

GCE



# Chief Examiner's Report History

Summer Series 2019





## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Education (GCE) in History for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's section on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk).



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## GCE HISTORY

### Chief Examiner's Report

#### Subject Overview

AS Unit 1 attracted an entry of 2,388 candidates, the majority of whom sat Option 5 (Germany 1919-1945). Although the standard inevitably varied widely, there were some outstanding scripts in each of the five options. Most candidates produced good or very good answers to Question 1. Although candidate performance was also generally good in Question 2(a), a significant minority of candidates continue to include in their responses knowledge which is not relevant to the question. There were some excellent responses to Question 2(b). However, some candidates made inappropriate challenges to the interpretations by simply listing information they did not contain.

### Assessment Unit AS1 Historical Investigations and Interpretations

#### Option 1 England 1509-1558

This option attracted an entry of 61 candidates. The overall standard was good and there were some excellent responses to all of the questions. Question 1(a) proved to be more popular than Question 1(b). Although almost all candidates completed the paper, a few did not manage their time effectively.

- Q1 (a)** This question on the features of anti-clericalism in pre-Reformation England produced some very good responses, which focused closely on the question and displayed accurate knowledge. Weaker answers were either too narrow in focus or paid insufficient attention to the wording of the question.
- (b)** There were some very good, well-informed and concise answers to this question on the causes of the Pilgrimage of Grace. Weaker responses displayed a limited awareness of the economic and religious causes.
- Q2 (a)** This question required candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying the role of Thomas Cromwell in Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. The best responses systematically addressed the utility of the source by analysing its content, date, author, mode, motive, audience, tone and limitations, as well as selecting appropriate contextual knowledge to support the evaluation. Weaker answers often struggled to find valid limitations. A few responses failed to provide any relevant contextual knowledge in their response.
- (b)** This question required candidates to assess which of two different interpretations on the Marian persecutions they found more convincing. The overall standard was good and there were a number of excellent responses which showed an impressive grasp of the arguments contained in the interpretations, as well as an excellent understanding of the historical context. Weaker answers exhibited several common flaws. Some were apt to paraphrase the interpretations, while others failed to provide sufficient contextual knowledge.

## Option 2 England 1603-1649

A total of 115 candidates sat this option. Although there was quite a wide range of standard, the vast majority of responses were good or very good.

**Q1 (a)** This question, which asked candidates to analyse the policies of James I towards Spain between 1603 and 1625, produced some excellent responses. Most candidates were able to provide detailed accounts of how James I's policy developed over the course of his reign, charting the transition from a pro-Spanish to an anti-Spanish policy. Some candidates, however, failed to note that James I's policies changed in the final two years of his reign.

**(b)** This question required candidates to analyse the impact of James I's policies on royal finances between 1603 and 1625. Most responses were very good, but a significant minority of candidates did not address the question fully. Some tended to ignore the second half of James I's reign, while others addressed the causes of the King's financial problems rather than analyse the impact of his policies.

**Q2 (a)** The quality of the responses to this question, which asked candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying opposition to the policies of Charles I in the period 1625-29, was very impressive. Most candidates provided a balanced analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the source. The best answers provided a thoughtful evaluation of the source, giving appropriate attention to content, context, author, date, audience, motive, tone and mode.

It was encouraging that a majority of candidates gave at least adequate attention to the content of the source. However, some candidates digressed by providing an extended and detailed analysis of what was not referenced in the source and then argued that such omissions constituted a limitation. This is not valid.

**(b)** This question asked candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the reasons for Parliament's victory in the English Civil War of 1642-1646 they found more convincing. The standard of the responses to this question was, in general, very high. Most candidates engaged well with the interpretations and included a great deal of relevant contextual knowledge in their analysis. Indeed, the precision, range and depth of contextual knowledge provided by candidates was most impressive. However, some candidates could have improved their performance by beginning their answer with a short synopsis of both interpretations. This would have allowed them to demonstrate more clearly their understanding of both extracts.

## Option 3 Britain in the Age of Reform 1830-1880

A total of 59 candidates sat this paper. Question 1(a) proved to be far more popular than Question 1(b). Although there were some excellent answers to all of the questions, the overall standard was less good than in the 2018 series. While the source analysis in Question 2(a) was, in general, quite well done, Question 1 was not well answered. Question 2 (b) produced answers of variable quality.

**Q1 (a)** Many of the answers about how Peel transformed the Tory Party into the Conservative Party in the 1830s were disappointing. Most candidates were quite well informed about Peel himself and the Tamworth Manifesto, but were much less secure on other elements of the subject, such as the role of F. R. Bonham and the establishment of the Carlton Club. There was also a tendency to digress on to the splits in the party over Catholic Emancipation in 1829, which was outside the parameters of this option.

- (b)** Very few candidates attempted this question on the role of William Gladstone in the creation of the Liberal Party between 1849 and 1859. Most answers exhibited a sound knowledge about Gladstone, including the experience he gained as a reforming Chancellor of the Exchequer. However, this was not matched by knowledge of the general state of politics in the late-1840s and 1850s. A major flaw in many responses was a failure to appreciate the role of the Whigs, arguably the most important constituent part of the emerging Liberal Party.
- Q2 (a)** This question, which asked candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying the methods used by the Anti-Corn Law League, was quite well handled. Candidates generally produced a good evaluation of the author, mode, audience and tone, as well as deploying good contextual knowledge. However, some answers might have analysed the content in greater depth, while limitations proved problematical in quite a few responses, with candidates simply listing information the source did not contain.
- (b)** There were some good responses to this question, which invited candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the consequences of the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1832 they found more convincing. Most answers displayed a good understanding of the contrasting arguments presented and deployed relevant contextual knowledge to present a coherent analysis in support of their judgement. This was particularly so in answers which referred to the innovations in party organisation and the wave of progressive reform during the 1830s.

## Option 4 Italy and Germany 1815-1871

This option had an entry of 46 candidates. The standard of the responses varied widely, ranging from excellent to poor. Question 1 (a) was less popular than Question 1 (b).

