failure to recognise reported speech. Many candidates in answering Question 3 assumed that the views in Source C were those of Renard, rather than of the Dean of St. Paul's. This misreading then undermined the comparison/evaluation being made.

Answers to Sub Question (b) often failed to gain bands higher than III for similar neglect of the 'technical' aspects of answering. Far too many candidates who produced answers which were focused on the question and supported by relevant 'own' knowledge fell into the trap of using the sources as illustrations for the argument, without any attempt at evaluation or analysis. These answers often contained give-away phrases such as 'Source C states..'; 'As shown in Source B..', etc. which normally indicate this approach. It should be remembered that these extracts are chosen because they represent a range of different viewpoints, which can be cross-referenced, contrasted, evaluated for reliability etc., and that an examiner is looking for evidence of sources being used in this way.

Another common cause for placing in a lower band than might have been the case is **imbalance between sources and external knowledge in Sub Question (b)**. The mark scheme makes clear that the greater the imbalance between these two elements, the lower the band awarded is likely to be, and in practise this is particularly true of questions where examination of the source evidence is submerged in external knowledge. What constitutes a good balance is somewhat problematical, although the mark scheme definition of a band I answer makes a useful comment on this. External ('own') knowledge should be used to extend the argument and source evaluation beyond what is contained in the extracts. It should not be the vehicle by which the candidate wrongly attempts to impress the examiner with his or her depth of knowledge on the subject in its wider context.

The **evaluation and analysis of sources** in both sub questions is all too often a mechanical process of 'ticking boxes' rather than a useful approach to meeting the demands of the question. This is most noticeable when dealing with a modern historian, who is generally 'evaluated' as

being relatively free from bias, having had an opportunity to use hindsight to review a variety of sources. Such comments add nothing to the argument, whereas to note that 'Kenyon's comment on the "new-look Charles, preaching moderation" reinforces the view that Charles' "intention to advance the true Protestant religion" in Source C may be insincere' is a useful cross-reference which will gain credit. Similarly, the tendency to make 'stock' evaluations can ignore real points of value. Thus in Question 2 (a) one candidate wrote:

Both sources...give a typical representation of the language Luther would use to attack the church, as Luther did use strong language, referring to the Pope as 'Antichrist' on numerous occasions.

The answer completely ignores a very relevant difference of tone between the two sources, (suppliant in A and more aggressive in B), which could then have been further evaluated in terms of audience and date. Attention to such points may make the difference between bands.

Comments on Individual Questions.

Q.1 The Wars of the Roses.

This question attracted a small number of entries, and these seem to have experienced few difficulties.

a) There was sufficient help in the attributions to make this a straightforward comparison for candidates with some background knowledge, which most had. There was a tendency for weaker candidates to make York rather than Somerset the focus of the answer.

b) When candidates had a good knowledge of the period, which many did, sources were evaluated meaningfully. Most saw Henry's weaknesses as a key factor.

Q.2. The German Reformation.

Although less popular than in the past, this topic was covered by a wide range of candidates, with some good answers being noted.

a) In general this proved to be an accessible question for candidates who could explain their comparison by reference to the dates of the Sources. Candidates benefited from knowing, or deducing from the sources the role of the Archbishop of Mainz. Weaker answers too often assumed that both extracts were directly concerned with indulgences missing the focus on the wider implications of papal finances in B.

b) Although at the lower levels of response there were candidates who plodded sequentially through the Sources seeing whether each contained references to finance, a good proportion of the remainder attempted some evaluation of the Sources in relation to the question. Among these, the most common reason for not reaching full potential was almost exclusive concentration on finances. Relatively few candidates commented on the initial importance of spiritual matters, highlighted in Source A. Even German nationalism was a factor which received far less attention than it merited, particularly as it is present in Sources B, C and D. This tended to be appreciated by only the most able answers.

Source D was, as often happens with this paper, seriously under-used, though it contained some vital information. Many drew attention to the cry of 'Death to the Roman Court' (often without seeing a link to B), though some did see the implications of Aleander's attention to his expense account in this context. Aleander's suggestion that the Germans could be 'bought off' represents an official view of the problem which could have been used to support the proposition of the question, though most neglected to do so. Similarly most missed the 'personality cult' aspects of D, which are vital illustrations of 'the appeal of Lutheranism'.

Q.3 The Mid-Tudor Crisis.

a) This question posed difficulties for a substantial number of candidates who were unclear of the context of the Sources. Although the Mark Scheme states that contextual knowledge is not a

requirement of part (a), it is generally difficult to produce a satisfactory response if there is not even a basic familiarity with the background of the extracts. In this instance, many candidates seemed to have little knowledge of the significance of the former Church lands, and the fact that their owners were the landed classes, whose support was essential if Mary were to get her religious legislation through Parliament (the 'desired result' of B).

Similarly, many candidates were unclear about the roles of Charles V (Mary's father-in-law) and Pole, and resorted to generalisations ('as the ambassadors/ Charles V were Roman Catholics they would have wanted the Church lands returned') which generally fell short of the mark. As noted in the General Comments (above), candidates who failed to distinguish the reported views of the Dean of St. Paul's in C from those of the Ambassador writing the report misinterpreted the author's intention.

b) Some candidates chose to interpret this question as 'reconciliation with Rome' rather than as reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants in England. This possible alternative approach was recognised in the mark scheme, and many of those who chose to adopt this interpretation recognised that there was a stark contrast between the apparent message of A and the reality of D, with B and C capable of various interpretations. Better answers related the apparently conciliatory tone of A to the insecurity of Mary's throne after the failed coup by Northumberland, and mentioned the aftermath of Wyatt's rebellion as a reason for the cautious approach to Church lands in B and C. This showed the integration of sources and external knowledge which is a characteristic of the higher bands.

Evaluation of the Sources was often fairly basic, though, unusually for a Source D, the majority of candidates were able to make some relevant comments about Foxe. All knew that he was a famous Protestant propagandist, but hardly anyone commented that he has been shown to be quite accurate in his facts. A number related the blow struck by 'the man Soyce' as an example of brutality, though it could be argued that burning alive is marginally less painful when unconscious. Source D presented candidates with an extract which really differed from the other three, and enabled even weaker answers to make some sort of grouping.

Q.4 The English Civil War

a) This proved to be a difficult question, partly because, as in 3 (a), some contextual knowledge (in this case of Arminianism and Puritanism) was an advantage, and partly because the sources provided rather oblique information on Charles' religious policies. This necessitated some inference from B about what Charles had been up to before 1642, and a consideration of how sincere his intentions were as expressed in Source B. A number of answers managed to address these issues quite successfully, with comments such as:

'By "true Protestant religion", it is likely that Charles meant his own faith, Arminianism, which although a branch of Protestantism, was often misunderstood to have Roman Catholic leanings due to its emphasis on grandeur and hierarchy. This directly opposed many Puritan principles held by men such as Pym.'

A few of the best answers went so far as to question the value of the sources:

'Therefore as a pair both sources are limited in usefulness as evidence for Charles I's religious policies, because they focus on current issues to be resolved, and thus the content involves how to resolve these issues...' This comment, and others like it, showed a praiseworthy confidence which not many candidates demonstrate.

b) In comparison with (a) this was a far more straightforward question, and consequently some candidates were tempted to switch to auto-pilot, and produced lengthy and often detailed narratives of events from as far back as 1629, with occasional glancing references to the sources. The focus of the question was clearly identified as the period leading up to 1642, and those whose context went too far before or past this date wasted valuable writing time. Similarly candidates were asked to assess the role of Charles' uncompromising attitude in leading to war, and many focused on this factor to the exclusion of others, despite pointers given in Sources B

and D. As noted elsewhere, Source D was underused, with many candidates reciting the familiar mantra that as a modern historian, Kenyon was likely to be free of bias and to have had access to a range of sources. Such comments are almost completely valueless, and many candidates missed the balanced assessment of Charles' character, and the useful opportunities for cross-reference to B and C which this Source afforded.

Q.5 Louis XIV's France

Like Question 1, this was very much a minority choice topic. There were few really outstanding responses.

a) This question presented two very contrasting Sources, and many candidates made comparisons of tone, date, audience etc. without really considering the value of the extracts as *evidence for Louis' style of kingship*. Very few commented on the interesting working definition of 'l'etat c'est moi' in B, or developed the references to the role of advisors mentioned in both Sources.

b) Very few candidates addressed the key issue of whether absolutism was strengthened, and again Source D was seriously neglected. External knowledge, apart from references to Versailles, seemed very limited.

2582 History Unit

General Comments

The entry for unit 2582 was approximately 60% that of January 2008. This is as expected with the introduction of the new specification and the majority of those entered for 2582 unit on this occasion were candidates re-sitting the unit. The overall standards were felt to be comparable to previous years, although several examiners noted that they received fewer very weak answers than in some previous January sessions. Equally, it was felt that there were relatively few very strong answers, with the great majority falling in Bands II, III or IV in the mark scheme.

Since this is the penultimate session for this unit, it is not necessary to offer fresh general advice on techniques and approaches. Extensive comments and guidance can be found in previous Examiner's Reports, such as those for January 2008 and June 2008. Alternatively, guidance on how to answer the equivalent units in the new specification (F963 / F964) can be found in the Examiner's Report for January 2009 relating to the new specification.

Comments on individual questions

1. The origins of the French Revolution 1774-1792.

Relatively few candidates attempted this question, but the quality of answers of those who did was generally good and the questions did not seem to present any undue difficulties.

(a) Most candidates were able to draw some comparisons and to identify similarities and differences in content. The shared emphasis on the dismissal of Necker was picked up by virtually all, as was the fact that D refers to bread shortages, whereas C does not. The provocation caused by the threat of troops was less frequently noted. Evaluation of the provenance of sources was often the clearer discriminator between stronger and weaker answers. Discussion of aspects of provenance was generally a prominent feature of answers, sometimes to the exclusion of a full discussion of content – indeed, one centre of about 15 candidates almost entirely neglected to discuss source content. Evaluation tended to be limited by a lack of knowledge about who Mme de Stael and Desmoulins were. Few, for example, were able to link Desmoulins with his later role or allegiance in the French Revolution and thus resorted to stock comments. Desmoulins was merely a journalist, writing a primary source and De Stael was writing later, so either possessed the benefit of hindsight, or the limitation of faded or altered memory. However, most were able to make appropriate comments about the likely loyalties of the two writers, whether it be to radical ideas (C) or to the memory of Necker (D).

(b) Most candidates were able to make a sound attempt at using the sources to identify evidence of the King's responsibility for the emergence of the revolutionary situation. A common approach was to group sources A, C and D against source B as a basis for a two-part answer. This approach made for a potentially sound answer, providing various opportunities for contextual knowledge to be added, although the extent and quality of such knowledge varied greatly, with candidates from at least one centre offering almost no independent knowledge. Evaluation of the sources was limited, or else tended towards 'stock' comments: so, for example, Arthur Young was either reliable / objective or unreliable / biased due to being an English visitor. The best source evaluation often concerned Source B, where candidates picked up on the obvious fact that this was a speech by Louis XIV himself and as such should not be taken at face value. At best this led to an opportunity to deploy own knowledge relevantly in order to assess the value of the source's evidence and many candidates effectively questioned the validity of the King's defence of his actions in B. Some picked up on the reference to bread shortages in D and to the economic context of Necker's dismissal to present good quality discussions of the King's responsibility for France's economic problems. Source A should have

provided opportunity to discuss an alternative view, focusing more on the emergence of radical, enlightenment ideas, with a discussion of Young's implied criticism of the King for not seeking to prevent the spread of such ideas providing further criteria for an evaluation of the King's responsibility for the revolutionary situation.

2. The Condition of England 1832-53

(a) There were very few strong answers to this question. The principal difficulty encountered was an inability to interpret the statistics in source D. Source B makes a straightforward claim that the new Poor Law had led to lower poor rates and most were also able to comment appropriately on the authorship of Chadwick and its likely effects on the evidence. However the evidence of D is more complex. While Cutler does agree that the poor rate in Aston (under the new system) was lower than in Birmingham (still under the old system), he also offers national statistics to suggest a higher average poor rate, thus challenging the view that the new Poor law resulted in greater efficiency. Only a very few candidates began to consider why this might be: some suggested the national figure included parishes both under old and new systems and therefore was a transitional figure; others wondered if Chadwick's figure reflected the rural south, whereas Cutler's figure included the higher poor rates of urban areas. Such suggestions showed intelligent engagement with the sources. Most candidates limited their discussion to the issue of costs, although B clearly provides other reasons for suggesting the new Poor Law was leading to effective management. A number of candidates drew attention to the dates of the sources. A frequently made point was that Chadwick was writing in 1837, but D was dated 1841, so had a longer term perspective on the new Poor Law. While candidates could be credited for attempting to consider the impact of date on the evidence, most failed to note that Cutler's figures related to 1836 and the speech was merely compiled at a later date. Despite Cutler's speech being collected in the 'Book of Bastilles' many candidates failed to identify Cutler as an opponent of the new law.

