

History

Advanced GCE **A2 7835**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS 3835**

Report on the Units

June 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 Report

This June's series of AS and A2 assessments marked an end to Curriculum 2000 and the introduction of OCR modular exams in History. In January and June 2010 assessments will be held in A2 units as usual but since most candidates are likely to be re-sitting one or more units, entries will be very small. This was the pattern in AS units for the present series: less than 10 per cent of the normal size candidature for June and half the entry for January 2009.

Interestingly, though the size of AS candidature was much reduced, the quality of work was just as good and in some cases better than in previous summer sessions. In five out of seven units, an improvement was recorded in the mean mark and most notably in the two European Period Studies components. There were, however, a large number of small entries of poor quality work, and some of these candidates were clearly under-prepared for the assessment. The A2 units have also seen a reassuring development: more candidates are studying Medieval History than ever before. After a dip in 2008, there has been an increase in the number studying Units 2587, 2590 and 2592. In part this shift was at the expense of Early Modern History topics, whereas the popularity of Modern History topics remains very robust.

June 2009				June 2008	
UNIT	Number of Candidates	Mean Mark	Maximum Mark	Number of Candidates	Mean Mark
2580	91	37	60	942	38
2581	405	38	60	4327	38
2582	1377	36	60	12814	35
2583	853	28	45	8152	28
2584	1004	27	45	10316	28
2585	519	28	45	3757	27
2586	1521	30	45	14746	27
2587	561	53	90	537	54
2588	3150	56	90	3180	57
2589	7464	56	90	7709	58
2590	2997	73	120	3081	75
2591	9361	74	120	9414	73
2592	12392	61	90	12495	61
2593	381	52	90	496	55

As I look back over the eighteen series of assessments since January 2001, a number of changes have occurred. Most units have seen changes in the length and nature of their assessment, their objectives being targeted and their mark schemes. Some option papers have grown in popularity while others have declined. Many Centres have acknowledged the wide variety of choice in each of the AS and A2 Units, and this has proved a key feature of past and present OCR Specifications. Moreover, as Centres have come to terms with modular exams and the problems associated with three AS papers in one session, so the quality of teaching and learning has improved, resulting in a steady rise in the percentage of candidates gaining A and E grades.

2580 – Document Studies 871-1099

Overall performance of candidates

With a very small entry, many of whom may already have sat the examination at least once; it is difficult to draw meaningful overall conclusions. However, one trend was noticeable in responses to all questions, namely insufficient evaluation of sources, especially in part (b). This was sufficient to pull a number of otherwise good answers into band III rather than band II. Similarly provenance was often underplayed in part (a), while background knowledge was thinly deployed in part (b).

Q1 This was the least popular question

- (a) Some candidates made useful comparisons of the content of the extracts, with the best responses drawing out omissions in the sources, such as the absence of Alfred for Buttington. Provenance was handled less well, and despite the difficulties of finding something original to say about Asser and the Chronicle, it was still possible to question whether Alfred was really as compassionate as Asser suggest, or whether Asser's *Life* was merely a eulogy, as was frequently claimed. A few made stock comments about Asser and hindsight.
- (b) This was somewhat disappointing, with candidates tending to write almost exclusively about military factors upon which they were well-briefed, often completely ignoring political skills, and cultural achievements, all of which were given pointers to in the extracts. As often happens, little real use was made of the modern historian in D, and even B was underused, despite useful possibilities for cross-reference with C and D.

Q2

- (a) Despite being presented with a raft of appropriate references in the sources, some candidates found difficulty in addressing the issue of opposition, preferring to concentrate on means of control used by William. While others made good comparisons of content, provenance was, on the whole, poorly addressed. Very few noted the differences in tone between the documents, finding difficulty in comparing Orderic and Florence.
- (b) This gave candidates an opportunity to deploy their own knowledge, which in some cases was extensive and relevant. Weaker responses used their knowledge to swamp the sources, and produced essays into which occasional illustrations from the sources were inserted. Others spent several pages disagreeing with the proposition, only to conclude that castles were, after all, the key factor.

Q3 The most popular question; this produced a good cross-section of responses across the mark bands.

- (a) While the better answers identified papal techniques such as manipulation, few really dealt effectively with language and tone, exploring the differences between the techniques of letter and sermon. None commented upon the different perceptions of Byzantium in the sources, and few noted that the tone of Urban's appeal was more strident than that of Gregory.
- (b) Many candidates had a great deal of background knowledge, and at times the sources were dominated by this. Where it was integrated with meaningful source analysis and evaluation, some very good responses resulted. A disquietingly small number of candidates dealt with D, with few noting bloody lust as a motive, and even few pausing to

Report on the Units taken in June 2009

consider whether the description may have been exaggerated. Better answers differentiated between the motivation of the popes and of those who actually participated in the Crusade, while some made a link between spiritual renewal and Gregorian reform of the Church.

2581 – Document Studies 1450-1693

The entry was much reduced at 385 candidates, the large number of single candidate entries confirming that most candidates were re-sitting the paper.

Q1 This question had a very small entry (29), and therefore compromised an unrepresentative selection.

(a) While provenance is often difficult on this question with anonymous chroniclers regularly appearing, this was generally neglected apart from some rather stock comments on Vergil, who was often represented as someone who knew no English, and would be pro-Lancastrian as he wrote under the Tudors. Some candidates tended to lose focus on the key issue of Warwick's reactions.

(b) Answers were generally thin on own knowledge, or used it to describe events outside the time frame. C was not fully explored, with few mentioning issues like the Captaincy of Calais. Most ploughed through the source finding examples to blame Edward and Warwick. Lack of evaluation kept most marks down in their bands.

Q2 The most popular question produced a range of answers across the mark range.

(a) There was much to compare here, with clearly contrasting emphases and tone. Many alluded to the scriptural basis of A, though often saw Muntzer's reference to 'the birds of the heavens' as biblical rather than a straight metaphor. As so often with part (a), weaker responses lost sight of the important 'as evidence for' element in the question. The fact that Muntzer was only indicating peasant grievances obliquely while attacking Luther confused many candidates.

(b) This produced some well argued responses, which generally addressed Luther's need for princely support and his alienation from violence as additional factors. The best answers used external knowledge to the full here, looking back to Luther's earlier writings as well as to his immediate reactions to the events of 1525. Less wide-ranging answers tended to agree with the proposition, using the sources and their own knowledge, in varying proportions to address the key issue. Some saw any religious expression (eg 'devil's work') as automatic evidence of religious motivations, not realising that such expressions were part of Luther's regular vocabulary.

Q3

(a) Not surprisingly, some candidates had to work hard to find much about Somerset's handling of unrest and rebellion from A, though not all candidates were fazed. Not all candidates recognised the obvious 'spin' to C, and surprisingly few commented on the dating of these two sources as a clue to their difference. Contextual knowledge, though not a requirement, would have assisted here.

(b) Some very good answers, but many who failed to extract the maximum marks, often because they produced a prepared essay on causes of the rebellions, rather than focussing on the terms of the question. Many seemed reluctant to see social and economic problems as a cause of class hatred, choosing to compartmentalise them in a rigid manner.

D was often misunderstood with all but a few of the best answers seeing that Smith was using his mouthpieces to attempt an analysis of the country's biggest problems. Many though that gentry leadership of common rebellions precluded class struggle, presumably

never having heard of Tony Benn. Only one pointed out that an educated leader was really the only hope for such uprisings to succeed (and that also being highly unlikely.) Few really considered what is involved in class conflict, being unable to distinguish between nobility and gentry. Many did not recognise that Paget is referring to class conflict in A ('The foot takes upon itself the part of the head...')

Q4 Unfortunately few candidates had sufficient independent knowledge to give them a context for (a) or a balanced argument for (b). Many were unclear who was fighting whom, and chronology presented problems.

(a) This was not an easy question, as there was some difference in focus between the two questions, with protection from dissolution in A and franchise in B. The arguments in B were not really understood, with few noting the key second part of the Ireton's comments, thus misreading his whole meaning.

(b) External knowledge was particularly vital here, as none of the sources made specific mention of the Second Civil War. Most made fairly basic comments about Charles playing one side against another, without explaining how it led to war.

Q5 Another tiny entry with 32 candidates, and like the Wars of the Roses, this topic now disappears from the new specification papers.

(a) Candidates generally attempted to explain the differences between the sources, often with fairly standard comments about Saint-Simon's hostility towards Louis and all his works, the more perceptive noting that he would have more knowledge of the long-term implications than an English visitor seeing Paris for the first time.

(b) The sources provided good material for this question, and candidates who supported the reference to twenty years of warfare with own knowledge usually produced good responses. Most noted that foreign commentators were kinder to the French government than French writers, and ventured to explain why this was so.

And so Document Studies in their present form fade into history. Having been involved with the paper since the start, it is the hope of this examiner that candidates and teachers will have found it interesting and stimulating, at least some of the time. Marking it has certainly been, for the most part, a pleasurable experience.

2582 – Document Studies 1774-1945

General Comments

The entry for this final session of unit 2582 was a small one of approximately 1,390 candidates. This was as expected with the introduction of the new specification and the great majority of those entered for 2582 on this occasion were almost certainly candidates re-sitting the unit. This is born out by the large number of centres entering just 1 or 2 candidates – in fact the average size of entry per centre was just under 4 candidates. Examiners had differing experiences of overall standards of attainment – some commented favourably on standards, suggesting that A2 skills were being seen to impact helpfully on performance. On the other hand, there were a large number of small entries of very poor quality, suggesting individual candidates were re-sitting without proper preparation. One examiner reported that even basic rubric instructions were being violated more frequently than usual eg over 10% of his scripts comparing all four sources, or incorrect sources, in question (a).

Since this is the final session for this unit, it is not necessary to offer fresh general advice on techniques and approaches. Guidance on how to answer the equivalent units in the new specification (F963/F964) can be found in the Examiner's Reports for January and June 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 were felt to be fair and of appropriate challenge.

- (a)** This was handled soundly by most candidates. The sources offered a mixture of similarities and differences, which most candidates were able to identify. Comments on the provenance were sound, although speculative assertions about possible bias or limitations (eg an American diplomat will be biased towards the revolution; an American will not understand as well as a Frenchman etc) were not effective. There was also evidence of careless reading of the sources and misquoting eg those who thought A was arguing in favour of war: 'makes a foreign war necessary', while omitting the crucial '...for different groups'.
- (b)** Most candidates were able to engage effectively with the key issue and to offer a range of reasons for the undermining of the monarchy. It was very common to see the different factors (role of Louis, economic crisis; political clubs) argued against the war as the key cause. A few better responses then evaluated these different factors against each other as well. However, several candidates clearly knew very little about the war (including when it began) and therefore focussed on the other factors almost exclusively, thus under-emphasising discussion of the key issue. Quite a few candidates took Source D at face value – it does make some valid points, but the tone and the attribution to a radical source required some consideration. Source C was often taken to mean that Louis was only interested in saving himself, whereas its content is more nuanced. Very few made any reference to his concerns about what the Emperor etc might say or to the last line and his idea of splitting radicals and moderates and so saving many lives.

2 The Condition of England 1832-53

There were very few answers to this question.

- (a) Understanding of the sources was generally not strong and answers tended to be vague and imprecise in their analysis of source content. While most realised that C came from a personal opponent of O'Connor, the exact accusations were not made clear. Some better answers picked up on D's attribution to a 'Yorkshire Chartist', recognising that this made it more likely that this would be from O'Connor's natural support base.
- (b) Again, answers were generally not of high standard. Some became general essays on 'reasons for Chartism's failure', fitting the sources into pre-learned material. Others had learned about the historical debate over O'Connor's leadership, or reduced the answer to a 'moral vs. physical force' discussion. A number struggled to establish whether source A was supportive or otherwise of O'Connor – the ambivalence of Harney's position created problems of analysis for some. Likewise, some wrongly saw source B as supportive of O'Connor – presumably due to a cursory reading of the opening sentence. This is another example of partial quotation or incomplete reading, leading to a misinterpretation of the source as a whole. The best answers recognised that the sources provided arguments both for and against O'Connor's leadership and that the focus of the question was on the impact of O'Connor's leadership, rather than reasons for Chartism's failure.

3 Italian Unification 1848-70

This question was relatively popular and produced a wide range of responses.

- (a) The comparison of sources as evidence for support for Garibaldi elicited a variety of responses. At the less successful end of the spectrum were sequential answers and those which confused 'support for' with 'supportive of'. There were some speculative, but generally unconvincing attempts to generalise from the fact that one author was British and the other German. The more successful engaged carefully with the specific content of each source and made thoughtful use of the differing dates and contexts in which the two sources were written.
- (b) This question allowed candidates to integrate their own knowledge effectively with the sources and to find a variety of interpretations within the sources themselves. Some candidates 'offloaded' considerable chunks of descriptive material about Garibaldi's military campaigns – this was only helpful if clearly used to expand on, challenge or explain the ideas in the sources. 'Stand alone' knowledge was less effective. It was not difficult to cite other factors which hindered Garibaldi's efforts (France, opposition of the Papacy, lack of enthusiasm in Rome in '67, role of Cavour) and easy to attack Garibaldi because of the references in Source D to soldiers' lack of training and the soldiers' disobedience in Source C. Some even accused Garibaldi's forces of being a rabble in spite of D's assertion to the contrary. Several candidates failed to appreciate the reference to the 60,000 troops in B – seeing it as evidence of lack of skill in not defeating them or a lack of ability to beat them, rather than cautiousness or military sense. This question did expose those with limited independent knowledge, as the sources were hard to use effectively without appropriate contextualization.

4 The Origins of the American Civil War 1848-61

This was a reasonably popular topic and it was felt that both the questions and the sources enabled effective discrimination between candidates.

- (a) In this case, as in many previous exams, the two sources for comparison were from the North and South. However, more unusually, the contents of each source contained more similarities than differences. This proved problematic for some, who insisted on trying to make them disagree when they did not do so. The focus on economic issues, rather than the possibly more familiar issues of slavery and secession, also threw some weaker candidates. Nonetheless, many were able to identify both broad areas of agreement and the differences in language and the different implications drawn by each Source on the nature of economic relations between North and South. The provenance of the two sources led to some predictably 'stock' comments on the bias of Northern and Southern perspectives respectively and also to the nature of newspapers (which are deemed inevitably to exaggerate to sell more copies; sensationalise; reflect public opinion; persuade public opinion etc.). While some of these comments may have validity it is important for candidates to link any such comments to the source content, in order that they are addressing the question ('as evidence for...') and commenting on these specific sources and not generically on a type of source.
- (b) The question lent itself to a fairly obvious grouping of Sources (B and D vs. A and C) and most candidates were able in such a way to produce at least a basic, relevant answer from the internal evidence of the Sources. Stronger answers made a good attempt to contextualise the material in the Sources, add their own knowledge to evaluate the typicality and extent of significance of the factors raised. Some could not resist the temptation to write about slavery, although only a minority of these were able to link it effectively to the question, which is about Northern opposition to secession. Only the better answers grasped the thrust in B and D linking the principle of democracy to the USA's perception of itself as having a wider 'mission' to the 'best interests of mankind'.

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

This was attempted by only a small number of centres, nonetheless eliciting a wide range of responses.

- (a) These two Sources present clearly differing motives for the introduction of Home Rule and the essential contrast was picked up without difficulty by almost all candidates. Despite the explanation above the cartoon in Source B, not all were able to interpret this cartoon effectively and in particular, the significance of the bait ('office') was not picked up upon by many. Effective evaluation of provenance depended on analysis of the message of the source, rather than merely generic comments on the nature of cartoons as a source. Equally, it was not sufficient to dismiss Source D as unreliable due to 'bias', although recognition of its status as a speech justifying the Home Rule Bill was important. Use of the dates of the Sources to contextualise the content was usually helpful.
- (b) Most candidates were able to interpret the relevant content of the Sources and to recognise that A, B and C were critical of Home Rule and D supportive. At the more basic level, some argued that opposition to Home Rule was justified on the grounds that three sources offered criticisms and the only one to defend Home Rule was Gladstone and, as such, unreliable. More successful approaches cross-referenced the sources, discussed provenance (with variable degrees of knowledge as to the significance of Churchill and Bright) and used independent knowledge to assess the cases made for and against Home Rule in the sources. Some answers showed pleasing knowledge both of the specific circumstances of 1886 (Hawarden Kite etc) and of the broader issues raised, such as impact on Empire, agrarian violence, coercion and the Ulster problem. Well informed

candidates sometimes drifted away from close source analysis and evaluation, but at best, own knowledge informed and evaluated the sources effectively.

6 England in a New Century 1900-1918

There were a relatively small number of answers seen on this question but it was generally answered competently, although there was a wide range of standards seen by examiners.