- Q1 (a)** This question on Mazzini's contribution to the unification of Italy between 1815 and 1848 produced few good answers. Most candidates were aware of Mazzini's political beliefs and his influence on others, especially Garibaldi. However, his various abortive attempts at revolution rarely featured. A number of responses overlooked the dates set out in the question and wrote, often at some length, about the Roman Republic, which could not be credited.
- (b)** This question on the role of Cavour in achieving the unification of Italy attracted some very good responses, which analysed Cavour's efforts to turn Piedmont into a forward-looking state, assessed his planning of the 1859 war and explored subsequent developments regarding the duchies and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, thus leading to Italian unification. Weaker responses were apt to omit one or more of these aspects of Cavour's work.
- Q2 (a)** This question required candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying the causes of the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. The answers were of mixed quality. Most candidates made a good attempt to discuss the utility of the source, especially noting the protestations of Prussian innocence and good intentions under the heading of "tone." In addition, most, though not all, responses succeeded in finding at least one valid limitation of the source. The best answers clearly understood the context of the proclamation, which sought to portray Prussian victimhood and trumpeted its proposals for "national unity." Weaker responses often lacked this contextual knowledge. In particular, few realised that the war of 1866 pitched Prussian troops against those of almost every other German state.

- Q2 (b)** This question invited candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the reasons for the failure of the 1848 revolutions in Germany they found more convincing. There were some good responses. Some candidates, however, missed the opportunity to elaborate on Interpretation A by making no reference to Prussian troops being used to mop up what was left of revolutionary resistance in neighbouring German states. Candidates, as a rule, showed a better understanding of Interpretation B and the failings of the Frankfurt Parliament, although the final sentence, relating to the capitalist classes' preference for stability in the face of the uncertainties of a new order, attracted surprisingly little comment. Few challenges to the interpretations went beyond a paraphrase of material from the other interpretation.

## Option 5 Germany 1919-1945

This option attracted an entry of 2,107 candidates. With such a large entry, the standard of answers to all questions inevitably varied widely, ranging from outstanding to very poor. Question 1(a) proved to be much more popular than Question 1(b).

- Q1 (a)** This question on the development of the Nazi Party between 1923 and 1929 produced some excellent responses which analysed key issues. However, some responses spent too much time explaining the reasons for, and events of, the Munich Putsch to the detriment of discussing other developments. Others omitted the contributions of Goebbels and Strasser.
- (b)** This question on the economic achievements of the Nazis in Germany in the period 1933-1939 produced some outstanding responses which focused exclusively on economic successes throughout the period. However, weaker responses were often imbalanced with the 1933-1936 phase being analysed in greater depth than the 1936-1939 phase. Others appeared to know very little about the consequences of the Four Year Plan of 1936.
- Q2 (a)** This question required candidates to assess how useful Source 1 was as evidence for an historian studying propaganda and morale in Nazi Germany in the period 1939-1945. This question produced some very good responses which systematically assessed the utility of the source by analysing its content, date, author, mode, motive, audience, tone and limitations, as well as selecting appropriate contextual knowledge to support the evaluation. Weaker responses displayed several flaws. Some did not develop the significance of the content, especially the references to morale and Total War. Others included knowledge which was not relevant to the question as it did not relate to propaganda and morale during the War Years. A significant number of candidates did not appreciate the value of the source as an example of Nazi propaganda and offered generalised limitations which were not supported with relevant evidence.
- Q2 (b)** This question required candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the reasons for the Nazis' rise to power from 1930 to 30 January 1933 they found more convincing. This question elicited some excellent responses which clearly understood the differences between the two interpretations. They also employed appropriate contextual knowledge to support and challenge the interpretations and reached a substantiated judgement about which interpretation they found more convincing. Weaker responses exhibited a range of flaws. Some had a limited focus on the interpretations and did not link information from their contextual knowledge to the content of the interpretations. A minority of responses produced inappropriate challenges to the interpretations by simply listing information they did not contain. Some answers provided insufficient evidence to support their judgement. A few candidates evaluated the utility of each interpretation which is not a requirement of this question.

## Assessment Unit AS2 Historical Conflict and Change

### Overview

The overall standard of Unit AS 2 was lower than in the 2018 series. There is evidence that this fall in candidate performance was at least partly due to the new format of the paper. It was noticeable that some candidates produced a very strong response to the 22 mark question but appeared to lack the range of knowledge required for a good answer to the accompanying 8 mark question. This was particularly true of Option 5, where the responses to the 8 mark question on Stalin exhibited a very wide range of standard. A feature of this series was that, in a number of options, candidates, though often producing a strong counter-argument in the 22 mark questions, did not handle the proposition well.

### Option 1 Spain and Europe 1556-1598

This option attracted an entry of 47 candidates. The overall standard was very good. All three questions were equally popular.

- Q1 (i)** This question on how Philip II's attitude to kingship was influenced by his father, Emperor Charles V, produced some very good responses. Weaker answers often confined themselves to a discussion on Charles V's legacy and provided insufficient focus on how he influenced Philip II's attitude to kingship.
- (ii)** There were some very good answers to this question, which required candidates to assess the extent to which Philip II's religious policy in Spain between 1556 and 1598 was directed by the Papacy. Weaker responses often lacked the knowledge to answer the question effectively.
- Q2 (i)** There were some very good responses to this question on the impact of the New World on the Spanish economy in the period 1556-1598. However, some candidates were apt to overlook the negative effects of trade with the New World on the Spanish economy, such as inflation.
- (ii)** This question invited candidates to assess how far Philip II was responsible for the outbreak of the revolts of the Moriscos, Perez and Aragon. Most answers handled the question well and there were some excellent responses. Weaker responses often neglected the role of Philip II in the Perez affair or made a limited assessment of the revolt in Aragon.
- Q3 (i)** There were some very good answers to this question on how Philip II used the Inquisition to control religion in Spain between 1556 and 1598. However, some responses had a limited focus on the role of the Inquisition in Spain, often digressing on to an account of Philip II's foreign policy.
- Q3 (ii)** This question, which required candidates to debate the proposition that the huge regional differences in Spain's economy were the most important reason for the economic problems it experienced in the period 1556-1598, elicited some very fine responses. Weaker answers paid insufficient attention to the importance of regional differences, focusing disproportionately on the other problems facing the Spanish economy.