(b) This question was answered slightly better than part (a) and the demands of the question seemed to be clearly understood. However, the overall standard was again generally not high, partly because confusion over the evidence of D spilled over into this question as well. Sources B and C provide clear evidence for the centrality of the money-saving motive, as does D, albeit in the context of challenging the effectiveness of the new Poor law in achieving this aim. Most candidates were able to identify the relevant evidence here, at least from B and C. Source A provides an alternative factor, based on moral considerations, which is developed also in C and alluded to more briefly in B. A significant number of candidates tended to write own knowledge based, pre-learned answers on the reasons for the new Poor Law, with only incidental references to the sources. Others veered the other way and could not supplement extraction of source content with sufficient contextual knowledge. Discussion of the provenance of the sources and the perspective of the various authors was generally very limited. Most candidates made a comment on Chadwick, but there was little attempt to consider the perspectives of the writers of A and C and confusion over Cutler's stance and the purpose of his speech was again evident.

3. Italian Unification 1848-70

This question was relatively popular and elicited a wide range of responses. Some were excellent, but many were mediocre, struggling in particular to get to grips with the demands of part (a).

(a) The requirement to compare the attitudes of both Britain and Austria towards Italy proved problematic for some candidates, with a number of answers only focussing on one of the two countries' views. Where both were considered, many answers tended to be sequential discussions, identifying first what A said about British attitudes, then what B said; followed by a similar sequential discussion of Austria's views. Direct comparisons of similarity and difference were less common, but the most effective answers saw the essential continuity of attitudes

between the sources, whilst also using considerations of date and context to explain and interpret the differences. Those who were able to place A in the context of the Crimean War and to link Palmerston's comments to the post-Villafranca context were often the most successful. A frequent misunderstanding in B was to think that Palmerston was actively suggesting that Britain might support the restoration of Austrian power in Italy, although a close reading of the source makes it clear that he rejects this option.

(b) This question produced some very well-informed and thoughtful answers, but also a good number of more limited responses. Most candidates were able to identify the role of Britain, as expressed in the four documents, although a minority were unsure exactly what Britain's policy was in B. Better answers grouped A and B as showing Britain's diplomatic support for Italy – some arguing that this was of crucial significance, but others suggesting that it was a relatively limited contribution to Italian affairs. Similarly, candidates (quite legitimately) differed in their interpretation of C, some stressing the key role of Britain in ensuring Garibaldi's success, but others focussing on Garibaldi's downplaying of the significance of the presence of the British fleet. Those who pointed out that three of the sources were of British origin and that the other (C) was from a close friend of Britain, set themselves up helpfully for an evaluation of the role of other powers. Critical evaluation of D was particularly fruitful, although only a minority were able to get much beyond the obvious image of Britain welcoming Italy, to consider how it depicted the role of other powers. Only a few rightly interpreted the significance of Napoleon III being restrained by France. In this respect, the dates of the question were often ignored, with candidates often straying beyond 1861, especially in considering the role of France. Candidates also strayed beyond the boundaries of the question by considering the roles of Cavour and Garibaldi, whereas the question asks only about 'foreign powers'. Many of the best answers were able to identify the role of France effectively, using the contexts of A and B, as well as the depiction of Napoleon III in C as a basis for this.

4. The Origins of the American Civil War 1848-61

This was a relatively popular topic and it was felt that both the questions and the sources were largely straightforward and did not present too many difficulties for well-prepared candidates.

(a) The key points of content comparison were identified with reasonable success by most candidates, but some of the finer points were missed. Most claimed that both sources said that the Kansas-Nebraska Act permitted the extension of slavery to the territories, but very few noted that, while A spoke of territories, B spoke of southerners taking slaves and then slavery into the Free States. While credit was given for the broad similarity, the distinction between territories and states was potentially an important one. Another difference that was not widely identified was the focus of A on the principle that Congress had no control over slavery in the territories, whilst B emphasised the south's ambition of securing universal toleration of slavery in the North. The contrasting provenance of the two sources was recognised by all, but more could have been done to explore differences in tone (triumphalist or alarmist) and purpose.

(b) Most candidates understood the thrust of the claim in the question and the majority successfully grouped A and B together, to argue that the Act appeared to benefit the south, in contrast to C and D, which argued that it did more harm than good. Most were also able to use the dates of the sources to contrast A and B as short-term reactions to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, with C and D providing longer term perspectives. A few pointed out that there was an absence of a longer-term southern perspective in the sources. The link between the Act and the formation of the Republican Party, as identified in D, was used by many as an opportunity to add independent knowledge of the rise of the Republican Party and the damage that did to the south's cause. Source C proved a little more problematic, with a number confusing the Fugitive Slave Act with the Kansas-Nebraska Act, or failing to see that the source referred to a sequence of southern actions, of which Kansas-Nebraska was just one. However, good candidates understood the argument of C and succeeded in effectively integrating their own knowledge of the events which followed on from the passing of the Act, to argue that it ultimately did more

harm than good to the Southern cause. An alternative view, that the subsequent deterioration of the South's position owed itself to later developments rather than to the Act itself was, when argued clearly, an effective response

5. The Irish Question in the Age of Parnell 1877-93

This was attempted by only a small number of centres and, while there were a few good answers, the majority were relatively poor.

(a) A significant number of candidates wrote sequential answers here, which provided very little by way of direct comparison. The central contrast, by which Parnell is presented favourably in A and critically in B, was identified by almost all, and a majority were also able to identify the contrast of motives ascribed to Parnell in the two sources – concern for evictions in A and political ends in B. Similarities were rarely acknowledged (e.g. the bitterness of Parnell and animosity of the Land League). Some answers digressed into a discussion of British policy and compared the accusation of 'apathy' made in A with Gladstone's promise of 'good laws and good government' in B – an issue more relevant to question (b). Most candidates referred to the provenance of the sources, with reasonable success. Most were able to identify O'Shea as Parnell's wife and noted either that she would be presenting him in the best light out of love or loyalty, or that she would have been directly representing Parnell's own attitudes as expressed privately to her. The contrasting perspective of Gladstone was also noted, with some candidates commenting a little speculatively, but nonetheless thoughtfully, on the fact that he was writing a letter to Forster, a supporter of coercion, and may thus have had a motive in presenting Parnell and the Land League in a less than favourable light.

(b) The majority of candidates lacked a sufficiently accurate or detailed knowledge of the events of 1880-1882 to be able to answer this effectively. Many were almost wholly dependent on the Sources, but were unable to evaluate or fully interpret their content due to a lack of contextual knowledge. In terms of grouping, most were able to identify B and C as providing a basis for a justification of British policy, whilst A and D argued otherwise. Most noted that this grouping also corresponded with the authorship of the four sources and some similarly observed the lack of an impartial perspective. In constructing an overall judgement on the question, candidates too often seemed to adopt a random sympathy for one side or the other, with little basis in the sources or evidence. To evaluate Sources A and B effectively required a secure knowledge both of the nature of the Land League's activities in these years and the content of Gladstone's Second Land Act of 1881. Equally, the issues raised in C and D could not be successfully discussed without a grasp of the Coercion Act, the imprisonment of Parnell and the Kilmainham Treaty. Only a very small minority of candidates possessed this precision of knowledge and in most cases where own knowledge was attempted, information was imprecise and very often there was confusion over dates, leading to candidates straying outside the relevant period.

6. England in a New Century 1900-1918

This was a reasonably popular question and one which was generally answered competently, although there was a wide range of standards seen by examiners.

(a) Candidates were for the most part able successfully to identify the essential contrasts in reasons for opposition to the National Insurance Act. Both sources suggest that the Act will not succeed in helping the poor, but do so for completely different reasons. While most were able to extract from C the argument that the Act would take money away from the poor, many did not seem to connect that with the reference to the compulsory contribution. In some cases, the text of the source was being used, but it was unclear if the reference to keeping a man on seven shillings a week, yet taking a compulsory contribution from him, was fully understood. This is an example of where contextual knowledge really is needed to enable an effective evaluation of the source to be made. Some linked the reference in C to taking a compulsory contribution, with D's objection to money being 'tapped for the sake of the least worthy' – a fundamental

misunderstanding. Otherwise, the content of D was usually understood clearly, although many seemed to avoid the reference to 'degenerate races'. In considering the provenance of the sources, a discussion of typicality was usually fruitful. A minority of the best answers could place Lansbury's views in the context of a spectrum of Labour views. There was less clarity as to how far the author of D should be considered a representative doctor, or conservative, or whether his views should be considered as those of an untypical extremist.

(b) A grouping of sources A and B versus C and D was an obvious (and essentially valid) starting point for this question and one which most candidates were able to develop at least to the point of using the source content relevantly. However, many did not get beyond a basic answer, arguing that A and B agreed that the Liberals had the best solution, but C and D disagreed. This lacked any consideration of what the alternatives were. C offers a number of helpful pointers to alternatives suggested by the Labour Party, which candidates with stronger own knowledge were able to explore to good effect. D offers a 'self help' critique of the whole welfare reforming strategy and could also have been identified as an alternative approach. While A and B are supportive of the Liberal reforms, the references to new liberalism and traditional liberal policies could also have been used as a basis for evaluation of Liberal reforms. Candidates often had good knowledge of the Liberal reforms themselves, but those who did were inclined simply to describe the various reforms as a basis for arguing that they were the best solution, rather than evaluating the effectiveness of the reforms, or considering alternative approaches.

7. Nazi Germany 1933-45

As always, this was by far the most popular question, with over 75% of all answers being for this topic. As in previous years, this topic produced a large number of weaker responses. However, it is encouraging to see that there were also some excellent scripts and that well-prepared candidates have every opportunity to shine in answering questions on this topic.

(a) The comparison of content was generally unproblematic, with most being able effectively to identify similarities and differences. However, there was a tendency for some Centres to focus too much on provenance and to leave the content comparison very general and unspecific. Effective answers provided close textual references to support their broad points of comparison and also were able to extract and analyse four or five points of similarity or contrast, rather than just one or two obvious and general points. Close, detailed reading of all parts of each source is strongly recommended. Both sources are of SPD origin and this allowed candidates to make a number of comments on provenance and reliability. An alarmingly large number thought that the SPD was a pro-Nazi Party, which is a surprisingly common error. Others argued, simplistically, that the SPD origin made the sources biased against the Nazis (although the same answers often also said that the sources showed how popular Hitler was) and some suggested that the positive assessments of Hitler's popularity must have been due to censorship or fear. This reveals a lack of knowledge of the nature and function of SOPADE reports. Some seemed to think that the views being expressed in A and, particularly, C were those of the author him/herself, rather than the reported views of others, leading to some inventive attempts to explain why a half-Jewish teacher was so supportive of Hitler. Finally, as one examiner noted, 'the mysterious Knight of the Long Knives rode apocalyptically through several answers' - a phenomenon noted in every exam session, more or less regardless of the question set!

(b) There was a tendency in answering this question to equate 'consent' with 'popularity', leading to a grouping of A,B and most of D against B and the reference in D to 'use of terror'. While there is a legitimate connection between the concepts of consent and popularity, better answers recognised that they were not identical. Some argued that consent was achieved through propaganda (or 'brainwashing'), rather than inherent consent – a distinction which, if well made, was fruitful. Source B was usually used to demonstrate lack of consent. However, more thoughtful answers often suggested that, while the response to the radio broadcast was not one of active enthusiasm, there was nonetheless no evidence of opposition, thus indicating

indifference amounting to passive consent. Many candidates also made an attempt to evaluate source B. Less successful attempts amounted to speculative assertions that Gibbs, as an English journalist, would be biased against Nazi Germany; or alternatively that he would be entirely objective as an outsider. A more fruitful approach considered typicality with some of the best attempting evaluations based on the socio-economic types represented in the café, or showing awareness that Nazi support was relatively low in Berlin in the early years. Where candidates offered own knowledge, it was often narrowly focussed on the early months of consolidation of power (e.g. election results), or else strayed beyond the period 1933 to 1939. There were, for example, a very large number of references to the White Rose movement as evidence of a lack of consent and there was little awareness of expressions of dissent in the pre-war years. A few candidates confused the concept of consent with the debate over Hitler's style of ruling and tried to argue that Hitler's rule was based on his consent to the policies of others. Unfortunately, this was not a valid approach. Despite such examples of confusion, however, there were also some very well-developed responses, which used the sources effectively to evaluate both reasons for and extent of consent and deployed own knowledge in an integrated manner to evaluate the source-based evidence.