- (a) All candidates were able to identify the obvious differences in the perspective of the two Sources. In some cases, the differences were seen as so stark as to lead to two entirely separate and sequential discussions of the Sources, whereas better answers did seek for hints of similarity (eg Webb's previous views on women leaving party politics to men), or to cross-reference differences more precisely. There was an interesting variety of responses to Source C, from those expressing (understandable!) outrage, to others who alluded more to Sir Almoth Wright's professional status and the respectability of the Times as a mouthpiece for male views. There were some largely speculative attempts to decide if he was typical of doctors, conservatives, males, or whether he was an outrageous extremist! Better answers took note of the dates of the two Sources, recognising that Webb's sympathies lay with Fawcett's NUWSS, whereas Wright comments at the height of Suffragette extremism.
- (b) This question proved a good discriminator, with the Sources providing plenty of material for the discerning and well-informed reader, without being entirely straightforward. Only a minority of candidates recognised that the key issue was 'equality of suffrage for women' – some focussed simply on 'equality', whereas others focussed on 'the vote' without picking up on the issue of 'equality' which is particularly highlighted in Source D. Successful answers often picked up on the scope of the question 'from 1906-18' and analysed the Sources according to their dates and contexts, producing a nuanced answer, assessing the prospects for success of the cause at different stages of the period concerned. There was a temptation amongst some (especially those who struggled to unravel the precise points being made in Source D) to offload descriptive material on women's role in the war – while this clearly is relevant, it is not a central issue in the Sources themselves and as such should not dominate the answer. A significant minority of candidates wrongly attributed one or both of Sources A and D to Millicent Fawcett (the former being written to her; the latter by her, but expressing the views of Sir John Simon). The importance of careful and accurate reading not only of the Source content, but also of the attributions cannot be over-stressed.

7 Nazi Germany 1933-45

All examiners were agreed that this, while being overwhelmingly the most popular question, was, as so often, the least well answered overall. This is not however, to say that there was not also a fair sprinkling of strong answers, nor that the questions themselves were deemed particularly challenging.

- (a) This produced a wide range of answers, suggesting that it was an effective discriminator. Examiners continue to note that a significant number of candidates believe the SPD agent to have been a Nazi supporter and the SPD to be some branch of the Nazi movement. Particularly concerning were the Centres where the majority of candidates seemed to be under this impression – given the frequency with which SOPADE sources appear in past papers and the number of times this error has been highlighted in previous reports, this is disappointing. Numerous candidates assumed that the SPD agent and the government agent would be biased, in one direction or the other, and as such their comments would be unreliable. However, a pleasing number did link provenance to content and comment thoughtfully on the fact that the SPD source was (at least on one level) giving more credit to the success of Nazi indoctrination than the government source in C; this in turn led to a

discussion of why this might be. Candidates commented on the different dates of the two Sources and, most effectively, noted that their criteria for judging success differed. Similarities could be found in the agreement on mass participation in Nazi controlled activities and organisations; but whereas B focussed on the suppression of individualism, C was more specifically concerned with the failure of indoctrination to prepare the German people for war. A number of candidates used B negatively to suggest Nazi indoctrination was not working, as people were not thinking for themselves. This was not the point of the source, which, albeit unsympathetically, was acknowledging success ('This has had an effect').

- (b) The focus of this question was about the 'transformation' of Germany between 1933 and 1939. Many candidates failed to sustain this focus and wrote either about the extent and methods of Nazi propaganda, or about the extent of opposition. In the latter case, as often in previous papers, examples of opposition tended to be post-1939, eg the White Rose group or the 1944 bomb plot. Attention to dates is clearly crucial here as credit is not given for examples outside the given dates. The best answers used Source D as a cue for identifying the difference between the appearance and the reality of a Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* and from that were able to use the Sources relevantly to argue around the key issue. Most saw Source A as supporting the view that Germany was transformed by propaganda and indoctrination, but also were quick to see that the Source, a newspaper, was almost certainly subject to Nazi propaganda control and, as such, an example of the attempt to transform, rather than proof of success. Source B was generally used to support the notion, whilst noting the early date and the limited criteria for judging success. Candidates who used the exclusion of Jews from the *Volksgemeinschaft* as evidence that society had not been transformed clearly missed the point. Source C was generally used effectively and there was pleasing awareness that this Source, dated later, referred more specifically to the impending shadow of war and raised a separate set of issues regarding transformation from the earlier Sources. A few only seemed to read the first part of Source D, failing to see its main argument that the promise of a 'National Revolution' was not fulfilled. Overall, there were enough good answers to suggest that the Sources and own knowledge could provide the basis for sophisticated and thoughtful answers, but all too often candidates failed to reach these heights, failing at one or more of the three hurdles of interpreting the Sources effectively, focusing on the key issue, or using appropriate independent knowledge.

2583-2584 Period Studies – English History

General Comments

The small number of entries for this legacy examination makes generalisations very difficult. The cohort sitting the examination was small and comparisons with previous years are probably quite meaningless. The standard of answers was very variable, with some very good answers, possibly from Year 13's attempting to gain extra marks, whilst there were also some very weak answers, possibly from candidates trying to improve their overall result. The small entry also means that there were a significant number of questions that were not attempted, particularly on 2583, or where the number of answers seen was so small as to make comments very difficult and this is reflected in the comments on specific questions. It was noticeable, particularly on 2583 that a significant number of candidates adopted a historiographical approach. Where candidates were able to use this knowledge to address the question credit was given, but where they simply described the views of historians they were limited to the lower bands. There are many candidates who find historiography very difficult and see the issues in terms of right and wrong or black and white and consequently have no appreciation of the subtleties of the arguments. Centres should be reminded that historiography is not a requirement of AS. The standard of written English was comparable with previous years. Candidates do need to ensure that conclusions are not simply assertions and that the conclusion has been developed from the rest of the essay.

2583

England 1042-1100

1 The Reign of Edward the Confessor 1042-1066

- (a)** Candidates who answered this question tended to write very little on 'the government of England' and as a result the essay became 'how effective was Edward the Confessor'. Although this could still work, it usually meant that answers were rather brief and undeveloped. Candidates must be encouraged to focus on the actual question set and not re-write the question to suit them. The level of factual knowledge was usually quite good and candidates were able to support their ideas.
- (b)** There was a general understanding of the Godwin's and their involvement in the instability of the period. However, few answers were purely analytical and many spent a great length of time writing about the events of Dover and the Godwin exile. Factual support was usually sound, but few answers were able to develop comments about Harold's relationship with Edward.

2 The Norman Conquest of England 1064-1072

- (a)** This was the most popular question in this section of the paper and was done relatively successfully. Many answers were able to consider a range of relevant factors before reaching a sensible conclusion. Arguments were usually well supported by factual detail. William's preparations were described at length and many answers showed a good knowledge of the logistics involved in the launching of the invasion. Candidates considered a good range of issues to explain William's victory at Hastings – luck, leadership, tactics, mistakes and preparations. Better answers displayed a clear sense that they were in control of the material.

- (b) Many candidates had a good knowledge and detailed understanding of castles, their construction and importance. However, most argued that it was other reasons that allowed William to secure control. Candidates usually stressed the role of terror, a lack of a unified opposition and William's policies. At the top level, answers often made links between the features and showed how castles underpinned many of the issues, particularly as William lacked a large force to control the country.

3 Norman England 1066-1100

There were not enough answers to this question to make any valid comments.

4 Society, Economy and Culture 1042-1100

There were not enough answers to this question to make any valid comments.

England 1450-1509

5 The Threat to Order and Authority 1450-1470

- (a) Although there were very few answers to this question, many candidates who did attempt it failed to focus on 'the powers of the monarchy' and instead wrote more generally about the problems of the period and the reasons for civil strife.
- (b) Most argued that Edward was not very successful in his first reign, and frequently pointed to the loss of the throne to support their argument. Other factors considered included his marriage and the ensuing difficulties, concentrating on the continued disorder. There were very few answers that considered the positive aspects of his reign. There were a number of answers that went on to consider issues from his second reign and this did not receive credit.

6 The End of the Yorkists 1471-1485

- (a) This question was tackled relatively well and were able to focus on the demands of the question and focus on the problems he faced. Answers were usually well supported by accurate and appropriate factual material, which allowed a clear argument to be sustained. Most students were positive in their comments about Edward than they had been in 5b and considered issues such as his dealing with the nobility and the financial issues. Some answers also considered the question of foreign policy.
- (b) This question was not handled very effectively and many focused almost entirely on the events surrounding Bosworth and showed little understanding of the importance of the events from earlier in his reign in alienating noble support and then linking it to Bosworth. Answers frequently relied on assertion rather than being developed into argument or evaluation.

7 The Reign of Henry VII 1485-1509

- (a) The range of issues considered by candidates was surprisingly limited and in many answers candidates focused on Henry's financial policies and what he did rather than examining their importance and linking it to the focus of the question about achievement. It was this last point that caused many candidates a problem, they were able to describe what Henry did, but were unable to assess his achievements. In some answers knowledge of financial measures was surprisingly thin and candidates displayed a better knowledge of his dealings with the Pretenders or the threat of the nobility. It was these two points that

tended to provide the main thrust of many answers and few were able to make links between the factors, particularly to show how important finance was in establishing and maintaining royal authority.

- (b) This question produced some good answers as many candidates were able to identify Henry's foreign policy aims and then assess whether they were achieved. The style of the question provided candidates with a structure for their answers and they were able to apply their knowledge to this, although there was some confusion about some of the Treaties. Most confusion was seen over the trade agreements with Burgundy and some answers failed to deal with relations with Scotland.

8 Social and Economic Issues 1450-1509

There were not enough answers to this question to make any valid comments.

England 1509-1558

9 Henry VIII and Wolsey 1509-1529

- (a) This was a popular question and drew a wide range of responses, with better answers focusing on analysis, rather than narrative. Many answers focused almost entirely on Henry's military exploits and how well he achieved his aims in this period. Weaker answers were sometimes confused about these events or went beyond the period in the question. Better answers started by identifying his aims and then examining to what extent each was achieved. Many considered issues such as 'honour and glory', securing the succession and appeasing the nobility. Some candidates failed to keep to the cut off date of 1514 and did not receive credit for consideration of events after the date.
- (b) This question was found to be challenging and many answers found it difficult to focus on the actual wording of the question and instead gave a list of successes and failures. There were a large number of answers that focused almost exclusively on the Field of the Cloth of Gold and The Treaty of London, leaving out events towards the end of the period. Those who were able to argue effectively usually agreed that success was found only in the short term. Better answers did see the subtleties, particularly around events such as the Field of the Cloth of Gold and were able to explain the isolation of England in 1529 and the failure to achieve the annulment as indicative of the long term failure of policy.

10 Government, Politics and Foreign Affairs 1529-1558

There were not enough answers to this question to make any valid comments.

11 Church and State 1529-1558

- (a) There were a number of answers to this question, but many candidates struggled to deal with the 'impact on the people of England.' Knowledge of the events of the Edwardian Reformation was, in instances, rather patchy and answers often focused on a narrow range of issues. Better answers were able to suggest that the Reformation made little impact as Mary was able to restore Catholicism with relative ease. There was little precise knowledge of developments at grass roots and candidates often relied on sweeping generalisations for their arguments. There was room for confusion over the two Books of Common Prayer and the differences between transubstantiation and consubstantiation and this often resulted in inaccurate analysis.
- (b) This was also a popular question, but as with 11b many candidates lacked the detailed knowledge of the changes and policies followed by Mary. Most argued that the changes were popular and some suggested that this was shown early in the reign by the eagerness

with which decorations were restored or at the end by the difficulties Elizabeth faced. However, some argued that the burnings and Wyatt's rebellion provide evidence of significant opposition. There were a few answers that looked at opposition in parliament and considered how far this reflected religious opposition.

12 Social and Economic Issues 1509-1558

There were not enough answers to this question to make any valid comments.

England 1547-1603

13 Church and State 1547-1603

- (a)** This question drew a wide range of answers, with some able to analyse the success and failure of the religious policies of both rulers. Those that adopted an analytical approach often argued that Mary was more successful in the short term, but that Edwardian Protestantism triumphed in the longer term, but would have to wait until the latter years of Elizabeth's reign. However, there were many weaker answers that displayed a distinct lack of detailed knowledge of the changes and tended to write in very generalised terms.
- (b)** This was a popular question, but there were many candidates who did not focus on the demands of the question and wrote extensively on the Church Settlement. As a result of this approach the situation at the end of the reign was given little consideration. Those who did try and address the question did see that both Puritanism and Catholicism had been considerably weakened by the end of the reign, but were often less convincing in explaining how this was achieved. Some were able to discuss the policy of encouraging conformity, but were less secure in explaining why persecution of Catholics occurred. This problem was even more evident when discussing Puritanism, although some were able to discuss the importance of the Marprelate tracts. However, at the top end there were some excellent answers that did focus on the latter years of Elizabeth's reign and even placed the weakening in a wider context of developments under the Stuarts.

14 Foreign Affairs 1547-1587

- (a)** There were very few answers to this question.
- (b)** Although there were few answers to this question it was noticeable that those who did attempt this question found it very difficult to cover the whole period, or where they did were often vague and generalised about the latter part. It was surprising how few were able to write effectively about the importance of Mary Stuart.

15 Government and Politics in Elizabethan England 1558-1603

- (a)** This question drew a large number of historiographically based answers and although there were some very good responses there were others that simply stated 'Neale argued this...whereas Elton argued that..' and we did not get to discover what the candidate actually thought. Descriptions of the views of historians are likely to reach a ceiling of Band IV and candidates should be aware of this. The rehearsal of various historical positions is usually at the expense of the presentation of evidence and analysis.
- (b)** In many ways this question saw the same pitfalls as 15a, but in this instance Elton was replaced by Haigh. Many of the answers took a long time to explain the theories with the rehearsal of the various historical positions at the expense of analysis and evaluation. Candidates would be better advised to focus on the events and discuss how far they show the effectiveness or otherwise of the government. It is worth reinforcing the comment made

in the Introduction that historiography is not a requirement at AS and experience suggests that it can impeded the answers of some candidates.

16 Social and Economic Issues 1547-1603

There were no answers seen to these questions.

England 1603-1660

17 Politics and Religion 1603-1629

- (a) There were only a few answers to this question and those who attempted it frequently struggled, showing little knowledge of foreign policy issues until the very end of the period. Some also struggled to make comparisons between the two periods. Many answers were heavily descriptive of events surrounding the Spanish expedition.
- (b) As with 17a, many candidates found this question challenging. Most answers adopted a chronological approach and if there was analysis it was often just bolted on. Events such as the Great Contract were often absent from consideration and many comments were generalised.

18 Personal Rule and Civil War 1629-1649

- (a) Although this was quite a popular question it was evident that many candidates did not understand the idea of religious divisions. Many answers went back into the early years of Charles' reign and looked at the issue of Arminianism and were unable to link this to the outbreak of the Civil War. Those were able to consider issues such as the Irish Rebellion or the Scots War usually had greater success in evaluating the importance of religion and making links between factors. There was a tendency for many to focus excessively on the period before 1640 and assume that Civil War was inevitable by then, rather than focus on events post 1640. Better answers examined events post 1640 and adopted a thematic approach. Knowledge of issues such as the Root and Branch Petition was very superficial, if it was considered at all.
- (b) This question attracted a few answers and there were some very good ones that had a good knowledge of events after the First Civil War and were able to evaluate a range of factors before reaching a balanced conclusion. However, there were a number of weaker answers that went back to the early years of Charles' rule, but were unable to explain how these events resulted in his execution other than to say he had created distrust. Better answers considered issues such as Charles' personality and his inability to compromise and this was often seen as the most important reason. There could have been more discussion of the role of the Levellers.

19 The Interregnum 1649-1660

There were insufficient answers seen to make valid comments.

20 Society and the Economy 1603-1660

There were insufficient answers seen to make valid comments.

2584

England 1780-1846

1 The Age of Pitt and Liverpool 1783-1830

- (a) This was a popular question, but very few answers were able to analyse the role Pitt's reforms played in his domination of politics. Candidates were usually able to describe the reforms, but little more. Some answers considered other factors, particularly the role of the King and the weakness of the opposition, but these were often poorly developed.
- (b) This question drew a number of good responses, although some answers were unsure of the term 'radical challenge'. Most candidates were able to assess the importance of a number of challenges through a chronological and descriptive approach with at least a simple analytical comment at the end of the paragraph. However, some very good answers adopted a thematic approach, considering the numbers involved, the aims and the government response, and this was often very effective. Most argued that the challenge was not serious and that the government overreacted.

2 War and Peace 1793-1841

There were insufficient answers to these questions to make valid comments.

3 The Age of Peel 1829-1846

- (a) This was not as popular as 3b and candidates did find it difficult to assess the seriousness of problems. As a result candidates frequently finished up by simply describing issues, particularly Catholic Emancipation and the Corn Laws. The better analytical answers were able to layer the problems and look at them as problems for Ireland, the party and Peel himself.
- (b) This was a very popular question. Many candidates focused on Peel's business and financial policies and argued that because these were successful he was successful as PM, turning the question into 'How successful were Peel's financial and economic policies? There were many answers that did not consider his political achievements and his management of his party and the subsequent impact of his style. Some were able to suggest that he was not successful in the longer term as his policy over the Corn Laws divided his party and led to the subsequent loss of office. There were a few who argued that by putting national interest first Peel was successful, he had been able to prevent social unrest and disperse the Chartist threat.

4 The Economy and Industrialisation 1780-1846

There were insufficient answers to these questions to make valid comments.

