

GCE

History A

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H105**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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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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Generic Comments for History H105

Overall examiners commented on the depth of knowledge shown by many learners and the standard of work displayed was often very encouraging and bodes well for the A level next summer. The standard of analysis, argument and judgement was often very good, but some responses did not fully grasp the demands of the questions or the mark scheme and therefore Senior Assessors thought it might be helpful to give some general guidance for Centres on improving the performance of their learners. The guidance is split into two sections, one for the Unit 1 papers and one for Unit 2 papers, however the essay guidance given in Unit 1 is also relevant for Unit 2 and will not be repeated in that section. Given the very nature of trying to improve Learner performance many of the comments will refer to weaknesses and how they can be eliminated or reduced, but this should not obscure the overall level of performance which was most encouraging.

Units Y131-143

Question 1

This question requires candidates to analyse the utility of a source in relation to a named issue. In order to produce responses which will meet the higher levels in the mark scheme learners should:

- Ensure they use the correct Source, it will not always be Source A as was demonstrated in the SAMs. The question will always indicate clearly which source is to be used.
- Learners need to consider both the provenance and content of the source to access the higher levels. A significant number of responses considered only one of these and this limited the level that was reached.
- When using own knowledge to evaluate the source the knowledge needs to be clearly linked to the actual source and the learner needs to explain how the knowledge either supports or challenges the given source. In many responses there was a great deal of knowledge, but this was not linked to analysis of the source. The knowledge is therefore best linked directly to a quotation drawn from the source or specific reference to an aspect of the source.
- The response needs to consider how useful the source is in relation to the specific issue raised in the question and not just generally.
- A conclusion or judgement should be reached about the actual utility of the source in relation to the issue in the question.
- Read the source carefully, a number failed to correctly identify the event or events to which the source was referring or simply did not read the source carefully and misunderstood what the source was saying about the issue in the question.
- Read the attribution carefully, paying particular attention to when it was written in relation to the issue in the question.
- Learners should avoid stock comments about the nature of the source, they should also take care to explain why a particular type of source might be more or less useful rather than simply asserting the point.

Question 2

- Ensure that all the sources are used, just because a source has been considered in Question 1 it does not mean it does not need to be considered in Question 2; the two questions are on different issues.
- Consider both the provenance and content of each source and test the validity of the content of each source using own knowledge. There were a considerable number of responses which either considered just provenance or used contextual knowledge to evaluate and some where one source was treated fully and others were not. In order to reach the top levels all sources need to be evaluated using provenance and contextual knowledge.

- Reach a judgement about the issue in the question based on the sources, not on your opinion or on own knowledge.
- Remember this part of the paper is a source paper and the answer needs to be driven by the sources.
- The analysis and evaluation of the sources can be approached in a number of ways, dealing with the sources sequentially is a perfectly valid approach, however there may be occasions where cross-referencing between sources can be used to help develop an answer.
- The Sources should not be used simply to illustrate.
- As with Question 1, avoid stock comments about provenance and explain why a particular source might be more or less valid due to its provenance.
- Read the sources carefully, a number of responses showed limited understanding of what the source was saying about the issue in the question.
- All the sources will need to be used and all the sources will have something valid to say about the issue in the question even if it is not always apparent on a quick read through.

Essay Questions - Unit 1 Questions 3 and 4, Unit 2 Questions 1 and 2

- Read the question carefully and answer the question set.
- Assessors are aware that in Unit 1 less time may be spent on the essay element, but it does not mean that there should be less analysis or judgement, more likely is that fewer issues will be considered and a smaller range of examples given.
- In Unit 1 essays it does not matter if fewer issues are covered provided there are sufficient from which the learner can draw a valid conclusion.
- To reach the higher levels responses must reach a judgement based on the argument that has been made in the main body of the essay. A conclusion that is at odds with what has been argued and evidenced previously cannot be judged to be supported.
- Ensure that ideas are supported by precise, relevant and accurate factual material otherwise attempts at argument are simply seen as assertions. The same applies with judgements, they must be supported by relevant and accurate material.
- Do focus on key words in the question and pay particular attention to command phrases, such as 'how far' or 'to what extent' and do not simply list factors.
- Ensure that the named factor is given clear and adequate treatment – a good paragraph, even if the learner wants to argue that the factor was not important, they cannot simply ignore it. In some responses the named factor was subsumed into other factors and the assessor had to go 'hunting' for it, it is better if learners make it clear.
- The strongest opening paragraphs outlined the view of the learner and signposted the line of argument, naming the range of issues to be considered, thus giving the answer a clear structure.
- Answers that deal with only the named factor or do not deal with the named factor at all are at best only partially answering the question and so are limited to Level III.
- Where questions ask about 'effectiveness' do not simply replace 'effectiveness' with successful. Focus on the given word, and it is helpful to establish the criteria against which either success or effective will be judged in the opening paragraph, even if this is done only briefly.

Unit 2

Question 3

This question requires learners to evaluate the strengths and limitations of a given interpretation from a historian. The interpretation is drawn from one of two clearly noted topic areas in the Specification and candidates can achieve any mark by confining their answer to that area of the Specification, but they can also be credited where they use information from other parts of the Specification where this is relevant, although the focus must be on the given area.

- Consider both the strengths and limitations of the Interpretation, dealing with only one element is, at best, a partial answer.

- Use the opening paragraph to explain the view offered in the given Interpretation and explain how it fits into the wider debate about the issue.
- There is no requirement to reach a judgement about whether the view in the Interpretation is stronger or weaker than other Interpretations about the issue.
- Avoid writing another essay that uses knowledge and understanding to evaluate the historical period – this has already been done in Question 1 or 2, this is a different task and tests a different skill.
- Many responses had considerable knowledge about the issue raised by the given Interpretation, but they did not use that knowledge to evaluate the Interpretation, instead the knowledge was simply deployed as in the essay questions, as though the candidates were analysing the historical event or period, not the interpretation itself.
- Where the knowledge deployed was not directly linked or used to evaluate the Interpretation this was at best implied or limited evaluation, and so could not be awarded marks above Level III.
- Look at the exemplar answers available on-line to see examples of how own knowledge should be used to evaluate the interpretation.
- It can help to build up a bank or library of evaluative words that are used regularly in the teaching environment.
- It can help to practice using a three or four paragraph structure to responses, with the first paragraph explaining the Interpretation, the second (which could be combined with the opening paragraph) placing the Interpretation in the context of the wider debate about the issue, the third to deal with the strengths and the last with the limitations. Once again this makes clear that no judgement is required.
- In order to ensure that the response does not simply become another essay it might be helpful to ensure that a response does not have more than a couple of sentences without using an evaluative word and linking the knowledge back to the Interpretation.
- Responses do not gain credit for evaluating other Interpretations, though other interpretations can be used in the analysis of the given interpretation. As with the deployment of other knowledge, the key is linking back to analyse the given interpretation.
- There is no need for responses to place the given interpretation in the context of 'schools of history', such as revisionist, traditional etc. Though this would be an acceptable approach if done in such a way that the focus was on analysing the given interpretation, the responses seen this year suggest that this approach can actually lead to the response drifting from the task and a more general evaluation of the 'school of history' being undertaken.
- Responses do not need to mention other historians in order to reach any level. Responses should simply evaluate the given Interpretation.

British period study and enquiry

Y131 Alfred and the Making of England 871–1016

Question 1

Most were able to identify Alfred's involvement in the source's authorship, but the best answers went beyond the obvious points to question why the Introduction had been written to question and throw into doubt the reliability. It is important to note this is an important part of the answer- several candidates only focused on own knowledge testing, which limited the answer.

Most candidates focused on Alfred's use of councillors and the Witan, though again the best candidates were able to explain why this made the source more useful or not. Some strong answers considered aspects of Alfred's decision making which were not mentioned such as threats from the Vikings forcing his hand, or considered the extent to which Alfred was an authoritarian ruler. A relatively common flaw was also to think about future monarchs using the same Law Codes; more often than not this strayed into rather assertive lines of argument. The best answers considered whether Alfred's Code was "just" or not, and used trial by Ordeal as a way of testing this. Very often this produced some first rate work.

The biggest flaw in answers to this question was in forgetting that the question asked candidates to think about Alfred's decision making rather than just about the Law Codes themselves, and as a result the utility was not as sharply analysed as it might otherwise have been.

Question 2

Most candidates were aware of the needs to mention all sources; a source by source approach was taken by most and was certainly effective. Most but not all candidates knew that both provenance and own knowledge had to be used effectively to evaluate the sources. Some made the mistake of making a convincing argument that focused on the idea of "justice" but relied only on inferring from the source without using own knowledge or provenance to test these ideas. The best answers sought to explain and analyse why sources supported the statement rather than only asserting facts or stating the provenance.

Some of the better answers considered other priorities which Alfred had in government, the most fruitful of which was either his learning or religion. It was in these areas that the best own knowledge was in evidence. This tended to yield better results as it did not merely favour a yes no approach but showed real engagement with the contents of the sources and what they suggested about Alfred's reign.

The biggest problem most responses had was in deciding a meaning of the word "just". Many took this to mean "fair" when perhaps a more valid approach was to consider the implication for law and order. Only where candidates explicitly defined the term "just" as "fair" in the answer was this a profitable approach- most left the meaning to be implicit which led to a rather patchy evaluation.

Question 3

Most candidates were able to produce a good structure of exploring at least three factors which demonstrated Athelstan's strengths. Many chose to look at his Law Codes and diplomacy in addition to his military strengths. Many candidates provided a great deal of detailed knowledge, though did not always link it back to the precise question dealing with military strength. Relative importance had to be referenced and discussed in order for the candidate to gain a higher mark and this was done relatively infrequently considering the quality of the knowledge presented in answering this question. There was also a tendency to describe rather illustratively all of

Athelstan's victories in battle without explaining why or how these victories proved to be the main reason for his success. The nature of "success" was not often well discussed.

Question 4

The question lent itself towards a rather list like response, with most focusing on the paying of tribute, noble betrayal and improved Viking tactics. Many candidates were able to describe how these factors contributed to the invasion, but their precise focus on whether Aethelred was responsible was a little less well explored. The nature of responsibility was the focus of the argument in the best responses, particularly in dealing with the betrayal of the nobility and whether or not Aethelred should carry the blame for this. Many lost their way in discussing all of the ways in which Aethelred could be said to be blamed which led to a lack of clear structure as many ideas were blended together.

There were many factors which could have been discussed here, and some candidates took a rather generalist and descriptive approach and discussed many with little evaluation rather than analysing fewer and exploring them in more detail and using this to come to a supported judgement on the question.

Y132 Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest 1035–1107

Question 1

Most answers contained an attempt to consider provenance. The nature of the Anglo Saxon Chronicle as an annalistic source led to some fairly basic and superficial comments on its provenance on the lines of 'since its purpose was to write down facts, it's reliable'. Better answers were able to highlight some of its limitations, such as the fact that there were different versions (although not for this period) and the text itself was subject to revision because of the number of authors involved. Generally, though, it was less effectively understood and appreciated.

Contextual information included one or all of the following: Flambard's purchase of Durham; Bloet's appointment to Lincoln; and the vacancy at Canterbury following Lanfranc's death (the date of which was often incorrect).

Weaker answers were distracted by William Rufus's problems with Anselm and provided a précis of these events, some of which was clearly drawn from Source C.

Question 2

Source B, Simeon of Durham, caused confusion in some responses. Better answers were able to discuss its provenance in relation to either William Rufus's relationship with Scotland or the trial, exile and return of William of Saint-Calais. Those who could not generalised about his uneven treatment of the church, using his support for, for example, Battle Abbey, to support claims that he was not an enemy.

Eadmer, in C, was the best-known of the authors, but many candidates went no further than to state that he would be biased in Anselm's favour. Better answers were able to use the fact that Eadmer was writing hagiography to make more sophisticated comments on its reliability. Many candidates came to the conclusion that A did not show that William Rufus treated the Church as an enemy; rather, he used it as a financial tool. Some candidates were able to use quite broad knowledge of the context by not only discussing the papal schism but also the Gregorian reform movement and investiture contest.

Question 3

The Godwins, and particularly the Dover crisis, were well-known; however, it was not uncommon to find confusion over familial relationships, particularly between Godwin and his sons. In some cases, candidates confused Harold and his father which led to serious factual errors and there was a strong correlation between the strength of the answer and how many of the family were named in the essay. Better answers distinguished between the problems caused by Earl Godwin and the harmonious relationship between Edward the Confessor and Harold, concluding that a turning point in relations occurred at the death of Godwin in 1053.

Some candidates misinterpreted the question slightly and considered the place of the Godwins amongst all of the problems Edward faced. Whilst in some cases there was an effort to link the other points, such as the succession, to the Godwins, in many cases the attention given to these other issues skewed the focus of the essay. Weaker answers made two lists, of ways in which the Godwins were and were not a problem, and then struggled to reconcile them or come to a judgement.

Question 4

The “to what extent” needed to be considered: many responses simply consisted of a list of points, some well supported, but with only vague and fairly brief links to the question. Some made two lists, one of continuity and one of change, but could not proceed further. A judgement did need to be made.

Some candidates were unsure about what to include under ‘government and administration’. William I’s creation of ecclesiastical courts was well-used in demonstrating the Normans’ innovative approach to the application of the law, for example, but some answers included lengthy discussion of the Church, and the make-up of the episcopate, which was not properly linked to the question. There was often an awareness of Domesday Book, but in general it was less effectively linked to the question, as if candidates were unable to grasp its importance in government practice.