## Option 2 The Ascendancy of France in Europe 1660-1714

A total of 67 candidates sat this option, producing responses of variable quality. None of the questions provided consistently good answers, while Question 1(ii) and Question 2(i) proved to be quite problematical. By far the most favoured combination of questions was 1 and 2, with very few attempting Question 3, though that choice was not necessarily to the detriment of those candidates.

- Q1 (i)** This question about the causes of the Dutch War of 1672-1678 was handled quite well. Most candidates identified Dutch involvement in the Triple Alliance and Louis XIV's belief that victory would be swift and therefore inexpensive as important factors, though fewer developed the point about the trade rivalry between the two countries. The importance of the episode when Louis offered one of his illegitimate daughters as a bride to William was somewhat overstated and rarely with clarity.
- (ii)** This question invited candidates to debate whether the re-formation of the Grand Alliance was the most important cause of the War of the Spanish Succession. It proved to be challenging, mainly because the proposition was not well handled and insufficient attention was paid to Holland and the Emperor Leopold. Better answers argued that the re-formation of the Grand Alliance was crucial for the outbreak of war because it was only as an alliance that Louis' opponents could take on the might of France with a realistic chance of winning. Answers were generally on safer ground when considering the series of errors committed by the French king.
- Q2 (i)** Many answers to this question about the main successes of the Grand Alliance in the Nine Years' War lacked the range of knowledge required for a good answer. Most responses were able to identify the victories in Ireland and the great naval victory at La Hogue, but were not well informed about the other theatres of the conflict. Unfortunately, a few answers were entirely off-focus, providing an account of the treaty which ended the war rather than the Grand Alliance's victories during the war itself.
- (ii)** This question, which required candidates to assess how far religious factors were responsible for the outbreak of the Nine Years' War, was, as a rule, well done. Attention was paid to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Louis' clash with the Papacy and the Cologne dispute, though there was occasional confusion about the elements that made up the latter two factors. Better answers provided balance by considering non-religious causes of the war, especially the hostility which Louis' previous expansionist policies had produced, leading to the formation of the League of Augsburg.
- Q3 (i)** Even though this question on the reasons for the failure of the First and Second Partition Treaties was the least popular on the paper, the few candidates who attempted it generally fared well. Most were secure on the reasons for their failure, referring, for example, to the lack of widespread consultation on the First Treaty and the production of a will by Carlos II to undermine the Second Treaty.
- Q3 (ii)** This question required candidates to assess whether the Peace of Ryswick benefited Spain more than any other country. It was quite well answered, although, as with Question 1(ii), the proposition proved to be a weak point. Beyond that element of the response, candidates mostly provided good detail about the gains by other countries, noting the significant strengthening of England's position and, in particular, that of its new king, William III.

### Option 3 Ireland 1823-1867

A total of 187 candidates sat this option. Although there was quite a wide range of standard, there were some excellent answers to all of the questions. Question 3 proved to be the most popular.

- Q1 (i)** This question, which required candidates to explain the impact of Catholic Emancipation in Ireland and at Westminster between 1829 and 1834, produced some excellent responses which dealt very well with both parts of the question. The most common flaw in less strong answers was that they were imbalanced. A significant minority of candidates digressed, focusing in detail on the Lichfield House Compact.
- (ii)** This question, which required candidates to assess whether divisions within the Fenian movement in the USA were the main reason for the failure of the Fenian Rising of 1867, was generally answered well. The best responses dealt very well with the proposition by analysing the role of the US Fenians in bringing Stephens' leadership to an end and replacing him with Kelly. Stronger responses also highlighted the fact that support from the US Fenians arrived in Ireland after the Rising had already failed. Weaker answers did not deal well with the proposition. In fact, it was a feature of many answers that they addressed the other factors in greater depth than the proposition.
- Q2 (i)** This question on why there were regional differences in the impact of the Famine in Ireland produced generally satisfactory responses. Most focused predominantly on the impact of the Famine in the West. Other regions were often covered less well and, in some cases, ignored altogether.
- (ii)** This question required candidates to debate whether Daniel O'Connell's campaign for Catholic Emancipation succeeded because of the instability of British governments from 1823 to 1829. The answers were of a variable standard. The best responses analysed the instability of British governments, developing the argument by referring to the four changes in Prime Minister in a short space of time. However, the answers to this question were generally more secure on 'other' factors, such as O'Connell's leadership and the Catholic Association, than the proposition itself. Many responses revealed confusion about how the instability of British governments affected their ability to cope with the issue of Catholic Emancipation.
- Q3 (i)** This question invited candidates to explain how the Fenians aimed to transform Ireland politically, economically and culturally after they achieved independence. It produced many good, and a few outstanding, responses. Weaker answers were too narrow in focus, failing to address one or two of the themes. As a rule, candidates dealt well with the Fenians' political aims, adequately with their economic objectives, but struggled with the cultural element of the question.
- (ii)** This question required candidates to assess how far landlords were to blame for the outbreak of the Famine in Ireland. It was generally handled well. Most candidates dealt well with the counter-argument, evaluating the importance of issues such as the role of the British Government, the impact of the population rise, the dependence of the potato and the lack of industry. However, most responses were less secure on the proposition. They generally addressed the issues of absenteeism, lack of land development and high rents, but very few discussed the impact of the Devon Commission and its recommendations.

## Option 4 France 1815-1870

This option attracted an entry of 51 candidates. The overall standard was good, with a number of very high quality papers. The 22 mark questions attracted responses which were generally focused and well informed. With regard to the 8 mark questions, Question 1(i) was well answered, but Questions 2(i) and 3(i) less so.