2583

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2a)

This was quite a popular question, but the quality of the answers was variable. Most were able to write about the claim of Harold Godwinson to the English throne, but there were a number who were unable to link this to the actual question. Many of the better answers considered whether Harold's claim was weak and pointed to the approval of the Witan, his role as sub regulus and the apparent confirmation by Edward on his death. Some also suggested that because he was English and due to his experience under Edward this made his claim even stronger, this was usually contrasted with William's claim and there was frequently debate about the oath. Many of the better answers went on to argue that it was not the weakness of his claim but the events at Hastings and immediately prior which cost Harold his throne. There were some answers that were able to make links, suggesting that it was only because of William's claim that he invaded and therefore without that it is unlikely that Harold would have lost the throne. Many answers elaborated on the various strengths and weaknesses of Harold and William as military leaders and used that to explain the reason for Harold's loss. There were however, a number of answers that did not go beyond discussing the strength of the various claimants and this narrow focus limited the band awarded.

2b)

Although this was not as popular as 2a) there were still a significant number of answers. However, many simply described the opposition that William faced and did not consider how serious the actual opposition was or offered the opinion that since he overcame the opposition it was not really very serious. At best these answers reached Band IV as they were little more than implied analysis. It was also disappointing to see the narrow range of revolts and rebellions that were considered in many answers. It was very noticeable that there was little reference to Hereward the Wake and many simply focused on the 'Harrying of the North' and Exeter. Some candidates did adopt a more thematic approach and this often produced a high level response, provided the argument was supported by reference to specific incidents.

6a)

There was a generally good level of knowledge about the topic. The rule of Edward IV was understood and the successes he had as a king were readily identified. The general opinion seemed to be that he failed in two respects: to pass on the throne to his son uncontested and there was some sense that his foreign policy failed because he did not pursue conquest. Finance played a large part in many answers, but there was little mention of foreign policy, other than the French treaty or of the Lancastrians.

6b)

Most candidates found this question to be straightforward. Many answers focused on the usurpation and few mentioned Richard's financial administration. The Princes in the Tower and the rumours of their fate received some attention, but the better students questioned the sources of these rumours. The death of Richard's wife also received some attention as did the problems with the southern nobility. There was little consideration given to the events between the summer of 1483 and 1485, which might have helped to explain why Richard failed to develop substantial support.

7a)

The quality of responses to this question was often dependent upon what candidates understood to be a 'modern ruler'; those who defined this in their opening paragraph and used it to refer back to were often the candidates who accessed the higher levels. There were many areas for candidates to consider and although most focused on the issue of government and law and

order, there were other answers that looked at the issues of trade and foreign policy, particularly the avoidance of war. Many answers focused on his relationship with the nobility and suggested that his use of 'new men' was a sign of a modern ruler as the 'supernobles' of the Medieval period lost power and influence. There was also consideration of issues of law and order, particularly his use of JPs. The better answers saw a balanced approach and showed that Henry still used the nobility and that parliament was still not a regular feature of government.

7b)

Although this question was quite popular, many answers were very narrow in their focus. There was a great deal that could be discussed, but many chose to deal only with Simnel and Warbeck. This could be successful, but only if answers broadened out and linked them into the threat from abroad, particularly the Yorkist challenge around Margaret of Burgundy. There were some answers that looked at other challenges from the Yorkists-Lovell and Suffolk- and this did enable candidates to display a better perspective on the period. Some answers looked at a wider range of issues and brought in the challenge from overseas and the threat of the nobility. There were some excellent answers that also considered the issue of the succession and were able to consider the weakening of Henry's position after the death of Arthur and Elizabeth and link this to the later challenges. At the top levels some were able to suggest that the threat was more perceived than real, although this was balanced against the weakness of his claim and that Stoke could have been another Bosworth.

9a)

This was a very popular question and it attracted a wide range of responses. Most answers considered the issues of legal reform and finance; others also considered his relationship with the nobility, the church and social reform. There were many who argued that Wolsey must have been successful as he survived in power for so long; this often led to a consideration of successful for who-Wolsey himself or the king. Most argued that his legal and financial administration was his most successful and there was often detailed discussion of the development of the usage of courts and his ability to raise large sums of money to fund Henry's wars, although most did draw attention to his failure of the Amicable Grant. The subsidy was generally understood, but some candidates found it difficult to balance this against the failure of the Amicable Grant. Most students do not understand the nature of taxation in the sixteenth century and assumptions are often based on what they know of taxation today. Discussion of the administration of the church and social issues saw greater controversy about the degree of success. It did not matter what view was taken, but it had to be supported by appropriate evidence. Many of the better answers argued that his response to social problems was hampered by the need for money for overseas ventures and that this caused him to abandon the attack on Enclosures. There were some answers that considered Wolsey's relationship with the nobility and his attempts to limit their influence through various reforms, such as the Eltham Ordinances.

9b)

Although this question was not as popular as 9a) it still attracted a significant number of responses. At the very highest level answers were able to link the issue of faction and the divorce together to produce very convincing analytical answers. These candidates were able to explain how the Boleyn faction manipulated Henry so that he became convinced that Wolsey was the obstacle to the divorce. However, there were a significant number who were unable to clearly identify the nature of their respective influence at Court or with the King. Most answers were able to consider a range of factors and most argued that the divorce was the most significant factor, however there were some who argued that it was the foreign situation that ultimately caused Wolsey's downfall as the pope was unable to oblige Henry, who then blamed Wolsey. Some argued that it was Wolsey's dependence on the King for his authority and saw a string of failures and loss of confidence as being the most important factors. At the lower end there were a significant number of candidates who struggled with the concept of faction and simply saw anyone who was opposed to Wolsey as creating a faction or saw Anne as a faction

on her own. Many answers started by examining either the failure of the Amicable Grant or his attack on the nobility through the Eltham Ordinances or Enclosure as the cause of his fall.

11a)

This question was largely approached in two ways, either was acceptable. Most chose to focus on Wolsey as the personification of abuses that could be found in the church on the eve of the Reformation and how, as its leader, he gave it a bad name. There were very few who saw Wolsey's domination of the Church as being a problem. This could have been used to argue that his dominance created a virtual power vacuum in Church leadership which left them unable to resist Henry VIII when he began the process of breaking with Rome. Better answers were able to demonstrate that many of the abuses were not that common and therefore, given Wolsey's position and wealth he was the largest problem. It was also possible to argue that the attacks on the church in the Reformation parliament ceased once Wolsey fell from power suggesting again that he was the major problem. The question gave candidates the opportunity to weigh up the abuses illustrated by Wolsey's career against the overall condition of the church and this frequently led to a discussion of issues such as absenteeism, nepotism and sexual misconduct. However, some candidates chose to argue that Wolsey's greatest legacy was his failure to achieve a divorce and how it affected the church. This approach was acceptable provided the answer focused on the Church in 1529 and did not lead candidates to use it as signpost to write about the religious changes in the 1530s.

11b)

This was quite a popular question and most responses chose to argue that it was either financial or political reasons that caused the dissolution. This approach was acceptable, but candidates did need to assess the role of religious factors, even if they concluded that they were not important. Many suggested that religion was used as an excuse and pointed to the work of Cromwell, Leigh and Layton. However, some balanced this by suggesting that for Cromwell, given his advanced religious views, religious reasons would have played a significant role. Many answers noted Cromwell's promise to Henry to make him the richest man in Christendom; this approach was acceptable, but it must be remembered that it was not until the dissolution of the larger houses that Henry gained significant wealth. Political reasons were considered, some answers made use of the Pilgrimage of Grace to suggest that monasteries appeared to be centres of resistance to Henry's extension of power, whilst others pointed to their obedience to Rome. There is still the problem that many candidates are unable to distinguish between monasteries and the church in general; as a result many answers considered the general condition of the church, rather than the monasteries and did not receive credit for this. There was also some misunderstanding of the purpose of the Valor Ecclesiasticus and a tendency to confuse this with the monastic visitations. There was also some confusion between monasteries with the Cahntries.

13a)

This question produced a number of very good answers, particularly from those who were able to distinguish between the different types of puritans and then assess the threat from each group. Most concluded that the threat was not great as most were willing to conform and those who were not were small in number and became discredited and isolated by the end of the reign and good use was made of the Marprelate tracts to support this argument. Many also considered the puritan challenge in parliament and were able to show that this was defeated, usually very easily, and supported this with reference to the Vestment Controversy, Cope's Bill and Book and Strickland. There was some consideration of the concept of the 'puritan choir', but most suggested this has been exaggerated and therefore presented little challenge. Others also argued that the death of puritan councillors also reduced the challenge by the end of the reign. Some candidates did argue that Puritanism was a strong movement within the Church on the basis of Grindal becoming Archbishop and seemed unaware of his suspension and replacement by Whitgift. The question did require a focus on the puritan challenge and it was not acceptable for answers to drift into considering whether the catholic challenge was greater.

13b)

There were fewer answers to this question than 13a). Very few of the answers were prepared to focus on the end of the reign, with much descriptive comment on events as far back as the settlement itself.

14a)

This question attracted a reasonable range of answers and most were able to identify and explain a range of reasons, however few were able to assess the relative importance of these reasons. Most answers focused on the issue of the New World and bullion ships, but better answers were also able to give due weight to the issue of the Netherlands. At the top level some were able to consider whether there perceptions of Philip as the champion of the counter-reformation added to the problems. At the lower end there were a number who described events from 1568 to 1585 and demonstrated only implied analysis.

14b)

This question attracted a limited number of answers, but it did see some very good responses, particularly where there was a good understanding of the significance of the removal of French forces. Many answers also drew attention to the realisation that Spain was the common enemy and that a united response was in the best interest of both.

15a)

Although the concept of 'efficiency' did cause weaker candidates difficulties and was frequently replaced with 'successful', there were a number of excellent answers. Much depended upon candidates understanding of the term 'government' and better candidates considered a wide range, both national and local before reaching a judgement. In many instances candidates still do not have a good grasp of the role and function of the Privy Council and were frequently reduced to sweeping generalisations. It was however encouraging to see the number who could discuss local government, particularly whether JPs etc functioned efficiently. This question also saw the familiar problem of candidates simply describing the opposing views of historians without any personal evaluative comment.

15b)

This question was more popular than 15a) and provided candidates with the opportunity to consider a range of issues. Many focused on the issue of Monopolies and whether it was a good indicator of popularity, others suggested that Essex's rebellion suggested a loss of popularity, although better answers were able to qualify this and show that it was based a round a small number of disgruntled nobles. This was frequently balanced against the 'Golden Speech' and the lack of unrest, despite the hunger prevalent for much of the time. There was also consideration as to whether the cost of warfare against Spain and in Ireland would have diminished popularity.

17a)

There were a few answers to this question and what was most noticeable was the lack of specific examples that candidates were able to use to support their arguments. This was frequently limited to generalisations about finance, with some reference to the Great Contract, and more specific consideration of foreign policy at the end of the period. This made it difficult for candidates to adopt a balanced approach and see that in many instances issues were dealt with without conflict.

17b)

There were a number of answers to this question, but few candidates focused on why divisions developed over the period. Very often the range of issues examined by candidates was narrow and often focused on the early part of James' reign or on issues of foreign policy. There was certainly little consideration of issues in the early years of Charles' reign and this resulted in candidates being unable to consider the whole period. Some answers also spent too long explaining that religious divisions were not always an issue.

18a)

This was a popular question and saw a very wide range of answers. At the lower end candidates did not focus on the issue of 'success', choosing instead to look at whether personal rule was popular. Many answers argued that, until the Bishops War Charles was largely successful and therefore it was only at the end of the period that it could be considered a failure. There was some attempt to address the issue of 'how far' and this was often done by arguing that Charles could not finance an active foreign policy. Many were aware of the financial achievements, particularly Ship Money, and were also able to examine the success of the policy of 'Thorough' in Ireland. Many answers were able to point to the fact that personal rule brought the country eleven years of stability. A few did argue that Charles was never really successful since his policies inherently provoked increasingly serious resistance.

18b)

This was a very popular question. Most candidates were able to examine a range of factors, usually looking at finance, the organisation of the armies, tactics and leadership and alliances. In considering financial issues there was a need to explain how far it contributed to the outcome and not simply describe the measures or explain why they were successful. At the top end, many candidates were aware that if Charles had seized the initiative in the early stages and marched on to London finance would not have been an important issue, but that it became crucial the longer the war lasted. As a consequence many argued that it was poor leadership that determined the outcome. Many were also able to link the issue of finance to the New Model Army and explain the role that played in the latter stages. There was a great deal that candidates might consider, but at the lower end many of the points were not well supported by precise examples.

19a)

There were some answers to this question, but many answers lacked the factual detail to sustain an argument and resorted to broad generalisations. The more successful answers established a set of criteria against which they could judge success. There appeared to be some confusion over Cromwell's achievements in the Caribbean and much generalisation about relations with France, Spain and the Netherlands. A clear chronological understanding would have provided a firm factual basis for many answers.

2584

1a)

This question produced a large number of answers across a wide range of levels. At the lower end candidates produced broad generalisations, showing little knowledge of either the methods used by Pitt or the radical groups in England. There were a significant number of answers that drew on examples from outside the period or wrote a general assessment about Pitt's policies, with more focus on financial methods employed. Only the better candidates were able to discuss effectively what the actual challenge of the French Revolution actually constituted. In the higher bands many argued that Pitt was successful, not always because of his policies, but because the challenge was never serious and they pointed to the low numbers in many of radical groups and the emergence of patriotic groups. There were some interesting answers that suggested Pitt was successful in the short term; but that he drove radical groups underground only for them to become a greater danger under Liverpool.