Y133 England 1199–1272

Question 1

Most answers showed evidence of careful reading of the source, though sometimes less focused reading of the question. Many responses however suggested a less careful reading of the question, and the point about John’s attitudes to the church was missed in many of the answers read. These answers were limited to general comment on the utility of the source as evidence for the reasons for the quarrel, which made at least part of their treatment tangential. Provenance was not well handled for this question. Only a few suggested that the pope would be anything but truthful (most suggested that because he was religious and a pope he was therefore truthful), which suggested a lack of understanding of popes and more widely of the reality of medieval religion - and sources. Context was less of a problem with most candidates able to put the selection in some context

Question 2

Most candidates seemed to have read the selections properly and got some of the nuance of the language. Candidates had the most trouble with assessing Source C and many took it at face value and did not look at the possibility of deceit on the part of the nobles. Provenance was better for the 2 other sources, but often lacked depth of knowledge about chronicles. Too often comment on provenance was limited to “they were written by monks so must have been true/must have been biased against John”. Some good answers looked in more depth at the provenance, however. Context was a more of a problem with many candidates not able to put the source in some context and failing to support their attempts to evaluate with specific and apposite knowledge. The question itself seemed to have been understood well with the issue of John’s blame being included.

Question 3

This question relied on specific knowledge of foreign advisors and the ability to measure their importance against that of other factors. Most candidates understood this and the great majority were able to address the question as well as their knowledge and ability allowed. There was no widespread tendency, as sometimes happens with this type of question, to ignore the named factor or indeed to deal with it exclusively and omit others. There was some good treatment of other factors, such as foreign policy in relation to France and Sicily, levels of taxation and the influence of the Queen. Considerable confusion was suffered by some, however, about what constituted “foreign” advisors, caused possibly by the names such as “X de Y” which some candidates took to imply the individual was foreign. The result was to undermine the focus of their argument.

Question 4

This was better answered than question 3 by and large, but not as frequently. It was a question which gave those answering it the opportunity to focus on a variety of reasons, rather than forcing a consideration of a named factor, and as such enabled them to play to their strengths in terms of knowledge. Candidates usually came up with a good range of reasons and explained them quite well. Their success was determined by the levels of their specific supporting knowledge and the extent to which they were able to use it evaluatively. Candidates who developed a series of factors, but were unable to justify links between them or support a claimed order of importance could therefore not access the highest level. The key word here was “assess”. It was therefore usually more successful to develop the evaluation of a few factors rather than to attempt to identify the maximum number.

Y134 England 1377 – 1455

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y135 England 1455 – 1509 Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII

Question 1

Answers to this question were generally done well. Most candidates were able to access the source and explain a range of motives for Richard’s return in 1460. Most candidates were able to draw upon some knowledge to comment on his return, but a significant number of answers lacked full engagement with the source as provenance was often ignored. Where answers were less effective students did not use the key question term ‘useful’ and therefore had limited focus on the question. Some answers simply descended into imparting knowledge without any reference to the source. A minority of candidates wrote about Source A instead of Source C.. Responses of this type were marked and credited in line with the levels of response mark scheme against the specified issue in the question.

There were a number of good responses on this question. Strong responses demonstrated an impressive knowledge of the context of 1460 and the outcome of the Parliament of Devils at Coventry. Stronger answers mentioned York claiming the throne by marching into the Parliament chamber and placing his hand on the King's chair, others argued that he did not want the throne as he had been good and loyal as protector earlier.

A significant number of candidates, however, misunderstood the Source and considered that it was about Richard's return and the events of 1450 following Cade's Rebellion rather than York's return from Ireland in 1460. Some also thought, even though they wrote about 1460 that Somerset was still alive and therefore wrote about his relationship with York.

Provenance was less developed in a number of answers with stock comments on a chronicler writing at the time or being unbiased seen on a range of scripts with otherwise good contextual knowledge. Comments about provenance were better when candidates focused on the language of the source, for example discussing the comments about the opinions of those who were “older and wiser”

Question 2

Responses for Q2 were less well-developed, with a number of candidates omitting to use both contextual knowledge and provenance when answering this question. Many candidates demonstrated impressive knowledge of the context of the 3 sources although a minority ignored the sources altogether and wrote a general answer on the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses. Weaker responses wrote generally in relation to issues such as patronage and finance. Many responses did not link the strength and power of nobility or the weakness of Henry to the actual outbreak of war and as a result were unable to access the higher levels of the mark-scheme.

In stronger answers there were references to specific struggles between overmighty subjects in the West country and in the North and many candidates were able to discuss the bitterness of York towards Somerset as noted in Source A. Surprisingly few candidates were able to discuss the weaknesses of the King, alluded to in B, in any great detail, preferring to focus on his “greedy counsel”. Knowledge of the state of royal finances might have been usefully noted here. For source C a number of answers neglected to use it in any great detail, perhaps because it was felt that the comments in Q1 had been enough. Candidates should use all 3 sources in a balanced fashion in this question. Again, as in Q1, contextual knowledge was applied relevantly although comments on provenance were less assured.

Question 3

In this essay few candidates established criteria against which to judge the importance of the mistakes made by Edward during his reign. A significant number of responses wrote about the mistakes without linking it to why Richard seized the throne. This led to extensive amounts of detail on the failure to secure the French marriage and alliance but with no link as to how this helped Richard in 1483.

Stronger responses considered the Woodville marriage and the factional differences at court. Other good responses argued that Richard had been loyal during Edward's reign, but that Edward had over-rewarded him and allowed him to build up a power base so that he could seize the throne. Others argued that rather than Edward's mistakes, it was Richard's skill and abilities that helped him to seize the throne. His ruthlessness in acting quickly once Edward had died alongside his proven ability in maintaining order in the North were the focus of these answers.

Alternative views were suggested including the problems of the accession of a minor to the throne as well as the inherent weaknesses of the 15th century crown. The mistakes and problems caused by the Woodville family were less well-known but noted in a number of responses.

Question 4

This was the most popular of the two essays. A surprisingly large number of candidates failed to respond to the specific question and wrote at length on foreign policy. Another issue was a general failure to establish criteria against which to judge the successes of his domestic policy and candidates would be well-advised to address such issues in their introductory paragraphs in future sessions.

Most candidates were able to discuss his relations with nobles and the improvements made to royal finances during his reign and wrote profitably about such matters when they discussed his aims. In dealing with nobles some candidates argued that despite it appearing successful, the threat of a rising was evident by the end of his reign detracted from his success. A similar point was made about his financial exactions with the problems of the Cornish and Yorkshire tax

rebellions as well. Most were also able to discuss the threats to his rule although at times some responses drifted into narratives of such threats to his power. Stronger answers argued that despite his successes in dealing with the Yorkist threat, the extent and length of the rebellions meant that his reign could not be regarded as a complete success.

Weaker answers tended to be extremely narrow and often just discussed the threats to his rule and how he dealt with them. For a large number of candidates, judgements were often no more than asserted and they should be reminded that a valid judgement must support its claims with accurate and relevant detail. Conversely, where information is used in isolation and for illustrative purposes, it cannot be credited as analysis or evaluation and so candidates must be selective in their use of own knowledge.

Y136 England 1485–1558: the Early Tudors

Question 1

Answers to this question were generally done well. Most candidates were able to access the source and explain that according to the source economic causes were to blame for the instability in 1549. Most candidates were able to draw upon some knowledge to comment on the breakdown of stability, yet a significant number of answers lacked full engagement with the source as provenance was often not used. The most effective answers used provenance and relevant contextual knowledge to challenge the view in the source. Where answers were less effective students did not use the key question term ‘useful’ and therefore had limited focus on the question. Some answers simply descended into imparting knowledge without any reference to the source.

A minority of candidates wrote about Source A instead of Source C. Responses of this type were marked and credited in line with the levels of response mark scheme against the specified issue in the question.

Most attempted to evaluate the utility of Source C but in weaker answers this took the form of “C is useful because it says.....and I know this is true” or something similar. Better answers saw candidates test their often very detailed knowledge against the views expressed by Somerset. They were quick to pick up on references to enclosures, common land and religion. A minority mistakenly assumed Somerset was only referring to the East Anglian Rebellion but most were able to place his comments in the wider context of the breakdown of stability.

However, to attain levels 4 or 5 it was necessary to address the provenance of Source C and here students were less confident and less assured. Some avoided the problem by ignoring provenance altogether and there were a lot of very basic comments: “Somerset was there so he should know.... Somerset was Edward’s chief minister so he would tell the truth....It is a private letter therefore it must be reliable.... It isn’t useful because it doesn’t mention any names...”

The key differentiator with the source, between those above and below L3 seemed to be whether candidates accepted Somerset’s comment about religion being a ‘pretend motive’ at face value or not. Those candidates who questioned the validity of Somerset’s comment usually went on to analyse and evaluate the issue in a whole variety of ways. The best answers commented on the tone of the letter as well as Somerset’s position, and also compared his claims in Source C to actual events. They also considered the idea of breakdown, looking at why 1549 saw such unrest when it had been absent in 1547 or 1548. They correctly pointed out the date of the source (August 1549) and appreciated that the Duke was seeking to portray the rebellions as mindless outbursts of violence by the “vilest and worst sort of men” and that his intention was to absolve himself from any culpability.

Question 2

This question was largely well-answered. Candidates adopted a number of approaches to this question. Some considered each source in isolation while some attempted to analyse the sources in groups or themes. The former approach was generally more successful as students seemed to struggle to analyse the sources together. Most candidates used a mini introduction and this worked well when the candidate had properly considered each source's view and could therefore summarise it in a few sentences before going on to analyse it in more detail. Some scripts simply described the general reasons for unrest in 1549 in their introduction which was not particularly useful. A minority of candidates chose to ignore the sources altogether and simply wrote an essay on the causes of unrest in 1549. Passing references to "...as the Sources show..." did not constitute an answer to the question as set and failed to gain much credit.

Candidates displayed a lot of detailed knowledge in order to evaluate to what extent the Sources supported or contradicted the issue. A common mistake was to misunderstand the "We pray..." in Source B as evidence of strong religious belief and to see Article 8 as evidence of protest against the Edwardian Reformation similar to the complaints voiced in Source A. Most candidates commented on Somerset's claim that "others pretend religion is their motive", though some simply stated that he was wrong. However most answers demonstrated that students had understood the main issues raised in each source including religious, economic and social aspects in regard to the question. The 'counter' arguments emphasising the significance of debasement, inflation etc. seemed to be better handled than the religious issues. A small number of students were able to identify and explain the reformist nature of the religious objectives in source B, and differentiate this from the more catholic grievances in A. More candidates were able to successfully explore, via contextual knowledge, the significance of the 'looking for loot', 'hatred of gentlemen' and 'wanting to rule' references in source C.

As with Question 1 candidates were less assured when examining the provenance and again this issue was simply ignored by some students. With Source A, few considered Somerset's purpose in publishing a letter in the King's name at this time. The best answers related the demands to events in Devon and Cornwall, and some even considered the linguistic aspect, pointing out remoteness from London both culturally and also as a religiously conservative region. Regarding Source B relatively few candidates showed any understanding as to how a series of rebel demands might be put together and to what extent they might reflect the true causes of discontent. Additionally, a number of candidates latched on to the words 'We pray...' at the start of each demand and took this to signify religious motivation rather than a demonstration of good manners. When discussing Source C only the best answers discussed Somerset's motives in dismissing the importance of religion or noted that in August 1549 his position as Protector was under serious threat. Some consideration of provenance was very formulaic 'Somerset was there at the time therefore this source is reliable'- candidates would really benefit from understanding how to draw out the analysis of provenance. Many candidates simply stated the source's provenance rather than analysing it.

Question 3

The vast majority of candidates chose to answer this question and it was evident that the majority of students had a clear knowledge of the topic. The most effective answers used a developed line of reasoning linked with relevant knowledge to support analysis of the relative importance of each factor chosen, following an argumentative essay structure. However a sizeable number of students chose to follow a simpler list structure (dealing with one challenge or challenger per paragraph) which limited their ability to be analytical. Some answers were purely descriptive and candidates failed to introduce any element of analysis or evaluation into each paragraph.

Candidates should be wary of lengthy and over-detailed plans which in some cases led to problems of time management when writing their actual answers. There were some quite simple, repeated factual errors (candidates confused the two pretenders or incorrectly identified who Simnel and Warbeck 'pretended' to be). Some students had misunderstood the question and

this led to some description of foreign policy. Two repeated issues were flagged by a number of examiners: one, Pretender means a claimant, not simply an impostor; secondly, Yorkist and Yorkshire are not interchangeable terms in the late fifteenth century. However, the main flaw in some responses was that they tended to become essays on the pretenders or foreign policy, rather than a precise response to the issue of “challenges”.

In good answers candidates dealt with the issue of the challenges to Henry VII well. Relevant issues including Henry VII's claim to the throne, rebellions and pretenders were documented. Many candidates argued that the early challenges were the most serious since Henry was not fully established and since the battle of Stoke could have resulted in his defeat which was a reasonable proposition. Some candidates discussed the Yorkshire and Cornwall tax rebellions with better answers pointing out that these were protests about policy rather than attempts to get rid of Henry as King. Weaker candidates provided a descriptive account of events focusing on a range of issues but largely just Simnel and Warbeck. Better answers demonstrated an analysis of the seriousness of the challenges using detailed knowledge of the majority of the issues.