- Q1 (i)** This question on the reasons why the Bourbons were restored to the French throne in 1815 produced consistently good, though not outstanding, answers.
- (ii)** This question invited candidates to discuss the proposition that the reign of Napoleon III between 1852 and 1870 was notable only for its lack of achievement. It was pleasing to see that a good number of candidates attempted this question on an area of the specification which had not always proved popular in the past. The overall standard of the responses was good. Most challenged the proposition, often successfully, with good supporting knowledge. Weaker responses often offered an unbalanced picture, paying insufficient attention to the “lack of achievement” of Napoleon III.
- Q2 (i)** There were many good answers to this question on why Louis Philippe became King of the French in 1830. However, it was surprising how many responses, even otherwise good ones, failed to point out the determination of the *pays d'état* to thwart the wishes of those who had brought about the downfall of the previous regime, imposing a constitutional monarchy rather than the republic desired by those who had manned the barricades.
- (ii)** This question required candidates to debate the proposition that Louis XVIII enjoyed some success, but Charles X experienced nothing but failure. The best answers not only described Louis' successes early in his reign, as well as Charles' many failures, but also identified exceptions which refuted the proposition. Examples were generally well chosen, but a significant number of responses could have made more of Charles X's inability to alleviate the worst effects of the economic downturn, as well as the latter half of Louis XVIII's reign, when, after Berri's assassination, the King was no longer able to resist the demands of the Ultras. In addition, the fiscal reforms of Decazes and Villèle, which were positives for both reigns, were rarely discussed.
- Q3 (i)** This question, the least popular on the examination paper, asked candidates to explain why Louis Napoleon Bonaparte became Emperor of France in 1852. It elicited a wide range of responses. Napoleon III's coups of 1851 and 1852 were usually described, although the two events were not always clearly differentiated. More might also have been made of his appeal to conservative elements in society, whether bourgeois, peasant or Roman Catholic, which ensured the transformation of Republic into Empire in 1852.
- (ii)** This question required candidates to debate the proposition that Louis Philippe's inability to manage the economy was the main cause of his downfall. Generally speaking, candidates displayed a commendable grasp of the range of reasons for Louis Philippe's downfall but were frequently less secure on his economic policies, the focus of the question. Most answers were well informed about Louis Philippe's foreign policy, his lack of reforming zeal and the Reform Banquet campaign. As regards economic issues, there was sometimes a failure to distinguish between the economic downturn of 1826-32, which the king inherited, and the crisis of the late-1840s, the background to his overthrow. The government's attempt to stimulate railway construction was rarely mentioned or its subsequent collapse, with consequences for banking and other industries. Candidates seemed unaware that *laissez-faire* was the norm at this time, while the endemic backwardness of the French economy compared with its neighbours, a problem throughout the century, was sometimes laid at Louis Philippe's door.

## Option 5 Russia 1914-1941

This option attracted an entry of 1,571 candidates. With such a large entry, the standard of answers inevitably varied widely, ranging from excellent to very poor. Generally speaking, the standard was lower than in previous years.

- Q1 (i)** This question asked candidates to explain how both Lenin and Trotsky helped the Bolsheviks to seize power in the Revolution of October 1917. It was generally handled well, with most candidates identifying a range of valid contributions from both Lenin and Trotsky. For Lenin, most candidates referred to the April Theses, though with varying degrees of explanation. Some answers also referred to Lenin's ability to win over doubters in the Bolshevik Party. For Trotsky, most candidates referred to his role as Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, his use of the MRC/Red Guard and his advice to Lenin regarding timing. Weaker answers often displayed an imbalance in the treatment of the two figures, with Trotsky being covered less well than Lenin.
- (ii)** This question required candidates to debate whether Stalin's efforts to improve Soviet industry were more successful than his efforts to improve Soviet agriculture in the period 1929-1941. It was, as a rule, quite well answered and there were a number of excellent responses. Most candidates recognised that there were successes and failures with both policies but that, in the short term, Stalin's industrial policy was more successful. Differentiation occurred in the quality of the supporting evidence candidates provided. A common flaw was the failure to link policy outcomes to Stalin's aims. While many candidates dealt well with the economic dimension of the question, they were less secure on the political and ideological successes and failures of the policies. For example, even though the peasants generally hated collectivisation, Stalin would have regarded it as an ideological success.
- Q2 (i)** This question on how Stalin's own actions led to his success in the leadership struggle within the Communist Party between 1924 and 1929 produced quite a wide range of standard. While the best answers identified and explained a wide range of Stalin's actions, weaker responses often omitted the many positions he held in the Party. A few candidates focused on Stalin's personality and Trotsky's personality weaknesses which were both outside the remit of the question.
- (ii)** The question, which invited candidates to debate the proposition that it was the impact of the First World War on Russia which caused the outbreak of the Revolution of February 1917, produced answers of mixed quality. While the best responses offered a sustained evaluation of the economic, social and military impact of the war on Russia, as well as the other factors which contributed to the outbreak of the Revolution of February 1917, less strong answers were apt to focus heavily on the role of the Tsarina and Rasputin and failed to discuss the mistakes the Tsar made in alienating his key support bases.
- Q3 (i)** This question on the features of Soviet society and culture in the period 1918-1924 was generally well done and there were a number of outstanding answers. Most candidates referred to women, the Russian Orthodox Church and young people, but were generally less secure on the arts and architecture.
- (ii)** This question required candidates to debate the proposition that Bolshevik economic policies between 1917 and 1924 were a total failure. Although there were some excellent answers, the overall quality of the responses was disappointing. Weaker answers exhibited a range of flaws. Some failed to support their judgements about successes and failures with sufficient appropriate evidence. Another issue was the failure of some candidates to link policy outcomes to Bolshevik economic aims. Other answers incorrectly assumed that unpopular policies were per se a failure. A significant number of candidates lacked a firm grasp of the aims and degree of success of State Capitalism, while some ignored it altogether.

## Option 6 Italy's Quest for Great Power Status 1871-1943

This option had an entry of 480 candidates. Although the quality of the scripts was variable, there were some excellent answers to each of the questions. It was evident that in the 22 mark questions a significant number of candidates did not handle the proposition well.