Britain 1846-1906

5 Whigs and Liberals 1846-1874

- (a) This was quite a popular question, but many answers were not effective in dealing with the weakness of Palmerston's political opponents. Most answers were better in dealing with foreign policy, although many did write large amounts about the Don Pacifico incident which was of little relevance. The appeal of Palmerston's government was usually effectively handled and there was consideration of the role of Gladstone.

- (b) This question was not well handled and many candidates simply described the reforms and considered their limitations and then stated that this was responsible for the electoral defeat. There were few candidates who were able to link Gladstone's responsibility to the reforms or simply asserted that he was to blame. There were a few candidates who made reference to the 'drink' legislation. Very few candidates were able to discuss the revival of the Conservative party by 1874 or the role of the nonconformists.

6 The Conservatives 1846-1880

- (a) Candidates struggle with this question and there were very few who suggested that in the short term it appeared to have brought the party few benefits as they lost the 1868 election. Some were able to argue that it did help Disraeli consolidate his position and gain a political advantage over Gladstone. Detailed knowledge of the Second Reform Act was also rather superficial and this limited the analytical comments that could be made. Very few were able to link the increased size of the electorate to the question and suggest that these new voters were naturally liberal and that the conservatives would need to change their policies to win support.
- (b) This question also saw a significant number of weak answers as candidates struggled to cover the whole period. Most answers adopted a chronological, rather than a thematic approach and this did not work well.

7 Foreign and Imperial Policies 1846-1902

- (a) There were very few answers to this question, but better answers identified the aims and then considered how far Britain was able to achieve them. However, many candidates found it difficult to cover the whole period and there was often focus on one particular area or issue.
- (b) This was quite a popular question and most candidates were able to identify a range of reasons for British involvement in Africa. Some weaker candidates found the concept of 'strategic' challenging, but better answers found that it allowed links to be made between a range of factors, particularly economic and the involvement of other countries. In explaining a range of factors many were able to reach Level III, but by drawing links or evaluating a range many achieved higher levels. Weaker answers lacked the precise factual support that was needed, particularly when considering economic factors and strategic issues was often confined to the Suez Canal.

8 Trade Unions and Labour 1867-1906

There were insufficient answers to these questions to make valid comments.

Britain 1899-1964

9 Liberals and Labour 1899-1918

- (a) This question presented many candidates with problems as their knowledge of the 1916 split was very limited and resulted in sweeping generalisations or vague assertions. There were many factors that could have been considered and some were able to write about the impact of the war, the long term decline of the Liberals and the impact of the 1918 Reform Act, but candidates did need to write a paragraph on the named factor. Many answers turned the question into a rise of Labour answer and then simply argued that this explained the Liberal decline.

- (b) This was a popular question, but it did result in many descriptive answers as candidates found it quite difficult to analyse the threat. Most answers knew more about Irish nationalism and as a result this was seen as the greatest threat, particularly as the Liberals became dependent upon them after 1910. Knowledge of Ulster Unionism was thin and many appeared to know little about Carson and the support given to him by the Conservatives. There was little consideration of the significance of the Curragh Mutiny or the Larne gun-running. Many answers also failed to take their answer beyond 1914, although there was some reference to the Easter Rising, which again was used to show that the Nationalist threat was the greater.

10 Inter-War Domestic Problems 1918-1939

- (a) This was a popular question, but unfortunately there were a large number of candidates who failed to understand the demands of the question and wrote about the impact of the strike and did not understand the phrase 'issues at stake.' There were also some who considered both the causes and consequences to ensure they had covered all required, but this did mean that coverage of the causes was often limited. However, there were some good answers that were able to link the two issues of economic and political. Some argued that the government turned it into a political issue, whereas many of those on strike saw it as an economic issue and wrote at considerable length on the long term causes of the strike, covering issues such as the conditions in the mines, the Gold Standard and the international situation for the coal industry after the Ruhr incident.
- (b) There were a few answers to this question, but it was not handled effectively as many candidates failed to focus on 'forced to change' and simply described the policies followed by the government. The range of issues covered was also limited and the result of these two problems was that few candidates were able to achieve more than Level III.

11 Foreign Policy 1939-1963

- (a) There were a number of answers to this question, but candidates did not find the question easy and some wrote about events before 1939 and others after 1945. Those who did try to address the question did consider relations with the USSR, but in other areas many comments were generalised and issues such as the desire to preserve the Empire were given scant treatment.
- (b) This question attracted few answers and although candidates were able to describe events at the Conferences, consider Greece and the Korean War, but were frequently narrow and generalised in the range of issues covered.

12 Post-War Britain 1945-1964

- (a) There were insufficient answers to this question to make valid comments.
- (b) There were a number of answers to this question and many candidates were able to explain a number of factors for Conservative dominance, even if they were not able to evaluate their relative importance. There was sound knowledge displayed of economic policy during the period, but there was also good understanding of the Labour divisions and the importance of Conservative leadership during the period.

2585 – European and World History

General issues

As this is the last paper of the series, the number of candidates was significantly lower; conclusions about performance are therefore often made on the basis of very few candidates. Where no comment is made on a particular question, too few or no scripts were seen.

The use of historiography continues to be a problem for many students, often just appearing as a bolt-on or descriptive exercise. Only the very best candidates seem able to handle it, and it is not a requirement at this level.

Specific questions

- 1 (a) Candidates generally displayed good knowledge, showing an appreciation of issues facing the popes and also of the wider political issues. However, answers were often descriptive and there was some lack of differentiation between the popes.
- 1 (b) This question seemed to provide more difficulties for candidates, answers often simply consisting of descriptions of life in Cluniac establishments.
- 2 (b) There were some good answers with candidates able to achieve a good balance between the given factor and others. Some were not good at differentiating between the Angevins, and therefore tended to generalise about their attitudes and policies.
- 3 (a) A good range of answers were seen, the best having strong knowledge of the achievements of leaders and able to set this against other factors. Others had less knowledge and dealt only sketchily with leadership, or gave a general description of the crusade as a whole lacking sharp focus on the question.
- 3 (b) Again, the question was generally well answered, the best providing a good balance of successes and failures and reaching well-supported conclusions. Some were less optimistic and saw the crusade as a disaster from start to finish. Good knowledge, but not always used to support an argument.
- 5 (a) Answers were generally characterised by a failure to focus on Venice and there was some evidence of trying to fit a prepared answer on Florence to the question. There was some success where candidates attempted to compare with Florence and Rome.
- 5 (b) Candidates often showed a good range of knowledge and understanding of the works of humanist writers, though some tried to turn the question round and looked at the influence of writers on Renaissance government and society. Occasionally, answers could be rather descriptive, but others provided some excellent evaluation.
- 6 (a) There were some problems with the concept of law and order, candidates often failing to see the links with other issues such as the nobles and civil war and treating them as entirely separate issues or not at all. Knowledge was often good but rather descriptive and some strayed too far into the reign, although reasonable latitude was allowed in the interpretation of 'early years'.

- 6 (b) Some good analysis of Charles' contribution to his own problems, but less good on the legacy of Ferdinand and Isabella – sometimes omitted completely, creating a rather unbalanced essay. Some strayed beyond the dates of the question.
- 7 (a) Much better on the army than the navy, but very little attempt to evaluate and prioritise factors.
- 8 (a) The best answers were able to balance patronage by royal families against other factors and these were often well-supported. Others were unable to handle both Spain and Portugal and the multiplicity of factors. Weaker answers also strayed into motivation instead of dealing with those factors which set Spain and Portugal apart from other countries in establishing their early lead.
- 8 (b) There were many good answers here but others failed to examine both exploration and empire-building for each of the given explorers.
- 9 (a) The best answers were able to balance Charles' policies against other factors and provide strong support for their arguments. Weaker answers tended to focus on either the princes or Charles and deal with little outside this.
- 9 (b) Some candidates saw the opportunity in this question to apply a balanced treatment to Charles' policy, however others tended to dwell exclusively on failures giving a rather unbalanced result. There was little mention of Hungary, but candidates did distinguish between Charles' achievements as King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor.
- 10 (a) The question produced some well-focused answers, with the best candidates well able to measure achievements against aims. Whilst some candidates were aware of the necessity to distinguish between Charles' Spanish and Imperial policies, others were more confused.
- 10 (b) Generally better answered than 10a, with candidates well in control of their material. A common (and successful) pattern was to contrast the early years with the rest of the reign, though weaker answers spent a disproportionate amount of time on the earlier years.
- 11 (a) The question was not well answered, with candidates often failing to distinguish between humanism and Protestantism, ascribing both to the influences of Calvin and/or simply describing humanism and Protestantism without linking to the question. Few covered the whole period.
- 11 (b) Answers too often developed into a list of successes and failures rather than an attempt to assess against aims for instance. Some strayed into domestic policy, whilst others dealt with little after Pavia in 1525.
- 13 (a) At best, there were some very good answers indeed with answers showing detailed knowledge and an ability to assess the work of the Jesuits against other factors. However, a better understanding or demonstration of the context would have been useful background against which to assess achievement. Weaker answers tended towards the descriptive.
- 13 (b) Fewer candidates attempted this question and it was less well done with candidates often focusing on Counter Reformation as opposed to Catholic Reformation and therefore producing an unbalanced result.

- 15 (a)** There was some treatment of both outbreak and development, but weaker answers tended to run the two together leading to some inaccuracy in ascribing too much importance to Calvinism as a factor in the outbreak of the revolt.
- 15 (b)** This question produced some rather weak results with candidates either providing a potted biography of William of Orange with little reference to the question, or demonstrating very little knowledge of him at all – with little reference to his high-point at the Pacification of Ghent or his posthumous importance as a figurehead.
- 16 (a)** Candidates generally produced some good answers, which demonstrated a sound knowledge of Spain and a thoughtful and balanced approach.
- 16 (b)** This was less well done than 16a. Candidates as always, had difficulties distinguishing between economic and financial policies, knowledge was rather thin and only rarely were they able to balance against other factors.
- 17 (a)** Some candidates simply read the question as an invitation to assess the problems with the nobility, but a few recognised the real focus of the question and were able to evaluate the extent to which noble opposition hindered developments.
- 17 (b)** Much better on Richlieu than Mazarin, who tended to be rushed through at the end of the essay. Some good comments on the aims of French foreign policy and Richlieu's cunning in using the Swedes to fight his enemies.
- 20 (a)** The question was in general, poorly answered. Responses were imprecise and generalised. Whilst other factors were explored, they tended to be lacking in depth.
- 20 (b)** There was some evidence of candidates attempting to fit a prepared answer on a comparison of France and the Netherlands into this essay structure, which only worked to a certain extent, providing some irrelevancy. There was little real understanding of the social structure and significant over-simplification of the three estates.
- 21 (a)** Often very well done, with a clear focus on the date and a wide range of aspects considered. Candidates were well able to balance strengths and weaknesses.
- 21 (b)** Answers sometimes degenerated into a narrative of the wars which reaped only modest rewards. Others failed to provide a strong enough focus on the given factor. Historiography was poorly used being little more than the 'some historians think' variety and therefore adding nothing to the outcome.
- 22 (a)** Little focus on any specific examples other than Versailles itself, resulting in some very generalised and therefore weak answers.
- 22 (b)** The best answers showed good control of material and selection of evidence rather than being weighed down by the length of the reign and variety of conflicts. Others got bogged down in this and answers often became very narrative, with candidates unable to define motives.
- 23 (a)** Better answers were able to demonstrate how the army interlinked with other aspects of policy, but candidates often demonstrated a lack of knowledge and consequently weak understanding.
- 23 (b)** Answers tended to be weak because of difficulties in identifying what constituted a major power. This was often seen solely in military terms, ignoring any other claims to importance Prussia might have.

2586 – European and World History 1789-1989

General Comments

This was the last examination of the outgoing specification, with a very much reduced number of candidates, many, if not most, of whom will have been retaking the paper. Despite this, the full quality range of work was seen, with a reasonable number of top-band answers, and encouragingly few responses of lower than pass standard.

The scripts held few surprises. The strengths and weaknesses commented on in previous reports were still apparent. The level of knowledge displayed in answers was rarely less than adequate; the real issue being the ability of individual candidates to use this knowledge in an effective and relevant manner. Responses were generally focused on the question, with candidates demonstrating awareness that they needed to argue and analyse. Nonetheless, the number that were capable, for example, of demonstrating the relative importance of several causal factors, rather than merely explaining why each individually was important, remained limited.

Comments on Individual Questions

Given the limited candidature, there were some questions to which there were only very small numbers of answers. It is not possible to provide general comments on these. Only those questions answered by significant numbers of candidates are commented on below.

- 1 (a) The very open wording of the question allowed candidates to select their own factors, and to define for themselves what constituted revolution in 1789. Most could explain several reasons, though these usually focused more on background factors in the ancien regime rather than on developments in 1789 itself. Indeed, the greatest weakness in responses was a failure to draw the distinction between those factors that explained why revolution *could* happen, and those that explained why it *did* happen in 1789 – exactly the kind of analysis required in the top bands.
- 1 (b) This was markedly less popular than **Q1(a)**, perhaps not surprisingly since it demanded knowledge of the full sweep of revolutionary developments from 1789 and 1795. Answers usually focused mainly on events up to 1793, with often excellent detail about the people of Paris, and using war and the King as the main alternative factors.
- 2 (b) Answers seemed unusually divided into two groups – high quality, detailed and analytical, or vague, generalised and lacking any true grasp of the period. The best answers made the point that, particularly in military respects, Napoleon's strengths and his enemies' weaknesses were mirror images – they would not have seemed so weak had not he been so strong – an understanding of which gave almost immediate access into top-level analysis. The weaker answers often struggled to find anything specific to say about the given factor, or indeed about Napoleon, and resorted to the blandest of unsupported generalisations.
- 5 (a) This was the less popular choice on the Italy topic, but was still answered by a good number of candidates. The general level of answers was high, though weaknesses commonly included answering generally on the various factors for failure, but without any reference to what actually happened in 1848-9. The most common conclusion was that Austrian power (and lack of any other great power intervention to challenge

it) was the most important factor, but only the better candidates could link this in any way to the given factor, or to other alternative factors, such as the Pope.

- 5 (b) This was a very straightforward question on well known material. In contrast to **Q5(a)**, here candidates were much more readily able to argue links between various factors, and to demonstrate how Cavour's achievements were dependent in various ways on the contributions of others, notably Napoleon III and Garibaldi.
- 6 (a) This was chosen by the great majority of candidates for the Germany topic. Better candidates had few problems in demonstrating how Prussia's military achievements and Bismarck's diplomacy rested to a considerable degree on Prussia's economic advances.
- 6 (b) Most of the relatively small number of answers did not have a sufficient understanding of the details of Bismarck's foreign policy to be able to answer in anything other than very general terms.
- 9 (a) This produced a very wide range of answers. The main challenge was to keep a consistent focus on the question – why so long? Weaker answers kept straying off into description of various aspects of the war. However, almost all could muster explanation of some relevant factors, though not many could produce a genuine assessment of the relative importance of different reasons. Conclusions were essentially assertions – unsupported choice of one or other factor as 'most important'.
- 13 (a) The Russia topic was probably the most popular on the paper, though this was the less often chosen question of the two. Weaker answers were simply on the 1905 revolution with some passing comment on its aftermath. There were not many answers that demonstrated a real mastery of the subject matter, and still fewer that were capable of making a reasoned assessment of the state of the Russian autocracy by 1914. Most simply assumed that it was on the point of collapse, just waiting for a world war to come and topple it over.
- 13 (b) The single greatest weakness of answers was a failure to give sufficient attention to what actually happened in February 1917. Almost all answers were, to a greater or lesser extent, trapped in discussion of background factors – the war, the Tsar assuming personal command of the armies, the Tsarina and Rasputin, the state of the peasantry – and did not analyse what actually caused the abdication of the Tsar.
- 14 (b) This question surprisingly gave candidates significant problems. Few answers kept a proper focus on the issue of stalemate – indeed, there were often good reasons to suspect that candidates did not fully understand the concept. This meant that many answers focused instead on military technological developments, whether or not these were directly related to the stalemate. This meant that discussions, for example of gas or tanks, often failed to see the point that these were efforts to *break* the stalemate, and were only relevant to the extent that they failed to do so. It was a rare answer that explained methodically how and why the stalemate on the Western Front came into being in the autumn of 1914, and why it was so difficult to break it thereafter.
- 15 (a) Mussolini is another topic on which answers tend to be polarised – those which master the detail, and those which are swamped by it. Here weaker candidates merely described how Mussolini increased his power after 1922, assuming that this was explaining how a dictatorship came into being. Good answers understood that, whilst an assessment of Mussolini's steps towards dictatorship was part of the

answer, analysis of the extent to which Italy was not a full dictatorship – of the other sources of power and influence which remained - was also essential.