Question 4

A smaller number of students chose to answer this question. In the best answers there was a consistent focus on the question, and analysis and evaluation was in evidence to support any judgements made. The most effective answers included a clear line of argument and used knowledge to support substantiated judgement on the relative importance of each factor. Candidates who chose to identify Wolsey's aims and assess his policies against these found that this approach was the most fruitful in terms of producing an analytical and argumentative essay.

There was some good knowledge about Wolsey's policies but there were a sizeable number of answers that clearly had a very limited understanding of Wolsey's domestic policy and gave accounts of the French wars or only discussed the divorce, often in rather vague fashion. Better answers focused on a wider range of factors including legal, social and economic aspects of his policies. The church was not generally dealt with although a few better candidates did provide a detailed analysis of this and the Great Matter. A number of answers looked at finance, the law, administration and enclosures before reaching a verdict. Knowledge about the Tudor subsidy, the Amicable Grant and the volume of cases heard by Star Chamber and Chancery was generally good: knowledge about the Eltham Ordinances though was less secure for many candidates. A common misconception was that the Star Chamber was created by Wolsey when in fact it had operated in the reign of Henry VII.

In weaker answers there were extended lists of Wolsey's domestic policies with differing amounts of analysis and focus on the question of how 'successful' these policies actually were. Some of these responses lost focus, instead deciding to assess which of their listed challenges was the most serious, rather than deal with the umbrella issue of “how serious” were all challenges faced.

Y137 England 1547–1603: the Later Tudors

Question 1

Answers to this question were generally done well. Most candidates were able to access the source and explain that according to the source economic causes were to blame for the instability in 1549. Most candidates were able to draw upon some knowledge to comment on the breakdown of stability, yet a significant number of answers lacked full engagement with the source as provenance was often not used. The most effective answers used provenance and relevant contextual knowledge to challenge the view in the source. Where answers were less effective students did not use the key question term 'useful' and therefore had limited focus on the question. Some answers simply descended into imparting knowledge without any reference to the source.

A minority of candidates wrote about Source A instead of Source C. Responses of this type were marked and credited in line with the levels of response mark scheme against the specified issue in the question.

Most attempted to evaluate the utility of Source C but in weaker answers this took the form of “C is useful because it says.....and I know this is true” or something similar. Better answers saw candidates test their often very detailed knowledge against the views expressed by Somerset. They were quick to pick up on references to enclosures, common land and religion. A minority mistakenly assumed Somerset was only referring to the East Anglian Rebellion but most were able to place his comments in the wider context of the breakdown of stability. However, to attain levels 4 or 5 it was necessary to address the provenance of Source C and here responses were less confident and less assured. Some avoided the problem by ignoring provenance altogether and there were a lot of very basic comments: “Somerset was there so he should know.... Somerset was Edward’s chief minister so he would tell the truth....It is a private letter therefore it must be reliable.... It isn’t useful because it doesn’t mention any names...”

The key differentiator with the source, between those above and below L3 seemed to be whether candidates accepted Somerset’s comment about religion being a ‘pretend motive’ at face value or not. Those candidates who questioned the validity of Somerset’s comment usually went on to analyse and evaluate the issue in a whole variety of ways. The best answers commented on the tone of the letter as well as Somerset’s position, and also compared his claims in Source C to actual events. They also considered the idea of breakdown, looking at why 1549 saw such unrest when it had been absent in 1547 or 1548. They correctly pointed out the date of the source (August 1549) and appreciated that the Duke was seeking to portray the rebellions as mindless outbursts of violence by the “vilest and worst sort of men” and that his intention was to absolve himself from any culpability.

Question 2

This question was largely well-answered. Candidates adopted a number of approaches to this question. Some considered each source in isolation while some attempted to analyse the sources in groups or themes. The former approach was generally more successful as students seemed to struggle to analyse the sources together. Most candidates used a mini introduction and this worked well when the candidate had properly considered each source’s view and could therefore summarise it in a few sentences before going on to analyse it in more detail. Some scripts simply described the general reasons for unrest in 1549 in their introduction which was not particularly useful. A minority of candidates chose to ignore the sources altogether and simply wrote an essay on the causes of unrest in 1549. Passing references to “...as the Sources show...” did not constitute an answer to the question as set and failed to gain much credit.

Candidates displayed a lot of detailed knowledge in order to evaluate to what extent the Sources supported or contradicted the issue. A common mistake was to misunderstand the “We pray...” in Source B as evidence of strong religious belief and to see Article 8 as evidence of protest against the Edwardian Reformation similar to the complaints voiced in Source A. Most candidates commented on Somerset’s claim that “others pretend religion is their motive”, though some simply stated that he was wrong. However most answers demonstrated that students had understood the main issues raised in each source including religious, economic and social aspects in regard to the question. The ‘counter’ arguments emphasising the significance of debasement, inflation etc. seemed to be better handled than the religious issues. A small number of students were able to identify and explain the reformist nature of the religious objectives in source B, and differentiate this from the more catholic grievances in A. More candidates were able to successfully explore, via contextual knowledge, the significance of the ‘looking for loot’, ‘hatred of gentlemen’ and ‘wanting to rule’ references in source C.

As with Question 1 candidates were less assured when examining the provenance and again this issue was simply ignored by some students. With Source A, few considered Somerset’s purpose in publishing a letter in the King’s name at this time. The best answers related the

demands to events in Devon and Cornwall, and some even considered the linguistic aspect, pointing out remoteness from London both culturally and also as a religiously conservative region. Regarding Source B relatively few candidates showed any understanding as to how a series of rebel demands might be put together and to what extent they might reflect the true causes of discontent. Additionally, a number of candidates latched on to the words ‘We pray...’ at the start of each demand and took this to signify religious motivation rather than a demonstration of good manners. When discussing Source C only the best answers discussed Somerset’s motives in dismissing the importance of religion or noted that in August 1549 his position as Protector was under serious threat. Some consideration of provenance was very formulaic ‘Somerset was there at the time therefore this source is reliable’- candidates would really benefit from understanding how to draw out the analysis of provenance. Many candidates simply stated the source’s provenance rather than analysing it.

Question 3

This was the less popular of the two essays and although there were some very good answers, it was less successfully done than Question 4.

A significant number of candidates failed to establish what “effective opposition” might mean. Too often any disagreement or minor friction between Elizabeth and her Parliaments was regarded as effective. Most candidates had decent knowledge of the topic but many found it difficult to home in on many specific instances or events. This meant generalised understanding only. Again, only a minority produced nuanced answers which examined factors in some detail before coming to a supported judgement. The counter-arguments examining Elizabeth’s use of management techniques in Parliament were better known to candidates who chose this essay, whilst in terms of effective opposition most dealt sensibly with Elizabeth’s later Parliaments especially on the problem of monopolies. Surprisingly few candidates were able to consider the role of the Puritan choir, or Parliament’s use of supply to pressurise Elizabeth into redressing their grievances.

There was a tendency to include names such as Wentworth, Strickland and Cope but without any real understanding of the relevant context. A common error was to regard Elizabeth’s Council as part of Parliament.

Question 4

This was the most popular of the essay questions. A surprisingly large number of candidates failed to read the question properly and missed the dates 1588-1603. This led to a great deal of irrelevant material on the Elizabethan Church Settlement, Mary Queen of Scots and early confrontations over marriage and succession. Another issue was a general failure to establish criteria against which the successful management of issues could be judged and candidates would be well-advised to address such issues in their introductory paragraphs in future sessions.

Candidates who wrote on the correct period often showed a great deal of accurate knowledge but there was a tendency to deploy this in a descriptive manner rather than an analytical one. The Armada and the adventures of Essex were often described in far too much detail. Many candidates produced a valid list of problems including the Spanish War, Ireland, the Earl of Essex, Factions at Court and in Parliament, poverty, vagrancy and monopolies. One examiner highlighted the problems of such an approach and suggested the following as an alternative; “Inevitably these answers could only skate thinly over the surface and candidates did best where they selected three or four of these problems and analysed them in detail”.

For a large number of candidates, judgements were often no more than asserted and they should be reminded that a valid judgement must support its claims with accurate and relevant detail. Conversely, where information is used in isolation and for illustrative purposes, it cannot be credited as analysis or evaluation and so candidates must be selective in their use of own knowledge.

Y138 The Early Stuarts and the Origins of the Civil War 1603–1660

Question 1

The best answers had detailed knowledge of the process of negotiations so were able to place this source in context. A large number of candidates grasped the nature of Charles' attitude towards a settlement, with very few misreading the source content. Weaker candidates in staying close to the text of the source were able to state how it demonstrated Charles's reluctance to negotiate with Parliament. Better answers were able to comment on the delays to negotiations being linked to Charles' dealing with the Scots. A significant number of candidates treated this more as a comprehension exercise than a utility question though, with contextual knowledge often attached to illustrate rather than to aid evaluation of the source.

The best answers engaged with both context and provenance at some level although a number misread the attributions and treated the source as being written in 1648 rather than as a Restoration justification of her husband's part in Charles' trial and execution. There was also some confusion over Lucy Hutchinson– it seemed that in some cases students had encountered her before in the course but were muddled over who she was, and did not therefore properly read the source attribution. In many cases spending time reading the source attribution would have helped the candidates to focus on the key aspects of the question. Provenance tended to be handled in isolation from the source's content and was sometimes rather stock in its approach (e.g. not written at the time, not directly involved in events etc., without these comments being made relevant to the specific details in the source.)

Question 2

Candidates adopted a number of approaches to this question. Some considered each source in isolation while some attempted to analyse the sources in groups/ themes. The sequential approach was generally more successful and is a valid method of analysis. Students seemed to struggle to analyse the sources together and there was a danger of repetition when sources were handled in groups.

In a relatively large minority of answers there were issues with focus, analysing *whether* Charles was a traitor or tyrant, not reasons for him being brought to trial. Weaker answers also strayed into his execution rather than trial. There were issues with students not really understanding what 'traitor' or 'tyrant' meant and hence being rather vague in focus. Better answers identified from the sources alternative explanations for Charles being brought to trial, such as 'God's Providence' or his unwillingness to negotiate. Students generally struggled more to apply Source A; Sources B and C were handled better in terms of both content and provenance. Some, weaker, answers even argued Source A was totally irrelevant to the question.

It was pleasing to see most students at least attempting to make use of source provenance, and to see very few answers which were purely knowledge driven, although it would still be helpful for students to get more practice in linking contextual knowledge directly to the sources as there was little synthesis in some answers at times. A sizeable minority of candidates treated this more as a comprehension exercise than as an enquiries question requiring analysis and evaluation, with own knowledge often used to illustrate a description of each source.

There were also some issues with understanding certain terms, as one examiner put succinctly "*Candidates on the whole struggle to understand what the key terms in the sources mean, and for that matter, what tyranny means. For example, several say that the fact that 'restoring the king to power would be inconsistent with the liberty of the people' demonstrates there are other reasons for trying the king, when in fact that's essentially the definition of tyranny. It's also rare for candidates to understand what 'man of blood' means, i.e. that Charles is to be treated as a man rather than an anointed King. Those who demonstrate even a general understanding of these terms tended to do well.*"

Question 3

Responses to this question were on the whole weaker than the responses to Q4. Candidates on the whole had a good knowledge and understanding of the range of religious issues during James' reign though found it more challenging to engage with 'How far' divisions increased. A number tended to focus more on whether divisions did or didn't increase, defaulting to answers on how successful James' policies were. Issues of focus generally emerged when candidates failed to see that they were being asked about *change*.

However, there were many successful answers which either identified relevant issues (impact of foreign policy etc) or handled different religious groups in sequence, and evaluated how far divisions increased as a consequence. Some candidates focused narrowly on the very early years of James's reign (Hampton Court Conference & Gunpowder Plot particularly). Stronger answers covered the whole of the reign and used an introductory paragraph to establish the situation for James at the beginning of his reign, and then used their conclusion to assess the extent of change by the end of his reign. The best answers were very analytical identifying particular turning points such as the 30yrs War or by identifying periods of change and continuity over the course of the reign.

There were some common misconceptions with some responses showing confusion about Laud and Arminianism, describing James as an Arminian and misattributing Laud's controversial Church reforms to James' reign rather than Charles'.

Question 4

Candidates seemed prepared for this question and it was generally answered well, with the majority of students addressing the question in a balanced way. Narrative answers to this question were unusual and there were many good examples of analysis and evaluation. Knowledge of the strengths of the New Model Army was sound, although some students wanted to attribute all parliamentary victories to the New Model Army, not realising it was formed only near the end of the war. Weaker answers tended to be more general in their knowledge of the qualities of the New Model Army but were more well-informed on alternative viewpoints including royal weaknesses or the significance of Parliament's control of London.

Another examiner noted the strengths seen in this type of question and offers some guidance for candidates in making interim judgements throughout the essay. "In many cases an attempt to establish interim and overall judgments was made, very successfully in some cases; answers could have achieved even higher marks where the line of argument was consistent throughout. Candidates engaged well with the prioritization required for a 'how important' question, demonstrating a good understanding of the requirements of the question, though interim judgments on significance were less frequently seen.