- Q1 (i)** This question asked candidates to explain why Italy entered the First World War in 1915 after refusing to intervene in 1914. The majority of answers were good. Most candidates were very knowledgeable about the reasons why Italy entered the war in 1915, referring to the Treaty of London and the attitudes of the interventionists. Although some candidates also discussed the reasons for neutrality in 1914 very comprehensively, others lacked detail on this aspect of the question. A few responses focused exclusively on Italy's entry into the war in 1915, including some which achieved full marks.
- (ii)** This question required candidates to debate the proposition that Mussolini's most successful involvement in foreign affairs in the period 1922-1939 was at the Munich Conference in 1938. The majority of the answers to this question were good, often displaying an impressive knowledge of the successes in Mussolini's foreign policy up to 1939. However, some candidates struggled to provide the required level of detail on Mussolini's involvement in the Munich Crisis. Weaker answers focused almost entirely on either the 1920s or the 1930s, while some ignored the proposition and discussed other events such as the Spanish Civil War.
- Q2 (i)** This question on how Mussolini was able to consolidate his political power in Italy between 1922 and 1926 was, in general, very well answered. Some responses were very detailed on a selection of Mussolini's methods of consolidating his political power, such as his reaction to the Matteotti Crisis or his use of the Acerbo Law, but lacked the same level of competence on events in 1925 and 1926 such as the Legge Fascistissime. A small number of responses digressed into a discussion of Mussolini's rise to power instead of his consolidation of power.
- Q2 (ii)** This question, which required candidates to debate the proposition that the most important consequences of the First World War for Italy between 1915 and 1918 were social, produced many excellent answers containing well-constructed arguments, supported by a broad range of appropriate evidence. Weaker responses were apt to be more limited on the proposition but often dealt well with the economic and political consequences of the First World War for Italy. A few candidates digressed into consequences after 1918.
- Q3 (i)** This question invited candidates to explain how Mussolini's leadership between 1940 and 1943 contributed to Italy's failure in the Second World War. Although there were some good answers to this question, quite a few responses were generalised and lacked detail on the actions of Mussolini between 1940 and 1943. A number of answers discussed other reasons for the failure of Italy in the Second World War which was outside the remit of the question.
- (ii)** This question required candidates to debate the proposition that the collapse of Liberal Italy between 1919 and 1922 was largely due to its political problems. It produced some very good responses which dealt well with the proposition, as well as the counter-argument. Less strong responses were apt to be too narrow in focus. Generally speaking, answers covered the 'other' factors, such as social problems and the 'Mutilated Peace', more effectively than the proposition.

## Assessment Unit A21 Change Over Time

### Overview

Unit A21 attracted an entry of 1,672 candidates in 2019, slightly higher than in the 2018 series. The overall standard this year was lower than in 2018. This applied to the largest options, Option 4 and, in particular, Option 5. On the other hand, it was pleasing to see that the standard in Option 2 was higher than in the 2018 series, while the overall quality of the scripts in Option 1 was excellent.

### Option 1 Crown and Parliament in England 1625-1714

A total of 96 candidates sat this paper and the overall standard of the responses was very impressive. The vast majority answered Question 1 and most demonstrated an excellent understanding of the period. A much smaller number of students attempted Question 2.

- Q1** This question required candidates to assess whether the Constitutional Revolution of 1640-1642 changed the relationship between Crown and Parliament more than any other event in the period 1625-1714. There were a large number of excellent responses with candidates analysing the impact of the Constitutional Revolution confidently and sustaining their focus on its relative importance in comparison to other key events in the period. Some less successful responses presented a broader analysis of the reigns of the monarchs, rather than focusing on specific events which changed the relationship between Crown and Parliament. Another flaw of some answers was to spend an excessive amount of the allocated time focusing on the reign of Charles I. This resulted in their analysis of the events towards the end of the Stuart period being too brief.
- Q2** This question required students to assess whether Parliament's clashes with the Crown in the period 1625-1714 were primarily motivated by financial considerations. Although this question proved to be much less popular than Question 1, there were nonetheless a number of very impressive responses. The best answers demonstrated a very good knowledge of the period and the ability to compare the relative importance of major issues such as finance, foreign policy and religion. Some candidates lost focus on the proposition as their answer developed, lapsing into a more generalised analysis of the events of the period.

### Option 2 Ireland under the Union 1800-1900

This option attracted an entry of 374 candidates, the majority of whom answered Question 1. The overall standard of the responses was higher than in the 2018 series and there were some outstanding answers to both questions.

- Q1** This question required candidates to debate the proposition that between 1800 and 1900 nationalists only experienced success when British governments were weak, while the successes of unionists were only achieved when British governments were strong. The best responses focused closely on the wording of the question, analysing the successes of constitutional nationalists, revolutionary nationalists and unionists in relation to the strength or weakness of British governments, as well the importance of other factors which determined the fortunes of these political movements.

Weaker answers exhibited several common flaws. Some candidates displayed little awareness of the relative strengths and weaknesses of different British governments across the century. For example, there was little discussion of the weakness of Wellington's government in the 1820s, although most responses were better on Peel's government in the 1840s. A significant minority of answers had difficulty engaging

with revolutionary nationalism and many failed to note that the three rebellions in the nineteenth century were defeated by strong British governments, particularly in the case of Emmet and later the Fenians. Another common flaw was a failure to discuss unionism in sufficient depth and few made the point that the success of Ulster unionists was as much to do with their numerical superiority as it did with the support of the British government.

- Q2** This question invited candidates to debate whether O’Connell and Gladstone totally dominated their respective halves of the nineteenth century. The quality of the answers varied widely, ranging from outstanding to very poor. The best answers engaged fully with the proposition, providing a good treatment of O’Connell and Gladstone, as well as other important political figures who arguably dominated events at certain times during the nineteenth century. There was general agreement among candidates that O’Connell was dominant in the first half of the nineteenth century, but many argued that Parnell rather than Gladstone was the dominant figure in the period 1850-1900. Many responses concluded that unionism produced figures such as Cooke who were dominant for a short period but could not be said to have dominated overall. Less strong answers displayed a range of shortcomings. Some focused disproportionately on the first half of the nineteenth century. Others paid insufficient attention to the issues raised in the question, sometimes providing an outline of the factors determining the fortunes of nationalism in the nineteenth century. A minority of candidates continue to deploy interpretations in their responses. This is not required.

