



General Certificate of Secondary Education

History 3041/6/C *Specification A*

Coursework

Report on the Examination *2007 examination – June series*

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Coursework

General Comments

Well designed assignments that accurately target the assessment objectives identified in the specification continue to characterise coursework for this specification. Particularly in the HAU assignments students are overwhelmingly engaged in stimulating historical studies using good research techniques, deploying knowledge well and using skills of analysis and interpretation. The vast majority of teachers are very familiar with relevant assessment criteria and make accurate judgements about candidates' attainment.

It has always been part of the philosophy and rationale for a Modern World Study within the SHP that the historical antecedents of a conflict be researched and studied so that the current situation can be better understood and relevant and rational conclusions drawn about it. This can provide a challenge for all concerned with teaching Modern World Studies and in designing assignments that ensure that candidates keep up to date with developments and do not focus too much on issues that have been overtaken by events. In the light of this, centres need to consider the assignments they are currently using for areas of study such as Conflict in Northern Ireland, China, Cold War (including Vietnam and South East Asia), and South Africa and assess them for purpose bearing in mind specification requirements and the project philosophy. Coursework assignments used over a number of years can become jaded and will benefit from developmental work to keep them interesting, relevant and engaging for students. Board set assignments can still be used as models for coursework design but centres might now want to consider how they can amend tasks to keep them fresh and relevant in order to meet the objectives of Specification A.

It is worth drawing the attention of centres again in this report to the criteria candidates need to meet to achieve awards at level 4. For the highest marks it is important for candidates to clearly meet the criteria laid down in the specification for this level. Centres should be careful to avoid making high awards where candidates have diligently produced work showing developed understanding at Level 3. These responses are often commendably well written and presented but do not confidently progress to Level 4 and show the complex relationship between issues and judgements.

The degree of guidance given to candidates by centres as they produce their finished assignments continues to be an issue raised by a few moderators. This has been noted in previous reports including that for 2005. It is acceptable for teachers to make suggestions about reading material and other study materials available for a given task, to discuss with candidates problems with the interpretation of a task and give general advice on the correct way to write assignments to ensure they are kept within the bounds of relevance. It may be helpful to point out, however, that teachers should not influence a specific assignment by offering guidance notes geared to a specific question, produce detailed writing frames or assist candidates by correcting work that will subsequently go through several drafts.

It is important for centres to give early attention to matters raised in feedback forms once they are received in schools in the autumn term. Moderators have expressed concern that issues they have raised appear not to have been addressed in subsequent years and, in some centres practice has not moved on. Where issues are raised for development in feedback, centres have the opportunity to contact a coursework adviser if they need further clarification or have questions to ask about the issues that have been raised. It is important to address developmental points as soon as possible to avoid any ongoing problems.

Most centres are to be congratulated on their HAU assignments where students are observing and analysing physical remains and using the evidence to help them answer stimulating historical questions. Some difficulties occur, however, often in village and town studies, where analysis of individual physical remains are overlooked and a general historical review of an area is made that does not allow for detailed examination of at least parts of a site. The purpose of site visits is to look at artefactual remains, analyse them as pieces of historical evidence and draw conclusions from them.

Objective 6.1

This objective continues to be well met on the whole with good causation questions often being set in the Modern World Study or the discussion of a site in its historical context for History Around Us. Some candidates still produce overly descriptive work or produce narrative that does not directly address the question being answered which is unhelpful and centres might wish to redouble their efforts to ensure that candidates know how to select relevant material for an answer and use all the information they include to support points being made.

Objective 6.2

Source analysis questions are generally well set and candidates in the best assignments analyses sources in a variety of ways to establish reliability, utility sufficiency or completeness for a particular enquiry. While providing an interesting variety of evidence teachers should not overburden candidates with too many sources particularly given the constraints of word limit and time. Also it is, of course, possible and good practice to edit material to make it accessible to candidates at this level.

Objective 6.3

Some answers addressing this objective still tread a difficult line between source analysis and examination of an interpretation of the past. Interpretations of history are conscious, later attempts to give meaning or significance to the past. In the best assignments candidates work with appropriate secondary sources and examine commentaries on the past in the context of other possible interpretations based on available evidence.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.