Y139 The making of Georgian Britain

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y140 From Pitt to Peel: Britain 1783–1853

Question 1

The question required learners to consider the utility of Source B and there were a small minority who instead wrote about Source A. Responses of this type were marked and credited in line with the levels of response mark scheme against the specified issue in the question. . Learners should also be aware, as is made clear in the generic mark scheme, that to reach the highest levels they must consider the provenance of the Source and apply own knowledge to test its utility about the issue in the question. Some did this, but wrote very generally about the Source and did not link it to the debate within the Conservative party about the repeal of the Corn Laws, whilst others saw the phrase 'the repeal of the Corn Laws' and gave an account of the reasons

for the repeal, with minimal reference to the Source. In considering the provenance it is important to read the attribution carefully and some did pick up that it was a private letter, but then suggested that as it came from just one person or was private might not show the views of the whole party, or that Goulburn might not know about the debate. Stronger answers were able to link it to the debate and some also used knowledge to link it back to the election campaign of 1841 and how Peel was dependent on traditional Tory and landowning support. Some answers also commented on the pressure Peel was under from the Anti-Corn Law League, whilst others commented on the logistical problem of dealing with the Irish famine, linking it to the comment about relieving 'the present distress'.

Question 2

Most responses were able to at least attempt to address the question, but answers that did not reach the higher levels often failed to do so because they failed to consider both the provenance of the Source they were considering or were unable to apply specific own knowledge to support their evaluation. However, even those who did this often misunderstood Source A and did not pick up on it being a reference to Peel's attitude to the 1832 Great Reform Act and his acceptance of the change, with many arguing to the contrary and using it to suggest he was opposed to all reform. Some, having misused it for Question 1 continued to see it as referring to the Repeal of the Corn Laws. However, stronger answers were able to use it to argue both ways in terms of putting the interests of the country above those of the party. Source B was often handled better than the other sources in Question 2, possibly because candidates had already spent time on it. Many were able to consider how the source both supported and challenged the statement in the question and were able to bring in own knowledge, with reference to the famine in Ireland, whilst some also commented on the fact that repeal would help neither the Irish nor the Conservative party. Source C seemed to be the easiest source to understand, with even weaker answers using knowledge, such as the reforms of the 1841 ministry and particularly factory legislation, to produce some analysis. Some were able to comment on the provenance of Source C, suggesting because it was written in a cheap paper it would support Peel's work for the country, whilst others suggested that because it was written as a tribute soon after his death it was inevitable it would praise him. However, many answers had very little provenance, even stock, making it hard to award more than a low level 4. Own knowledge seemed to focus mainly on repeal of Corn Laws, although some referenced factory reform. Some of the strongest answers did reach a source-based judgement at the end of the response.

Question 3

This was the more popular essay question. Given the limitations of time it was not expected that learners would consider all of the reforms of the period, but they did need to consider sufficient so that any judgement was based on a sufficient range of issues to make sure the judgement reached was valid. Weaker answers either described the reforms or became confused with the previous decade and wrote about Liverpool's measures to tackle the unrest. A number of answers were of the well-explained list approach but there were some answers which both displayed insight and judgement. This was particularly noticeable in discussions about Catholic Emancipation and the repeal of Combination Acts. Learners were able to argue that Catholic Emancipation suggested that the reform was liberal as it broke from a long held tradition, but then balanced that against the situation in Ireland and argued that it was forced on a reluctant government. Some found Peel's penal reforms difficult to interpret, but more disappointing was the lack of knowledge about the financial and trade measures of the period.

Question 4

There were a number of weaker responses to this question, whose understanding of the actual question was confused and showed little understanding of the concept of parliamentary reform, writing about issues such as social reform. Some produced an essay on the reasons for parliamentary reform in 1832. Many answers wrote about the way in which both Pitt and Liverpool managed the radical threat and explained why it was not a challenge. Quite a lot of weaker answers just described the radical threat over the period. However, there were some who were able to address the issues raised by the question, although they sometimes focused

heavily on the Pitt period and the impact of the French Revolution, rather than covering the entire time span in the question. However, some were able to consider the nature of the government, the attitude of the monarch as well as the named factor and produce a balanced answer.

Y141 Liberals, Conservatives and the Rise of Labour 1846–1918

Question 1

Although most candidates had a clear understanding of the Source a number found it difficult to use it to address the precise demands of the question or became side tracked and did not always focus upon the questions of ‘explanation for militancy’. Therefore there were many ‘general utility’ answers which hovered in the mid-range (Level 4-3) band. The weakest answers were seen where candidates discussed the suffrage movement rather than the Suffragettes or became confused about the chronology of events, commenting that the Source was written in the same year as the ‘Cat and Mouse Act’ or the death of Emily Davison at the Derby. However, stronger answers did place the source in its wider context and were able to use these events to show how militancy developed. Other good use of knowledge was seen with responses considering specific Liberal actions that ‘forced’, as the source said, women to resort to militancy e.g. the 1909 Suffrage Bill, its collapse and the resultant ‘Direct Action’ campaign embarked upon by the Suffragettes. Some also referred to attacks on MPs, arson attacks, chaining to railings and damage at galleries. The handling of provenance was reasonable although generally stock – an alarming number did not seem to know that ‘Votes for Women’ was the Suffragettes mouthpiece, or if they did assumed that this automatically made the source unreliable, even if it was supported by own knowledge.

Question 2

Whilst the question was understood, unfortunately some of the candidates found this to be difficult to answer partially because of the sources, and in particular Source B. The best answers understood that Source A was generally in support of the interpretation, but its provenance cast doubt over the credibility due to the fact it was from the Suffragettes and therefore cast all Liberals with the same brush, as it were. However, the weakest answers struggled to relate this source to the question and therefore either simply analysed it on a superficial basis or ignored it! Although Source B clearly presented that the Liberals were not ‘united’ in their opposition, for Lloyd George and Churchill both make it clear that they are not opposed, many found this source difficult because of the conversational nature and very few actually understood its message. It is a particularly authentic source taken from a conversation between Liberals although one is affiliated to the press. Furthermore many also failed to see the value in it because they hooked onto the fact it was written by the editor of the Manchester Guardian and therefore dismissed it as press, rather than reading the attribution carefully. The last source was better understood – Asquith shows his opposition but acknowledges that ‘a considerable majority of my colleagues are of a different opinion’ – the weakest answers simply hooked onto what Asquith said in agreeing with the interpretation, whilst the majority understood that this his acknowledgement afterwards actually placed the source on the counter argument. Once again provenance was weaker, however, this did not appear to be because it was difficult, it was evident that many were running out of time, having spent too long on Question 1 – provenance was dropped therefore in favour of getting onto the essay questions – this unfortunately had a detrimental impact on candidates marks – centres would be well advised to encourage pupils to spend a shorter amount of time on Question 1 in order that Question 2 can be completed in full and that both own knowledge and provenance can be used to address the question.

Question 3

The question was attempted by a number of candidates, but knowledge about the ‘influence of Gladstone’ was often quite generalised or sometimes his influence was completely ignored. Responses were much stronger when dealing with other reasons, such as the Conservative split of 1846, although some spent far too long on that issue, or the Radicals. Some learners did not read the question carefully and instead went on to write about the 1868 ministry and its reforms and attempted to use the reforms to argue that Gladstone’s influence was therefore crucial. There was also some good discussion of the role of the press and non-conformity, whilst other responses focused on events such as the Willis room Meeting. There were few learners who were unable to write relevantly, but a number lacked real depth of knowledge or did not deal with the named factor.

Question 4

This was the more popular question in this Unit and most candidates had a sound knowledge of Disraeli’s foreign and imperial policy to be able to address the question, although some did not focus well-enough on ‘defending British interests’ and instead simply considered whether he was successful. Answers were able to discuss a wide range of issues, covering events such as the purchase of the Suez shares, events in Afghanistan and the Zulu War, as well as the Eastern Question. There were some who were able to distinguish between the actions of Disraeli and the ‘men on the spot’ and used this to support their argument. However, some answers did lack range and focused almost exclusively on either Suez and the Empress of India or the colonial conflict, with the Eastern Question receiving scant coverage. Whilst, in the time allowed, candidates are not expected to cover all issues it is important that sufficient is discussed to make any judgement valid.

Y142 Britain 1900–1951

Question 1

Although most candidates had a clear understanding of the Source a number found it difficult to use it to address the precise demands of the question or became side tracked and did not always focus upon the questions of ‘explanation for militancy’. Therefore there were many ‘general utility’ answers which hovered in the mid-range (Level 4-3) band. The weakest answers were seen where candidates discussed the suffrage movement rather than the Suffragettes or became confused about the chronology of events, commenting that the Source was written in the same year as the ‘Cat and Mouse Act’ or the death of Emily Davison at the Derby. However, stronger answers did place the source in its wider context and were able to use these events to show how militancy developed. Other good use of knowledge was seen with responses considering specific Liberal actions that ‘forced’, as the source said, women to resort to militancy e.g. the 1909 Suffrage Bill, its collapse and the resultant ‘Direct Action’ campaign embarked upon by the Suffragettes. Some also referred to attacks on MPs, arson attacks, chaining to railings and damage at galleries. The handling of provenance was reasonable although generally stock – an alarming number did not seem to know that ‘Votes for Women’ was the Suffragettes mouthpiece, or if they did assumed that this automatically made the source unreliable, even if it was supported by own knowledge.

Question 2

Whilst the question was understood, unfortunately some of the candidates found this to be difficult to answer partially because of the sources, and in particular Source B. The best answers understood that Source A was generally in support of the interpretation, but its provenance cast doubt over the credibility due to the fact it was from the Suffragettes and therefore cast all Liberals with the same brush, as it were. However, the weakest answers struggled to relate this source to the question and therefore either simply analysed it on a superficial basis or ignored it! Although Source B clearly presented that the Liberals were not ‘united’ in their opposition, for Lloyd George and Churchill both make it clear that they are not opposed, many found this source difficult because of the conversational nature and very few actually understood its message. It is a particularly authentic source taken from a conversation between Liberals

although one is affiliated to the press. Furthermore many also failed to see the value in it because they hooked onto the fact it was written by the editor of the Manchester Guardian and therefore dismissed it as press, rather than reading the attribution carefully. The last source was better understood – Asquith shows his opposition but acknowledges that ‘a considerable majority of my colleagues are of a different opinion’ – the weakest answers simply hooked onto what Asquith said in agreeing with the interpretation, whilst the majority understood that this his acknowledgement afterwards actually placed the source on the counter argument. Once again provenance was weaker, however, this did not appear to be because it was difficult, it was evident that many were running out of time, having spent too long on Question 1 – provenance was dropped therefore in favour of getting onto the essay questions – this unfortunately had a detrimental impact on candidates marks – centres would be well advised to encourage pupils to spend a shorter amount of time on Question 1 in order that Question 2 can be completed in full and that both own knowledge and provenance can be used to address the question.

Question 3

This was by far the most popular of the two essay questions. The best answers looked at Lloyd George in depth across the full time period ie. up until 1924. They examined his part in the split with Asquith, his domestic policy ‘homes for heroes’ and the ‘honours crisis’ and foreign policy relating to Chanak, all of which were carefully evaluated and then placed in the context of other issues such as the Rise of Labour and the Conservatives. Some candidates also evaluated with Asquith, although this was less effectively done. Weaker answers often gave very light coverage of Lloyd George and either ignored the split with Asquith and focused on his post war ministry or focused almost exclusively on his split with Asquith, with little coverage of the later period. The very weakest answers focused very much upon Lloyd George’s personal life – discrediting him as a politician – but made little attempt to link this to the decline of the Liberal Party in general. Where there were regular links back this question was, in general, answered relatively well. Candidates were able to consider issues such as the impact of the war on liberal values, the rise of Labour and the experience they gained during war, the Representation of the People’s Act of 1918 and its impact on the Liberal party and the recovery of the Conservatives from 1906. Some weaker answers tended to focus more generally on the issues surrounding the decline of the Liberals, with less attention given to Lloyd George’s contribution to it.

Question 4

Fewer candidates attempted this question, which drew a range of responses in term of quality. The phrase ‘socialist principles’ proved to be challenging to access for some weaker candidates, whilst stronger answers remained focused and used it as a point of reference.

The best answers gave a comprehensive examination of Labour policy post war related to NHS, National Insurance Act, etc. and examined how far these related to ‘socialist ideology’ and evaluated by how far it was simply a matter of necessity or building upon the work of the Liberals – the education system seemed to be the best way to prove that it was not entirely based upon socialism. Weaker candidates struggled and often gave just a broad overview of the Labour government’s policies, wrote at depth about the Beveridge Report but choose to completely avoid tackling the notion of ‘socialist principles’ and thereby left themselves in the lower levels. Some also did not understand what was meant by social reforms and instead wrote at length about the economy and the nationalisation of industry. Where this was related back to the social implications of such measures it could be credited, but for much of the answer this was not usually the case.

Y143 Britain 1930–1997

Question 1

A number of responses did not focus on the demands of the question. Some responses wrote at length about the provenance, although in weaker answers this was often quite general and did not go beyond it 'was written by Churchill and would therefore be biased or unreliable', whilst some others clearly thought that he was Prime Minister at the start of May. However, stronger answers not only displayed some knowledge about the Norway campaign, but were able to place it in context of British failures at the start of the war, bringing in events such as the invasion of Poland and the loss of France – with specific mention of Dunkirk- although some were able to contrast these defeats with successes elsewhere, although discussing events of 1941 onwards brought little credit. Responses often made mention of Churchill's earlier career, particularly Gallipoli and his later relationship with his Generals. There was also some discussion of the lack of preparedness, with responses discussing the lack of rearmament until late in the 1930s, but stronger answers often linked this back to Churchill and the Ten Year Rule. There was much that learners could consider and most were not limited by their lack of knowledge or understanding of the Source, but because they did not consider both the provenance and the context.