### **Option 3 The Causes and Consequences of Great Power Conflict 1848-1945**

Although the majority of the 51 candidates in this option chose Question 1, a significant minority opted for Question 2. The standard of the responses to both questions varied widely, although there were very few weak answers. A feature of the responses was the sparsity or absence of dates.

- Q1** This question required candidates to debate the proposition that nationalism was the main cause of the wars which were fought in Europe between 1848 and 1945. The overwhelming majority of answers dealt well with the counter-proposition, identifying a wide range of different causes of wars and providing good supporting evidence. In general, however, answers dealt less well with the proposition. The North Italian War of 1859 and Bismarck’s Wars of German Unification were usually satisfactorily dealt with, although, disappointingly, most candidates took Cavour’s and Bismarck’s Italian and German nationalism at face value, when the manipulation of nationalism to serve specifically Piedmontese and Prussian interests might usefully have been debated. Few responses noted Bulgarian nationalism as a trigger for the Russo-Turkish War of 1877, while the Balkan wars were not always recognised as a nationalist Slav campaign to expel the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans. Similarly, more might have been made of the Serbian desire to liberate and lead a South Slav state, the root of the events of the summer of 1914. Hitler’s campaigns to absorb Austria and the western part of Czechoslovakia into the Reich were often not recognised as having a nationalist dimension, nor was the attack on Poland considered in the context of recovering a “lost” part of Germany. A common flaw in a number of responses was to describe, in some detail, crises which passed off without descending into “war”, as specified in the question. Some answers, however, noted how such crises contributed in the medium or long term to the outbreak of wars, which was appropriate and acceptable.

**Q2** There were some good attempts at this question, which invited candidates to debate the proposition that alliances were more likely to lead to wars in Europe in the period 1848-1945 than to prevent them. The overall standard of the responses was good but weaker answers paid insufficient attention to alliances, providing instead a detailed analysis of the other causes of wars in Europe between 1848 and 1945. The alliances involving Piedmont and France, preceding the 1859 war, the Austro-Prussian alliance against Denmark, and the Prussian-Italian alliance, which forced Austria to fight on two fronts in 1866, were usually noted. The Dreikaiserbund, in its two incarnations, was often referred to, but rarely as an alliance which prevented, or at any rate did not lead to, war. The “pan-Slav” alliance which fought against Turkey in 1877 was rarely mentioned, while, surprisingly, a number of candidates did not appreciate that the Balkan League was, overtly, an alliance. The Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894, eventually joined by Britain, was usually discussed, but a number of candidates failed to refer to the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy, thereby missing the opportunity to show how the major European Powers were dragged into the conflict in the summer of 1914 because of their obligations to allies. A few candidates incorrectly chose to treat the League of Nations as an alliance. Some responses, inventively, saw the Rapallo Pact as an alliance of sorts, as indeed it was, but references to the Little Entente, the position of Italy as a protector of Austria in 1934, and the alliances linking Britain, France and Czechoslovakia were rare. More surprisingly, the Nazi-Soviet Pact was not always seen, in terms of its agreement to partition Poland, as a major step towards war in 1939.

#### **Option 4 The American Presidency 1901-2000**

A total of 478 candidates sat this paper. The overall standard was below that set in the inaugural series last year, but still included some outstanding answers. Question 2 proved to be far more popular than Question 1 and also produced answers of a higher quality.

**Q1** This question invited candidates to discuss the proposition that, of all the American presidents in the twentieth century, the presidency of John F. Kennedy witnessed the largest gap between what it promised and what it actually achieved. The question was not answered well, exhibiting two common flaws. Some candidates did not know enough about the Kennedy presidency, while there was little appreciation of what other presidents offered in terms of promise or public expectation. For example, some responses made reference to the fact that, by the time of his death, Kennedy’s Civil Rights Bill was stalled in Congress, when focus should have been on the more pertinent fact that it was only in 1963 that Kennedy had begun to address the issue of Civil Rights in a substantive manner – and only then under pressure from the Civil Rights movement.

**Q2** This question focused on whether Richard Nixon achieved more in foreign policy than any other American president in the twentieth century. Some of the best answers dealt with the three major strands of Nixon’s foreign policy – China, the USSR and Vietnam – as well as analysing his principal rivals in terms of foreign policy achievement, usually the two Roosevelts, Wilson, Truman and Reagan, although consideration was variously given to Eisenhower, JFK, Bush and Clinton as well. While there were some excellent answers to this question, the overall standard was variable. A chronological approach to the subject did not serve all candidates well, as this tended to give insufficient prominence to Nixon – who was, after all, the focal point of the essay – and also leave Reagan’s presidency under-analysed, especially if a candidate was under time pressure. Another common shortcoming was the omission of one or more of the key elements of Nixon’s foreign policy. However, the most problematic responses were those that simply produced a general narrative of American foreign policy in the twentieth century. Weaker answers were also apt to recount policy failures when the focus of the answer should have been on achievements.

## Option 5 Clash of Ideologies in Europe 1900-2000

Option 5 continues to be the most popular option of Unit A21, attracting an entry of 673 candidates. Although Question 1 proved to be the more popular question, a significant minority of candidates chose to answer Question 2. While there were some excellent answers to both questions, the overall quality of the responses was lower than in the 2018 series. The most common flaw of weaker responses was the failure to provide an acceptable balance between their assessment of Soviet foreign policy and that of Western governments. It was also evident that some candidates continue to deploy interpretations in their responses. This is not required.

- Q1** This question, which asked candidates to assess how far economic considerations determined relations in Europe between the Soviet Union and Western governments during the period 1917-1991, produced some good or very good responses. The best answers provided a balanced argument which analysed economic considerations from both a Soviet and Western perspective, as well as evaluating the importance of other considerations such as security and ideology. Weaker responses displayed a number of shortcomings. Some were imbalanced, paying insufficient attention to, or even neglecting, the policy considerations which determined the policy of Western governments towards the Soviet Union. This criticism applied particularly to the 1930s and the 1980s. In addition, some candidates struggled to cover the whole time period of the question and the quality of analysis for the period 1955-1982 tended to be less good than for the rest of the period. Another weakness was the tendency of some responses to lapse into a narrative account.
- Q2** This question required candidates to debate the proposition that the aims of Soviet foreign policy in Europe between 1917 and 1991 were defensive, while the main aim of Western governments was the destruction of the Soviet Union. The best responses provided an accurate, focused and balanced argument which analysed the defensive aims of the Soviet Union and the destructive intentions of Western governments, as well as constructing a clear counter-argument, supported by appropriate evidence. Weaker responses often struggled to deal with the latter half of the question and failed to consider how fascist governments attempted to destroy the Soviet Union. Some answers lapsed into a narrative at times, while others provided only a superficial analysis of the aims of Western governments.