- 16 (a)** Many answers on any question on the Weimar Republic will provide an unfocused description of what happened, often with a less than perfect grasp of the facts. This time there were certainly some of these, but most answers were somewhat more effective, identifying and explaining a range of reasons for the Republic's survival in the 1920s. There were few, however, who were capable of any genuine assessment of these reasons.
- 16 (b)** This produced a much fuller range of responses than **Q16(a)**. There have always been good numbers of capable candidates, well prepared to answer questions on the Nazi economy, and this year was no exception. For such candidates, this was a very straightforward question. They were able to look at the way in which economic policy evolved after 1933, and reach balanced assessments of the degree of success/failure attained by 1939.
- 17 (a)** There is still almost universal acceptance of the orthodox view that the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh on Germany. Most answers were therefore little more than a run-through of the terms of the Treaty with some comment about how unfair it all was. Persuasive counter-arguments were thin on the ground. Many answers lacked the contextual knowledge of the war and its causes which would have made a more balanced assessment easier to achieve.
- 18 (a)** Most answers included far too much material on the 1920s – the struggle for leadership – than on the 1930s, when Stalin was consolidating his hold on power. Whilst there is some material relevant to both aspects, the question required a primary focus on the 1930s. Many answers, for example, omitted any consideration of the impact of economic policies such as collectivisation and the Five Year Plans.
- 18 (b)** Although this was chosen by a minority of candidates for the USSR option, it was generally answered more effectively than **Q18(a)**. Most answers looked at a good range of impacts, both during the war and on the position of the USSR as a great power in the post-war period.
- 19 (a)** Many answers were surprisingly weak on the way in which the Cold War developed in the years 1946-9, focusing instead on the situation in 1945 and the more general reasons for suspicion between the two sides.
- 20 (a)** Many answers were surprisingly vague, even on the sequence of events following the invasion of the South.

2587-2589 Historical Investigations

General Comments

The June session for these units did again produce some excellent scripts where candidates were able to use their considerable knowledge to evaluate the relevant historical debate in all their answers. Many candidates produced well informed, supported evaluation in the Passages question and clearly argued assessments of historical debate in the essays.

However, all examiners reported candidates who did not succeed in meeting the demands of the questions. In the Passages question candidates were sequential in their references to the Passages and described their content, rather than analysed it. Candidates were very prone to selecting a brief quotation from each Passage, assuming this represented the view of the Passage and then comparing it with similar short extracts from the other Passages. Some misinterpreted Passages, despite the information in the steer to the Passages. In some cases candidates were expecting particular views to be represented and forced the Passages into this preordained mould. At other times candidates knew the debate on the issue in the question well and proceeded to outline it with minimal reference to the views in the Passages, or they dismissed these views in favour of others, not represented in the Passages. The interpretations in the Passages, and not just selected highlights, are the focus of the question. Candidates were also troubled by Passages which set up one view and then argued that it was not valid. The entire Passage should be read carefully.

In essay answers candidates were very prone to listing factors, causes, results or whatever was asked for, without much argument beyond assertion as to the relative importance of each. Some were inclined to import extra debates into questions where they were not needed or to describe schools of thought or well known differences between historians when what was required was a discussion of possible explanations. These reports have reiterated time and time again that the statement that a particular historian is a revisionist adds little to an attempt to assess the validity of the views the historian puts forward. What does help is some factual evidence. Conclusions were not always given sufficient thought but simply repeated the points made previously. Candidates should strive to reach a judgement and this is an opportunity for them to think independently, rather than rehearse the opinions of others, as long as they can back up their ideas.

The quality of written English has not improved and all the comments made previously could be repeated. Would of surfaced far too often. Incorrect spelling of common terms like Catholicism is inexcusable as is the failure to spell correctly words which appear on the question paper. Examiners reported greater numbers of candidates whose handwriting was close to being illegible. Some candidates wrote in a minute script. In some cases where scribes had been used, their handwriting left much to be desired. There were a number of candidates who added post scripts to their answer with asterisks to indicate where this extra material should be inserted. Examiners tried hard to decipher such additions, but often reported that it was not clear to what they referred. Very few candidates were short of time and those who had to finish an answer in note form or conclude abruptly had usually spent overlong on their first answer.

2587

There were 561 candidates, one third answering on Charlemagne and two thirds on King John. No letters of complaint were received about this paper.

Charlemagne

- 1 Generally this question was well answered. Most candidates were able to make a sound judgement as to what was meant by personal interest and could see how the Passages supported or challenged the given view. Only stronger responses were able to deploy contextual knowledge but some referred to Alcuin's educational and literary contributions, other scholars and Carolingian minuscule. Some of the best were well informed about Carolingian architecture or could list the classical works copied in Francia. Some candidates missed the administrative motive in Passage D.
- 2 Candidates generally preferred this essay question to question 3 and were well prepared on this topic. Most candidates could list a range of factors and what discriminated most amongst them was how well they were able to rank the causal factors they cited. Some tried to argue for religious reasons but better responses suggested this as a reason and then produced arguments and evidence to show it was more marginal in importance and that Charlemagne did not always do the bidding of the Pope. Some omitted the motive of plunder and so lost the chance to include the debate on this issue. The idea that war was part of the Frankish Way of Life was less often explored. Some candidates wished to write solely about why the wars with the Saxons lasted so long and others did tend to spend a disproportionate part of their discussion on the Saxon Wars. Some good responses argued for a synthesis of factors, such as the cross and the sword.
- 3 This was less popular and there were fewer strong answers. Weaker answers were almost exclusively on the role of the church in administration and only a brief paragraph on Charlemagne's personality. Others tried to turn this into a question on foreign policy and argued that it was conquest which held the Empire together. Some spent too long on Ganshof and decomposition and again neglected the personality of Charles. Some candidates were well versed in the views of historians such as Innes, but simply described their views without any critical evaluation.

King John

- 4 This question was mostly well answered. Candidates found it straightforward to group the Passages with A set against the others and they appreciated the lively language in A. There was plenty of scope for cross reference and candidates could pick out carried on much as usual in B and the church did not grind to a halt in D or the flow of wealth into John's treasury in C and John's financial profit in D. Some candidates were a little confused by the references in B both to grave discomfort for the religiously minded along with the much as usual evidence of ecclesiastical records. Candidates do need to be aware that Passages may contain more than one interpretation. Good responses argued that the Interdict had little impact on the church but a far greater impact on John, in enabling him to reap such strong financial benefits. However, there were candidates who did not read the question carefully and focused on whether or not the Interdict had much effect and ignored the prolongation of the quarrel. Others preferred to answer about whether John or Innocent was more to blame or how far John's obstinacy prolonged the quarrel. These nearly always missed the reference in C to John's willingness to negotiate. Some, not content with the views in the Passages, insisted on discussing views held by other historians such as Warren.

- 5 This was a popular and straightforward question and some strong answers were read. These were from candidates who were well versed in the abortive campaign of 1205 and the actual campaigns of 1206 and 1214. They wrote about the Poitevin campaign and Bouvines and the shortcomings of John's allies with sound detail. There was analysis of the relative strengths of Philip Augustus and John, notably in finance and the best argued that the loss of Normandy had decreased John's revenue, although partly offset by the profits from the Interdict, and similarly increased that of Philip Augustus. Some decided that the inevitable backlash against the Angevin Empire victimised John. The criticisms of John's temperament were usually set against the known hostility of the monastic chroniclers. The counter argument that John was less to blame was often weaker, but one or two independent-minded candidates wrote spirited defences of John, blaming his allies, his lack of resources, the ingrained self interest of his barons and his difficult situation while praising his leadership skills and citing a range of examples to prove the point. But there were weaker responses which focused too much on the period prior to 1204 and on John's errors regarding Arthur, the Lusignans and William de Briouze, without whom, candidates seem to feel, no essay on John can be written.
- 6 Fewer candidates attempted this question and fewer still answered it well. These few were fully informed on the events of 1215-16 and the annulment of the Charter, the invasion of Prince Louis, the unresolved issues, and the military situation, with the barons retaining London, were all cited. Weaker answers focused on events leading to the Charter or about John's relations with the barons prior to 1215. Some candidates were able to analyse the clauses of the Charter effectively to show how John accepted and then refused to acknowledge some parts of it as well as discussing the flaws in the Charter itself. There was a general desire to blame John and ignore the intransigence of some of the barons and the role of Stephen Langton.

2588

There were 3150 candidates for this paper, a slight decrease on June 2008. There were more candidates attempting the questions on Elizabeth I than on the other three topics combined. 565 for Philip II, 1699 for Elizabeth I, 655 for Oliver Cromwell and 231 for Peter the Great. A letter of complaint was received about question 3.

Philip II

- 1 Candidates seemed familiar with the relevant debate and used the wide range in the Passages as a way in to an equally wide range of contextual knowledge. They sometimes found it difficult to reach a clear judgement.
- 2 This was the more popular of the essay questions and there were some well argued and relevant answers. The extent to which Philip's religious policies were serving national interests led to a discussion of a series of policies and the motives, often analysed as mixed, behind them. A few candidates only considered national interests as a motive with no alternatives being analysed. There were several ways in which candidates could go astray. Some saw the question as being about how far Philip's policies were motivated by religion and this often led them into foreign policy. Others argued, with more validity, that for Philip national interests were the same as the interests of Catholicism, but this did not help them to make progress with the question. A third problem lay with those who assessed the success of Philip's policies. Some of these issues have been the subject of questions set in previous years.

- 3 This question was less well answered. Candidates did not find it easy to deal with changing problems, strategy and effectiveness and this was taken into account. The most successful approach was to deal with the pre 1580 period and then the later period which gave an immediate interpretation of changing problems. Candidates who took the traditional route of dealing with Philip's relations with each country in turn were also quite effective. Those who listed his possible motives and described the debate about these were less satisfactory. Some considered that these motives were the same as Philip's strategies

Elizabeth I

- 4 Candidates did not always pick up the references in the question to serious and to stability. They also often missed the ambivalence of some of the Passages so that the references at the end of A to Whitgift's hard line policies and the resultant tensions or to the remaining issues at the end of C were not fully appreciated. The fact that 3 Passages challenged the idea of a supposed calm at the end of the reign was not always perceived. Candidates remain loth to recognise that the argument in any Passage may be two-sided. The implied argument in D that it was the proposed Presbyterian governmental structure in the church which was a threat was not often followed up. Some contextual knowledge was pertinent and well used. The reference in A and C to prophesyings were often picked out and the responses of Elizabeth's archbishops were quoted. Some argued that the vigour of the reaction illustrated the extent of the threat, while others felt the Queen's fears were overdone.

But there were some responses which chose to write a general essay on the Puritan threat, with scant use of the Passages and some which brought in the Neale thesis at length in evaluating B's mention of an opposition group in the Commons, an idea which B refuted. One or two devoted whole paragraphs to discussion of the dates of publication of the Passages.

- 5 This was the less popular of the essays and some candidates missed the word far and simply wrote about how. This led to much description of methods of control. Other, clearly quite able, candidates answered a different question on the rise of the House of Commons. Another group chose to describe the views of historians on this issue but offered no opinions of their own, while a third group was unable to distinguish between the Commons, the Council and the Court. Neale was again very prominent and often his ideas were stated to be wrong and therefore there was no need for Elizabeth to control Parliament, because they offered no opposition to her. But there were effective answers which focused on the relevant debate, generally arguing that Elizabeth and Burghley were able to control Parliament, by a variety of means, but there were some exceptions, such as the monopolies issue. The role of the House of Lords in the making of the religious settlement was often well used by the better candidates, while weaker ones suggested this opposition lasted for much of the reign.
- 6 This was a more popular question although the use of the word problem instead of threat remained unobserved by quite a few candidates. The debate on this topic was well known and often well evaluated, particularly in relation to the extent that the missionary priests or Mary, Queen of Scots were a genuine problem. But there was a tendency to argue that the lack of hostile legislation early in the reign showed there was no problem, while the reaction to the advent of seminaries and Jesuits proved there was now a problem. Clearly Elizabeth's views had wide credence. If she implied there was a problem, then there was one. There was some rather imprecise comment so that the bishops in the House of Lords were seen as a problem throughout the reign, Mary, Queen of Scots was soon executed so was not a problem, while Philip II was a constant hostile presence in Europe. Some stronger candidates argued that there might well have been a problem but for a series of

misfortunes for the Catholics such as the reluctance of Philip and the Pope to act against Elizabeth, the French connections of Mary and her disreputable image, the mistimed Papal Bull, the misdirection of the missionary endeavour and the defeat of the Armada. These answers were a pleasure to read.

Oliver Cromwell

- 7 Candidates found the Passages accessible and some were able to group them quite effectively, taking A and C against B and D, sensibly using the steers to make this judgement. Of the Passages, C proved the most problematic with candidates not really understanding to what extremism in the steer referred or recognising that Cromwell's actions were driven by fear of radicalism within the army. The other difficulty lay in the lack of relevant contextual knowledge as evidence from later in the Protectorate was often cited, notably Cromwell's refusal of the Crown. Some used the Fifth Monarchy Men to illustrate the extremism in the army, but this group were less prominent in the period in the question. Better candidates knew about the Leveller mutinies and pointed out that Cromwell did not fear the army as he suppressed their insurrections with relative ease. Cromwell's religious conviction was backed up by his propensity for quoting from the Bible, a sure sign of his piety. The statement in Passage D that we would be wrong to imagine was missed by some candidates who then went on to imagine Cromwell was suiting himself. Some of the evaluation was simplistic, most especially of Passage A where Buchan was seen as unreliable since he was a traditional historian or criticised for turning Cromwell into a Stalin type dictator as he was writing in the 1930s. The evaluation should refer to the views expressed in the Passages as the questions make clear. The views of other modern historians were used to assess the given view but often treated as a substitute for factual information.
- 8 Candidates did not always read the question carefully and observe the dates give. Hence the Major Generals made frequent appearances. The other influences on Cromwell were not fully developed. Most candidates could assess the role of religion but found it harder to consider the role of Parliament and the need to balance their interests with those of the army. Hence some answers lacked much sense of debate. Some of the material quoted was not very appropriately used with discussion veering away from the question into the morality of events in Ireland. The fighting was usually seen as a result of army influence with some support for religious motivation.
- 9 Answers to this question were quite effective if candidates knew when the Protectorate began. Healing and settling in Scotland and Ireland was not relevant. Candidates tended to argue that Cromwell pursued other aims consistently such as ambition or becoming a military dictator and neglected the factor in the question. The Rule of the Major Generals was often a prime component of these answers. The distinction between healing and settling and godly reformation was understood by very few.

Peter the Great

- 10 Most candidates were able to analyse the Passages reasonably effectively. They tended to miss the nuances and, at times, clearly made points, like the final argument in Passage D. They did not always point out that, although Passage B referred to considerable reforms, these only affected the elite. Nor did they link this to the argument in passage C. Candidates mostly evaluated the Passages by cross reference, but some knew about opposition to Peter and could expand on the superficiality of some of his administrative reform.

- 11 This was not a popular question and few of those candidates who chose to answer it understood its implications. They thus wrote general accounts of the reign, showing how Peter overcame or was overcome by the problems. Some of this material could be used relevantly to show that problems he surmounted were probably not that great. There was a minority of candidates who answered this well and were in control of the debate and had a wide range of relevant knowledge. Some did tend to divert into the debate about how much reform predated Peter's reign. Again, this could be made relevant to show that the problems were already being tackled and so were not that serious.
- 12 This question mostly produced detailed answers on foreign policy but not all candidates were able to adapt their knowledge to suit the question set. Some wrote about the general success of Peter's policy or the reasons for success or failure or discussed his aims at length so that the degree of assessment of the extent to which Russia became a European power was a good discriminator. Some candidates even managed to write about the Persian intervention relevantly by showing how it affected the way he was regarded in Europe, while others suggested that the examples usually quoted to show Peter was respected and feared in Europe were not really very substantial. Several, however, made the valid point that it was a start which eventually did lead to Russia becoming a European power.

2589

There were 7464 candidates for this paper, a slight decrease on June 2008, 797 for Napoleon, 809 for Gladstone and Disraeli, 542 for Bismarck, 1052 for Roosevelt, 1992 for Lenin, 1348 for Chamberlain and 924 for the Cold War. A letter of complaint was received about Questions 5 and 6 on this paper.

Napoleon

- 1 Generally candidates found the Passages accessible and understood the debate they contained. They were able to assess the part played by several factors in Napoleon's downfall. Some rejected the explanations in the Passages too readily and preferred to write about the role of the Continental System and the factor in the question could be neglected. Some opportunities for cross referencing were missed, such as fresh hope and opportunities to his enemies in A, the armies of the Fourth Coalition in B, and all the allies to bring him down in D. Few candidates picked up the interpretation in Passages B, C and D that Napoleon was far from finally defeated in 1814. Candidates were often reluctant to venture on a definite judgement and those claiming several factors were equally responsible needed to show how the factors linked together.
- 2 Candidates needed to take time to consider what being an heir to the Revolution entailed and some never really mentioned this and so their answers were largely implicit. Others focused more on how far Napoleon was a dictator, and examiners were expected to make the necessary links to the question. But candidates who could define what the Revolution stood for had little difficulty in showing how Napoleon did or did not pursue the same ends. Most concluded that on the whole he was not the heir, but rather, as one candidate argued, a pretender.
- 3 Many candidates wrote in general terms about the qualities of Napoleon as a general, looking at his qualities as a leader and his relationship with his troops. Better candidates saw that the question was two sided and the strengths of Napoleon were set against the weakness of his enemies. It was possible for candidates to make a sound argument on either side and the question discriminated well. Often the range of examples quoted

distinguished the stronger from the weaker. Some candidates missed the date in the question and a few looked at events in Egypt, but rarely at sufficient length to affect their answers much.