Question 2

Most structured their answer by dealing with each source individually followed by a judgement. There were some good examples of a more thematic answer that was able to integrate the sources in combination. Often, these tended to result in a more sophisticated use of the evidence. Whatever the approach, the best responses linked textual with contextual closely, created a strong sense of the sources in their context, applied knowledge tellingly and set up analysis and evaluation. There was quite a bit of repetition regarding Source A with Q1. This is understandable but most candidates recognised the different focus of the question. The typical differential in answers was between those that used both knowledge and provenance, securing a Level 4 and those that only managed either a brief or partial evaluation and analysis, or only one of these. This resulted in a lower mark being awarded. Learners found some of the sources easier to deal with, particularly in terms of own knowledge, with Source C providing the greatest challenge, although some were aware of the final outcome of the vote. Source C also raised a few other problems as some were unsure whether Amery was a supporter of Chamberlain or Churchill, whilst some seemed to think it was Churchill who had spoken the words in the debate. Source B was probably handled the best as it opened up both sides of the debate and many were quick to pick up on this, although discussion of provenance was often misguided, with a considerable number failing to pick up that it was diary entry. Many answers were able to bring in the question of Halifax as an alternative to Chamberlain and used this knowledge well, whilst others commented on the position of Labour towards Chamberlain. Some found linking Source A to the actual question quite difficult, but many argued that it showed how weak the position of the Prime Minister must have been for Churchill to emerge as the next Prime Minister. Stronger responses linked this to Source B and Churchill's attributes, although many also picked up on his weaknesses alluded to in B.

Weaker responses simply used comprehension skills to relay the meaning of the sources to allow them to agree or not with the question asked. Many candidates would attempt an evaluation without any real attempt to evaluate the provenance. Provenance was mostly of the 'stock' variety. Source A was often evaluated the best, presumably because time had already been spent on it. Some also thought that Cromwell was alive and a contemporary of Churchill. A surprising number of candidates merely described Source C, perhaps because of lack of time.

Question 3

This was by far the most popular essay. Most candidates seemed to have little difficulty identifying the relevant factors, although obviously varying in terms of the quality of analysis. Some knew little about leadership itself and more or less ignored that as a factor; others made a great effort to comment on each leader in turn. However most essays were well structured, even if the named factor was less-well addressed and there was a clear attempt to answer the question, although the word 'strength' was not always clearly focussed upon. A number of candidates did not look at all of the leaders with Home being the most frequently omitted. Where leadership was discussed it was Conservative leadership that was the main factor, pointing to Macmillan's reputation, Churchill's initial popularity and Eden's charisma and charm. It appeared that the stronger, more nuanced answers tended to downplay Tory leadership. Some candidates successfully pointed out that events like the Suez Crisis, 'Night of Long Knives', Profumo and other crises showed that their leadership was not as good as it first appeared and that perhaps it was only the timing of elections that allowed their domination. Candidates seemed much happier discussing the economic performance of the governments and the rise in living standards, which was sometimes linked to the problems facing Labour. Labour weakness and leadership were often well discussed and comments made about the success of Labour once they had a strong leader, contrasting with the Conservative leadership of Home. However, others noted that despite this and the poor economic situation Labour's victory in 1964 was close.

Question 4

Although this was less popular than Question 3, it still produced a good range of answers. However, often answers were very narrow or confused, with a number believing that Heath led the Labour party and therefore confusing events and legislation. Very few answers even mentioned Callaghan, although the Winter of Discontent was a good catchall for proving weaknesses against the TUs and the economy. Europe was cited more often and in more detail than might have been the case in any other year! Strangely enough very few mentioned the ground-breaking social policies enacted in the late 1960s, perhaps not appreciating sufficiently that they were addressed to very real social issues. Again only the best were able to clarify what constituted success/failure. However stronger responses were well able to recall the problems in government such as the economy, financial pressures (Devaluation, IMF loans), trade unions (especially 1969-70 events), Bennites and the 'Winter of Discontent.' They were equally able to point to social policy success in the later 1960s such as the legalisation of homosexuality and abortion. More sophisticated answers were more sympathetic to Wilson especially, arguing that he was able to compromise with the unions and divisions within his party and leave a relatively successful legacy in what were difficult economic situations. Callaghan as PM got little mention in many responses. Generally the 1964-70 period was covered better than 1974-79.

Non-British period study:

Y231 The Rise of Islam c.550–750

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y232 Charlemagne 768–814

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y233 01 The Crusades and the Crusader States 1095–1192

Comments on each question

Question 1

Many good solid answers were seen to this question. They were characterised by a good knowledge of the Crusader States across the time span and an understanding that the question demanded comparison of reasons as to why the States survived. Thus, strong responses matched Muslim weaknesses (especially disunity between Sunni Muslims in Egypt and Shia Muslims in Aleppo and Damascus) against how these were exploited by Crusaders such as Tancred and Baldwin. Some candidates discussed, appropriately, alliances made between Crusaders and Muslims and also that once Muslims did unite they started to challenge the Crusader states. Muslim weaknesses were invariably compared with other factors such as the propensity for Crusaders to integrate with local populations, the role of the military orders, castle construction, support for the Crusader States from Genoa and Venice and the abilities of Crusader leaders. Many candidates were able to offer some at least some explanation of the factors although a significant number struggled to arrive at judgements about relative significance. Quite a few answers simply stated that a factor was important (or even the most important) without providing justification. However, the biggest issue arising from weaker responses concerned the term Crusader States. A significant number of essays revealed at best a hazy understanding of the term or ignored it all together. Such answers were characterised either by a focus on the First Crusade or the Crusades in general and therefore were classified as being on the topic rather than the actual question.

Question 2

This question seemed less popular than Q1 possibly due to some candidates being unsure about the relationship between Richard I and Philip Augustus. The strongest answers analysed the impact of Philip's return to France after falling out with Richard over numerous issues. They then went to show how Philip's actions troubled Richard to the extent that he too, eventually, left the Middle East only to be captured and imprisoned. Many candidates correctly drew the conclusion that the disagreements had a profound effect on the relative failure of the Third Crusade before going on to discuss other factors. The later included the death of Frederick Barbarossa, the relative strengths of Richard and Saladin and the logistical difficulties of fighting in the Holy Land at the time. Weaker answers lacked clarity over the disagreement issue and/or drifted to stating/listing and describing the limited achievements of the Crusade. There was also some confusion over the military strength of Frederick Barbarossa with figures ranging from less than 10,000 to over a 100,000. Finally, some of the comments regarding the abilities of Richard and Saladin were rather romanticised and stereotypical (the 'Lionheart' Christian as opposed to the effete Muslim); this resulted in unbalanced and generalised comment.

Question 3

Many candidates showed a pleasing understanding of the task and were able to evaluate the interpretation in the context of the wider debate over the motives of those who went on the First Crusade. Strong answers focused on the key words and terms in the interpretation ('most', 'unshakeable determination', 'conquer' and 'pilgrimage') and used these to structure a balanced assessment. For example, some candidates were able to argue out that to say 'most crusaders were driven by an unshakeable determination' is a misleading generalisation and one that is difficult to prove. The very best answers were able to then use such a structure to integrate discussion of other factors that motivated crusaders such the prospect of material gain, aspects of religious belief in general, the desire to test military prowess and the Byzantine issue. Some candidates showed that they were very well informed on the First Crusade but wrote an essay about why it occurred. This was not the object of the exercise and such responses were usually classified as not answering the question (or, depending on the quality of explanation and argument, at best inferring an answer). In general, examiners felt the interpretation provided ample opportunity for strengths and weaknesses to be discussed in a balanced manner. Where the strengths and weaknesses were simply signposted and not developed, it revealed that candidates had not fully grasped what was expected of them.

Y234 Genghis Khan and the Explosion from the Steppes c.1167–1405

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y235 Exploration, Encounters and Empire 1445–1570

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y236 01 Spain 1469–1556

Question 1

This was by far and away the most popular choice for candidates. The best answers chose to take a thematic approach looking at Charles' background, appointing of foreign ministers and the threat of being amalgamated with the Holy Roman Empire and tax issues. Answers were considerably improved when the idea of social issues with nobility and plague were brought in as well as religious intolerances and the precarious state Ferdinand and Isabella left Castile and Aragon in. Less successful approaches tended to go for a Comuneros vs Germania approach. The best responses took into consideration the nature of "responsibility", weighing up whether or not Charles could be held responsible for various factors and how far we can hold Charles accountable for these actions. Often precise knowledge was lacking to back up ideas leading to some simplistic and assertive responses. A minority included irrelevant material, notably on events after 1524. Overall, this was a well understood and satisfactorily answered question.

Question 2

Very few candidates chose to answer this question, although once more the thematic approach was the one which worked best considering the extent to which success could be best achieved and measured. The biggest problem here was that candidates largely ignored one or other of the rulers choosing only to focus on Ferdinand OR Charles, and as a result this limited their analysis and the depth of their answer. Some responses relied rather heavily on description rather than focusing on analysing the extent to which the campaigns could be a success.

Question 3

Many responses did not address ‘pacification’ in the interpretation. Many did not show a sound understanding of the meaning, and a surprising number took to answering on unification. Most answers did well to mention the Hermandad, Corregidores and Ferdinand and Isabella’s personal presence as well as the limitations each of these measures had. The majority also talked about religious pacification through the war in Granada or the Inquisition. This was sometimes mistreated, however, with rather simplistic arguments based on how attacking other religions resulted in pacification. This ignored the turbulence these policies caused and formed the basis for rather simplistic and asserted evaluation. Therefore, the best responses evaluated the benefits of a unified religious system as well as questioned the extent to which this can really be called a pacifying influence. There was also some valuable evaluation on the role of the nobility and to what extent this could be covered by “law and order”, with some lovely focus on the increased role of councils and the letrados.

The real flaw in the majority of cases was in the technique rather than the knowledge being displayed. Most relied on an implicit evaluation, not using their knowledge to say how the interpretation was supported or limited in terms of the evidence they were using, especially when considering the wider historical debate. Candidates should be aware that this question requires all points to be brought back to the interpretation and that describing different methods of control without reference to the interpretation could not be well rewarded. This was also affected by confusion over the term pacification, taking the essay towards a unification debate instead. Only where the candidate fully made clear that in order to pacify a country it needed to be united could this line of argument be rewarded as good analysis of the given interpretation. An essay like approach that elicited a group of factors, coming to a conclusion at the end would rarely create more than a partial evaluation of the interpretation.

There was also some confusion over the use of provenance arguments- these were not required. Where candidates mentioned other historians and the broader debate it was only where they supported this view with some own knowledge and explained how this supported the interpretation or showed it to be limited that it was fully rewarded, because only by using it in this way was it actually answering the question, which is about the strengths and limitations of the given interpretation. Often candidates confused “name dropping” for analysis, when in fact this was merely description, not evaluation.

Y237 01 The German Reformation and the rule of Charles V 1500–1559

Question 1

This was the more popular of the essay questions. This elicited some very successful responses, which effectively measured Charles’ responsibility against factors beyond his control. Some divided the issue further, differentiating between Charles’ actions, to blame him for some and say that others were wise or essential, but still caused a weakening of Catholic authority. There was no shortage of material, and stronger essays came to balanced and supported judgements. The most frequent factors to be given strong treatment were Charles’ preoccupation with the French and the Ottomans. Less was said in most essays about the strengths of Protestantism in Germany, or about the limitations of Charles’ power as emperor. Little was said about Charles’ ambivalent relationship with the papacy. Weaker answers listed factors with less or no linkage between them or evaluation. Some gave two lists, of Charles’ responsibility and of factors beyond his control, with no developed comment.

Question 2

This was much the less popular essay. Successful answers required supported treatment of the named factor, and in general this was lacking. There was very little evidence of specific knowledge either of the levels of Charles' income or the sources of it. No answer, for example, showed awareness of the stresses on Spain, and Philip's complaints. No specific piece of knowledge is ever essential, but where there is a named factor the successful answer must contain some areas of specific knowledge of it. Too many responses rejected the factor and then developed a general discussion of Charles' failures and Ottoman successes. The impression was given that most of the stronger answers were to the other question: many of the attempts to handle this question were made with limited knowledge. The less successful answers were lists of reasons for Charles' failure with varying amounts of support and limited or no evaluation or linkage. Some merely described factors and it should be noted that knowledge cannot be credited in isolation, but to score well must be used as the basis for analysis and evaluation.

Question 3

Every response to this question attempted to address both the printing press and various of the other factors which contributed to the spread of Luther's ideas. Most responses showed awareness of Luther as an author, and of the link between literacy, the location of presses, and the importance of towns. That said hardly any demonstrated specific knowledge of his writings. The three great pamphlets and the translation of the Bible, were rarely referred to, and as for the sermons and the hymns, they did not feature. Nor was the comparison between written and oral communication of ideas – or indeed the link. Sermons and hymns can be both heard and read, and printing can reach the illiterate. As always it is stressed that no specific piece of knowledge is essential, but this was a general lack. Few answers picked up on the last phrase, "a mass reading public" though this was effectively evaluated by some of the best responses. There was a range of other factors to set against this and this was well done, the role of princes and the effects of Charles' absences being the most common. Indeed the most frequent moderate responses accepted the importance of printing uncritically and then measured it against completely different factors rather than evaluating the detail of the quotation.