## Assessment Unit A22 Historical Investigations and Interpretations

### Overview

A2 Unit 2 attracted a total of 1,669 candidates, a small increase on the figure in 2018. The majority sat Option 4 (Partition of Ireland 1900-1925). Although there were some excellent scripts in all of the options, the overall standard was slightly lower than in the 2018 series, although it was gratifying to note that the quality of the scripts in Option 1 was significantly higher than in the 2019 series. The quality of the essays in all the options was generally good and, even though the standard of the responses to the other questions varied more widely, there were some very good answers to both the source and interpretation questions. A feature of the responses to Question 2 was that some candidates made inappropriate challenges to the interpretations by simply listing information they did not contain.

### Option 1 England 1558-1603

This option had an entry of 73 candidates. The overall standard was high and there were some very good answers to all of the questions. Although Question 3(a) proved to be the more popular essay question, it was gratifying to see that a significant minority of candidates attempted Question 3(b) on economic developments.

- Q1 (a)** This question, which required candidates to assess which of the sources an historian would value most as evidence in a study of the personality of Elizabeth I, produced some very good responses. The best answers fully evaluated the content of the sources in relation to the question, employed a wide range of criteria to assess value, introduced relevant own knowledge and made a substantiated judgement. Weaker answers often paid insufficient attention to the content of the sources.
- (b)** This question, which invited candidates to debate how far the sources supported the view that the secret of Elizabeth I's success as a ruler was her ability to relate to all her subjects, was generally handled well. The best answers effectively utilised the content of both sources and skilfully integrated the source material and their own knowledge into a clear argument. Weaker responses often displayed little own knowledge or had insufficient focus on the question.
- Q2** This question, which required candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the Puritan challenge to the Elizabethan Church they found more convincing was, as a rule, handled well. The best answers identified which of the two interpretations they found more convincing and, in support of their judgement, provided appropriate evidence from the extracts and very good contextual knowledge to support and challenge the interpretations. Less strong answers often lacked relevant contextual knowledge or included knowledge which was not related to the interpretations.
- Q3 (a)** This question, which invited candidates to discuss the proposition that Elizabeth I's senior ministers strengthened her rule, while the actions of her favourites undermined her position, was generally answered well. The best responses focused closely on the wording of the question, discussing senior ministers, such as Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham, as well as favourites such as Robert Dudley and the Earl of Essex. The best answers dealt equally well with both parts of the question with a coherent argument. Weaker answers often failed to engage sufficiently with the question.

- Q3 (b)** This question required candidates to debate whether agricultural change was the most important economic development in England in the period 1558-1603. The overall quality of the responses was good and there were some excellent answers. However, a few candidates lapsed into a discussion of Elizabethan foreign policy.

## Option 2 Ireland 1685-1714

A total of 90 candidates sat this paper. The overall standard was good. Most candidates understood the sources well (Question 1) and were able to provide a balanced evaluation with good own knowledge. The interpretation question (Question 2) produced answers of more variable quality, but there were nevertheless some outstanding responses. Question 3(b) was by far the more popular essay question and was generally well answered. Fewer candidates attempted Question 3(a) and the answers were more varied in quality.

- Q1 (a)** This question required candidates to assess which of the sources an historian would value most as evidence in a study of the Treaty of Limerick. A large number of candidates scored highly on this question, pointing out that the Treaty was misleading since much of it was never implemented. Many candidates made reference to the missing clause that was not ratified in 1697. Others pointed out that the promise of religious liberty was vague. Some candidates valued Source 1 more highly than Source 2, often citing its more objective tone in contrast to the highly emotive rhetoric of Source 2. Nonetheless, many answers appreciated that Source 2 had value due to its timing, which allowed its author to reflect on the reality of the Treaty, not simply what was put down on paper in 1691.
- (b)** There were some very good answers to this question which asked candidates to assess far the sources supported the view that the Treaty of Limerick was deeply flawed. As in the responses to Question 1(a), many candidates deployed good own knowledge to complement their source analysis by arguing that, because of the actions of the Irish Parliament in 1697, Source 1 might be considered to be simply the penultimate draft of the Treaty of Limerick. The reality, to which Source 2 alluded, was the onset of the Penal Law era – a betrayal of both the letter and spirit of what had been produced in 1691.
- Q2** There were some good, and a few outstanding, responses to this question, which required candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the changing positions of Catholics and Protestants in Ireland in the period 1685–1689 they found more convincing. The best answers identified a range of strengths and weaknesses in the interpretations and drew on rich contextual knowledge to substantiate their judgements. However, one area in which many answers could have been improved was in providing evidence of their understanding of the interpretations. This could have been addressed by writing a summative analysis of each interpretation in the introduction. In this particular instance, such an approach may have allowed candidates to appreciate that a clear distinction between Interpretation A and Interpretation B was that, while the former presented Protestants generally as resigned victims, the latter interpretation depicted a more complex situation in Ulster.
- Q3 (a)** The question invited candidates to debate the proposition that the main reason for James II's pursuit of pro-Catholic policies in England during his reign was the support he received from Parliament in 1685. In general, the quality of the responses was lower than to Question 3 (b). The best answers produced a balanced response, arguing, on the one hand, that James II was encouraged by the support he received from this most loyal Parliament – for example, in terms of its generous financial settlement, its support in the Monmouth Rebellion and its sanctioning of an enlarged army – to be much more radical in terms of religious policy than may have been his original intention. Very good responses

also produced a convincing counter-argument, arguing that the King always intended to pursue a radical agenda of Catholicisation. Weaker responses often struggled to address the proposition effectively.