1b)

There were very answers to this question, but those who did attempt the question showed little knowledge of the reforms of the period and were often confused about the ministries after the death of Liverpool and chose to ascribe everything to him. Many candidates seemed unaware of the work of Robinson and Huskisson and focused almost entirely on Peel's penal reforms, thus showing little understanding of the key issues.

3a)

This was a very popular question which attracted a very wide range of responses. At the lower end candidates struggled to focus on 'party leader' and chose instead to write about the reforms of his last ministry and whether they were a success. Consideration of some of the reforms was relevant, but again they needed to be linked to the question. There were a number who also chose to answer a slightly different question and focus on whether Peel governed in the interests of the party or the nation; once again, although this had some merit candidates do need to answer the actual question set and not change the title. At the top end the focus was very clear and many argued that he from 1834 to 1841 Peel was very successful; he re-united the party after 1832 and improved party organisation, although many pointed out that this was not due to Peel himself. There was frequent consideration of the nature of 1841 victory and many argued that this was not a success and that Peel had failed to broaden the base of party support and was still reliant on the landed interest. Discussion of the ministry often focused on Peel's unwillingness to listen to back-benchers and how, by 1846, he had split the party, arguing that showed he was not a good party leader.

3b)

This question was much less popular than 3a) and many struggled to handle the focus of the question and failed to consider the idea of 'mishandled' and 'policy'. Instead there were a number of answers that explained why the Corn Laws were repealed with the occasional link or nod to the question. There were very few answers that understood the situation in 1841 and the nature of Peel's electoral victory with his dependence upon the landed interest. Candidates were unable to point to Peel's long association with amending or reducing the Corn Law levels, not even the reforms of 1841-2 and even fewer focused on a Free Trade theme. There were other answers that simply suggested Peel must have mishandled the situation because the party split.

4a)

Most answers were vague and generalised with very few specific references to transport developments, and what factors drove these. The usual conclusion was that all the factors were inter-related.

5a)

Most candidates were able to consider a number of reasons for the domination of the Whigs and Liberals in the period. Although some struggled to write in depth about the named factor, most were able to write a relevant paragraph before consider other issues. Many answers focused on the split in the Conservative party and the talent available to the Whigs/Liberals in this period and argued that these were the most important reasons.

5b)

Although this question attracted a number of responses many focused on how important Gladstone was to the development of the Liberal party rather than Liberalism and although much of the material used was relevant it meant that they were not always focused on the demands of the question. Candidates do need to read the question carefully and not simply use an answer from a previous essay that was fairly similar. Candidates were able to weigh up Gladstone's role against other factors in order to reach a judgement.

6a)

This question attracted a number of answers and most did not focus on 'how' weak, but 'why' the Conservative party was weak, taking it for granted that after the Corn Laws they were weak, as shown by their lack of time in office. Answers did consider issues such as poor leadership of the party and their weak performance when in office, particularly Disraeli's budget.

6b)

This question attracted a reasonable number of answers, but many were characterised by a narrow coverage, often focusing very heavily on the Eastern Question at the expense of other issues. Discussion of the Congress of Berlin was not developed and linked to 'Britain's interests', particularly the limiting of Russian power. It was noticeable that knowledge of imperial issues was often limited to the issue of Victoria's title as Empress of India. Coverage of issues such as the Suez shares, Afghanistan and the Zulu War were often treated in a superficial manner, if they were covered at all.

7a)

Although this question was quite popular the quality of answers was often disappointing, with many vague of the concept of 'Balance of Power'. The focus was often very narrow and limited to the Eastern Question and many were unable to link developments to the focus of upholding the balance of power. There was little recognition of the emergence of Germany as a threat to the balance by the end of the period, with most focusing their attention on Russia and keeping her out of the Mediterranean.

7b)

There not many answers to this question, but a number focused on 'why' imperialism was popular, rather than 'how' popular. As a result many focused on the economic benefits of imperialism and assumed that because of the benefits it was popular. Some argued that it was more popular among the classes that benefited directly from the policy. There was some acknowledgement that, with the Second Boer War, its popularity did appear to be in decline by the end of the period. Many were able to write about popular imperialism with some reference to Music Halls and literature, but in some instances more precise supporting detail would have benefited the argument.

8a)

This question was not done well, largely because candidates did not seem to have enough specific knowledge. Many were able to write only about the LRC and ignored the ILP. There were some answers that muddled Ramsay MacDONald and Keir Hardie. Most answers were unaware of the different socialist groups.

9a)

This was a very popular question and most candidates were able to examine a range of factors for the Liberal victory. Candidates did find it easier to write about Conservative failings rather than Liberal strengths; although many did argue that the strength of the Liberals was to exploit Conservative weaknesses. Many illustrated this by reference to the Tariff Reform campaign and their 'big loaf', 'little loaf' poster. At times, weaker answers failed to explain how the issues under discussion resulted in Conservative defeat and simply asserted that their policies made them unpopular. Most were able to write about the Boer War, Chinese Slavery, Taff Vale and the Education Act. There were a significant number of candidates who argued that the Liberal commitment to social reform was crucial, yet this scarcely appeared in the election campaign. A number went even further and suggested that it was the actual reforms that helped them win. There was also some discussion of the importance of the Lib-Lab pact of 1903.

9b)

Answers to this question were frequently very limited and candidates were reduced to writing in sweeping generalisations. There was little specific knowledge of factors influencing specific reforms and knowledge of the reforms introduced also tended to cover a narrow range. Candidates were often reduced to writing simply about Lloyd George's background of poverty, which has been exaggerated, rather than weighing up his influence against other factors. There was little awareness of the role of Labour MPs in some of the legislation or of the influence of other members of the government, such as Asquith.

10a)

Although this question was quite popular many candidates were unable to identify the domestic problems that Lloyd George faced and based their answer on a very narrow range of issues. Most candidates argued that he was not very successful, but better answers placed this in the context of the scale of the problem he faced after the war and his difficulty of being a Prime Minister without a party. There were a significant number who spent a disproportionate amount of time on his personality, the Honours Scandal and his downfall. There were very few candidates who discussed the issue of Ireland, but there many who discussed Chanak, which is clearly foreign policy.

10b)

Most candidates tackled this question by dealing with the two governments separately before making an overall judgement about the relative importance of the problems. Many concluded that 1924 was mostly political, whilst 1929-31 was more economic. However, specific knowledge of the ministries was lacking and there was also some confusion about the chronology of events. Very few candidates were able to write about both the Campbell affair and the Zinoviev letter in any depth and also often ignored the weak political position of the government. When dealing with the second administration specific knowledge about the events of 1931 was also often superficial, although better answers were able to link the issue of economic problems to the political split within the party over proposed cuts.

11a)

This question presented most candidates with difficulties and they were unable to use their knowledge to answer the actual question set, very few appeared to understand the concept of 'imperial' and tended to see it as synonymous with 'great power and therefore tended to write about early Cold War history. The concept of 'influence' was challenging and many were reduced to either describing what happened to the Empire or offer reasons why Britain gave up much of its empire.

11b)

This was more popular than 11a) but many answers focused on 'why' attitudes changed, rather than 'how far'. Most argued that the change in attitude came post Suez and culminated in applications to join the EEC.

12a)

Most argued that the social reforms did not owe everything to wartime changes and reports, but they often found it difficult to support their argument. There was some weak knowledge about Beveridge, which was often the basis of answers and many virtually ignored the idea of wartime changes. When candidates did try and substantiate their view that there were other factors they did look at Labour's commitment to reform and the social problems of pre-war.

12b)

This was quite a popular question and attracted a wide range of answers. Many were able to examine a wide range of issues and frequently concluded that the major reason for Labour's victory was Harold Wilson. In considering Conservative mistakes candidates did examine the appointment of Home as leader and also the government's handling of the economy. Better answers often compared the two leaders or the economic performance of the government with the links of Labour with the new technology.

2585

1a. Many candidates described the reasons for the conflict between Gregory V11 and Henry 1V rather than assessing them. There was also sometimes too much focus on the background of the conflict at the expense of the conflict itself. Few students considered the characters of the two involved.

1b. Good knowledge shown on this topic although answers were not always well prioritised. Other candidates tended to describe the new monasticism and then left any analysis to the conclusion.

2a and b. Too few scripts to comment.

3a. The best scripts were excellent showing a wide range of knowledge, and a clear understanding of religious zeal as a motive, often linking/supporting with reference to events on the actual crusade and then balancing against other motives. However, weaker answers did not make this link which led to some unfocused description, with many candidates simply writing everything they knew about the first crusade sometimes confused with the People's Crusade. There was some drift into last session's question, with emphasis on papal motivation rather than that of the crusaders, and some organisational problems, (of otherwise very good scripts) where candidates focused on other issues first and ran out of time before they got chance to deal with religious zeal. Whilst there was some good evaluation in rejecting a range of materialistic factors in favour of religious zeal, candidates did not generally recognise that the two are not mutually exclusive.

3b. Again, there were some excellent answers with some students showing good knowledge and understanding, and able to weigh a variety of factors against each other. Occasionally, answers were unbalanced with too much focus on a single factor (usually crusader leadership) at the expense of a fuller consideration of a range of factors. Lack of Muslim leadership was usually mentioned but often lacked supporting evidence.

4a and b. Too few scripts to comment

5a. Unsurprisingly, answers tended to focus on Florence rather than Rome and Venice. Whilst many candidates were able to outline details of economic development, they were less successful in linking these factors to the development of the Renaissance. Other factors such as political or cultural issues tended to be descriptive or ignored altogether .

5b. This was the less-favoured option and tended to produce poorer answers. Answers were frequently unbalanced with little on architecture and few examples to support ideas on either art or architecture.

6a. The best answers recognised the complex and interdependent relationship between nobles and monarchy and argued that problems after Isabella's death showed that Ferdinand and Isabella's success was therefore fragile. Weaker answers consisted of rather generalised descriptions and/or a very narrow focus, with little understanding or even mention of the Civil war

6b. Many candidates considered this to be a question on religious policy or its success, and as a result produced rather descriptive answers of varying quality based on the degree of knowledge; these tended to be weak on Isabella's reforms in the church but better on such factors as treatment of the Jews and the Inquisition. Issues such as the war in Granada were less well-handled because candidates failed to explore other motives. Better answers distinguished between the policies of Ferdinand and Isabella but sometimes with poor support.

7a. Candidates rarely offered much detail of military strength. The origins of the Janissaries was usually described, but there was little further explanation of their role in expanding the empire, other than a brief reference to their part in the siege of Constantinople. There was little or no mention of the sipahis. Evaluation of other factors was slight. Whilst candidates clearly recognised this was required, they were hampered by poor knowledge, so were only able to make rather generalised assertions.

7b. Answers were characterised by good knowledge on other factors which had assisted Suleiman, but less good on his own qualities. There was some good linkage of other factors but little evaluation other than this.

8a. Answers were quite well done, but there was sometimes a lack of focus on motivating factors and therefore some less relevant passages on issues which aided Portugal. Candidates tended to talk about push and pull factors without explaining their relationship to motivation. There was some failure to link the economic factors with the voyages themselves.

8b. Very few candidates went for this option and those that did were rather weak, with little mention of even the basic military equipment of the Spanish, such as horses, guns and canon. Some were able to give a brief description of Cortes' attack on Mexico, but these were largely unfocused on the question. There was little attempt to deal with the distinction between exploration and empire-building.

9a. A range of answers was produced, with the best showing a sophisticated analysis of the complex nature of the tensions between Emperor and Princes even before the advent of Lutheranism. However, weaker answers simply consisted of a list of the numerous Diets and failed to show an understanding of the wider issues. With weaker answers, there was some failure to progress further than 1530 and/or unravel the imperial/religious mix.

9b. Fewer candidates tackled this question. The best answers saw the links between inflation and population growth, but weaker candidates quoted some very dubious and sometimes contradictory statistics.

10a. Candidates produced a range of responses, the best providing strong answers showing detailed knowledge and understanding of the problems and able to rank and link them. However, weaker answers struggled with the idea of 'early years', had poor basic knowledge, particularly when Charles was actually in Spain, which led to significant distortions in argument.

10b. There was a full range of answers, with the best providing good focus on Charles as King of Spain, with little irrelevant treatment of his imperial ventures. Weaker answers however did not make the distinction and failed to cover the whole period. There was also some tendency here to over-simplify into a straight choice between the French and the Turks and be too general on the struggle with Francis, without seeing the need to focus on the control of Italy.

11a. Best answers showed an understanding of the limitations on absolutism in this period. These had often provided a useful introduction tackling the term 'absolutism'. Other answers had less idea about its meaning and occasionally simply used it as a synonym for powerful, or just described Francis' policies. Some tried to equate success in foreign policy with absolutism.