Y238 Philip II 1556–1598

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y239 African Kingdoms c.1400–c.1800: four case studies

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y240 Russia 1645–1741

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y241 The Rise and Decline of the Mughal Empire in India 1526–1739

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y242 01 The American Revolution 1740–1796

A good number of candidates were entered for this topic and the questions produced a wide range of responses with a healthy spread of marks. Of the two essay questions the majority of candidates attempted question 2 on the years 1784-7.

Question 1

Despite this question being taken directly from the Specification, many did not focus on it and wrote about how successful Britain had been rather than why she had been successful. In a number of cases candidates simply did not know enough about the topic and wrote very generalised comments about the support of natives or the strength of British forces. Most were unable to explain the importance or significance of events, such as Quiberon Bay in explaining why Britain was successful and the issue of supplies to America or finances was poorly understood – a few commented on British payments to Prussia. Candidates found it difficult to include detail in their responses and this was the main problem with this question. This meant that they were analysing their ideas but not providing enough knowledge to properly substantiate them. This left their answers vague in parts and saw many only obtaining L3. Several candidates had got confused between the problems of the Austrian War of Secession/French-Indian War and the American Revolution.

Question 2

Overall, this was done much better than Q1. Strong responses looked at all aspects of the question. This meant identifying the problems and then assessing the solutions. At the top end they were able to evaluate the extent of success. Weaker responses included ideas that were close, but outside of the dates provided. A lot had a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation which laid a sound foundation for their answer. Many tackled it by looking at themes such as political, social, economic and foreign issues. Knowledge was often impressive and they were able to write balanced answers which allowed a reasoned judgement and therefore access to the higher levels. Weaker responses described the situation and there was only occasional link to the question. Candidates that did not know very much about the Articles struggled, as did those which strayed into the 1790s.

Question 3

Many answers contained good knowledge, but unfortunately with scant or no reference to the Interpretation. Knowledge, therefore, abounded, but an ability to link it in a sustained manner was often absent. There were a few candidates who used knowledge of the historiography, but not many; where it was used, it was used well. The weaker responses had a confused understanding of what 'commercial issues' were and this led to their answers only displaying a limited understanding, making it very hard for them to evaluate the interpretation effectively. The majority of candidates did divide their responses into strengths and weaknesses, but most did not refer back to the interpretation enough and instead simply referred to it at the start and maybe at the end of their paragraph, leaving them at L2/3. Too many candidates offered a judgement at the end which wasted time as no marks were awarded for reaching a final judgement on which view of the interpretation was more plausible.

Y243 01 The French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon 1774–1815

This was a very popular topic and the questions produced a wide range of responses with a healthy spread of marks. Of the two essay questions the vast majority of candidates attempted question 1 on the outbreak of revolution in 1789.

For the essays, most candidates were able to write answers which focused on the question set rather than the topic. Some were able to go further and develop analytical responses which included judgement and evaluation. Particularly impressive were answers which developed a clear line of reasoning from the introduction through to the conclusion and which were able to incorporate mini-judgements into the text. In such cases, conclusions were often strong with developed and supported judgements. However many candidates wrote descriptive answers which although focused on the question set lacked real supported judgements and/or evaluation. Often links back to the question were weak, unsupported or generalised. Some answers also lacked detail throughout or else became top heavy with descriptive detail.

Question 1

Most candidates answered this question and most were able to identify a range of ways in which economic factors led to revolution. Many mentioned tax reforms and poor harvests. The legacy of wars and the problems over financial restructuring also featured; so, too, unemployment and a variety of social problems. Many were able to identify a range of other factors, typically the failures of government and the impact of new ideas, and attempted to engage in a discussion as to the relative significance of each against the stated factor. The role of particular ministers, the king's weaknesses and errors, court politics and regional unrest often featured. Links were made and judgements concluded by the best candidates. The less strong tended to describe events and features of these years and could become confused in trying to analyse the roles of Louis XVI's ministers, often confusing Turgot, Necker, Calonne and Brienne.

Question 2

A minority of candidates attempted this question. Generally answers were well focused and mostly detailed. Most addressed the economic and political weaknesses of the Directory and compared this against the rise of Napoleon and military causes; the political skills of Napoleon and those around him featured often. A common theme was that errors and failings made by the Directory let in the opportunistic Napoleon and his supporters. Some candidates were confused over the chronology of this period and included some irrelevant information. In particular there could be confusion over the electoral high-handedness of the Directory and its ambivalent relationship with the army. There were some descriptive accounts but most offered some analysis, with the best offering sound, supported judgements.

Question 3

There was a wide range of responses to this question. Almost all candidates engaged with the interpretation, tried to explain it and provided evidence to support or oppose the view. Most focused on the idea of the Revolution's popularity. Others focused on this alongside a discussion of the role of the urban masses. Quite a number were confused over the phrase 'urban masses', not realizing that this did not include rural unrest (although this could be very well used on the other side of the evaluation) and some discussed the revolution as a whole with others confining themselves to 1789: both approaches were equally acceptable. Some, however, simply described. Others failed to use sufficient historical context/support in their answers and instead judged the interpretation more superficially. There were those, too, who treated this as an essay of argument and counter-argument without reference to the Interpretation itself. However, almost all students addressed the idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the view. Some candidates discussed the provenance of the interpretation in a way which was not relevant to the discussion, particularly when this involved a simple discussion of reliability. In turn, there were those who became too fixed on the nature, origin and purpose of the interpretation; and some became fixed on the use of labels ('Marxist,' 'revisionist'). At their best, impressive answers, not necessarily that long, were strong on strengths and weaknesses, offering viable alternatives, using apposite topic knowledge and analysing and evaluating carefully and closely.

Y244 France 1814–1870

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y245 Italy and Unification 1789–1896

There was a good-sized, representative entry for this unit. The paper elicited a wide range of responses across the ability range. Of the two essay questions, Q2 was rather more popular and generally elicited stronger responses.

Question 1

This was the minority choice for the essay question but was, nevertheless, attempted by a good number of candidates. In general, candidates' responses were a little disappointing. There was a marked tendency on the part of a good number of candidates to give a more or less narrative account of some of the 1815-48 governments. They did not, therefore, give sufficient attention to other factors in bringing about the 1848 revolutions. Conversely, better responses were able to point to the diversity of Italian regimes in this period, covering the spectrum from mildly liberal to largely repressive. Comment on the crucial importance of the governments of Piedmont-Sardinia and of the Papal States was relatively undeveloped, compared to comment on the Kingdom of Two Sicilies. Tuscany and Parma were well used by a few candidates as a counterpoint to the Two Sicilies. Better answers were able to give appropriate attention to other factors, such as the role of Austria and of native Italian nationalist movements, but, on the whole, these alternative factors were not especially well handled with the consequence that the overall argument and judgement was compromised.

Question 2

This proved to be a little more popular as an essay choice and produced some strong responses. Better answers had a grasp of the structural and cultural problems that beset the Italian state in its formative period. There was a healthy appreciation of the North-South divide, including the degree of Piedmontisation and the impact of *trasformismo*, as well as the lack of linguistic uniformity. It was encouraging to see a variety of well-argued conclusions with differing emphases on the relative degree of unity achieved in this period. Some answers got stuck in the 1860s, barely commenting on events after the acquisition of Rome; conversely, others tended to take the vital territorial acquisitions of 1866 and 1870 for granted. A number of candidates tended to recite a list of factors which, sometimes, they found hard to relate to the central theme of the question, Italian foreign and colonial policies being a case in point. Perhaps too many answers failed to exploit the awkward relationship between the Papacy and the Italian state but a fair number of candidates handled this well.

Question 3

The vast majority of candidates had a reasonable grasp of the importance of Cavour and could put this in the wider context of the process of unification. Better answers were able to compare the role of Cavour with a range of other historical actors, most obviously Garibaldi, but also Mazzini, Victor Emmanuel and Napoleon III. The very best answers zeroed in on the term 'architect' and were therefore able to evaluate the interpretation with real precision. The question of Cavour's aims in relation to the process of unification rather than simply the aggrandizement of Piedmont-Sardinia was also a characteristic of better responses. Weaker responses were undermined by factual confusions concerning Cavour, the pact of Plombières and subsequent events, 1859-61.

Y246 The USA in the 19th Century: Westward expansion and Civil War 1803–c.1890

There was a good-sized, representative entry for this unit. The paper elicited a wide range of responses across the ability range and by the end of the marking period there was a more even division between the two essay questions, although question 2 was marginally more popular.

Question 1

Average responses provided large amounts of evidence about the treatment of Native Americans but often failed to go beyond asserting that land loss was the most serious consequence of government policy. This was especially apparent with the cultural factor, which many stated was the worst impact but felt that description of the Americanisation policy, the restrictions on nomadic lifestyle (slaughter of buffalo) and the need for tribes to co-operate was all that was needed to establish relative impact.

Higher achieving responses not only linked the various factors, showing an awareness of cause and effect, but also were able to suggest grounds on which relative seriousness could be assessed. By and large this question was handled less confidently than Q2, although the range of factors considered was relatively similar between the best and more middle-of-the-road responses.

As is so often the case, the need to harness the extensive own knowledge demonstrated by students to the precise demands of the question seems frustratingly elusive. Some of the weakest responses misinterpreted the question and assessed the impact of land loss on the Federal Government, but this was a small number.

Question 2

On the whole this question elicited a good range of responses, many of which were well focused and persuasive. There were, however, a number of poorly organised answers, in which relevant factors often spilled out apparently randomly and were combined with assertions of relative importance at the expense of close analysis of the material and a properly considered evaluation. Too often, more limited answers were characterised by long, rambling detail and frequent revisiting of points made previously, as if repetition increased their validity. Weaker responses identified the Confederate weaknesses and then provided a mirror image of Union strengths and then were unable to make a definitively supported judgement. Many others stated that there were differences between the stated Confederate army weaknesses and those of the Confederacy generally but were unable to analyse the precise links between them. Few but the best responses constructed a clear judgement about the relative importance of Confederate weakness and Union strengths.

Again the level of own knowledge was impressive, but the need for shorter, more question focused answers was clear in a number of cases; in some ways sheer weight of knowledge proved to be a handicap. That said, there were some really impressively organised answers that had a real grasp of relevant military detail and were good at weighing this against other political or economic considerations.

Question 3

There was a wide variation in responses to this question, mainly because a number of responses were uncertain about 'economic opportunities'; they sometimes became focused on the concept of exploitation and the American imagination leading to long, semantic evaluations of the interpretation rather than providing evidenced-based factors to address the context.

Most candidates, however, clearly understood the economic emphasis and often began with the gold rushes and their attendant town developments, as well as cattle and farming per se. Few responses except the stronger ones distinguished between push and pull factors but most cited government encouragement and railways as further reasons for expansion, with few but the best acknowledging that both of them had obvious economic dimensions. Some weaker responses focused on immigrant labour in the west once railways were cited.

Comprehension of Manifest Destiny was almost universally clear among better responses, but going beyond a simple description thereof was beyond the large majority. The Mormons, as an example of the importance of religion, were used successfully by most. Promotions in literature and the Wild West shows were covered well by the small minority who cited them.

It looked likely that many candidates were pressed for time and were unable to achieve the desired degree of balance as a result. Quite often this appeared to be the consequence over rambling, over-long responses to the essay question.

Y247 Japan 1853–1937

There were insufficient entries for this unit to provide comments.

Y248 International Relations 1890–1941

General Comments:

All candidates attempted a response to the correct number of questions. In most cases, the first essay on the role of German foreign policy. Candidates often wrote a substantial amount for the essay question with the interpretation question commonly being about half the length of the essay. The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar was overall a little disappointing. Key words were usually spelt correctly, e.g. Weltpolitik, Kaiser Wilhelm II. However, second tier words were often spelt wrongly, words like assassination. Structurally, paragraphs were used well to separate the introduction, main arguments and conclusion. Only rarely did one see the main argument being bolted on to the introduction. Introductions commonly stated the causes of World War One, citing German foreign policy to be the main cause. Alternatively, the second essay introductions were far more descriptive, sometimes stating the level of satisfaction for the different countries. Conclusions frequently read as a regurgitation of previously stated facts and were simply reiterating what was already said, a summary of previous points.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

Most candidates attempted this question. The question responses broadly fell into two types. One, an illustrated list of reasons for why the First World War broke out, commonly stating aspects of German foreign policy to begin with. These were the Arms Race, the aggressive behaviour of the Kaiser and German War Council, the lapse of diplomatic ties with Russia, the 'blank cheque' and German imperialism. Other causes for conflict cited were the alliance system, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and sometimes Russian aggression via rapid mobilisation. More sophisticated responses looked to explain the existence of German foreign policy relative to other factors, trying to assess the degree of responsibility by looking at linking cause and effect. Students often found the complex system of alliances a key cause of war as without the alliances then the conflict may have been restricted to the Balkans. In this respect, the conclusion sometimes judged German foreign policy as the most responsible factor as it contributed to strengthening alliances and greater confidence within the alliances. Knowledge was relevant and sometimes detailed within responses. However, where there was inaccuracy this was usually by confusing facts, for example between the first and second Moroccan Crises. Most candidates explained the reasons for the First World War, stronger responses relayed a more precise focus on German foreign policy, making this aspect the consistent point of analysis.