Gladstone and Disraeli

- 4 Candidates were able to group the Passages effectively, although the Passages were not always totally consistent in their views and the reference to misfortune in A, to problems with university education in Ireland in C and to administrative scandals in D, all of which ran counter to the main view in the Passages were not always appreciated. There was a good understanding of the role of religion in some of the hostility to Gladstone's measures. There was some tendency to downplay the popularity of financial rectitude, which could be juxtaposed with the payment of the Alabama compensation, in favour of stress on the dislike of the Licensing Act from both brewers, the public and the Nonconformists, albeit for different reasons. Ireland was not often used to provide contextual knowledge to evaluate the views. Some candidates equated popularity with success.
- 5 This led to some very strong answers which contrasted the slow rise of Disraeli before 1867 with his more rapid progress afterwards and drew the obvious conclusion. There was some good understanding of the pressures on Disraeli and his urgent need to accomplish reform in 1867 in order to survive in the party. Many candidates pointed out that he was far from universally popular with Conservatives as late as 1867. There was some good assessment of his strengths lined up against his inherent defects as a possible Tory leader. Most candidates concluded that 1867 was decisive in his career. Less able candidates made a list of the reasons why Disraeli became the Conservative leader, often arguing there was no viable alternative or they assessed why he won the 1874 election..
- 6 Candidates did not always have detailed knowledge of the focus of the Midlothian campaign and included too much discussion of the rights and wrongs of the eastern policy followed by Disraeli and the issue of the Bulgarian atrocities. The forward policy and Beaconsfieldism were then neglected. The alternative explanation, that the Tory policies and failings were to blame usually had more support, with candidates arguing that Gladstone exploited Tory difficulties, but on his own could not account for their defeat. Disraeli's lack of energy was also stressed but the depression of the period was less well known.

Bismarck

- 7 There was some lack of understanding of the nature of the Luxembourg crisis and over-reliance on description of the Passage content in weaker responses. In passage A individual phrases were picked out such as national spirit that he had encouraged to argue that Bismarck had meant to do this, when the view in the Passage was contrary. Passage B was not well evaluated as candidates lacked contextual knowledge. There was better use of C where some candidates did use their knowledge to support the typicality of Bismarck's use of foreign crises to secure domestic objectives. Most candidates picked up on the reference in D to Bismarck as master of manipulation, but did not always link this to the key issue. Better answers ranged beyond 1867 to offer a broader analysis of Bismarck's intentions.
- 8 Candidates with stronger answers were able to discuss in some detail the problems facing Austria and France and also briefly consider the attitude of both Russia and Britain. They were then able to go on and consider the economic and military strengths of Prussia and the role of Bismarck. However other candidates simply either outlined the weaknesses of

Prussia's neighbours or Prussia's strengths and their answers were thus unbalanced and often not well aimed at the question.

- 9 There was some strong analysis of both liberalism and conservatism. Candidates showed how the Empire developed out of wars dominated by Prussia and how the Constitution of 1871 owed much to the Prussian dominated North German Confederation of 1867. On the other hand they argued that by 1871 the Liberals had gained more than they could ever have hoped for a decade earlier. In both cases there was good supporting detail. Weaker responses offered limited discussion and relied on the assertion that conservatism triumphed. The significance of universal male suffrage continued to elude many.

Roosevelt

- 10 Candidates found the Passages accessible and could identify the debate contained within them. Some candidates became sidetracked in the debate about how far policy was isolationist or interventionist. This is an issue that has often been the subject of a question in previous sessions, but it was not the focus of this question, which was centred on an analysis of change and continuity. Some candidates credited Roosevelt with the Dawes and Young plans.
- 11 This question usually led to a sound assessment of a variety of explanations and candidates were better here at reaching a clear and supported conclusion. They were able to evaluate the relative importance of the causes they cited. Some did produce a catalogue of factors with little discrimination as to their contribution. Some good candidates made the point that the Wall Street Crash could be interpreted as a symptom of depression as well as a cause.
- 12 This question was less popular and tended to lead to useful discussion about the New Deal but often in rather general terms and with a lack of convincing supporting knowledge.

Lenin

- 13 The Passages seemed to be mostly understood by candidates. Passage A confused some who did not know packed as a technical term and took it to mean full of. Passage B led to problems in that the view expressed in the opening sentences was then refuted. Candidates who picked out quotations from the Passages to support their arguments, without seeing the interpretation of the Passage as a whole thus could be in error. Some candidates did not appear to be confident about exactly how a rising and a coup were different. Many candidates confined themselves to explaining the views in the Passages with little attempt to assess their validity and contextual knowledge was sparse. Some did mention the process of seizing power to indicate it was a coup and a few could quote from evidence such as the film *Oktober* to suggest the Bolsheviks carried out a coup but then presented it as a popular rising. Some candidates diverted into a consideration of the role played by Lenin. There was the usual problem that candidates strove to classify the Passages as soviet, orthodox, revisionist, libertarian and so on, which proved both difficult and unrewarding.
- 14 This was the more popular of the essay questions and there was some strong knowledge about terror, the strengths of the Bolsheviks and the weaknesses and disunity among their enemies. But there was much less evaluation of the importance of the factors and what was there, was often asserted without much argument being put forward. There were also candidates who began by stating that an overview of the historiography was an essential preliminary to the discussion of the issue. These answers rarely contained much actual information as to why the Bolsheviks overcame their enemies. The terror was sometimes

dismissed too easily. Most candidates concluded that it was the Bolshevik strengths which prevailed, one arguing that the enemies of the Bolsheviks were so weak that any non-league side could have defeated them, let alone Trotsky's Red Army, the equivalent of a Premiership team, which scored goal after goal against them. A few candidates strayed beyond 1920.

- 15** This question was not often answered effectively. Candidates were sometimes confused about the order of events and material from the Civil War period crept in and even references to Stalin. They wrote about why Lenin introduced the NEP, how far it was a reversal of Communism and how effective it was economically rather than its role in keeping the Bolsheviks in power. The Kronstadt rising was described by many but could be made more relevant as an expression of the need for change or the Bolsheviks could face further uprisings. Some found it hard to think of alternative explanations and so their answers did not have much sense of debate.

Chamberlain

- 16** The analysis of the Passages was generally competently done. Some candidates did not make full use of Passages B and C. The balanced argument in C meant that candidates either used it to argue Munich was justified as Hitler was corralled by the agreement and Chamberlain bought time or to argue that there was huge damage to British prestige, but rarely both or to evaluate which of the views had more support. Passage A also proved difficult as candidates found its assertions that Munich was a triumph in line 1 and a symbol of shame in line 10 hard to reconcile. Careful reading of the whole Passage was needed. There was some good, detailed contextual knowledge about Britain's defence capacity, Churchill could be brought into the debate to support one view, but general descriptions of his opposition to Chamberlain did not achieve much. Thoughtful comments from candidates are quite unusual so the candidate who noted that two of the Passages were written in the 1990s and then remarked that Munich, even after 50 years, still had the capacity to arouse strong feelings, was to be applauded
- 17** Candidates did not always have sufficient knowledge about the economic considerations influencing British policy and so dismissed these in favour of other factors, like hostility towards the Treaty of Versailles, the terms of which were often extensively described. British policy in the 1920s was not always well known and some candidates placed appeasement as starting in the 1920s. This question, like many others, led to a list of factors with little evaluation of the relative importance of their role. Moreover, the factors related often to British policy without much reference to relations with Germany.
- 18** This question was handled quite effectively with candidates being aware of the debate about the impact of the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Some did not quite appreciate that alternative moments for the end of appeasement needed to be assessed. Candidates were less well informed about the events of September 1939 and the extent to which Chamberlain was still searching for a way out in the last days of peace. Some candidates were aware of this and concluded that appeasement ended only with his declaration that Britain is at war with Germany. A few candidates returned to the debate about how far appeasement was justified.

Stalin

- 19** The Passages proved to be largely accessible, but candidates did not always use them effectively but diverted into the debate about why the alliance broke down, notably the issue of the second front. Hints in the Passages about tension between Britain and the US or the impact of ideological factors were not often developed. Generally candidates concluded that the alliance, born of necessity, could not last, but a few did point out that hindsight helped them to this judgement or that a change of leadership in the USSR as well as in Britain and the US might have made a difference.
- 20** This question saw plenty of good answers as candidates were well prepared to discuss the roles of the fear of communism, economic and military imperialism and altruism. Most were unconvinced by the latter and some were able to link motives together to reach a synthesis. A few diverted into how far American fears were justified so that they could bring in this debate. The schools of thought approach was used by some candidates but not very profitably.
- 21** This question led to some solid two-sided arguments with candidates having plenty of evidence on both sides of the debate. Some made this into a question about how far Stalin was to blame for the Cold War and some drifted into events outside the dates in the question. Candidates who insisted on the orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist interpretations did not often manage to reach a clear conclusion.

2590-2591 Themes in History

General Comments

Each of the thematic units produced an effective differentiation. As always, the units produced a wide range of marks but in general the overall quality of performance was weaker than in recent sessions. At the top end, there were many excellent scripts that reflected the key features of a synoptic paper. Points of continuity and change were identified and assessed, thematic and comparative approaches were adopted, and arguments were supported with accurate factual knowledge. Above all, these candidates focused their answers on the question set and showed an ability to use their knowledge flexibly. Indeed, candidates who grouped similar and contrasting ideas, personalities and developments, tended to score good marks. The topics which produced the best answers were Tudor rebellions and Tudor foreign relations in Unit 2590, and Ireland and German nationalism in Unit 2591.

Weaker essays were characterised by a number of common features. Factual knowledge was often inaccurate or very vague, and some answers stopped well short of the full period range. Events were narrated or arranged chronologically such that any attempt at synthesis was at best implicit. Points were often asserted without development or explanation, key elements of a question misinterpreted, and several candidates wrote answers to a pre-determined question. Centres are strongly urged to ensure their candidates are familiar with the generic mark scheme so that their essays engage with the key assessment targets. 'Turning-point' questions continue to present difficulties for many candidates, and it is appropriate to repeat the advice given in the Report for June 2008. 'When candidates answer a 'turning point' question, they must do more than just evaluate the importance of an event or its immediate aftermath and claim that this proves it was a turning point. Comparative assessments of developments before and after the event are required, as well as a synthesis of other key developments. It is also appropriate to remember that turning points can be negative as well as positive.'

Nearly 3000 candidates from 248 Centres were entered for Unit 2590; over 9300 candidates from 662 Centres were entered for 2591. Just two complaints were received, each claiming that Questions 2 and 3 on Ireland in Unit 2591 were unreasonably difficult. In fact both questions produced very high marks from many candidates and, if some candidates were stretched by either of these questions, the majority appear to have risen to the challenge. It is nevertheless worth repeating that synoptic questions often require an overview not only of the period but also of connecting developments that cannot and should not be discreetly compartmentalised. All elements of an option topic need to be taught and revised if candidates are to meet a question's requirements.

It is pleasing to report that there appeared to be an improvement in the quality of written English, though literacy levels varied enormously from Centre to Centre. The value of paragraphing arguments and structuring themes without recourse to over-elaborate planning was taken on board this session by many Centres. Unfortunately some Centres still pay little attention to the writing of formal grammar; sentences frequently had no main verbs and proper names were abbreviated.

Comments on Individual Questions: 2590

The Government of England 1066-1216

- 1 This question produced many good answers. Most candidates adopted a thematic approach and better answers integrated the main themes into an overall argument. Some alternative approaches were adopted by a minority of candidates, such as an explanatory narrative or a sequential comparison of Anglo-Norman government. While analyses were often sound, responses were not always consistently synoptic. The main problem in weaker essays was a failure to cover the period with candidates writing on either the period before Henry I or after Henry II. There was also a tendency to describe the changes in English central government, with an attempted comparison of importance featuring only in the conclusion.
- 2 This question evinced some excellent answers which explored a range of factors. These essays were analytical, structured and synoptic, and firmly focused on the question set. Many candidates, however, spent a lot of time considering judicial reforms without linking them specifically to local administration, and by referring to increasing centralisation at the expense of the localities. Most essays discussed sheriffs though only a few mentioned earls but many failed to consider the reign of Stephen when discussing sheriffs. Some candidates with weaker answers had no concept of what constituted 'local government', and repeated much of their essay on Question 1 instead.
- 3 This was not a popular question, nor was it well handled by the majority of candidates. Many used 'continental possessions' as a vehicle to write a general essay on the reforms of Henry II. A few misread the question as the impact of Henry II upon the continental possessions. Those who did address the question often wrote at length on Henry II but neglected synoptic links and alternative turning-points. References to Stephen and John were often thin, with few candidates assessing the role of William I and William II.

Crown, Church and Papacy 1066-1228

- 4 This was the most popular question in this set and produced a wide range of responses. There were some excellent answers that assessed the relative importance of motives in the context of other factors, such as personality, political circumstances and the power of the Papacy. However, the majority of candidates seem to have either failed to address 'motives' sufficiently or treated them sequentially with other factors. Some candidates wrote chronological accounts, reign by reign, of Church-state relations. Although historical knowledge was often very sound, the ability of candidates to use it effectively proved a key discriminator.
- 5 Though there were some good answers, the concept of 'turning-point' proved difficult for some candidates and 'extent' was largely ignored. Very few candidates were able to deal convincingly with the reign of Stephen, relying on generalisations such as 'freeing the Church', papal support against Matilda, or good relations with Theobald. A common response was to list a number of possible turning-points without attempting any comparative or synoptic assessment. Few essays considered the relationship between Innocent and John or the period after 1216. Some wrote about the growth of the Church instead of papal intervention; and a minority wrote about the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury in English affairs.
- 6 This was the least popular question. It produced a few good answers but most responses were divided between generalised descriptions with little relevant supporting material, and pre-prepared answers that began with a definition of developments but then failed to address the question set. Some explained why monasticism developed; others identified

turning-points. The best essays analysed the factors responsible for the development of English monasticism and then examined each to see whether the main development came in the period after Henry I or not, before reaching an overall judgement.

Rebellion and Disorder in England 1485-1603

- 7 This was a popular question which generated some good answers. The best responses evaluated rebellions that sought to overthrow the political order and focussed primarily on dynastic rebellions but also considered factions that aimed to remove ministers and councillors. It was often suggested that the gentry were more involved in overthrowing regimes and the lower orders were more interested in restoring political order. These answers also recognised that often religiously motivated rebellions wanted to overthrow the prevailing administration and restore the Catholic faith in part or in its entirety. Some candidates with weaker responses struggled to understand the phrase 'political order' or covered a limited range of rebellions, some omitting Simnel and Warbeck, others failing to assess rebellions after 1554. Most opted for listing rebellions which sought to overthrow the monarch and contrasted them with those that did not.
- 8 A common mistake in this question was for candidates to focus on the causes of economic and social rebellions rather than to evaluate or compare the threat that they presented. Few defined 'most dangerous threat'. Several candidates omitted Ket's rebellion and many who did discuss it claimed that Norfolk was a city. Knowledge of taxation rebellions was also variable. Too many candidates claimed that all tax rebellions were 'easily dispersed'. Some candidates argued that the greater the number of rebellions, the more dangerous they became. Some listed rebellions, described what happened and only in the concluding sentence stated whether or not they were threatening. Some gave too much attention to political revolts against the early Tudors and produced unbalanced responses. The best essays compared a range of rebellions and assessed their threat in terms of their nature and how well governments dealt with them.
- 9 Two approaches were commonplace. Candidates with weaker responses took a general view of Tudor administration and wrote a prepared essay. Instead of focussing on 'effectively', they chose to write about how successfully rebellions were put down, and many candidates asserted that since rebellions were 'easily defeated', governments must have dealt with them effectively. Few candidates focussed on 'methods', some interpreted 'how effectively' to be 'how', and many turned the question into one on causation. Better responses began with a statement of the criteria which were to be applied to judge 'effectiveness', examined the different methods employed by the Tudors at central and local levels, and analysed government policies and strategies. Although there were a few outstanding essays, the question was not generally well answered.

England's Changing Relations with Foreign Powers 1485-1603

- 10 There were several good answers that looked at themes and made synoptic judgements accordingly. They compared economic with other factors such as dynastic, religious and personal issues but also considered trade and commerce as well as finance. Candidates often suggested that economic factors were usually sacrificed when the Tudor dynasty was threatened. Weaker answers looked solely at financial factors and approached the topic chronologically making little attempt to address the question synoptically. Some focused on economic policy rather than on its impact on foreign policy and foreign policy decisions.

- 11** Not a very well answered question. Many candidates produced a narrative and chronological account of Anglo-Scottish relations but failed to address the issue of explaining the 'changes'. Few examined how France affected the relationship and international affairs in general were overlooked. Some candidates asserted that there were several turning-points but did not explain or assess their origins. A few candidates failed to understand what a turning-point was, merely comparing policies rather than key events. Knowledge of Somerset's relations with Scotland was often slight and a surprisingly large number of candidates knew nothing about Anglo-Scottish relations after 1568.
- 12** This was the least popular question of the trio and was generally poorly answered. Anglo-Spanish relations were frequently viewed in terms of economic, marital and political links by better candidates who assessed the divorce against other key developments. Most notable were the Scottish rebellion, the French wars of religion, the Dutch revolt and the activities of Drake. The best essays assessed how the divorce changed relations since 1485 and argued that Mary's marriage to Philip showed that good relations could be restored. Most argued that the definitive shift occurred under Elizabeth following the onset of the Dutch revolt. Weaker essays tended either to over-emphasise the divorce or to ignore it completely in favour of explaining other turning-points in greater detail.