11b. Few candidates recognised the need to cover the whole period, even though dates were given. It was often seen simply as a question about royal policy, and therefore just addressed the level of success of Francis in religious affairs, providing rather narrow and poorly focused answers.

12a. There were few takers for this question, and answers tended to be characterised by lack of focus on the actual question, with many candidates simply describing the changes in infantry which took place. There were few mentions or discussion of specific battles.

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

13a. The question elicited some excellent responses, which successfully analysed problems within the Catholic church and showed very good judgement. Weaker answers however, used it as an opportunity to say all they knew about Luther's ideas, without linking their points to the question..

13b. Answers to this question were characterised by strong knowledge, but only occasionally with equally strong evaluation. For some, there was too little focus on the Council of Trent itself, and a failure to consider how widely or narrowly it was applied in other countries. A stronger explanation of the problems with which the church was dealing, would have been beneficial to many candidates, thus enabling them to have some measure of recovery.

14a. Few candidates for this question. Some problems with focus were demonstrated, with little discussion of the Edict of Nantes as the basis in establishing Henry's authority. There was little mention of the importance of ending the war with Spain. There was some description of the work of Sully, but a general failure to link it to the question.

14b. Too few candidates to comment.

15a. There was a good range of answers, with the best including both the causes and events of the Dutch revolt, demonstrating an impressive knowledge and understanding and often good evaluation. Weaker answers got little further than vague generalisations about Philip's religious intolerance.

15b. This was a less popular option than a and produced fewer good answers. Many candidates struggled with the concept of regionalism and this uncertainty led to some uneven argument and in some cases significant distortion.

16a. Answers were hampered by a lack of detailed knowledge especially about the provinces. There was also some lack of balance between the two issues. Even the answers which contained better knowledge, rarely took an analytical approach to evaluate Philip's success.

16b. Better answers were provided here, sometimes with good comparisons between treatment of the church at home and abroad. Many students however, adopted an uncritical approach, failing to explore other motives and seeing the relationship with the Pope in only very simplistic terms.

17a. Answers were often successful in dealing with the Huguenots, but frequently failed to mention the Devots. Few discussed the political motives behind many of Richlieu's religious policies and fewer still were able to evaluate the factors. Where discussion of other domestic policies such as finance, nobles etc. existed, it was very thin.

17b. Too few candidates to comment.

18a and b.. Too few candidates to comment

19a and b. too few candidates to comment.

20a. There were some strong answers, with candidates demonstrating good knowledge on the changes and developments. Additionally, the best candidates produced wide-ranging consideration of the nature of revolution.

20b. Few good answers were provided. Many strayed into a comparison with France, or became completely diverted into a discussion of French merchants and their lack of importance in their economy and society.

21a and b. Too few candidates to comment.

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

22a. The question elicited a wide range of responses; some demonstrated detailed knowledge and sound analysis, but others had difficulty in encompassing the whole period, and envisaging a changing attitude in different campaigns. Weaker answers also lost sight of the main focus of defence and gave an account of the campaigns in narrative fashion. Issues were rarely linked to each other, candidates often seeing only a single possible motive.

22b. There was a mixture of answers with the best providing good focus on the two dates. Many weaker scripts failed to get beyond the descriptive and/or were often narrow in range of other powers considered.

23a and b. Too few candidates to comment.

24a and b. Too few candidates to comment.

2586/1, European and World History, 1789-1989

General Comments

Around two-thirds of the candidates were resitting this paper. Not surprisingly, then, there were relatively few outstanding scripts, most candidates' answers being competent at best, demonstrating a reasonable level of knowledge and some ability to explain individual factors, but with little evidence of analytical skills. An encouraging feature, however, was the rarity of really weak answers. Almost all candidates produced work that deserved to pass the examination.

Despite the fact that relatively few answers actually reached the top levels of the marking scheme, this was not for want of trying. One of the striking features of candidates' answers is that most demonstrate an awareness of the need to focus on the specific question asked. This was not always the case. In the past many candidates wrote essentially descriptive answers in which analysis and explanation of what the question was asking were essentially implicit. Nowadays even weaker candidates will try to argue, for example, what was the 'most important' factor, even if their argument is no more than unsupported assertion, or an explanation of why the stated factor was important (i.e. rather than more/most important).

Another area in which even weaker scripts show some quality is the recall of relevant factual knowledge. Although there are recurrent, apparently ineradicable factual errors, e.g. hyperinflation hitting Germany in 1929, almost all candidates know sufficient historical facts to answer their chosen question adequately. Many, however, struggle to do this because an apparently ever-increasing proportion cannot express their ideas with any degree of precision. There is no evidence that the quality of English – spelling, punctuation and grammar – is improving. Abbreviations litter many answers, the Bols overthrowing the Prov Gov, the FR caused by economic factors; there are egregious outbreaks of slang, with the First World War 'really kicking off' after the Sarajevo assassination; and the handwriting in many scripts is so poor as to be barely decipherable.

Comments on Individual Questions

1(a) The King was the most commonly used alternative factor. It was a rare candidate who could say nothing at all about economic factors, be they bad harvests or the King's financial problems. The sequence of events in 1789 was not well known, so most answers were based on background, long-term enabling factors and not on the short-term triggers that brought about revolution rather than merely the calling of the Estates General.

1(b) This was markedly less popular than part (a), and generally less well answered, though there were a few well informed scripts that were able to assess the significance and inter-relatedness of factors such as Louis and war. Most answers simply did not contain the detailed knowledge of the course of the revolution between 1789 and 1792 that was necessary to construct a satisfactory explanation. Ironically, many answers contained so much background material on events before 1789 that they would have been better advised to answer part(a).

2(a) This was the less popular of the questions on Napoleon. Knowledge of the reforms was reasonably sound, but there was little effective focus on matching them against the principles of the revolution.

2(b) The general standard of answers to this question was high. Fortunately for candidates, linkages between the causal factors for Napoleon's downfall are clear for all to see, and as a major reason for the invasion of Russia was Alexander's failure to enforce the Continental System, a route was wide open to provide some analysis of the relative importance of different factors.

3(a) There were very few answers to this. Most could provide reasons but with little assessment, and economic factors were generally overlooked.

3(b) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

4(a) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

4(b) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

5(a) Though less popular than part (b), there were still plenty of candidates who chose to answer this question. They had little difficulty in identifying a range of causes for revolution. The weakness in the answers was the lack of assessment of these causes, and given the fairly diffuse nature of the 1848 revolutions in Italy, this is perhaps not surprising.

5(b) Few answers managed to give a coherent view of France's role over the whole of the stated period. Naturally enough, there was a concentration on 1859-60, but some answers gave little more. Perhaps more surprising was the relatively weak treatment of alternative factors, such as the contributions of Cavour and (frequently omitted entirely) Garibaldi, which is especially ironic since he was the only one of the major figures who actually sought unification.

6(a) The central issue in determining the quality of answers was whether candidates understood the word 'diplomacy'. Many did not, and either ignored the given factor entirely, or assumed it was a synonym for war. If the given factor is unexplained, an answer cannot achieve more than Band 4, and this was the fate of many of these answers.

6(b) There were few answers to this. Those candidates who opted for it were usually well informed, and could provide some balance in looking at successes and failures of policies towards both Catholics and Socialists.

7(a) There were few answers to this question, which was much less popular than part (b).

7(b) Most answers were rather too descriptive and took a check-list approach – Crimean War/success, Italy/success, Mexico/failure, war with Prussia/failure – without really being able to reach any assessment of how far all this impacted on France's prestige and influence in Europe.

8(a) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

8(b) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

9(a) It was a rare candidate indeed who was capable of focusing the answer on the period between Lincoln's election and Fort Sumter. Almost all responses were concerned more with background factors, essentially slavery and all its implications, that divided North and South.

9(b) This was a very popular question. The overall standard of answers was good, with almost all candidates able to give at least some detail on the achievements of Lee and Grant, though it was a common feature of weaker answers that Grant would be dealt with less well. There were, however, several surprisingly frequent errors – Grant winning at Gettysburg, or marching through Georgia, for example, and an almost complete lack of awareness of the difference between strategy and tactics. Only better candidates knew much about the latter stages of the war in which the two men came into direct conflict.

10(a) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

10(b) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

11(a) and (b) These were very similar questions, neither being answered by large numbers of candidates. Answers on this topic tended to be of a modest standard, containing some accurate recalled material, but with a tendency to generalisation.

12(a) Almost all candidates choosing this option answered part (a). Although there was a tendency to use some material more relevant to the post-1877 period, e.g. 'grandfather clauses', and few answers displayed much detail on the processes of reconstruction, there was an overall awareness of the realities of life for most Black Americans in the period, legally free but in practice constrained in almost all social, economic and political respects.

12(b) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

13(a) This was a very popular question, though still answered by fewer candidates than part(b). As with many other questions, candidates generally possessed sufficient factual material, but failed to use it adequately in an assessment of the relative importance of the various causal factors. Many answers were very descriptive, covering various aspects of Tsarist Russia, but without ever explaining how these were relevant to the outbreak of revolution in 1905.

13(b) This was one of the most popular questions on the paper. As always with questions on the October Revolution, answers lacked detail on how the Bolsheviks actually seized power. Almost all candidates can explain how it became possible for the seizure of power to occur, but very few focus on the revolution itself. This was especially true of the given factor (Lenin), where most answers covered the April Theses yet failed to mention anything Lenin did after going back into exile in July.

14(a) Answers on the causes of the First World War almost always, to a greater or lesser degree, get lost in a mass of detail. This was a question on the outbreak of war in 1914, yet the greater part of seemingly every answer would spend pages describing (usually badly) Bismarck's alliance system, colonial rivalries or the naval race. Anything Germany did after 1871 was seen as a cause of war in 1914.

14(b) There were few answers to this question. Most of these had the usual stereotypical view of Versailles as harsh and unfair.

15(a) The reasons for the fascists' rise to power in Italy are well known, and almost all answers satisfactorily explain e.g. fear of socialism, the mutilated victory, corruption and inefficiency of liberal governments. Remarkably, though, very few answers on the topic ever really focus on how Mussolini came to power in 1922. In this particular question it did not seem to help candidates that the given factor was Mussolini himself. Some candidates could provide very little detail on his contribution, and contented themselves with generalisations about him being a great leader and inspiring speaker.

15(b) This was chosen by fewer candidates than part (a). Economic policies were better known than social policies, but most answers were able to provide a reasonable balance between the two.

16(a) This was probably the most popular question of all. As usual it attracted a large amount of vague, half-understood, descriptive material on the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic, none of which is especially powerful in explaining the Nazis' rise to power, since before 1929 they manifestly were not rising to power. Being given the Great Depression as a factor by the question, one would have expected almost all answers to have pointed out the contrast in the Nazis' fortunes before and after it. In practice, although most could explain how the Depression turned the German people away from democracy and towards the extremes, few could make the analytical leap of explaining that it was the Depression that made the difference. There was also insufficient knowledge of developments between 1930 and late 1932, which are crucial to explaining why Hitler was invited to become Chancellor.

16(b) There were many answers to this question, almost all of which could explain a variety of reasons for lack of opposition, though some strayed into anachronistic material on the war years (e.g. the White Rose group). Very few, however, provided any assessment of these reasons, perhaps suggesting that the command word 'assess' in the question is not universally understood as demanding the same kind of causal analysis as question formats asking for the 'main' or 'most important' reason.

17(a) Few knew in detail the relevant diplomatic developments of the 1920s, but it was still possible to provide a reasonable answer based on general points about war-weariness, anti-war feeling, German weakness, and so on.

17(b) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

18(a) Answers in the past have sometimes been rather uncritical about claims for the success of the Five-Year Plans. It was therefore encouraging to read some responses that, if anything, leaned too far in the opposite direction, seeing the Plans as little more than a propaganda success and demonstrating a healthy scepticism about any statistical claims made by the Soviet regime. The fact remains, though, that the Soviet Union did undergo rapid modernisation during the 1930s, and was able to defeat Germany in World War 2.

18(b) There were not many answers to this question, and the general quality of these was not high, with factual detail not well enough known.

19(a) This, too, attracted answers that suffered from a lack of accurate recall. Many answers lost the necessary focus on Europe, straying onto China, Korea and even McCarthyism. Candidates often confused the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

19(b) There were few, if any, answers to this question, so comment is impossible.

20(a) Candidates were rather stronger on the underlying causes such as ideology and great power rivalry than they were on the specifics of the arms and space races. They were particularly weak on the inter-relatedness of the arms and space races, tending to see the space race as simply a matter of prestige. A large number of answers were somewhat one-sided, explaining US policy but providing very little on the USSR.

20(b) A slight problem was caused by the words 'military intervention' in the question. There were varying interpretations of what this meant and therefore when it occurred. In practice it made little difference since there were causal factors that would cover all possible interpretations. What was not acceptable was for candidates to launch into narratives of the war itself, which inevitably was what some had in mind – this was a question asking about why the USA became militarily involved in the first place.

