

History Pilot

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE J938**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE J038**

OCR Report to Centres

January 2012

J938/J038/R/12J

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

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

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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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Report on Coursework, Units B872, B873, B877, B878, B880, B881, B882

The entry was very small, with few centres and some of them with only a handful of candidates. A sizable minority of candidates were re-sits for unit B873 and in addition between 15% and 35%, depending on the unit, were in Year 10. As usual, there were most candidates for the International Unit, B873, but there were some good Local Studies, B872. There were also entries for Change over Time, B878, the Depth Study, B880, and the alternate International unit, B882; there were no entries for B877 or B881.

The importance of planning has been made clear in previous reports. In several cases, especially in the Local Study, careful planning had gone into the question and the provision of a set of resources which enabled candidates to formulate their own responses. The task required candidates to compare the heritage, past and present, of stately homes and mining memorials. This enabled candidates to address the specification requirement to consider significance in past and present in a way that set their local history in a wider setting in both time and place.

In other cases candidates were given too much structure, so that their responses did not amount to an answer to the question, but a series of disjointed paragraphs.

The specification for the International Unit requires candidates to judge the international significance of an event. Several centres chose the Vietnam war. The most easily available resources on this topic deal with the war and its internal impact on Vietnam and the USA. However, in order to succeed in this unit, candidates have to address genuinely international aspects – for example, the impact of the war on other states, or changes in US foreign policy. These aspects often received thin treatment and it may well be that these needed better resourcing.

In part 1 of the Study in Depth unit candidates are required to evaluate sources; some of the source analysis was marked rather highly for the levels of understanding shown. However, overall marking was carefully and thoroughly carried out and there was plenty of evidence of internal moderation having taken place. The comments on each candidate's work were most helpful, especially where they summed up the key characteristics of the work in terms similar to those in the generic mark scheme.

B874, B875, B876, B879 Teacher Assessment

The entry for January 2012 was very small with just a handful of centres. However, the Heritage Management and Marketing (B874), Multimedia (B875) and Missing Persons (B879) units all had candidates. There was an interesting range of work covering such topics as the evacuation of children during the Second World War, the Gunpowder Plot, back-to-back housing in Birmingham and Lady Anne Clifford.

The main challenge in all of these units remains that of basing the work on solid, in-depth, historical knowledge and understanding. Sometimes the historical content of the work was thin, with candidates being distracted by issues such as presentation. In the Heritage Management and Marketing unit, candidates should always be more focused on the history than the marketing. The history needs to be represented in the marketing materials, and a key focus of much of the work should be the historical significance of the person, place or events being marketed. There was some impressive work that did this. It was usually achieved by setting one piece of work directly on the issue of significance.

Some candidates presented an impressive range of evaluations of multimedia products for the Multimedia unit although more explicit use of historical knowledge and understanding would have improved the quality of much of the work.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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