The Development of Limited Monarchy in England 1558-1689

- 13** This was minority choice question and not well answered. Many essays focussed solely on parliamentary opposition and ignored religious, economic and judicial groups. Few discussed the Whig and Popish plots or Monmouth's rebellion and the treatment of Charles II and James II was often very weak. Elizabeth was better assessed and candidates had some thoughtful comments on James I and Charles I but many essays that began as explanatory narratives soon became simple narratives with little or no synthesis. A minority of candidates discussed how monarchs dealt with opposition rather than focussing on changes in opposition.
- 14** There were some good discussions of Elizabeth's reign, often with much detail about the role of prerogative powers in relation to parliament but, for many, this approach was not sustained and James I was rarely treated comprehensively. Some candidates failed to discuss Charles II and James II, or regarded James II as the weakest of all monarchs because he was deposed. Too many stepped beyond the terms of the question, focussing on 1689 and the Bill of Rights, while some went well into the 1690s. The key words in the question of 'unlimited power' were often overlooked in favour of an essay that focussed on the 'rise of the power of parliament'. Weaker answers produced a reign by reign account which lacked synthesis.
- 15** Many candidates saw this question as an opportunity to write a narrative of financial relations between the Crown and parliament, focussing on the earlier part of the period and omitting developments after 1660. Few attempted to specifically link their facts to the issue of developments in the role of parliament. Weaker responses dismissed financial factors before focussing mainly on religion and foreign affairs. There were, however, some excellent essays which were controlled, well supported, thematic, and which produced comparative evaluations.

Dissent and Conformity in England 1558-1689

- 16** There were several very good answers. A range of issues was assessed by the best candidates who illustrated their arguments with specific examples drawn from across the period. Most candidates, even better ones, took a chronological approach but the more successful essays included synthesis within each of the paragraphs. A few candidates were of the opinion that Oliver Cromwell tolerated Catholics.
- 17** This was the least popular question but handled very effectively by many candidates. The concept of 'strength and unity' was usually assessed together but some perceptive answers recognised that they were not mutually inclusive and evaluated them accordingly. Weaker essays gave too much attention to the Elizabethan Church settlement and failed to compare it with later periods in anything like adequate detail.
- 18** Only a few candidates answered this question. The best essays focussed on reasons and presented an argument that covered most of the period evenly. Weaker answers focussed too much on Elizabeth's reign or described rather than evaluated what happened to Protestant nonconformity.

The Development of the Nation State: France 1498-1610

- 19** This question posed some problems for candidates who could not define 'government', which often came to mean the power of the monarch, or 'centralised', which was interpreted as 'unified'. Some candidates were able to show that the Wars of Religion had weakened the growing power of the government but were unable to assess or demonstrate the extent to which Henry IV was able to reverse that trend after 1598. Other candidates wrote about the strong kings but totally ignored the period from 1559 to 1589. Several candidates turned their essay into a question about absolutism. The best answers examined a number of factors thematically and assessed elements of change and continuity.
- 20** This was an unpopular question that generated some very weak answers. Few candidates seemed to know much about the French economy and most focussed on the condition of government finances. Some turned the question into an essay on government policy and its impact on the economy rather than on the economy itself. Few were aware of how the economy was affected by the Wars of Religion. Knowledge of Henry IV and Sully was generally sound but only the best essays evaluated trade, agriculture, industry, commerce and transport.
- 21** This was the most popular of the three questions and was generally well handled. Candidates were mostly able to state why the civil wars broke out but there was often very little comparison with the first half of the century, which resulted in an unbalanced outcome. In a few cases, candidates had more information than they could manage and were so keen to include every possible factor that they failed to discuss any of them in detail. The best candidates adopted a thematic approach and deployed an impressive array of relevant evidence in support of their argument.

The Catholic Reformation in the Sixteenth Century

- 22** This was the least popular of the three questions and not well answered. Reasons were often limited in scope and explanation, and there was a tendency to describe the deficiencies of the Catholic Church and the popularity of Protestantism. Candidates focussed rather too much on the earlier period and gave insufficient thought to the years after Trent.

- 23** A popular and well answered question. Most candidates compared Paul III and the Jesuits and voted for Paul, noting that without his legitimising the Society, their existence and contribution had to be called into doubt. The better candidates set the years from 1500 to 1534 in context and assessed the legacy of both Paul and Loyola down to 1600. Weaker answers made little attempt to compare the two men and their legacy and instead wrote two separate essays with a synoptic conclusion. A common error was to dismiss the early years or to cite Sixtus IV as an example of a sixteenth-century pope.
- 24** The Council of Trent was assessed by the best candidates in terms of its work before and after its decrees were published, and set its legacy against other turning-points, such as the Jesuits' foundation and work, the Sack of Rome, the Lutheran Reformation and Paul III's pontificate. Some good answers looked at the extent to which the work of the council had been anticipated by the reforms of Bricconnet, Cisneros and the new religious orders. Weaker responses only focussed on the three sessions of Trent and not on its legacy; some failed to compare the Council with other turning-points. Paul III's pontificate was often cited as a most important development because he called the first session of the Council of Trent but many candidates overlooked the fact that there was no certainty there would be subsequent sessions, and it fell to Pius IV ultimately to issue the decrees.

The Decline of Spain 1598-1700

- 25** Generally well answered. Most candidates adopted a thematic approach, with the degree of coverage and balance being the main factors determining the mark bands. Finances featured most consistently, alongside the character of kings. The elements of similarity and difference, continuity and change in the problems themselves were less apparent than a discussion of the limitations of monarchs in dealing with the problems identified. Some otherwise very good answers concentrated too much on one aspect, such as foreign policy and war, leading to unevenness or imbalance according to the strength of other factors.
- 26** This question produced some very effective analysis, and was approached from very different angles. Some candidates argued that the fragmented nature of Spain lay at the root of many problems, while others, more predictably, saw war as the underlying factor. The legacy of Philip II was cited by some as a starting-point, often quoting Kamen to support the idea of long-term decline from before 1598. The best responses were clearly aware of the complex interrelation of factors.
- 27** The least popular question and not well handled. The main problem was coverage, with few candidates mentioning 'European possessions', and significantly many overlooking the Netherlands. Weaker responses could not handle the concepts of 'symptom' and 'cause' because they had limited knowledge of revolts or European possessions. The Portuguese and Catalanian revolts were known, but often sketchy – the Netherlands were generally not well assessed.

The Ascendancy of France 1610-1715

- 28** This question produced some disappointing answers. A number of candidates had a very limited understanding of what the Treaty of Pyrenees was and rather blandly stated that it gave France more lands. Several candidates revealed their lack of knowledge by ignoring the treaty altogether and considered other turning-points though many candidates clearly were at a loss as to what a 'turning-point' might be. The standard approach was to write an account of how France became a major European power.

- 29** Some candidates showed very sound knowledge of Colbert and compared his work thematically with that of Richelieu and Mazarin. Weaker responses wrote simple descriptions of what these ministers did without assessing how far the economy was strengthened. These essays, which were often sequentially structured, invariably lacked any synthesis or comparison.
- 30** The majority of candidates took a thematic approach to this question and maintained a high standard of synthesis. Both similar and different problems were evenly balanced and supported with an impressive range of supporting evidence. Weaker essays tended to write an account of the reign of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, and failed to synthesise their arguments. In general, the question produced some outstanding essays that nuanced comparative evaluation, dealt with a variety of problems, and recognised aspects of similarity and difference in the same problem.

From Absolutism to Enlightened Despotism 1661-1796

- 31** This question was neither popular nor well answered. Though there were a few excellent essays, many answers lacked knowledge of political ideas or failed to acknowledge the influence of any of the French philosophers. Candidates preferred to assess policies adopted by French governments and, although this approach was credited where examples of continuity and change were identified, far too many essays made no attempt to link them to political ideas other than to make vague references to absolutism. Surprisingly there was very little consideration of relations between Church and state, government and crown or representative assemblies.
- 32** Knowledge of Catherine II was generally sound but in many cases, candidates were unable to compare her with Peter the Great, and instead wrote a very imbalanced essay. Several answers only focussed on Catherine, and many of the weaker essays struggled to come to an overall judgement.
- 33** Several candidates misread this question. Instead of assessing how the Enlightenment affected the Roman Catholic Church, candidates wrote about how the Church criticised the Enlightenment. Others simply described criticisms of the Catholic Church without considering 'growing criticism', and therefore lacked synthesis and any recognition of change and continuity. A minority of candidates nevertheless tackled this question exceptionally well.

Comments on individual questions: 2591

Britain and Ireland 1798-1921

- 1** Most candidates dealt very well with this question. Answers were particularly strong in respect of O'Connell and Parnell but less successful in evaluating twentieth-century developments or reaching 1921. Redmond and the role of the IPP in Westminster were omitted in several answers. Some candidates focussed on evaluating the successes of constitutional nationalism rather than on their methods employed which was the key element in the question. There was a tendency among weaker essays to compare constitutional nationalists with revolutionary nationalists or to turn the question into one about Irish nationalism which had clearly been expected. As a consequence, de Valera and Collins received unwarranted coverage whereas the veiled threat of violence, which contributed to the success of constitutional nationalism, did not always receive the attention it deserved.

- 2 There were many excellent answers to this question even though it was the least popular of the trio on Ireland. The best candidates established a thematic framework and looked at how religious issues affected constitutional and cultural nationalism. Weaker responses had difficulty embracing the phrase 'religious issues' and failed to see what the question required. Many candidates overlooked twentieth-century events or down-played the role of Ulster in the nationalist movement, and some did not go beyond 1869. Some ignored religion altogether and wrote about other factors that hindered Irish nationalism. Others seemed to think that Irish nationalism was synonymous with Irish Catholicism.
- 3 The majority of candidates agreed that economic problems were pivotal to the development of Ireland during this period. Some discussed land reforms and tenant-landlord relations, the dependence on potatoes and the consequences of the Famine. Better answers were also aware of industrial trends, and most candidates compared economic problems with political, religious and social/cultural developments before reaching a judgement. Many candidates produced high quality arguments and only a few concentrated entirely on economic issues. Weaker essays often produced narrative accounts and focussed solely on the Famine, whereas several outstanding answers saw the Famine as a crucial instance where economic factors collided with social developments to produce ultimately decisive political consequences.

War and Society in Britain 1793-1918

- 4 Only a few candidates tackled this question. Most failed to focus on 'reflect changes in British society', and instead gave a description of some of the reforms. Better essays considered social changes in literacy levels, education, urban movements, improved standards of living and changing attitudes towards women.
- 5 Answers were generally sound in so far as they went, but the range of wars assessed was disappointingly limited. Most considered the Napoleonic, Crimean, Boer and First World War but few looked at colonial wars during the period. Whether or not candidates gave a comparison of different wars usually determined their mark; good answers produced a synthesis whereas weaker responses usually wrote sequentially.
- 6 This question produced a disappointing set of answers. Some candidates seemed unsure what 'British society' might mean and consequently struggled to get to grips with the heart of the question. Better candidates produced thematic arguments that usually comprised an evaluation of the political, economic and social impact of a range of wars. The best pointed out that none of the wars occurred within the British Isles and not until the Boer War and First World War were British people directly affected by warfare.

Poor Law to Welfare State 1834-1948

- 7 The quality of responses was disappointing. Many candidates did not understand 'housing policy' and were unable to relate it to the First World War. For many the focus of the essay was the 1920s to 1940s and knowledge of the nineteenth century was often quite weak. There were some reasonable answers that identified a range of factors beginning with the impact of World War One and comparing it with the significance of other developments but most candidates struggled to provide an assessment of housing and tried to turn the question into one on public health.
- 8 Many candidates produced a list of education acts and were unable to evaluate 'largely ineffective'. Few assessed state attitudes and permissive approaches to education, and some omitted both the 1870 and 1944 Education Acts. The question was well answered by a small minority only.

- 9 This question was poorly answered. Covering the nineteenth century proved a problem for many candidates and few went beyond describing the Poor Law. Some candidates turned the question into how the welfare state was developed but knowledge of the welfare state itself was often patchy. Identifying other factors resulted in candidates discussing the extension of the franchise, the rise of the Labour party and Liberal reforms to varying degrees of success.

The Development of Democracy in Britain 1868-1992

- 10 Candidates who adopted a thematic approach generally scored well. Though emphasis on the suffragettes was often unbalanced, there were some very good essays. Most answers, however, were narrative-based and listed the reforms with a nod in the direction of the reasons.
- 11 The 'quality of leadership' presented problems for some candidates either in respect of understanding the concept or of providing appropriate supporting details. Answers tended to focus on different leaders but any assessment of them was a characteristic of better responses.
- 12 This question produced a mixture of responses. Better essays were able to relate the developments of radio and television to democracy but quite a few candidates struggled to link together the two parts of the question. Some candidates found that they did not have enough detailed information on the developing media to make a coherent argument.

The Development of the Mass Media 1896-1996

- 13 There were few good answers to this question. Little attempt was made to assess the impact of the mass media on public opinion during specific moments of national crisis. Instead the methods used by various media and motives of different pressure groups were described with a heavy emphasis on the two world wars.
- 14 This question was very popular and generally well answered. The impact of press barons in shaping the development of newspapers was well handled and much attention was given to Murdoch's empire beyond the realm of newspapers. Better essays extended their argument to compare newspapers with the development of radio and TV.
- 15 A disappointing question. Many candidates wrote three mini essays: a good one on the press but weak evaluations of radio and TV, which often failed to engage with the question set. The best essays linked all three developments synoptically.

The Changing Nature of Warfare 1792-1919

- 16 This was the least popular question in the set but produced some high quality answers. Knowledge was often skilfully moulded to meet the demands of the question. In particular the development of systems of command and control, weapons and transport were interlinked to demonstrate the limitations on warfare during the period. Weaker answers had difficulty separating strategy from tactics, devoted far too much time to assessing the Napoleonic Wars or adopted a chronological approach which made synthesis hard to achieve.
- 17 A popular and well answered question. Most candidates displayed a very sound understanding of the impact on warfare of railways, telegraph, radio and telephonic communications, assessed their strengths as well as their limitations, and linked them to

other factors. There were several perceptive ideas usually backed up with a good range of factual evidence. Weaker responses often wrote two mini essays on each of the topics in the question and knowledge of changes in communications after 1900 was frequently glossed over. Some candidates ran out of time and failed to consider World War One; others wrote at length about weapon developments.

- 18** This question produced some high quality answers. Candidates realised that superior manpower could mean more than just numbers. The calibre of soldiers was discussed and compared with other factors such as weaponry, generalship and organisation to show its merits and demerits over the period. Weaker answers tended to ignore the focus of the question, gave too much attention to the Napoleonic Wars and too little to World War One, or they overloaded their essays with descriptive material. Some candidates only cited the Napoleonic, Crimean and American Civil Wars as their evidence which resulted in very unbalanced answers.

The Challenge of German Nationalism 1815-1919

- 19** This question produced variable results. Better candidates balanced the decline of Austria with the rise of Prussia and evaluated the responses; some challenged the premise that Prussia had not already overtaken Austria by 1866, though it was difficult to sustain the thesis that Prussia's rise was inevitable and so required minimal explanation. Surprisingly even many better candidates failed to discuss the significance of the German constitutions. Weaker responses conflated Prussia and Germany after 1870 and totally ignored the role of William II. Some stopped in 1866 or 1871. Others failed to explain how the Zollverein actually enabled Prussia to become dominant, and the command to 'assess' proved to be a concept too far for some candidates.
- 20** This question yielded mixed results. A chronological approach was adopted by most candidates but better essays attempted to cross-reference periods, events and issues to produce a synthesis. Economic factors were balanced against leading political and military figures. A common and persistent canard was the assumption that German nationalism and unification were identical developments. Weaker essays wrote simply on economic factors, or wrote too much about other factors. It was rare to find thematic approaches or arguments that went much beyond the Zollverein when discussing economic issues. Some candidates had difficulty linking the booming German economy to the Weltpolitik.
- 21** This question was the least popular of the set. Excellent answers distinguished between the aims of different groups of nationalists, explained their arguments and produced material to show analysis and synthesis across the period. Most acknowledged how Bismarck and William II altered the aims of nationalism and a good number examined the important developments of 1918-1919. Weaker essays tended to ignore the period after 1870 or dealt with the period in discreet compartments, identifying a dominant aim in each but without showing any links or connections between them. Some candidates spent too long on Bismarck but ignored the period from 1815 to 1848.+

Russian Dictatorship 1855-1956

- 22** A very popular question and reasonably well answered. Some candidates confined their essay to political change and many omitted the Provisional Government. Better essays compared and contrasted the tsarist and communist rulers in respect of their aims, policies and methods of government, and most concluded that not all rulers were opposed to change. They claimed that economic and social reforms were not opposed but political reform, if granted at all, was short-lived and opportunistic. Weaker essays ran through periods of rule chronologically and offered little if any analysis or synthesis and focussed

solely on political change. A few candidates turned the question into how rulers dealt with opposition and tried to re-deploy a learned answer from June 2008 and January 2009. Some candidates only talked about repression arguing that, because of repression, rulers such as Stalin were hostile to change.