Question 2

This question was not particularly popular and answers tended to be weaker than responses for essay question one. An important problem lay in the issue of the 'Big Four'. A few candidates thought the fourth country was Japan but candidates seldom wrote about Italy. When candidates did, they did so briefly and in a narrative style. This was a useful discriminating factor to show a clear awareness of the question and a wider use of detailed knowledge. Most candidates recognised the role of the other three main powers, the USA, Britain and France. The essays commonly wrote about each country in turn, describing what they wanted and sometimes explaining if this fulfilled their aims. A few candidates mentioned Germany and explained how their aims were not fulfilled, irrelevant to the specific question. Much of the response was illustrative and in many cases inaccurate. Another common issue was for candidates to omit large sections of knowledge. For example, candidates writing about America's aims and

Wilson's Fourteen Points would only mention one or two. Candidates did not have an accurate understanding of self-determination although most commonly grasped that France wanted revenge, and a number of these candidates explained why. Consequently, responses often had narrative, list-like conclusions that repeated what the 'Big Three' achieved and if this made them satisfied. Stronger candidates would look at the different aims of the 'Big Four' thematically, and state how they were fulfilled in terms of reparations, territorial demands, military restrictions, etc. These responses were more analytical as the candidate would explain their reasoning behind the different responses from the various nations. Such responses were rare but less conducive to illustrative answers.

Question 3

Most students could explain the interpretation in context, making the link between the short-term miscalculation and appeasement. Some students were surprisingly laboured in their connection between miscalculation and appeasement, some also argued that appeasement was in fact a long-term determinant of war, this could also be done quite convincingly and justifiably. Those students who did not understand the 'miscalculation' element of the interpretation lacked an awareness of appeasement. However, most of these students could still explain some aspects of Hitler's long-term determination for war. Not all responses were well communicated, this was a consequence of limited awareness of 'short-term miscalculation' and 'long-term determination', candidates sometimes analysing a strength and then using contradictory knowledge and explanation, or vice-versa. Long-term determination was commonly evidenced via Hitler's writings in *Mein Kampf*, the Hossbach Memorandum, the weakness of the League of Nations as a consequence of the Great Depression, pacts with Japan and Italy, and agreements with Russia in the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Again, some of these points could be effectively argued as short-term miscalculation or long-term determination, at times this was skilfully done. What was common, and it was not necessary was a concluding argument that stated what factor was the most significant in the cause of World War II. There were also a number of candidates who discussed historiography, with views from Taylor and Kershaw, for example. Sometimes this knowledge was skilfully woven into an analysis of the interpretation's strengths and weaknesses, at other times it was less effective as such discussion dragged the response away from the given interpretation. Clear and explicit links were necessary throughout, with relevant knowledge in order to reach level 4 and above. The quality of knowledge used, and the awareness of the surrounding context was the crucial determinant in deciding the higher level responses. Some students still crafted essay style answers that did not relate to the given interpretation.

Y249 Russia 1894–1941

General Comments

All candidates attempted a response to the correct number of questions. In most cases, the first essay on Nicholas II was selected. Candidates often wrote a substantial amount for the essay question with the interpretation question commonly being about half the length of the essay. The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar was overall disappointing. Key words were frequently spelt incorrectly, this is perhaps understandable when considering some of the key terms used e.g. Pobedonostsev, von Plehve, etc. However, second tier words were also spelt wrongly or simply made up, words like 'unsuccess' were used to describe a lack of success or failure, interpretation was commonly spelt wrongly. Structurally, paragraphs were used well to separate the introduction, main arguments and conclusion. Only rarely did one see the main argument being bolted on to the introduction. Introductions commonly stated the problems Nicholas II faced and sometimes decisively stated a viewpoint, i.e. Nicholas was/was not effective, or Stalin's policies were/were not a disaster. Conclusions frequently read as a regurgitation of previously stated facts and were simply reiterating what was already said, a summary of previous points.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1:

The most popular essay question. Candidates almost always had an awareness of the problems Nicholas II faced. Weaker responses tended to focus on these problems, illustrating a problem, sometimes in a degree of relevant knowledge and then moving on to state that Nicholas was not successful, or was successful in dealing with them. In many cases there were assertions whereby the candidate did not readily explain how it was dealt with in any depth. There was a general lack of accuracy and weakness in much of the knowledge used. A significant proportion of scripts would get dates wrong e.g. the date of the Emancipation Edict, or the numbers killed during the 1905 'Bloody Sunday' massacre. A number of students seemed to think Nicholas II was the child of Nicholas I or Alexander II. There were also cases where there were large sections of narrative outlining the problems before the question of dealing with the problems was actually addressed, these essays tended to drift and were credited for illustration. Stronger candidates readily identified the problems but then explained how these problems were dealt with e.g. Russification, repression or the October Manifesto and other reforms. A large number of candidates identified the following as problems: The nationalities question, the nature of autocracy, the peasant problem, economic backwardness (industrially as well as in agriculture), and opposition. Witte and Stolypin were often cited, commonly candidates had a good awareness of what each individual did but could not always use this knowledge to accurately address the question. Inaccuracies sometimes crept in regarding their precise roles in government. Candidates often recognised that the October Manifesto split the opposition but sometimes failed to focus on this and went straight onto illustrating the subsequent Fundamental Laws. The Russo-Japanese War and the 1905 'Revolution' was also cited as a problem with lots of description of events surrounding Gapon's march. The strongest candidates tended to deal with about four problems effectively, highlighting how successfully they were dealt with and why. Few candidates compared the problems and why some could not be dealt with as effectively. Stronger responses discriminated between long and short-term problems and how this impacted the efficacy of Nicholas' attempted solutions. A number of candidates wrote about Russia's entry into World War I and the Tsar's decision to become Commander-in-Chief in August, 1915. These sections were marked as irrelevant as they went beyond the demands of the question.

Question 2:

Question number 2 was less commonly addressed. Candidates almost always recognised the Five-Year Plans and the Collectivisation drive as Stalin's main economic policies. Thus, essays were often divided into industrial and agrarian sections, with one paragraph on successes and one on failures. This could prove successful but was dependent on the quality of knowledge used. Occasionally, candidates addressed the question in terms of economic, political and social success or disaster, this response tended to yield a more analytical, less illustrative response. The quality of analysis was variable. Many responses fell down on a lack of detailed knowledge regarding important disasters like the 1932-3 famine or dekulakisation. If these events were mentioned the knowledge was not always effectively woven into an analysis of the question, why was it a disaster? Thus, candidates seemed to miss opportunities to really analyse the question in depth. The most common observation was a relatively detailed level of knowledge regarding industrial output and production in the Five-Year Plans. However, the plans were often described in a chronological way, methodically reviewing the successes and failings of the first, second and third plan. The best responses clearly outlined the social costs and explained how these could or could not be offset by the other advances made.

Question 3

Almost all candidates had a clear awareness of the Civil War and the sides involved. Only a few responses could not correctly grasp the nature of Hosking's interpretation. However, the candidates who understood the meaning of the interpretation did not always have the precise knowledge to effectively analyse its strengths and weaknesses. These responses could sometimes be quite lengthy but ultimately used very few precise terms. It was not uncommon to see candidates use a degree of relevant knowledge but fail to achieve more than twelve marks

as there were few explicit links to the given interpretation's strengths and weaknesses. Other approaches that lost focus on the question tended to address other interpretations, sometimes accurately citing other historians like Service and Lynch but failing to make sufficient links to the given interpretation. Therefore, ultimately many responses bunched around the middle level due to the largely implied nature of links to the given interpretation. Good responses referred to the interpretation as strong or weak and then explained why using relevant knowledge to expand on the point. For example, the strengths of Hosking's interpretation lay in the fact that the Whites were politically disunited. Candidates then went on to discuss the differing views of monarchists, Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and how the different leaders like Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich could not agree. Occasionally, really detailed knowledge was used to describe how Kolchak refused to recognise Komuch and the problems that ensued. Responses may address other strengths of the given interpretation by focusing on the second part of the interpretation, 'failing to act as a focus for all the various anti-Bolshevik forces.' Candidates sometimes used the failure of White propaganda, or the White Terror, or their relationship with the Greens to explain this aspect. However, this was less common. To address the weaknesses of the given interpretation candidates frequently recognised the role of Trotsky, the geographical location of the Reds and the advantages conferred, and sometimes the role Lenin and propaganda. It was surprising to see how these points were not always developed to explain why this made the interpretation weak, in some cases the points were just identified. A conclusion is not necessary, sometimes this helped the candidate as it developed explicit links to the given interpretation, in other cases the conclusion was an unnecessary addition that argued the most significant factor and did not link back to the interpretation. A small number of candidates wrote about the provenance of the interpretation, again not necessary. Whenever this was done the comments were simple and did not effectively evaluate the interpretation's origins, purpose or reliability.

Y250 Italy 1896–1943

General Comments

All candidates attempted a response to the correct number of questions. In most cases, the first essay on Mussolini's rise to power. Candidates often wrote a substantial amount for the essay question with the interpretation question commonly being about half the length of the essay. The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar was overall a little disappointing. Key words were usually spelt correctly, e.g. Giolitti, Transformismo, etc. but there were grammatical errors, particularly with capital letters and punctuation. Structurally, paragraphs were used well to separate the introduction, main arguments and conclusion. Only rarely did one see the main argument being bolted on to the introduction. Introductions commonly stated the causes of Mussolini's rise to power, citing the weakness of coalition politics to be the main cause, or the fear of socialism. Alternatively, the second essay introductions were far more descriptive, describing different events in Fascist foreign policy with little clarity surrounding what constituted consistent and inconsistent foreign policy. Conclusions frequently read as a regurgitation of previously stated facts and were simply reiterating what was already said, a summary of previous points. The quality of responses for essay question one were far higher than the quality of essay responses for essay question two. A significant number of candidates struggled to grasp the meaning of the interpretation.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

This was the most popular choice of question. It was answered to a higher standard than essay question two. The quality of knowledge was more detailed and there were more relevant points made. Candidates often cited all, or most of the following factors for playing a role in Mussolini's rise to power: The weakness of the coalition governments and Transformismo, long-term divisions between north and south and the humiliation of Adowa, the 'mutilated victory', Mussolini's personality and attributes, the fear of socialism and the weaknesses of Mussolini's opponents, including the socialists and the King. Finally, the role of the elites often encompassed the actions of big business, the Pope and the King and was linked to the fear of socialism. Responses to this essay question more often created a convincing argument, and compared and contrasted causes for Mussolini's ascendancy. In many cases, responses pointed at the role of the elites being the key factor as without being invited into power Mussolini would have not had the opportunities to consolidate his power. However, others believed the underlying causes of this was the fear of socialism, without it Mussolini's politics would have had less appeal. Regardless of the final argument, many of these responses were analytical and supported by detailed knowledge. Weaker responses were more illustrative and failed to analyse factors in enough depth, relative to Mussolini's appointment in 1922. These responses were sometimes inaccurate, citing the wrong dates for certain events, like the Battle of Adowa.

Question 2

This was less popular as an essay question. The question was also poorly addressed in many cases. The most common error was to address the successes and failures of Mussolini's foreign policy instead of the question of consistency. Some responses drifted between consistency and success, most explicitly used the term success or failure and therefore addressed the topic rather than the specific question. There were some more sophisticated responses. These clearly outlined some criteria to suggest consistency, and a lack of, in terms of foreign policy. This was done in the introduction alongside a clear viewpoint. Most of these more focused responses assessed consistency relative to Mussolini's continued desire to make Italy great and emulate the Roman Empire, and the inconsistent, changing nature of European allies before, and after 1935. These responses explained reasons for consistency and inconsistency using relevant and detailed knowledge. The weaker responses made errors relating to foreign policy, for example, getting the dates or spelling wrong regarding the Abyssinian conflict. Some candidates made the essay overly-complicated, struggling to find a number of arguments to suggest a consistent approach. Candidates did not mention Mussolini's tendency to target weaker or smaller countries (e.g. Corfu, Abyssinia, Albania), or Mussolini's consistent desire to court strong, potential allies and play a key diplomatic role in Europe (e.g. Locarno, Stresa, Munich), just some of the examples that candidates could have discussed.

Question 3

Responses suggest that a significant number of candidates did not fully understand this interpretation. Essentially, weaker responses wrote about the topic of propaganda or economic developments, however they did not evaluate the full meaning of the interpretation, essentially that the policies were either propaganda success or they had substance, achieving something of genuine economic worth. Due to this some responses were poorly communicated, suggesting arguments for strengths and then writing as if explaining weaknesses, and vice-versa. However, some candidates did address the full meaning of the interpretation. Good knowledge was displayed via an awareness of the Battles for Lira, Births, Land and Grain. Candidates had to be careful not to turn an explanation of the Battle for Births into a social, rather than an economic argument. Candidates occasionally wrote about the Corporate State. Other social comments made were about the Dopolavoro, again this caused drift as it meant the response was usually following a social line of argument. Good responses outlined the significance of propaganda in Mussolini's Italy, thus placing the interpretation into context. This helped good responses to explain the propaganda successes of the economic policies despite their economic failings.