2587 - 2589 Historical Investigations

Principal Examiner's Report 2587-9

General Comments

As this Unit nears the end of its life it would be pleasant to report that candidates were now using appropriate techniques to tackle the questions and were fully conversant with the skills needed to do well. Sadly this is not the case.

The most frequent example of poor technique remains that of disregarding the Passages and the views expressed therein to concentrate on writing an essay on the area of debate. Candidates need to be fully aware that the initial focus must be on the views in the Passages and that grouping the views and comparison between the views in the Passages is expected as well as the use of contextual knowledge to support or contradict the interpretations. If a factor is mentioned in the question then it is expected that the factor will be thoroughly assessed in the answer. Trying to fit the Passages into the schools of history on a topic is often counter-productive as they are not chosen on this basis. Some candidates needed to be more explicit in their references to the debate being considered in the Passages. Candidates should also be encouraged to spend time reading the Passages carefully. Candidates are expected to reach a supported judgement and to avoid the bland conclusion that all the factors have a similar impact.

In the essay questions, one of the main faults was to avoid the focus in the question. In some instances the dates given in questions were not noted and candidates strayed outside these parameters. Candidates continue to drift away from the actual focus of a question to one they have prepared earlier, sometimes the question on the paper set in the previous session. They also need to remember that there should be a clear sense of debate in their analysis.

Some candidates were careless about numbering their answers correctly and filling in the grid on the front of the booklet. Standards of handwriting did not improve either.

2587

There were 238 candidates, 51 answering on Charlemagne and the rest on King John. No letters of complaint were received about this paper.

Charlemagne

1 Generally this question was well answered. Candidates were able to reach a variety of judgements, with the cynical settling for the lure of plunder and the idealistic for religion. Most rejected defence and some did not give enough consideration to defence although it was the factor identified in the question. Candidates did not always appreciate that Charlemagne's motives might have changed over time. None of the Passages caused particular problems to candidates.

2 Candidates were mostly well prepared for this question and were conversant with the relevant debate. Some did divert into descriptions of the Coronation and the allied debate about how far Charlemagne was expecting to be crowned. Some, also, were determined to include what they knew about the theories of Ganshof somewhere. Most candidates concluded that the impact was slight but a minority argued the other way quite forcefully.

3 This was a less popular question and candidates tended to drift away from assessing reasons to describing methods and the achievements of the scholars, about which they often had extensive knowledge. Those who did keep to the focus usually argued that religion and the promotion of improved government were the main factors.

King John

4 This question was reasonably well answered by most candidates and the debate was familiar to them. They found Passage A difficult to interpret and evaluate and some were defeated by the language and thought that it was the barons who were coming to John to account for the wrong they had done. More careful use of the steer to the Passage could have prevented this. There were plenty of opportunities for cross reference and comparison of the Passages in this question but too few candidates took these up. Selecting a phrase from each Passage and then using this as a peg for an essay on why John fell out with his barons was a common and mistaken technique. King John was generally seen as blame worthy but there were candidates who defended him and used Passage B and hints in Passages A and D to show that the barons were not totally innocent. The reference in Passage B to *gambling* was taken literally by some candidates. Some candidates brought in contextual knowledge which was only loosely linked to the Passages, such as the role of the quarrel with the Pope in worsening relations, or they drew their examples from events much earlier in the reign such as the death of Arthur.

5 Candidates continued to be unable to distinguish between 1204 and 1214. Some showed real confusion about the order of events and Otto of Brunswick made frequent appearances. Candidates also tended to write about why John lost Normandy but not about his weaknesses and Philip's strengths. The Lusignans and the Angouleme marriage were often described at length but there was good reference to the impact of John's personality and his alienation of former allies. Thus they had the necessary information but could not adapt it to the specific question. There were responses which had no mention at all of the words *strengths* and *weaknesses*. As in Question 4, King John had few supporters, but the role of monastic chroniclers in blackening his reputation was quite well discussed.

6 This was a popular question, but there were pitfalls. The main one was to describe the process of the quarrel with the Pope in detail. Another was to debate who was to blame and another to consider why the quarrel lasted so long. These debates have been the subject of previous questions, but were not the focus here. Candidates also found it difficult to develop a coherent argument and dodged between points suggesting John gained and those indicating he did not, instead of marshalling all the evidence first for one viewpoint and then for the other. Other candidates could argue cogently that John was the big beneficiary. Some mounted a rather one-sided argument and so Innocent emerged as totally defeated with insufficient discussion of his gains from the quarrel.

2588

There were 695 candidates for this paper, a decrease from January 2008, 246 for Philip II, 290 for Elizabeth I, 41 for Oliver Cromwell and 118 for Peter the Great. A letter of complaint was received about question 2 and the Mark Scheme was adjusted as a result. The small number of candidates answering on Oliver Cromwell means that comments on questions 7-9 are less full.

Philip II

1 Most candidates were able to group the Passages, setting A and D against B and C. Weaker candidates did little more than paraphrase the steers to make the comparison. Passage B posed the greatest problem for candidates and the material on the Inquisition was often misinterpreted. Candidates read the first line and assumed the Passage agreed with A and D and did not always seem to have reached the final line of the Passage. Some candidates neglected Passage D. There was good knowledge about Carranza and Perez but some of this was used to develop the factual examples, rather than to evaluate the views expressed. There was some loss of focus with candidates drifting off into the Netherlands, foreign affairs, a discussion of the extent of Philip's power or consideration of the outcome of his policies. But there was good evaluation of the extent to which aims were political with the reference in C to the Morisco Revolt taken up, in a number of answers.

2 The extent of knowledge about the key issues in the economy usually was the main discriminator in this question. The debt Philip inherited was generally well known and finance was often better covered than the economy. Inflation was a slightly surprising omission in some cases. Weaker candidates digressed into the Netherlands and some were determined to write about foreign policy and the Turks and so saw war as the main problem. The Morisco revolt was a popular choice to illustrate the problems which arose. When blame was apportioned it tended to be all Philip's fault. Some weaker candidates divided their answer into three sections, arguing first that Philip was to blame, then that he was partly to blame and then that he was not to blame, with little evidence used and finally asserting that one of these choices was the right one.

3 This question was less well answered. Candidates simply did not focus on the question. They wrote narratives about the causes of the Revolt and few progressed beyond 1578. They were also unsure as to what constituted a military decision, with the choice of Margaret of Parma or Requesens as Regents being instanced as military matters. All of Alva's actions were often seen as being military in nature. The diversion of Parma was the best known example of a bad military decision. Where other factors were covered in any detail, they tended to be listed with insufficient attempt to differentiate between factors. Geography was a popular alternative explanation.

Elizabeth I

4 There was a wide range of answers to this question from the very weak to the impressive. The word exaggerated was a key discriminator as weaker candidates tended to ignore it and to draw their answers exclusively from the Passages using the steers. Better candidates did manage some grouping with A and D set against B and parts of C. One of the main problems for candidates was their determination to introduce the Neale thesis. Some dealt with this first and demolished it but did not link their discussion to the Passages and often were short of time to evaluate the views given. Others diverted entirely into the debate about how far the power of the House of Commons increased during the reign and went on to mention the causes of the Civil War. But the better candidates could use Neale as evidence to back up the view that the clashes had been exaggerated. Passage A gave candidates the greatest difficulty as some argued that Elton agreed with Neale and so was clearly wrong. The reference to the monopolies debate in D was missed by some, possibly because it came at the end of the Passages. Contextual knowledge was adequate for all except the very weak, with the issues of marriage and the succession, the fate of Mary, Queen of Scots, monopolies and the campaign of radicals like Wentworth all figuring. A few weak candidates seemed to think that the dates given in the titles of the books used in Passages B and C were the dates when the books were being written and so saw these as primary sources.

5 This was a popular question and looked straightforward but candidates did need to know who the suitors to the hand of Elizabeth were and why they were unsuitable. A number of responses did not mention any names and the omission of Dudley was very unexpected. There were some very strong answers which outlined the debate fully. These rejected the psychological arguments as lacking proof and concentrated on reasons for opposition to individual suitors or to categories such as foreign and native aspirants. Against these they could set the desire not to marry and the Virgin Queen image. There were responses which simply listed and described the various explanations, sometimes with very limited factual evidence. Digressions included the succession issue, the Gloriana cult and the attitude of Parliament, some introducing material from question 4. Some candidates made skilful use of the Passages which were the basis of a recent question on this topic.

6 This question attracted some very competent answers where the extent of Catholic underground activity was discussed and this was seen as a factor against which the role of the priests could be assessed. Other factors were the arrival of Mary, Queen of Scots and the rebellions and plots associated with her, but candidates did tend to assert that these revived Catholicism without showing how that might be. The debate about the impact of the missionary priests was generally well known, although the difference between seminary priests and the

Jesuits was not always recognised. Candidates were able to challenge the question and argue there was no revival, either because Catholicism died out or because it had continued to prosper in the 1560s and did not need reviving. On the less positive side there were candidates who wrote about the extent of the threat from Catholicism, the role of the House of Lords in the Settlement, often linked to question 4, the greater threat posed by Puritans, government measures against Catholics and the life of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Oliver Cromwell

7 Candidates tended to analyse the Passages first and then write a short essay on the question without linking the two, or to write answers driven by knowledge with scant reference to the Passages. Contextual knowledge was variable with some examiners commenting that little was known about the Major Generals while others found better knowledge of them and of the Naylor case. Some candidates could point to the incompatibility of Cromwell's religious views and those of Parliament and the problems caused by the issues associated with the army. Finance was less well known and candidates struggled to find evidence of ways in which Cromwell co-operated with parliament.

8 Candidates were usually able to assess military successes, about which they did generally know something, against factors such as his religious drive, his social position and his early performance as an MP. The latter was mostly dismissed as being of much importance and the debate on Cromwell's social position was outlined without much conclusion being drawn. But there were weaker answers where a biographical narrative replaced any discussion and some ventures into the personal rule of Charles I and why it was unpopular.

9 Few candidates tackled this question and they tended to ignore 1653 and to discuss the major changes of the whole period, including why Cromwell declined the offer of the crown. Peter the Great

10 Some candidates failed to define success and so their answers were not well focused. The references in all the Passages to a degree of success were not always picked up. In evaluating the Passages the bad social effects were usually seen as indicating failure and the economic benefit, albeit with a social cost, was missed.

11 Some candidates were not really sure what barbaric or man of reason meant. For the weakest barbaric meant stupid so errors of judgement were seen as barbaric. For others it meant unjustified. Usually the treatment of the Streltsi and of Alexis were cited but the church and westernization were less often mentioned. Aggression in foreign policy was also seen as barbaric. Man of reason was interpreted by many as reasonable, which was a fair way to look at the issue. Some did suggest that anything which was not barbaric was reasonable which was less successful. Candidates tended to struggle to use their knowledge about, for example, why Peter was called the Great, to answer a slightly different question. There were, by contrast, some very strong responses with good relevant examples and high quality discussion.

12 Most candidates were able to see that the question was posing Peter's decisions and actions against factors which he could not control, such as geography and the actions of other leaders. A few diverted into how successful Peter's foreign policy was. Some candidates looked at the material chronologically and so considered Turkey, then Sweden and then back again to Turkey which did not often produce a clear argument. Dealing with the two countries separately was generally a better approach.

2589

There were 2508 candidates for this paper, 159 for Napoleon, 156 for Gladstone and Disraeli, 260 for Bismarck, 418 for Roosevelt, 446 for Lenin, 738 for Chamberlain and 391 for the Cold War. There was one complaint about questions 10-12.

Napoleon

1 Generally candidates found the Passages accessible and understood the debate they contained. Only stronger candidates engaged with the issue of the benefit to European States.

2 Very few answers to this question were seen. Candidates rarely considered nothing more than in any detail

3 Some candidates focused more on the other factors than on the Continental System and there was a good deal of listing of factors without much differentiation between them. Some candidates wrote about the war in Russia and the Iberian Peninsula almost exclusively, with little on the coalitions and growing opposition in Europe. Better candidates could link the factors effectively and evaluate their role in Napoleon's downfall. These mostly decide that the Russian campaign was the decisive event.

Gladstone and Disraeli

4 Most candidates found the Passages straightforward and were able to analyse them effectively. Contextual knowledge was not well used even though the reforms of this ministry are a key issue. Better answers were distinguished by their ability to evaluate how novel the focus of Disraeli's reforms really was.

5 This was the less popular of the essay questions and candidates often needed more knowledge on the events of the period before 1868 and Gladstone's part therein. Better answers could, at least, refer to the other factors which helped to shape the party.

6 Candidates needed to define British interests in some way and to restrict their analysis to the Eastern Question. Those who failed to do either were the weakest. Even the protection of the British route to India was left out in many responses. Some candidates had a good knowledge of the Eastern Question but found it harder to link what they knew to the specific question.