- 23** The crucial element in this question eluded many candidates. The focus was on the development of Russian government and not 'policies of Russian governments' or 'a history of Russia'. As such, many essays drifted away from changes in how Russia was governed ie differences/similarities between tsarist and communist regimes, doctrine, methods, organisations, enforcement. Some candidates believed that the communists took over from Nicholas II in October 1917 and completely ignored the unique nature of the Provisional Government. Others devoted insufficient thought to the turning-point concept and treated each new reign or ruler as 'another important turning-point'. There were some who forgot about this element altogether. The best essays began with the October Revolution, set it in its historical context, and then compared it with alternative key moments to see if it was the most important of them all. The assassination of Alexander II and the accession of Stalin were the favoured alternatives, and a surprisingly large number tried to argue in favour of Khrushchev's deStalinisation speech.
- 24** This was the most popular question. Most candidates ran the living and working conditions of Russian peasants together but some sought to distinguish these elements with varying degrees of conviction. Two approaches were common: a chronological survey of how peasants were affected by government policies and events during the period; and secondly, a thematic analysis of conditions that tended towards 'consistently miserable' but perceived improvements for at least some of the peasantry. A common weakness was to assume that all peasants were the same and were treated uniformly and Stolypin's reforms, the NEP and educational and social developments after 1945 were often overlooked. Weaker responses tended to write narrative accounts that lacked structure and synthesis, and included all types of workers.

The Struggle for the Constitution 1763-1877

- 25** This question was not attempted by many candidates and generally was not well answered. There was only a limited understanding of what 'separation of powers' might mean and the inter-action between the President, judiciary and legislature was often ignored. Candidates tended to focus on the role of presidents rather than on examining the various levels of government. In several cases coverage of the period was surprisingly poor with most emphasis put on the early decades.
- 26** This was a popular question but few candidates answered it effectively. Knowledge was often very thin, for instance, on the major events of the conflict and on Lincoln's role in it. Most candidates wrote a narrative of events leading up to the civil war; few assessed the sectional conflict as a relative cause or focussed on 'successfully managed'. Several candidates incorrectly averred that Lincoln freed all of the slaves in 1863.
- 27** A popular question that proved to be a good discriminator. The best candidates assessed Jackson's presidency and identified the populist, pro-active, aggressive characteristics before comparing him with other presidents - usually Washington, Lincoln and Grant - in respect of specific issues such as relations with Congress and the Supreme Court. Weaker answers trawled through every president, each representing 'another turning-point', while often giving insufficient attention to Jackson himself.

Civil Rights in the USA 1865-1980

- 28** This was the most popular question in the set and produced a wide range of answers. The best candidates integrated the role of African Americans and pressure groups with other factors, such as Congress, the Supreme Court, various presidents, the media, and white liberals. They understood that progress in civil rights was not steady and usually depended upon a combination of factors. Coverage of the whole period was variable even in very good answers, and few essays mentioned Frederick Douglass and Thurgood Marshall or the content of the Civil Rights and the Voting Rights Acts to show what had actually been gained. Weaker answers often refuted the assertion without acknowledging that for long periods of time African Americans only played a minor part. Others ignored events before 1909 and after 1968, though Garvey and Randolph were also regularly overlooked. Some presented lists of African American leaders and organisations with comments on their effectiveness or they wrote chronological accounts focussed on Martin Luther King.
- 29** Many candidates showed a surprising lack of knowledge about the New Deal and in particular how trade union rights were affected. While most essays discussed the Wagner Act, few mentioned the Smith-Connally Act, and there was a common tendency for essays to drift from Trade Union to labour rights. The main issue facing candidates, however, was how to tackle the 'turning-point' concept. Few handled it well. Most essays saw various events as 'another turning-point' and made no cross-reference to the New Deal. The early years of the period were often poorly assessed – few candidates mentioned Powderly, Gompers, Heywood and Debs, or even the role of Wilson in the First World War. Similarly the period after 1950 received short shrift, such that essays were frequently unbalanced. There were, however, some excellent answers that set the New Deal in its historical context and compared it with alternative moments of change across the period.
- 30** This question was a very good discriminator. It produced some strong, critical responses from candidates who were prepared to voice their opinion and back it up with valid ideas. Better essays tried to compare and contrast themes, focussed on economic and social issues, such as education, employment and citizenship, and made good points about geographical areas. Though most essays examined the four main groups – African, Asian, Native and Hispanic Americans – few discussed European migrants, such as Poles and Italians. Not all candidates understood the concept of 'melting-pot' and many lacked sufficient knowledge to write a coherent argument. Some believed that 'melting-pot' meant 'multi-cultural'; others thought it meant 'equal rights for different ethnic groups'. There was also a tendency among many candidates to assess different groups separately. As a result, the best candidates produced a synthesis; the weakest responses described how immigrants were treated during the period.

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General observations

Inasmuch as it is possible to estimate with any accuracy, the standard of work is much the same as in previous years – though it may be fitting to assert in this final year that the ‘standard’ has risen over the eight years of the coursework component’s life. It is easy to forget the host of pretty essays that passed for personal investigations (PIs) once upon a time and it is worth remembering how good the work of some of the current candidature is. The transformation has not happened by accident; rather it is the result of the hard work and dedication of all those involved – on both sides of the fence. It has never been the intention of the PI to produce generations of professional historians; rather, it has been to allow generations of young people to experience historical activity and to understand what it is to think historically. Simply stated, candidates on this component, at whatever level they are operating, have had the opportunity to create historical knowledge – and that cannot be a bad thing.

An important criticism in this year’s report is the apparent failure of the PI to prevent a sort of ‘reversion to the discursive mean’, evidenced by an apparent increase in the number of centres allowing candidates to select coursework titles that are examination ‘bankers’ rather than topics of genuine interest.

I began to feel this year that it was time this particular approach to coursework was dropped. The ‘free choice’ in Modern history boiled down to about 20 favourite topics with some centres manipulating one or two topics with minor variations. I have had enough of Lenin and Haig for one lifetime.

The answer to this is that it may be true – and in some cases for good reason – but that not all candidates do it badly. On the contrary, ‘popular’ topics produced some of the best work of the year, every bit as good as that associated with more esoteric (usually medieval or early modern) studies. The same examiner conceded:

I came across some excellent stylists whose prose would grace the best academies in the country. On the other hand there was some poor writing but generally the intuitive talents of the students burst through the limitations of their linguistic skills and arguments emerged that were mark worthy.

Of course, there have also been some very weak scripts, whose authors, typically, appear to have been involved in some other kind of activity. There were studies without referencing of any kind; descriptive accounts with no sign of critical reasoning or wider reading; and a picture or received quotation or two to illustrate or adorn. It is understood, of course, that A-level embraces candidates of widely differing abilities. However, these are unforced errors and there are eight editions of this report available to both teachers and candidates showing how to avoid them.

Titles and preparation:

Examiners felt that centres were given good advice by coursework Assessors, particularly where this involved changes to the proposed title of the study. In most cases – but not all, candidates were seen to act upon the advice given. Where they did not, it was generally to the detriment of the finished work.

The range of work attempted was, of course, much wider and more varied than the '20 favourite topics' mentioned above. The following is a typically entertaining list:

Lenin easily beat Stalin into second place in the Russian stakes, and Martin Luther King fought off a strong challenge from Nelson Mandela in the hagiography handicap. Haig was generally agreed to be a butcher or a donkey, though he still has some supporters. There were many less usual topics such as the role of the West in the fall of the Qing dynasty; the Zulu wars; the Younger Pitt; and an assessment of the work of the Mexican artist Diego de Rivera, which was very well done. Some candidates with inappropriate titles – eg Assess the relative importance of the Easter Rising (relative to what?) and why it was either successful or unsuccessful – might have been better advised to think again.

Despite the apparent reduction in initiative mentioned earlier, there was a really healthy variety in question types offered by candidates who were allowed the freedom to choose. One examiner commented on the marrying of literature and history with the example, 'Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* is a fictional text and therefore has no value to the historian. How far is this true?' There was no further comment on the outcome of that particular study but, as a general rule, candidates attempting this sort of topic tended to treat the fiction as *fiction*, as something to be tested against 'real' evidence. They fail, in other words, to exploit the role of the 'author as researcher', by asking, for example, where Dickens got his information from. Was it simply from experience, observation and imagination, or did he research facets of the scenes he was depicting? If so, what were his sources? Etc... Further examples of fresh but successful titles may be divined from the following:

It may be true that those who have a personal interest in less mainstream topics often display that interest in their writing. Examples include General Custer's over-confidence as the cause of his defeat and 'How is the escape of Danish Jews from the Holocaust best explained?' (an uplifting and little known story – better than Schindler!). While all the other girls in one centre addressed the question of why Elizabeth remained single, one candidate gave herself the more challenging question, "I may have the body of a weak and feeble woman..." To what extent did gender pose problems for Elizabeth I as a ruler?' This worked well.

It was good to hear that conspiracy theories (Who was Jack the Ripper? Who killed Kennedy?) seem to have all but disappeared this year. On the other hand, there were some titles that can only be described as 'optimistic', for example one dealing with welfare reform in England between 1558 and 1948. Another examiner suggested that the reason why so few comparative studies on Martin Luther King and Malcolm X fail to reach Band I is that their contributions are not strictly comparable, and, more contentiously, that there are few good books on either of them.

Quality of argument

If we have learned something over the last eight years, it is that the best PIs are invariably those where the candidate is in control of her/his material, which s/he has understood and, in turn, conveyed to the reader. One examiner summed this up rather well:

Such Investigations understand the concept of 'argument', which is presented adversarially on the way to providing a reasoned conclusion. This concept is a long treasured one in historical studies, but still poses difficulty to students who rely too much on regurgitations of sources or, occasionally, class briefing notes.

Many of the most successful PIs have come from students who have pursued some 'enthusiasm' of their own.

Such students are usually in control of their own arguments (based, of course, on their own title) and utilise evaluatively (some) 'big books' that they have clearly read and comprehended (and, quite probably, enjoyed). In contrast, there have been Investigations that were ill-digested – often hasty – re-hashes of class material with the addition of some of those tertiary texts (eg 'Access to History') that have been spawned by current specifications. This is not a desirable model to be carried forward in to the 'new era'.

It is a while since anything has been said about the function and importance of the introduction and conclusion, but this has been covered this year with considerable clarity by one examiner:

Reading a good introduction is rather like watching a surgeon prepare for an operation: the crucial areas are carefully defined and outlined and the instruments (sources here) selected before the first incision... With regard to conclusions, they should do rather more than précis the previous eleven pages. The conclusion is where the writer finally and clearly comes off any fence s/he may have been sitting on. The argument should reach its climax here, not in the preceding paragraph; perhaps with an intellectually satisfying resolution... The final paragraph is not the point at which the candidate can relax.

This is followed by an example of the conclusion to an Investigation dealing with Hitler and the Holocaust, in which all of this is done rather well.

'By way of conclusion, we can see that it is clear from the beginning that Hitler despised the Jews, although stating that, by the 1920s, he had committed himself to their removal is, on the weight of the evidence, too simple a view. On the other hand, the 'structuralist' idea that Hitler was not alone in making these decisions often goes too far. Mommsen is right to conclude that, although it cannot be proved that Hitler gave the order for the Final Solution, 'this does not mean that he did not approve the policy'. The complexity of the decision-making process within the Third Reich brought progressive radicalisation, whereby it was difficult to determine where the various initiatives came from. We do, however, see a clear escalation in Hitler's policies towards the Jews. The start of his rule was characterised by less organised and less extreme policies like the boycott, and he realised that only strong direction from the state could sort out the 'Jewish problem', and so swung to more radical policies, some of which may have been his own ideas, but most of which appear to have been offered by other Nazi radicals.'

Here is a conclusion in which the candidate balances the weight of the evidence and makes a decision. In this case, it involves adjudication between 'intentionalist' and 'structuralist' positions on the topic; in another, it might be an evaluation of the relative importance of causal factors, or of their interaction, in bringing about an event. The point may well be repeated that the conclusion is the climax of the argument, in which the candidate is not simply keeping the score, but scoring the winning goal.

Making a decision does not necessarily involve adjudication between competing alternatives; it can also mean using supportable elements of these views to establish a third position, or synthesis. Synthesis is very difficult to achieve, but in the following extended example, an examiner presents us with a worthy example – written on exactly the same topic:

Since I have been particularly vehement regarding those tertiary texts that insist on attaching the labels, 'intentionalist', 'structuralist/functionalist' to a range of texts relating to the Third Reich, it will be clear why I particularly appreciated this essay. It's on whether Hitler's decisions were the determining factor in 'the inception, development and planning of the Final Solution. This is from the introductory paragraph:

"Functionalist' historians such as Broszat and Browning argue that there were many other factors responsible for the development of the Final Solution. 'Intentionalist' historians such as Dawidowitz believe that Hitler had a master plan involving the extermination of the Jews long

before the Wannsee Conference in January 1942. This essay will argue for a synthesis of 'functionalist' and 'intentionalist' perspectives'.

The candidate goes on to do exactly 'what it says on the tin'. This is the conclusion, as clear and concise a presentation of the argument in an Investigation as I have seen.

'In summary, there is evidence that Hitler's anti-Semitic rhetoric and his centrality as the charismatic leader of the Third Reich played a crucial role in the inception of the Final Solution. By highlighting and systematizing existing anti-Semitic ideas he promoted the development of eliminationist thinking into exterminationist policies. However without a background of longstanding anti-Semitism in Europe and economic and political conditions ripe for the development of extremist nationalism and the scapegoating of outsiders, it is unlikely Hitler and the Nazi party would have been able to develop actual anti-Semitic policies to the extent that they did. In terms of the development and planning of the Final Solution there were both central and peripheral dimensions in the process. The specifics of central planning lay in the hands of Himmler and Heydrich, though it is highly likely that Hitler was aware of overall policy and primary sources link him to particular decisions instrumental in the developing Final Solution, such as the deportation of Jews to the East. Alongside the centrally planned elements of the Final Solution there were also massacres of Jews where the presence of directions from the centre are either disputed (killings by the *einsatzgruppen*) or else absent, (the gassing of Jews in Lodz and Chelmo in 1941). In these situations Hitler's influence is indirect, by promoting the ideological context in which the murder of Jews is perceived as desirable and acceptable. The Final Solution developed in its ultimate form through evolving political events and through specific planning, in which Hitler's anti-Semitic rhetoric (and his likely authorization of the overall policy) were crucial but not single determinants.'

And not a functionalist or structuralist in sight! It is evident the candidate is in full control of the argument and while synthesis of the different approaches is not as original as the introduction suggests, it has been executed with considerable skill and great confidence.

Yet another way of making a decision on the argument is to conclude that no single factor was necessary to causing the outcome. The candidate may go on to claim, for example, that several factors were of equal importance, or, as in the following case, that the outcome was due to a particular *interaction* of causal factors. In either case, of course, either the sufficiency of other factors or the nature of the interaction has to be *demonstrated* – not merely asserted. The following is a good example of a demonstrated interaction:

The next extract is from a study of the extent to which the Wall Street Crash caused the Great Depression. I was impressed by the willingness to engage with complex arguments respecting the interaction between the financial institutions, the stock exchange, and the state of the US economy to bring about the economic depression.

'Harding believed in Republican ideology and filled the Federal Regulatory commission with men of vested interests. The result was that Federal financial agencies ceased to function, which set the scene for the oncoming depression, as people only took action to benefit themselves. It is evident that the Government knew too little about the banking system due to vested interests and the unregulated system in place, many officials went into the late 1920s oblivious to the dangers that lay ahead. The common belief is that 'Not stopping the bank run of 1929 had created the Great Depression' ¹⁰

In 1931 the second wave of Bank failures hit the United States; it began in March and continued throughout the year. This bank run spread to other countries including Germany, Britain and Japan, the latter responded by abandoning Gold reserves and pursuing expansionary policies. By doing this Japan managed to instigate a recovery. However the US responded differently, by staying on the Gold Standard and instead increased interest rates as a protection for the Gold standards}. The result of this was 'the US recession deepens even further'¹¹.

This suggests that the role of the banks became influential in the 1930s American Depression, as it seems to have made the weak economic situation dire. Peter Temin supports this view as he considers that the 'hegemony of the gold-Standard ideology' and its relationship to the boom created economic instability and the circumstances for an American Depression in the 1930 s to occur.'

In any study of this length, it is obvious that there needs to be a close and mutually dependent relationship between the title and the argument. And it follows that, in order to be successful, the candidate has to write on the *title*, not just on the topic. One examiner provided an example of a title that provides such an opportunity: 'To what extent was there no real alternative to Chamberlain's policy of Appeasement?'

This title cannot be (successfully) addressed by merely reciting the views of historians, which, need, of course, to be harnessed to support or challenge the candidate's own review of 'alternatives', before s/he reaches a conclusion. Once this simple truth is absorbed, the chances of writing an appropriate Investigation are almost guaranteed.