- (b) The standard of the answers to this question, which invited candidates to discuss whether numerical superiority alone determined the outcome of the Battle of the Boyne, was very impressive. The major strength of most answers was the range of factors presented, in addition to the numerical advantage, to explain the Williamite victory, including leadership, morale, tactics and equipment. The proposition was, in general, also handled well with the best responses demonstrating how the numerical superiority of the Williamites swung the battle in favour of William III at key points, such as the crossing at Oldbridge.

### Option 3 Ireland 1778-1803

A total of 59 candidates sat this paper. Although there was a wide range of marks, the overall standard was higher than in the 2018 series. Indeed, there were some very good answers to both the source (Question 1) and interpretation (Question 2) questions. Question 3(a) was the most popular essay question, while the alternative, on the Catholic Question, was the least well answered question on the paper.

- Q1 (a)** This question asked candidates to assess which of the sources an historian would value most as evidence in a study of the failure of Emmet's Rebellion in 1803. It was, in general, handled very well. While most candidates exhibited competence in dealing with the provenance of the sources, what tended to distinguish the quality of the answers was the candidates' own knowledge and analysis. In relation to Source 2, more might have been drawn from the fact that its author was a member of, or at least associated with, the Ascendancy class, while a more general flaw in some answers was a failure to strike an acceptable balance in assessing the two sources. In fact, a significant minority of responses gave insufficient consideration to Source 2.
- (b) This question invited candidates to assess how far the sources supported the view that the sole reason for the failure of Emmet's Rebellion in 1803 was his inability to take control of Dublin. It produced some very good answers which exhibited a good knowledge of the subject matter and the technique to blend this information with relevant content drawn from the sources. For example, many answers picked up on the reference in Source 1 to a 'shortage of money' and linked this to the fact that Emmet had spent the inheritance he received from his father on this venture and even that had proved insufficient. More limited answers tended to be overly reliant on the sources to construct an argument.
- Q2** This question required candidates to assess which of the different interpretations of the formation of the United Irishmen they found more convincing. Most candidates understood the interpretations well and, from this foundation, were able to construct a coherent and convincing evaluation of the views of Kee and Bardon. Many responses displayed a good or very good understanding of the historical context. In fact, some of the analysis was very impressive, making reference to New Light Presbyterianism, the Scottish Enlightenment and the French Revolution among other factors of influence. A limiting element in some answers was the ineffectiveness of the challenges mounted against one or both interpretations.
- Q3 (a)** Most candidates chose to answer this question which asked candidates to debate the proposition that the Constitution of 1782 made no difference to the way Ireland was governed. In general, it produced solid, though not outstanding, responses. The best answers were those that struck a balance between recognition of the shortcomings of the constitution – for example, continuing

British control of the Irish executive and continuing manipulation of the Irish Parliament by means of patronage – while also acknowledging that it had some merits, for example in promoting the development of the Irish economy. Weaker answers, however, might have given more focus to what the Constitution of 1782 actually comprised as a starting point in addressing the question.

- (b)** Fewer candidates attempted this question, which invited candidates to discuss the proposition that government attempts to resolve the Catholic Question in the period 1778-1798 achieved nothing but political instability in Ireland. In general, the question was not handled well. Answers were apt to focus too heavily on the later part of the period in question – when arguably the government had lost sight of the Catholic Question and was concentrating on dealing with the threat posed by the United Irishmen – and not enough on the early years, when a series of Relief Acts were passed. Most answers recognised the significance of the Fitzwilliam episode in 1795, but even here, a more detailed analysis might have been provided in many answers.

### **Option 4 Partition of Ireland 1900-1925**

This option attracted an entry of 1447 candidates. With such a large entry, the standard of answers to all questions inevitably varied widely, ranging from outstanding to very poor. It was gratifying to note that the vast majority of candidates managed to complete all the questions within the given time allowance.

- Q1 (a)** This question, which invited candidates to assess which of the two sources an historian would value most as evidence in a study of the causes of the Irish Civil War, was generally answered quite well. There were many excellent responses which fully assessed the value of the sources in relation to the proposition and used appropriate own knowledge. Weaker answers often paid insufficient attention to the content of the sources.
- (b)** There was a wider variation in the quality of the responses to this question, which asked candidates to debate how far the sources supported the view that divisions within Sinn Féin caused the Irish Civil War. The best answers fully utilised the content of both sources and skilfully integrated the source material and their own knowledge into a clear argument. Many responses demonstrated good knowledge of the causes of the Irish Civil War, in particular the dispute over the Treaty oath. Weaker responses tended to lack relevant own knowledge. Some candidates displayed little knowledge of the causes of the Civil War and instead included knowledge relating to the Treaty debates, which could only be rewarded if it was relevant to the question.
- Q2** This question required candidates to assess which of two different interpretations of the causes of the Easter Rising they found more convincing. Although there was a wide range of standard, the quality of the answers was higher than in the 2018 series and included a number of very impressive responses. Top level answers identified which of the two interpretations they found more convincing and provided very good evidence in support of their judgement by supporting and challenging the interpretations. While stronger responses challenged the arguments contained in the interpretation, less strong answers were apt to ‘challenge’ the interpretations by simply listing knowledge not included in them. Weaker responses often struggled to identify the salient points of the interpretations or lacked relevant contextual knowledge. Others were characterised by vagueness or a failure to focus on the content of the interpretations.

- Q3 (a)** This question, which asked candidates to assess whether Craig had more reason than Carson, Bonar Law, Asquith or Redmond to be satisfied by the outcome of the Home Rule crisis by September 1914, received a wide range of responses. There were many very good answers to this question, and many candidates covered all the leaders competently. Weaker answers tended to be superficial in character, lacked detailed evidence or failed to engage with the proposition.
- (b)** This question required candidates to debate how successfully the government of James Craig dealt with the challenges Northern Ireland faced between 1921 and 1925. There were many excellent responses which focused on a wide range of the challenges Craig's government faced up to 1925 and provided a systematic analysis of how successfully it dealt with these problems. Weaker responses lacked detailed evidence, were too descriptive or failed to engage adequately with the proposition.

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