Bismarck

7 Weaker candidates used the content of the Passages to describe whether the Treaty of Prague was lenient or not, which was not the question asked. Stronger candidates did consider the idea of a master plan and looked at possible interpretations of Bismarck's motives.

8 This question was the more popular of the essays. Some candidates used it to recite a simple list of factors to explain the unification of Germany, while others had a good analysis of the factors which allowed Prussia to dominate in the process.

9 Some weaker candidates included a good deal of pre 1867 material or used the Passages for their ideas. Better answers could consider the arguments surrounding the War with France and Bismarck's timetable for unification. Knowledge of the debate was generally good, although candidates are more aware of the polarized debate than of the gradations in between the extremes.

Roosevelt

10 Candidates did not experience any particular difficulty in understanding the Passages. Weaker candidates used the Passages in passing to illustrate their answers and the weakest hardly mentioned the Passages at all. Some candidates confused the Wall Street Crash with the Depression and looked at how far overproduction was the cause of the crash. Stronger candidates did focus on the factor in the question and gave it full consideration and then broadened their answer out to look at other factors. Some did not reach a definite conclusion, arguing that all the factors had an equal impact. The best answers were able to link the factors, for example showing how overproduction could not be overcome by selling abroad because of tariff barriers.

11 This question was the more popular of the essay questions. Stronger answers paid attention to the word mainly in the question and examined the problems of enforcement and linked these to issues like corruption and organized crime. Some candidates took a schools of thought approach arguing that one historian thinks this and another historian thinks that, rather than explaining which school of thought was the most useful. Some weaker candidates wrote simplistically about certain groups so that Irish culture was seen as based on whisky and Catholicism irrevocably associated with wine.

12 This question was less popular and tended to lead to good or weak answers with little in between. The weaker described events in US foreign policy from 1920 to 1941 and often focused on Roosevelt more than Hoover or Harding. These candidates did not argue clearly since they tended to describe events and then argue that these showed isolationist policies and then put forward a counter argument that they showed interventionism. This meant the general trend of the argument was obscured.

Lenin

13 The Passages proved to be accessible and allowed candidates to explore the debate about the Bolshevik victory. Some candidates were carried away by the extent of their contextual knowledge and did not relate it sufficiently to the Passages. The Greens, for example, could be worth a mention but not a long paragraph. Some candidates, while explaining the extent of the use of terror did not show fully how this contributed to victory. The reasons why the Whites lost became the focus of some answers. Surprisingly few developed the theme of terror with references to War Communism.

14 There were fewer answers to this question and some of them focused too heavily on Lenin's written output before 1914. In general knowledge of the pre-war period has improved and more detailed answers were seen than previously. These could examine the role of Tsarist repression and relative economic success against the weak leadership. There were some who ventured into long descriptions of schools of thought which was not a good way to approach the question. A few went beyond 1914.

15 This question was much the more popular of the essays and some excellent answers were seen and a number achieved full marks. The debate was clearly outlined by most candidates. Some examiners reported, however, that they had read responses where knowledge of exactly what Lenin contributed to the revolution was very thin. Again there were candidates who described the historiography with little evidence to support their descriptions and, again, these did not reach high Bands.

Chamberlain

16 There seemed to be a particular tendency with this question to write essays illustrated by the Passages, rather than to make the Passages the focus of the answer. Short phrases were taken from the Passages but the overall interpretation, as outlined in the steer, was neglected. Passage B which contained the word economic was seen as supporting the view in the question, although the general argument of the Passage was different. Candidates should be urged to read the whole Passage to grasp the overall view before starting to write. Similarly the reference

to the Empire in Passage B led to long accounts of the troubles in Ireland and the movement for Indian independence. Many answers drifted into the 1930s and some seemed to think Austen and Neville Chamberlain were the same person.

17 Candidates knew about the Ten Year Rule and some had good detail about the extent of British armaments in the 1930s. Most answers listed the factors that accounted for appeasement and dismissed the inadequacy of the armed forces quickly in order to concentrate on public opinion. Some slid into a discussion as to how far appeasement was justified. There were also answers where Germany was barely mentioned although the question was about British relationships with Germany. Relatively few answers considered the relative importance of factors, beyond an assertion that one of them was the most vital.

18 Significant numbers of candidates failed to grasp that this was a question about 1939 and the bulk of their answers concerned material from an earlier period. The level of factual knowledge was very limited, apart from some reference to the take over of the rest of Czechoslovakia. The pressures in the Cabinet and in parliament were rarely mentioned.

Stalin

19 The Passages proved to be accessible, although there were again candidates who simply described the content of the Passages or treated the question as another essay and made little reference to the Passages. Some answers also lacked balance and blamed the USSR or the US exclusively. Other candidates failed to come to any kind of judgement.

20 This question saw plenty of good answers. These were able to evaluate the factors which led to the break up of the Alliance effectively. Other answers were lacking in detailed knowledge. Most referred to Katyn, but only a minority could mention Stalingrad or Kursk as examples of the pressures on the USSR, let alone the allied assistance to Russia through convoys and other means.

21 This question often led to descriptions of the arms race and little more. Some candidates included material from before 1948 and few answers were in Bands I and II.

2590 - 2591 Themes in History

General Comments

Both the 2590 and 2591 papers worked well and resulted in effective differentiation. Not surprisingly in a synoptic unit there was a wide range of responses but the overall quality was unfortunately mediocre. The mean mark for both units was down from 73 in June 2008 to 70 and 68 for 2590 and 2591 respectively, and the Medieval and American option papers produced even lower mean marks. The number of candidates who entered this session remained fairly constant, with a slight increase in 2591 and a slight decline in 2590. At the top end of the range there were a few outstanding essays which demonstrated a real sense of control and an ability to synthesise a variety of factors over the whole period. Better answers do try to make links and so cross-reference and cross-evaluate; this is important for turning-point questions, which still challenge candidates more than they should. Comparative analyses and evaluations do lead to better reward levels. Clearly candidates who use a thematic approach to answer questions are better able to synthesise elements to reflect the synoptic nature of the unit. This was very evident in Questions 7, 9, 11 and 22 in Paper 2590, and Questions 1, 22 and 24 in Paper 2591.

Weaker features, however, persisted in the majority of scripts and there were many Band V responses. Many candidates seemed to be under-prepared both in their factual knowledge of the chosen theme and in their essay writing skills and many answers showed an insufficient coverage of the period. Candidates are still prone to twisting the question to reflect a prepared answer and, although most candidates know quite a lot of facts, they either unload them indiscriminately or write narrative accounts with minimal assessments. In a minority of cases, candidates seem to have learned pre-packaged answers which only approximated to the question set. There is still a strong tendency for candidates to write chronological accounts which inhibit their attempts at demonstrating synthesis and consequently of scoring high marks.

A large number of candidates still do not make effective use of the Timeline and, as a result, omit basic information, give the wrong dates for events or none at all. However, it is worth reminding Centres that the Timeline Insert will not be permitted in the new specification to be first assessed in January 2010. Most candidates experienced little difficulty writing their essays in the allotted time although many candidates wrote over-complicated and lengthy essay plans, often at the expense of developing details in the essay itself. The overall quality of written English was generally sound, although the use of abbreviations for proper names, particularly in the American paper, continues to be an unfortunate trend.

Comments on Individual Questions: 2590

Comments have been confined to questions that were answered by four or more candidates.

The Government of England 1066-1216

1. This question produced little comparison and candidates frequently substituted *change* and *expansion* for *development* thus giving their answers a false skew. While most knew the features of central government, they failed to compare the rôle of the crown with other factors that brought about development. Some asserted that since the king appointed the great officers of state, the crown was incontrovertibly the most important factor. This line of thought accidentally side-stepped a more productive approach. Others set the influence of the church against that of the crown. They suggested that important contributions were made by Ranulf Flambard and Roger of Salisbury, both of whom were bishops and therefore the church made an important contribution. None thought of the episcopal office as a reward for royal service.

2. This was not a popular question. While several candidates repackaged an essay about Henry II being the 'father of the English common law', they failed to explain the points it attempted to make, asserting, for example, that under Henry II itinerant justices became 'more proactive than

reactive'. Candidates, who understood what the question required, made do with lengthy descriptions. Any comparison was left unexplained.

3. Often candidates made a great deal of explaining why the structure of government needed to be improved/changed/updated/modified rather than balancing the impact of the continental possessions on the way the English central government handled the politics. While some took no account of 'assess the extent', others sought to explain why continental possessions affected the conduct of English central government. The key to a good answer was to work out what 'conduct of English central government' meant.

Crown, Church and Papacy 1066-1228

4. This question elicited a good range of answers that varied in approach from thematic to straight narrative accounts. The biggest weakness was that several candidates did not think about what they were supposed to be doing, often beginning with a narrative of the four archbishops detailed in the specification, mostly with some relevant comment, but sometimes without any at all. Few considered what 'strengthening the English Church' and 'essential' meant in the context of the question.

5. An insufficient number of candidates attempted this topic to merit a report.

6. This was the best answered of the three. Several candidates attacked the question thematically, examining a range of factors and evaluating degrees of success. Prominent in successful answers were papal aims and criteria for judging the success of these. More pedestrian efforts concentrated on the methods by which the papacy tried to intervene with *passim* evaluation, though there was often more concern to detail those occasions when papal intervention occurred. Some thought the aims of the papacy were confined to limiting royal power over the Church. Weaker candidates sometimes had curious omissions, for instance neglecting to mention John's dispute with the papacy over Langton, the effect of the Becket affair on relations with Rome, or the political impact of Innocent II and Eugenius III.

Rebellion and Disorder in England 1485-1603

7. This was the second most popular question in the set and reasonably well answered by those candidates who thought carefully about it. The nub of the question was 'landlord-tenant relations' as a cause of rebellion, and too many candidates had only a vague idea as to what this might entail. Candidates tended to miss a range of synoptic themes, and few seemed aware that landlord and tenant issues occurred across the whole period. Most recognised that enclosures could be central to the relationship, some dwelt upon wages and employment conditions, and a few wrote sensibly about leases, rents and feudal obligations. Taxation was seen as the main factor behind several rebellions though few candidates commented that this was not the case after 1549. Better responses distinguished between disturbances that were solely caused by taxation and others which were multi-causal. Only the best essays discussed how some rebellions had local grievances and others were a result of government policies. Surprisingly the Amicable Grant disturbances were overlooked by many candidates.

8. Examiners took a tolerant view towards candidates who had few details about propaganda but who wrote generally and sensibly in the context of the maintenance of political stability. Few were able to discuss the wealth of government propaganda issued in the 1530s and 1540s but were a little more knowledgeable on Elizabethan propaganda. Nevertheless, even allowing for candidates who wrote in general terms about other methods employed by the state, such as the use of local officials, especially JPs and lords lieutenant, parliamentary legislation and the role of the nobility, gentry and clergy, the question was poorly answered by all but a few candidates. Far too many candidates described as many methods of maintaining political stability as they could without balancing these against propaganda.

9. This was a very popular question and achieved high marks for several candidates. A key distinguishing feature was whether candidates focused on 'challenge' and compared rebellions according to a range of criteria. If they did, then their essays were likely to demonstrate synthesis. Too many responses, however, analysed usually in sequence each major rebellion before reaching a judgement in the conclusion. Only then was a degree of synthesis apparent. Coverage of the period was a major problem, with a number of otherwise quite good answers concentrating on the period from 1536 to 1554. This excluded Simnel and Warbeck, both of whom in different ways presented considerable challenges. Others omitted any discussion of 1549 or Wyatt, while Elizabeth's problems often received very scant attention. A lot of candidates wrote an essay to a previous year's question on the 'threat' presented by rebellions, and did not see the problem from a government's point of view. Some governments were better prepared than others and if several rebellions broke out simultaneously, as occurred in 1549, or if the government was vulnerable to attack, as happened in 1487 and 1497, then the challenge was quite considerable.

England's Changing Relations with Foreign Powers 1485-1603

10. The question was about the aims of the foreign policy but some candidates wrote about the execution of that policy. There were other misconstructions of the question: some took consistency for continuity; others ignored the 'extent' element in the question and wrote about whether there was consistency in the foreign policy; yet others wrote about consistency within each reign. The best answers dealt with themes across the period, though curiously even these answers rarely mentioned marriage alliances. Some chose to concentrate on a couple of factors, generally omitting trade, and as a result presented an unbalanced response.

11. This was answered quite well, with better answers assessing personality alongside other factors. Many answers were restricted by failure to confront personality, except to assert that Henry VIII was a 'war munger' (sic) and that Elizabeth was keen on the Duke of Anjou until he died. There were a number of answers which dealt at length with Somerset and Northumberland, and dismissed Edward as a 'youth'. Only a minority of essays mentioned the personal rivalry of Henry VIII and Francis I, and references to other French rulers were notable for their absence.