This year, several examiners have been exercised by candidates' apparent inability to achieve the correct *balance* between argument and the use of sources:

A few very well argued pieces were kept from the top band by neglect of sources, although they answered the question set very competently. Similarly, very many, especially poor, candidates used the sources, not to drive the argument, but almost to replace it. The worst of these included lengthy direct quotations, which were often then paraphrased. Some answers were largely historiographical, often listing different 'schools' and appending an 'evaluation' as a conclusion.

Many of these said little about the actual topic and might have been helped by a more 'directive' title. For example, a candidate wishing to follow a historiographical line might have been better off with 'To what extent have historians agreed that Hitler was a weak dictator?' than with 'How far was Hitler a weak dictator?'

Finally, there needs to be a word in praise of contingency. Contingent factors (sometimes referred to as 'short-term') are extremely important to an explanation, either as 'triggers' that set off the final sequence of actions and reactions that cause the occurrence of the event; or as factors that determine exactly how, when or where the events takes place (thus denying the notion of inevitability in historical explanation). It is strange, then, how few candidates tend to include them in their explanations. How many explanations of the enfranchisement of women in 1918 include details of the Speaker's Conference of October 1916? How many accounts of Hitler's rise to power include the feverish negotiations that took place between Papen's decision to call the election of July 1932 and Hitler's appointment as chancellor in January 1933?

Use of sources:

There were several pleasing reports from examiners about improvements in the critical handling of both primary and secondary material. However, as in previous years, there has also been a falling between the stools of dearth and plenty:

Some good candidates fail to reach the highest level because of an over-concentration on historiography to the extent that there is only a very limited reference to actual events and actions. In other words, the historiography obscures the history...Some candidates still use sources simply to pepper their work with quotations, often to no good purpose. At the other extreme are the candidates who rarely use a quotation, preferring simply to talk in general terms about what different historians have said.

Sources are, perhaps for the majority, a hurdle required by the examiner, rather than a means of enriching and extending the argument. Most sources were used as illustration, in the most extreme instances as one word quotations which added nothing (eg 'As gates points out, the political foundations of the new regime were 'shaky'¹). By contrast, 'Goebbels regarded the radio as the 'spiritual weapon of the totalitarian state' offers evidence of the views of the person who was actually responsible for its use, and thus extends the argument.

Some Investigations were almost rendered unintelligible by the density of quoting with little evaluation [so that]...the quote often replaced evidence and left the essay vacuous – in some historical never-never land.

Simplistic 'ad hominem' judgments about historians continue to pass for critical evaluation amongst a minority of candidates. It has been stressed in previous versions of this report that candidates will lose nothing by focusing instead on what particular historians have *written*, rather than on who they are. 'Ad hominem' evaluations can be very telling, but achieving the right sort of depth is not easy. Successful attempts at this almost invariably involve a reasonably extended reference to the author's social or political context, or some consideration of the circumstances in which s/he was writing. Weaker judgments are just as invariably informed by more spurious assertions, by the attaching of labels and by lack of temporal sense. For example:

- Porter is a prolific writer... and well regarded as an authority on medical history, having published over a dozen books on the subject.
- As an orthodox historian, Churchill believed that Appeasement was the wrong policy.
- As a revisionist historian, John Charmley had access to more documents than orthodox historians and therefore can be seen as a more reliable source of information.
- Galbraith is a reliable source because he has written many books on American history.
- This evidence is not reliable as Weidemann is not a well known historian.
- The historian Murphy is unreliable because he writes books for A-level students.
- Clarendon backs up Kishlansky's claim.....
- This must be reliable because she lectures at Oxbridge [*a place where there is apparently no bias, prejudice or partisanship*].

*The first message to be carried forward into the era of the 'new' coursework is that 'labels' are usually counter-productive. They are used in the proverbial 'tertiary' sources as a (legitimate) convenience, but they have no place in a student's Investigation, which should utilise **specific** sources – often as a brief quotation (appropriately footnoted with page numbers) which are **used evaluatively**, rather than merely quoted, in support of the writer's **own argument**. It is, of course, a chicken/egg argument of sorts, but, in this case, the answer is easy....the 'history' precedes the 'historiography'. The 'embedding' of sources may help to 'illustrate' a point, but such sources need to be 'used' by the candidate (eg in cross reference) to fulfil any evaluative purpose.*

This brings us neatly to cross reference as a critical tool. 'Paired lists' recording historians' agreements or disagreements are of little use. The simple requirement is that the cross-referencing of (usually) secondary material can only count as 'critical use' if its purpose is to advance the argument – either by (1) adding a factor not previously considered, (2) strengthening a case, or (3) calling a claim into question, and thus allowing an evaluative judgment to be made. Examples of all three functions can be found in the following extracts. An example of the first can be found in this study of the role of propaganda in assisting the popularity of the Nazi party:

'Propaganda is widely acknowledged to have been a major contributor to the success of the Nazi party. Richard Evans, for example, puts its mass popularity down to the projection of the party image as one of "strong decisive action, dynamism, energy and youth" achieved through "powerful simple slogans...images...marches...posters" and so on. Burleigh agrees that propaganda was instrumental in the rise of the popularity of the Nazis, adding that their

emphasis on egalitarian policies was vital in attracting some of the working class, stating that “National Socialists ... practised egalitarianism unlike the bourgeois parties”.

An example of the second can be found in this extract from a study of the role played by the ‘malign influence’ of the Woodvilles in the reign of Edward IV:

‘Mancini controversially views the Woodvilles as instrumental in the Duke of Clarence’s execution, writing that Elizabeth Woodville decided her children might never succeed Edward IV unless Clarence was removed “and to this she easily persuaded the king”. Mancini believed Elizabeth feared Clarence might make a claim to the throne. Whilst many have criticised Mancini as a reliable source, Ross argues that recent research provides some persuasive evidence that the Woodvilles were involved in Clarence’s downfall. Sir Thomas More cited the “jealous slanders of the queen” as one reason for the charges laid upon the duke’s head, and Hicks argues that Edward’s later regret concerning his brother’s execution provides convincing support for Mancini’s view that Edward did not act independently but was “manipulated into destroying his brother”.

And an example of the third function can be found in this extract from a study of the extent to which peasant nationalism was the key to the Chinese Communist Party’s victory in 1949.

‘A peasant nationalist movement in China was important in winning the civil war, but was not the main factor for the Communists’ victory. The Japanese invasion of China’s major cities in 1937-8 ignited Chinese nationalism, by the threat the Japanese posed to their culture and independence. Furthermore, Japanese brutality, such as the ‘three alls’ policy, (kill, loot and burn all) heightened the feeling of nationalism, and the people became increasingly bitter towards the Japanese invaders. Chalmers Johnson argues that this peasant nationalism was the key to the Communists’ victory, for the Communist appeal came from ‘organising resistance’ against the Japanese and allowing the peasant population to take an active role in fighting the enemy. Johnson’s view however underplays the influence of Communist socio-economic policies, as Gillin argues in the example of the province of Shansi. There the Communists were welcomed by the people and their support came from their ability to offer tangible improvements to everyday life, not from fighting the Japanese. This is emphasized by the warlord Yen His-shan who was in control of the province, who fought heavily against the Japanese. He could not remain in power simply by resisting the Japanese, when faced by a regime that tried to incorporate the people more than any other had done before, and offer socio-economic benefits such as ‘free education’ and ‘medical care’. Gillin’s detailed critique of Johnson’s book produced real counter examples such as in the province of Shansi to back up his alternative analysis.’

At the other end of the spectrum, it is sad to note that discount sources this year included ‘A Children’s History of the Crusades’, a number of GCSE texts and, of course, Wikipedia. It may also be worth noting that studies based on a reasonable number of ‘big books’, fully referenced with page-numbered footnotes, almost always score highly.

Presentation and expression:

Sad to relate, the standard of grammar and syntax showed a clear decline this year – widely reported by most examiners. Clearly, this is not a function of the Independent Investigation but it must be a matter of considerable concern to all of those who fear for the English language. Evolution is one thing; neglect quite another. Will the Literacy bandwagon save us, or is it already too late?

Despite the demise of the Third Reich, the Nazi’s (sic) are the guardians of the Greengrocer’s Apostrophe. Contrary to last year’s report of the apostrophe’s strange death, it has merely morphed.

It will come as news to thousands of candidates that the past tense of the word 'lead' is 'led'.

Candidates should in future be made aware of the need for complete footnotes and that the first thing the examiner is likely to look for is the page reference. The absence of a page reference is often an indication that the candidate's debt to the source, or his/her reading of it, is spurious.

In some cases, the standard of English was so poor as to be unintelligible. Clumsy expression, weak spelling and faulty syntax do not make for clear communication and argument

Spelling and punctuation appear to be disintegrating fast. In particular, the comma is becoming as rare as its lepidopteran namesake. Even otherwise good candidates now misuse the apostrophe, and phonetic spelling continues to advance, 'could of' becoming almost universal.

Meanwhile, the uncritical acceptance of internet sources continues to cause concern. While some such as the BBC or National Archives are obviously dependable, what are we to make of 'Fishy.cnz/swordfish/interpretations, and other even more bizarrely named'?

Valedictions:

I have learned a great deal over 30 years of marking coursework, which as a classroom teacher to the very end, has considerably enriched my lessons. I have missed the diversity of topics recently, especially the archaeology and local history, but I think the standard of work has improved considerably and I put this down to better teaching.

In the sense that one can, I have enjoyed marking this unit and feel that candidates will miss a form of assessment which allows 'a hundred flowers to bloom'.

2593

General observations:

There were more good scripts than usual this year, recognised by focused analysis and genuine critical evaluation. However, there was also a large number in the lower part of Band III and upper Band IV – worthy but lacking in really sharp focus on the exact terms of the question.

Sadly, critical use of sources in these weaker scripts was a comparative rarity and the employment of footnoting of any kind infrequent. In spite of warnings in previous reports, some candidates brought in large collections of previously prepared sources – often quite lengthy – which were simply noted in the main text as ‘See Source A, B’ etc. The examiners were then expected to wade through appendix material, which in some cases exceeded the study itself in length. This was an unreasonable expectation. All the candidate has to do in the appendices is identify the phrase or line from the source – no more than this – that is intended as quotation and make sure that there is a link or footnote to create the reference.

Again, in spite of previous strictures, candidates chose their own titles, some of which differed very markedly indeed from the questions on the examination paper. Misreading of a question may be forgiven in the pressured conditions of an examination hall – but these questions were notified a long time in advance.

Performance, as ever, depended very much on the choice of example to illustrate the board-set question. Some centres should have steered candidates away from their particular choices – or sought advice from OCR Coursework Assessors.

Observations on specific questions:

1 The Arts and history

Choose any television programme (or series of programmes) dealing with the past and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses as an historical interpretation.

There were some very good answers on Question 1, based, for example, on TV productions of *Richard III* and *Blackadder Goes Forth*. These made good use of both primary and secondary sources.

Weaker answers all too often settled for a description of the production or uncritical commentary on script excerpts. There was little attempt to locate the situations portrayed into their context or to evaluate the productions against hard historical evidence.

The best answers were those with a clear focus and critical sense. For example, there were candidates in one centre who made critical use of primary and secondary sources to evaluate *The Tudors* as an interpretation of Henry VIII’s motives for seeking a divorce from Katherine of Aragon.

2 Economic history

To what extent was economic change the main cause of historical development in the period you have studied?

Some of the better answers examined the significance of economic depression on the rise of the Nazi party; the relationship between economic change in Tsarist Russia and the Revolution of 1917; and the impact of the Industrial Revolution on British politics and society.

Many of those choosing the Nazi option did not know enough about economic factors to create a viable argument. Moreover, attempts to demonstrate (as opposed to assert) the relative importance of causal factors rarely succeeded.

The best answers came from candidates who chose less obvious (but more fruitful) vehicles – in particular the unification of Germany. Other successful topics included the fall of the British Empire and Western European development after 1945.

3 The Individual in history

How far would you agree with the view that the significant achievements of any period you have studied owed more to groups than to individuals?

This was the most popular question but it was rarely done well, mainly because of a general neglect of the contribution of 'groups' as a counterpoint to the role of individuals. Instead, candidates tended to write their standard essays on eg 'Lenin and the Russian Revolution. In this case, the failing was not to discuss the role of, say, the Bolshevik Party or the Petrograd Soviet – or even popular unrest and the role of the army, if focusing on the February or July episodes. Other choices included Roosevelt and the New Deal, Peter the Great and the westernisation of Russia, the reign of Elizabeth (some, admittedly making an attempt to discuss the role of the Privy Council), and Hitler (weak dictator or Master of the Third Reich). Much more consistently successful were those who chose Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement (CRM).

Better answers did try to balance the contributions of individuals and groups, but 'groups' tended to be ill-defined or not fully understood. Many who chose Lenin did not recognise the opportunity to rehearse the popular rising/coup d'état argument.

As ever on this paper, success was largely dependent on the ability to choose an appropriate example. Good choices were Martin Luther King and the CRM; Wilberforce and the abolition of slavery; opposition to Hitler; Wellington and his army; Edward I and his army. Guy Fawkes was an interesting choice but it was difficult to demonstrate the achievement! Weaker answers described how the individual did this and the group did that, without any critical comparison being made.

4 Local history

Assess the usefulness of evidence from a local site for interpreting a similar development on a regional or national scale.

Sadly, this category attracted very few responses. However, there was one interesting study of Rochester castle examining the extent to which it provided a blueprint for castle development. 'Sadly', because this component and its larger sister, the Independent Investigation, were 'made for' local historical research.

5 Military history

With reference to any battle or campaign you have studied, how far was the outcome attributable to the tactics and strategy employed by the winning side?

This was probably the best answered of all the questions on the paper. In the best answers, tactics and strategy were set against alternatives such as generalship, weakness of opposition, resources and chance.

The most frequently used examples were Hastings, the Peninsular War, Austerlitz, Waterloo, the American Civil War, Sadowa, the Western Front in the First World War, Stalingrad and the Vietnam War. Maps and charts were often used effectively – one of the few examples where visual appendices proved useful.

Where the candidate failed to recognise the scope for introducing ‘other factors’, answers tended to be limited to assessing the effectiveness of the tactics or strategies employed by the winning side in causing the outcome. Another cause of difficulty was the inability to distinguish ‘strategy’ from ‘tactics’.

6 Political history

With reference to any regime you have studied, assess how far its effectiveness was dependent on the co-operation of a ‘political elite’.

This attracted few responses. However, Hitler (as ‘weak dictator’) and Stalin (as perpetrator of the Great Terror), Edward IV (and over-mighty vassals) and Petain (and Vichy collaboration) were popular.

Much depended on the candidate’s ability to define and identify a ‘political elite’ and to link such to the regime, its make-up and the issue of effectiveness.

7 Religious history

Assess the relative importance of religious factors as a cause of any historical event or conflict you have studied.

This question attracted a strong response, the most successful being focused on the 16th century. The French wars of Religion was an obvious choice and was very well answered; this was closely followed by the Henrician Reformation, where there was good understanding of, for example, dynastic and material motives and of the top down/bottom up debate. Other successful examples included the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, Kristallnacht and the Arab Israeli conflict. A few candidates who chose the French Revolution might have been better targeting Question 2.

Much depended on the delivery of ‘relative importance’; here, the ability to set religious against other kinds of causal factors (usually political) in bringing about the chosen event. Many otherwise worthy attempts lacked the detailed knowledge dispositions and none but the ablest could contemplate a synthesis based on the interfusion of religious and political beliefs, motives and attitudes.

8 Science, Technology and history

Assess the relative importance of science and technology in changing the lives of ordinary people in any period you have studied.

The few attempts at Q8 failed to assess the relative importance of science and technology. There was an interesting study of the development of computer-assisted technology during the 20th century but availability and analysis of sources posed problems.

9 Social history

To what extent did the growth of towns result in social progress in any period you have studied?

This was quite popular but not well done. Most answers consisted of detailed descriptions of life in towns, focusing on dirt and disease and its impact on health. Some wrote usefully on the growth of trade. However, there was insufficient focus on the idea of social progress (ie the solutions to the problems identified) and/or of the need to evaluate the progress made ('to what extent...?').

10 World history

'On the whole, the influence of European civilization on other parts of the world has been beneficial'. How far is this true of any period you have studied?

As in previous years, the World History question attracted little interest. However, the few who attempted it were able to demonstrate a clear sense of debate. Cortez and Pizarro proved fruitful subjects, as did a study of British influence in Ghana and Nigeria.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE History (7835)
Advanced Subsidiary GCE History (3835)
June 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2580	Raw	60	42	36	31	26	21	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2581	Raw	60	42	36	31	26	21	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2582	Raw	60	42	36	31	26	21	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2583	Raw	45	33	29	25	21	18	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2584	Raw	45	33	29	25	21	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	31	28	25	22	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2587	Raw	90	65	59	53	47	41	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2588	Raw	90	65	59	53	47	41	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2589	Raw	90	65	59	53	47	41	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2590	Raw	120	85	76	67	58	50	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2591	Raw	120	85	76	67	58	50	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2592	Raw	90	71	63	55	48	41	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2593	Raw	90	70	62	54	47	40	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	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	0
7835	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

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

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3835	29.3	60.3	81.8	93.9	99.3	100.0	3365
7835	25.0	55.6	81.0	95.2	99.5	100.0	12823

16188 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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