A conclusion is not necessary, sometimes where included it helped the response as it developed explicit links to the given interpretation which had not been made earlier in the answer, but in other cases the conclusion was an unnecessary addition giving an overall viewpoint as to the strengths or weaknesses of the given interpretation without adding anything to its analysis.. Candidates did not write about the provenance of the interpretation, this is not needed and therefore it was encouraging to see this omission.

Y251 Democracy and Dictatorships in Germany 1919–1963

Question 1

This question elicited a range of responses. Some candidates were confused about the topic and wrote about Hitler's rise to power rather than how successfully he imposed his ideals on the German people. The best answers were able to discuss a range of ways in which Nazi ideas were accepted or challenged. The better responses were able to judge success by examining whether or not Nazi ideas were accepted. For example on the role of women and Nazi ideals many candidates were able to discuss the rising birth rate as a possible indicator that women were going along with the idea or that whilst youth policy was largely a success there were examples of opposition. The best responses qualified this by stating that youth opposition was easily crushed and was relatively rare. Some of the better answers qualified their analysis using time factors arguing that as the war dragged on the populace became less and less pro-Nazi. In terms of coverage, most candidates were able to write about women and youth but fewer were able to discuss the imposition of ideals on workers or the issue of religion.

However, it was felt that many candidates struggled with the question on Nazi Germany, where many responses focussed on the different ways in which the Nazis attempted to impose their ideas (e.g. through propaganda and terror) rather than on the issue of whether or not these strategies were successful. This led to a descriptive approach which failed to address the major issues in the question. A number of candidates also looked at Hitler's election successes and failures rather than his success in imposing Nazi ideals, although it was valid to suggest that the regime never had majority support in these elections. There was also some variation on definition of the word 'impose' i.e. whether people came to believe in these ideals themselves or whether they were successfully made to follow them.

Question 2

Although there were fewer responses to Q2, the quality of these responses impressed the examiners. These responses on post-war Germany analysed a range of relevant factors. Most candidates explained Adenauer's role and compared it with other factors including Marshall aid, US attitude, the role of Erhard etc. and then came to a judgement.

The best answers linked all the positives backed to Adenauer and used him as a thread to link all the factors together. In weaker answers, as with question 1, a number of candidates mistook 'success' for 'popularity'. Less successful answers also analysed what Adenauer did to help Germany recover rather than analyse how successfully his methods worked. Some candidates seemed to suggest that just by doing something he was successful without providing any supporting evidence. Fewer candidates discussed the issue of vanishing opposition and the political aspects of the constitution, choosing instead to focus on the social and economic aspects of the period, as well as foreign affairs.

Question 3

Answers on the Interpretation element of this paper were rather mixed. Many candidates simply gave a list of the successes and failures of Weimar and gave perhaps a "bolt-on" approach which skirted around the assessment of the interpretation provided. Only the stronger answers tested the interpretation against their own knowledge with a number of candidates drifting beyond the 1920s. The interpretation required candidates to discuss whether this period saw any evidence of growing political stability following the First World War.

A significant number of candidates struggled to explicitly refer to the wider historical debate.

Many responses implicitly referenced the interpretation, but lacked an appropriate phrase (e.g. 'some historians view this period as...'). Fewer managed to test the given interpretation against other interpretations but talked in general terms about an alternative view.

Some weaker responses treated the interpretation as a source and so attempted to discuss its usefulness by pointing out what it didn't include, provenance etc. This is not a source exercise but a testing of an interpretation against contextual knowledge. The background of the historian needs no comment. Stronger responses regularly referred back to the given interpretation linking the detail of their evidence and its discussion to their evaluation, rather than writing long paragraphs with reference to the given interpretation merely at the beginning or end.

In terms of coverage, candidates were more comfortable in discussing alternative viewpoints focusing on successes in foreign policy or social and economic progress during the 1920s. Stresemann dominated many answers although some saw him as being Chancellor for the whole of the period after 1923. Candidates were less sure about the political aspects of the interpretation, particularly when analysing its strengths. They might have discussed the short life of coalition governments, the role of Hindenburg, the pro-Kaiser elements of the civil service and judiciary and the growth of fringe parties. Stronger responses made pertinent points about the limitations of the interpretation by discussing the work of the Grand Coalition and the political decline of the Nazis after 1923.

Y252 The Cold War in Asia 1945–1993

Question 1:

This was the most popular of the essay questions. Most candidates coped with this well and were able to identify several reasons why China fell to Communism. Stronger responses were able to assess why one factor was more important, rather than just produce a list of reasons. A significant number saw the strengths of the Communists or weakness of Nationalists as the most important reason, whilst the best answers were able to identify that nationalist weakness played into Mao's hands. America's role was also understood with the better answers concluding that there was little that the USA could do to prevent China falling to Communism in 1949. Only a minority of candidates made reference to the USSR or Japan. Weaker answers misunderstood Stalin's role and gave him equal footing with the US eg. 'Mao won because he gained massive support from Stalin' which is not true as Stalin was lukewarm to Mao at best. Weaker responses tended to write a descriptive list or give reasons why Communism was popular – "Mao was a peasant and so everyone liked him". Weaker responses discussed the start of the cold war in Europe, at length, evidence which was at best tangential.

Question 2

Fewer responses were seen on this question and in general terms answers were less sound. Only the very best answers managed to discuss the key factor of US opposition to French colonialism and explained the view that the US took in 1945. Ho Chi Minh had been a key ally in the fight against the Japanese and to begin with at least the State Department and certainly the OSS saw him as a Nationalist not a Communist. There was surprisingly little reference to US involvement in Vietnam before the Japanese surrender. A few candidates were uncertain about the term colonialism, leading to some confused responses about French communism.

Most candidates simply dismissed the premise and went on to explain other factors and assessed their importance. Better answers saw that US policy changed quickly and support for the French war came because France's support was needed in Europe, the sideshow in Vietnam was a price the US was willing to pay. Other good answers recognised that the loss of China was pivotal and changed the way the US saw the world in developing the idea of containment.

A disappointing number of candidates went beyond 1954 and discussed why the US was dragged into Vietnam and candidates should be reminded that it is vital to look at the dates in the question. A significant number of candidates were confused by the term Indo China and talked at length about the Korean war.

Question 3

The responses to this question were largely sound, with many candidates able to discuss the strengths and limitations of the given interpretation. A small number of responses were seen commenting on the background of Vivienne Sanders, and despite the impressive knowledge, candidates should be reminded that the task is to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the specific given interpretation, not the strengths or limitations of the historian more generally.. Candidates are required to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the given interpretation, using their contextual knowledge and knowledge of other interpretations.

In weaker responses there was evident confusion about the term ‘viable state’ with responses struggling to develop this idea contextually. Weaker responses also tended to ignore the interpretation and launched instead into a narrative of why the US lost. This was quite common in a significant number of answers.

Stronger answers established that the US was unable to create a South Vietnamese state that could resist Communism right from the start- often a comparison was made with the Philippines or Japan, the model states. These answers identified that Diem and his regime were inept and corrupt as were all the other governments which followed the US- sanctioned assassination in 1963. They identified that as a strength and then went on to explain what the interpretation had omitted – Communist popularity, domestic opposition, the peasant mentality etc. Some were able to see the failure of Vietnamisation under Nixon as an inability of the US to create a viable state. There was some unevenness at times with a number of candidates unable to elicit much information on the political aspects of the South Vietnamese state but showing excellent knowledge of other factors for the US defeat. There were also several responses that failed to score highly because they wrote an essay on why America lost rather than using that knowledge to evaluate the given interpretation. Knowledge of the topic area can only be credited when it is used to analyse and evaluate the interpretation.

Y253 The Cold War in Europe 1941–1995

Question 1

This was the most popular of the essay questions. Generally candidates were able to write relevantly and at length. Most were able to discuss a list of reasons why tension between the Allies increased in this period although a significant number of candidates produced a descriptive list rather than an analytical essay. The dates in the question were generally understood, although a minority of candidates discussed, at length, the Cuban Missile Crisis or the involvement of foreign governments in the Russian Revolution. The more successful responses offered a discussion of longer term issues from the end of World War Two to the actions of the Americans and Russians during the period concerned.

A small number of candidates wrote about the problems between the Western Allies during this period, which was a less obvious, but valid approach to answering the question and they were credited for this. Occasionally some responses were seen with lists of valid reasons for the growth in tension, but without any supporting detail. At this level these are assertions and candidates should be reminded of the need to support their arguments with relevant detail.

Question 2

This was the less popular of the two essays. A significant number of candidates treated each of the two events discretely and were unable to demonstrate an analytical approach this way. A more successful method was to compare the two events and show how they were similar and then explain how they were different. The best responses did this. Knowledge of the causes of the two events was not always as extensive as was required for an essay of this type. Those candidates who were uncertain of the causes drifted into accounts of the two events and the Soviet responses, which was outside the scope of this essay. Better responses could point to the roles of Nagy and Dubcek and discuss their aims. Many candidates were able to discuss the economic aspects of the causes of the two uprisings. Fewer candidates were able to discuss the growth of nationalism in either country or the role of liberal pressures.

Differences were undeveloped in a significant number of essays and candidates should be reminded that where an essay asks 'How similar' things are, it is necessary to also discuss differences in order to be able to reach a supported conclusion about the extent of similarity. A number of responses could point to the fact that the Czechs did not want to leave the Warsaw Pact unlike the Hungarians but only the best answers were able to discuss the role of the Church in the Prague Spring, or the impact of de-Stalinisation in Hungary. Candidates also need to remember that to achieve Level 5 there must be a judgement as to the level of similarity of the causes of these events.

Question 3

Answers to question 3 were variable. As the Chief Examiner has noted the interpretations should be analysed against contextual knowledge. Strengths and limitations should be pointed out using a wide range of contextual support. Additional interpretations can then be used to help evaluate the given one.

The strongest responses were able to discuss the economic weaknesses of the USSR and the COMECON states. Knowledge used to analyse the strengths of the interpretation ranged from knowledge of the Soviet economy, armaments spending, the debts of the Eastern European states, costs of the Afghanistan War etc. Mid-range responses concentrated on the economic weaknesses of the USSR alone, ignoring those of the COMECON states. Limitations were handled well by the majority of students who could discuss the role of Gorbachev, problems in the satellite states such as Solidarity in Poland and the growth of nationalism in these areas. In a significant number of responses there was evidence of a lack of knowledge of this topic, with candidates relating the fall of communism to the 1953 East German uprising or other events from outside the scope of the question.

Y254 Apartheid and Reconciliation: South African Politics 1948–1999

Question 1

This was the more popular of the two essay questions. Responses showed that candidates possessed a great deal of knowledge about the events around 1955, but in some instances they were not able to use this to address 'how complete' and instead described the legislation or did not focus strongly on the position in 1955. The best answers evaluated the extent to which different pieces of legislation were successful in achieving segregation and identified areas where segregation was still partial or limited by 1955. Even some evaluation of this nature enabled candidates to address the question and attain a high level.

Some candidates used the existence of opposition as evidence of an incomplete Apartheid by 1955; this worked as long as it was clearly linked to the question but less successful answers imparted lots of knowledge about resistance without fully connecting it to the issue in the question.

Some candidates used knowledge of developments in Apartheid post-1955 as evidence of the limitations of Apartheid by 1955 and, again, this was effective as long as it was linked to the question appropriately.

Many less successful answers simply narrated or imparted knowledge about Apartheid policies between 1948 and 1955 and this limited the marks that could be awarded, as the question was not fully addressed.

Question 2

As with question 1, many candidates displayed a good range of knowledge and most were able to offer at least some argument in terms of the question, although stronger focus on effective, rather than successful was essential for the highest level to be reached. Generally, however, answers addressed the question well and candidates seemed well prepared on this area of the specification.

The majority of answers focused on social and economic issues, as specified in the question and did not drift into other issues, although some weaker answers drifted into political issues, or focused exclusively on social or economic issues rather than both – this meant the focus was ‘partial’ and limited the level that could be reached.

There were many good answers which identified different social and economic challenges or policies and then evaluated the extent of their success, using detailed evidence. A small number of answers were more narrative, but these were few.

Question 3

The best answers considered the interpretation carefully before beginning, so they showed clarity of understanding as to what it was actually arguing. Some candidates took it section by section, evaluating each of the issues raised by the Interpretation, which meant that there was plenty for them to write about. Answers were able to consider issues such as black consciousness, industrial action and whether they were hard to handle. Other responses divided their answer into strengths and weaknesses overall. Either approach worked providing the evaluation was there and knowledge was clearly linked to the Interpretation, whereas weaker answers used the interpretation only very sparingly, imparting general knowledge about the topic of resistance.

Most candidates showed good chronological understanding and focused on the decade specified. Responses showed knowledge and understanding of Black Consciousness; there were a minority of answers, but still some, who did not fully understand the term ‘industrial action’ and misinterpreted this as boycotts of SA by international corporations. Some answers did not address both these elements and this meant they were only ‘partial’ and therefore did not reach the highest levels.

However, some answers did have issues with focusing on the given Interpretation. Black resistance was specified in the interpretation, and therefore it might be appropriate to note that it ignores the MK, students, women etc, but not the international Anti-Apartheid Movement as this was not black resistance. Less strong answers were often significantly side-tracked in talking about irrelevant international resistance.

It is important that learners understand that there is a difference between different ‘interpretations’ and different factors – there was a tendency to use the interpretation as a jumping off point to just respond as though it was a traditional essay style question about a historical factor in , rather than a question requiring the evaluation of a given interpretation.

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