12. Generally this question was well answered. Weaker candidates often concentrated on the reign of Elizabeth to the exclusion of the rest of the period or limited their answers to descriptions of the ways in which England related to the Netherlands. Better responses were able to show through developing themes how Burgundy affected English foreign relations and appreciated why its transition to the Netherlands changed that relationship.

The Development of Limited Monarchy in England 1558-1689

13. This question produced some good answers. Candidates who assessed both crown and parliament and the factors influencing each development scored well. Weak essays ignored changing religious and political circumstances, or did not recognise the importance of royal finances in the crown's relationship with parliament. The best essays examined the topic thematically and even if they cited their examples chronologically, each paragraph made synoptic links and connections across the period. The weakest responses wrote narrative accounts and still managed to overlook the civil war.

14. There were several strong answers to this question. The best covered the whole period synoptically and identified particular periods when parliament's role underwent significant changes. While most candidates focused on the reigns of Charles I and Charles II, there was often only limited consideration given to the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, and even less space accorded to the 1650s. Weaker answers frequently gave an account of parliamentary developments rather than analysing the reasons.

15. An insufficient number of candidates attempted this question to merit a report.

Dissent and Conformity in England 1558-1689

An insufficient number of candidates attempted this topic to merit a report.

The Development of the Nation State: France 1498-1610

An insufficient number of candidates attempted this topic to merit a report.

The Catholic Reformation in the Sixteenth Century

22. Several candidates assumed that the Papacy was 'essential' to the Catholic Church's revival and spent much of the essay describing what various popes did. Others argued that the Papacy was essential because it did so much and proceeded to give an account of its work. Candidates who scored the highest marks focused on the question set and examined why the Papacy was essential. They usually compared the earlier period, when the Vatican was unenthusiastic about reform, with the era following Pope Clement's pontificate. No one pointed out that even after 1534 there were pontiffs who held back reform.

23. A minority question which was well answered by a few candidates. Several reasons were assessed and often Spain and Italy were compared with other Catholic countries although some responses took a more obtuse line by comparing them with Protestant states.

24. The new religious orders included several Italian foundations as well as the Jesuits, and better essays set these groups against other factors in the revival of the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, some candidates had little knowledge of the work of the orders and were unable to compare their contributions with other developments. In many cases, candidates bypassed or downplayed the importance of the new orders and assessed all of the other factors instead. This included extensive comments on the work of the Jesuits outside Europe.

The Decline of Spain 1598-1700

An insufficient number of candidates attempted this topic to merit a report.

The Ascendancy of France 1610-1715

28. An insufficient number of candidates attempted this question to merit a report.

29. A poorly answered question in which most responses were pre-packaged and inappropriate to answer the question set.

30. There was only one really outstanding essay which focused on the requirements of the question and organised their arguments thematically. The remainder gave a learned answer that simply did not fit the terms of the question.

From Absolutism to Enlightened Despotism 1661-1796

Not enough candidates attempted this topic to merit a report.

Comments on individual questions: 2591

Comments have been confined to questions that were answered by four or more candidates.

Britain and Ireland 1798-1921

1. A popular question that achieved quite good marks. Better candidates looked at leadership, organisation, the international context in 1918-20 and war weariness in comparison with 19th century coercion, among other factors. There was a tendency for candidates to assess various revolutionary groups, including Sinn Fein, before reaching a judgement and only the better essays tried to offer a synthesis. Few defined what the aims might have been or seemed to realise that their aims changed over time and that there was never any unanimity.

2. This was the most popular question of the set and generally well answered. Many agreed with the premise and compared the 1886 bill with other turning-points, notably 1829, 1845/6 and 1916. Those who saw the 1911 Parliament Act as the most important turning-point, however,

had difficulty developing an effective answer. Knowledge of the bill was very variable which inevitably led to some vague comparisons and limited synthesis. Generally candidates' understanding of the earlier period was better than that of post-1886, and only the best answers handled the concept of turning-point with confidence.

3. The least popular and successful question. Too many candidates tried to adapt a previous question on coercion and cooperation and lost sight of how to evaluate 'effective'. As a result there were few synoptic essays: instead an essay that considered examples and reasons for coercion was followed by one that examined concession.

War and Society in Britain 1793-1918

An insufficient number of candidates attempted this topic to merit a report.

Poor Law to Welfare State 1834-1948

7. A key issue was the lack of real grasp of poverty, there being a tendency to describe living and working conditions. Often not enough cross-evaluation was offered and quite often, other than reference to 1834, answers dwelt very much on the 20th century, usually describing the Liberal reforms. There were some sound assessments of the 1920s and 1930s but at times at the expense of the other periods.

8. This question was generally well done but weaker responses often wrote a list of factors or features. Not that much was said about the role and place of wars. It is still the case that quite a few answers simply describe cholera and related outbreaks with an evaluation tacked on at the end.

9. The key element of 'genuine concern' was often glossed or assumed without real examination; instead there was a tendency to adduce a set of factors. Improvements to lives could have been assessed rather more fully and a sharper focus given to the concept and content of different government welfare policies. Again, there was a tendency for candidates to jump from 1834 or 1848/1850s into the next century without explaining developments in the intervening period.

The Development of Democracy in Britain 1868-1992

An insufficient number of candidates attempted this topic to merit a report.

The Development of the Mass Media 1896-1996

13. An insufficient number of candidates attempted this question to merit a report.

14. Candidates were well versed on general trends but showed a strong tendency to describe and narrate events. Few demonstrated synthesis or analysis of key developments or were able to back up their comments with specific examples and details. The educative role of the press was rarely discussed.

15. A popular question that was quite well answered. Again, however, essays were often heavily narrative and descriptive and only a few candidates effectively demonstrated a synthesis in their arguments. Surprisingly few essays identified particular governments or individuals that would have given some substance to their generalisations.

The Changing Nature of Warfare 1792-1919

16. Most candidates argued that there was a revolution in technology in the 19th century which had a profound impact on warfare but they were less adept at illustrating how such changes affected different aspects of warfare. The weakest essays confined their answers to describing the changes and failed to offer an assessment; better responses assessed the impact and explained why some periods saw more developments than others.

17. Candidates generally agreed that planning and preparation were important prerequisites for a successful war and the key determinant in many answers was to focus on 'success' in war rather than on winning a battle. The best essays set these factors against other elements, such as leadership, resources and strategy, but candidates also suggested that careful planning and preparation did not necessarily result in victory. Weaker responses often narrated developments and rather surprisingly omitted the First World War altogether.

18. Some candidates wrote at length on Napoleon and often to good effect. The best essays traced his legacy over the period and compared a variety of generals to illustrate their argument. Weaker answers struggled to define 'generalship' or to explain and assess how developments in warfare often changed methods of generalship. Many also spent far too much time on Napoleon without making appropriate cross-references and links to later generals.

The Challenge of German Nationalism 1815-1919

19. This question produced several fine answers. The majority of candidates agreed that 1866 was a key turning-point in German nationalism, explained their reasons and compared it with other significant developments. The earlier period was less well known and the Wilhelmine era was often skirted over in weaker essays but the years from 1848 to 1890 were generally well covered. Weaker responses had an unsure grasp of 1866 either as a major event or as a turning-point. Occasionally 1848-9 as a key turning-point appeared; more often 1871 or 1888/1890 but some dwelt on the First World War and especially 1918-19 and this resulted in difficulties when trying to compare earlier turning-points. The Zollverein was a popular turning-point but many candidates had difficulty linking its creation to the growth of German nationalism rather than just economic unification.

20. This was the least popular question in the set but often produced some very good answers. A problem tended to be to forget that other influences were needed apart from German nationalists, which often should have been explored more fully. When other influences were adduced, these were economic or perhaps personalities. Weaker responses tended to follow a broadly narrative approach and neglect making synoptic links until the conclusion.

21. There were several excellent essays on this question. Most candidates argued that Germany was just as divided in 1919 as it was in 1871 but progress was most marked in the earlier period. Territorial, political, economic, religious and social elements were examined thematically by the better candidates; weaker essays approached the question chronologically and failed to distinguish between different types of unity. Some candidates displayed a weak grasp of the nature of the German Confederation which was disappointing. Centre-led approaches that dwelt on the strands of German nationalism (liberalism, socialism, conservatism) did cause difficulties for candidates. While these strands had some applicability in the other questions, they got in the way of the focus on the German nation.

Russian Dictatorship 1855-1956

22. Knowledge of Russia's urban working classes was at a premium in many cases and examiners took a lenient definition of the term to include urban peasants. Most candidates made a good attempt at this question although some students completely rejected the notion of an urban working class before the Stalinist period and so produced a very unbalanced response. However, too many candidates wrote entire essays about the peasantry and made little or no attempt to set their experiences in the context of an industrialised Russia. Instead of giving a balanced assessment, candidates frequently wrote about repression and little else. Education, health and housing were usually overlooked and few candidates explained the ideological attitudes of the two regimes.

23. A very popular question but not well answered. Candidates seemed to be unsure in many cases what the phrase 'reluctant reformers' might entail. Some ignored it altogether and described in a chronological format different reforms implemented by Russian rulers. Generally more was needed to illustrate reluctance and to contextualise issues. Quite often candidates

wrote a comparison of repression and reform, which was a previous year's question. There was also a tendency to focus on one part of the period to the detriment of others e.g. Stalin or Alexander II, with no real mention of Alexander III. Most argued that Nicholas II was a reluctant reformer and explained this well but not many assessed Stolypin or explained why Lenin passed the NEP. Better responses tried to assess the motives that lay behind reform and compared tsars and communists across the period to demonstrate that motives were often multiple and mixed.

24. If candidates examined the reasons for the comparative failure among critics of Russian governments, they generally scored well. Some candidates started by challenging the question and argued that opposition was successful in this period but the vast majority understood the demands of the question. Some answers surprisingly omitted 1917 and instead focused on the eras when the state police was most active and efficient, namely under Alexander III and Stalin. Better responses knew that Russian rulers tried to buy off discontent with concessions and added other factors such as ideology and logistical problems, as well as repression/terror and/or weakness of the opposition. Weaker answers knew little about the opponents of Russian governments and focused instead on how governments dealt with their critics or listed the reasons why revolutions happened. Generally not enough was made of the nature, identities, character and scale of opposition – often it was simply assumed or else assumed that it failed.

The Struggle for the Constitution 1763-1877

25. This was the least popular question in the set. Candidates generally took the view that several factors accounted for constitutional changes, although social issues was one of the most important factors. The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments stemmed from social changes and many candidates referred to these developments. Some assessed the Revolutionary War as a reason for changes to the Constitution. Most candidates argued that constitutional changes largely resulted from civil rights', technical and judicial issues.

26. This was a popular question and generally well answered. The conflict between the States and Federal governments concerning their jurisdictions was understood and assessed by most candidates, many of whom were able to point to changes that occurred, for instance, as the frontier moved westwards. Weaker responses paid less attention to the limitations of the US Constitution and focused instead, and sometimes exclusively, on the issue of slavery.

27. This question was well done. Better candidates were aware that the President's role changed in the course of the period at the expense of the Federal Government and that the roles of Congress and the Supreme Court also developed. Weaker candidates gave little attention to the Supreme Court but were generally well informed on the changing position of Congress.

Civil Rights in the USA 1865-1980

28. A poorly answered question. Most candidates adopted a very narrow view of White supremacist groups and devoted much of their answer to other factors that limited the advancement of civil rights. Few focused on the actions of the Supreme Court and Congress but were more knowledgeable on presidential influences. The majority of answers gave extensive coverage to the work of African Americans, much of which was often irrelevant to the question set.

29. There were some good answers to this question, especially in respect of Hispanic Americans. Knowledge of Asian Americans was less detailed and there were huge gaps in coverage for the years 1900-1941. Several candidates, however, seemed unaware that both Asian and Hispanic Americans benefited whenever there was civil rights' legislation and that in spite of changes in the law, discrimination particularly in social and economic rights, remained.

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

30. This question produced some weak answers. Most saw the New Deal era as a major turning-point but were less secure on assessing developments during the 1920s. The better essays compared the period 1919-41 with other turning-points, especially 1877-91 and 1964-80, and explained how and why Native Americans' rights changed for the better.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE (Subject) (Aggregation Code(s))
January 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2580	Raw	60	44	39	34	29	25	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2581	Raw	60	43	38	33	29	25	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2582	Raw	60	44	39	34	29	25	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2583	Raw	45	35	30	26	22	18	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2584	Raw	45	34	30	26	22	18	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2585	Raw	45	33	29	26	23	20	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2586	Raw	45	34	30	26	23	20	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2587	Raw	90	66	59	53	47	41	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2588	Raw	90	66	59	53	47	41	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2589	Raw	90	66	59	53	47	41	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2590	Raw	120	86	77	68	59	51	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2591	Raw	120	86	77	68	59	51	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3835	300	240	210	180	150	120	
7835	600	480	420	360	300	240	

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3835	18.1	46.5	77.1	94.3	98.9	100.0	1322
7835	17.4	60.5	86.7	98.5	100.0	100.0	196

1518 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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