

Citizenship Studies

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J269**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **J029**

OCR Report to Centres

January 2013

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

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

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General Comments

This paper is now well-established and familiar to most centres. This paper constitutes 40% of the marks for the short course and 20% of the marks for the full course. In the academic year 2012/13 it was available for both the January and June examination series with one re-sit opportunity for candidates.

Marks awarded to candidates ranged from 40 to 0 with some outstanding work seen at the top level. As in previous years, candidates in many centres had been prepared well for the examination but there were other centres where significant parts of the specification content seemed not to have been covered and candidates struggled to show any understanding of some of the most basic concepts such as rights and responsibilities. This was shown by the relatively weak performance of candidates from some centres on the multiple choice and short answer questions (questions 1–10).

Individual Questions

Questions 1 to 5

The multiple choice questions are differentiated and therefore some are harder than others. Some candidates used a process of elimination in which they crossed off alternatives that were definitely wrong so as to narrow down their choice.

- Q1** 70% of candidates knew that MPs are elected to the UK Parliament every five years but a significant minority thought that the UK Parliament was composed only of representatives from England and Wales.
- Q2** Nearly 80% of candidates showed a sufficiently good grasp of the concept 'community cohesion' to realise that crime levels would be higher where levels of community cohesion were low.
- Q3** This question proved to be the most difficult of the multiple choice questions in Section A with only around 60% of candidates identifying 'a bill' as the term used to describe a proposed new law as it passes through Parliament.
- Q4** This was the best answered of the multiple choice questions in Section A. 85% of candidates correctly linked the European Court of Human Rights with the description 'European citizens can appeal if their rights have not been protected'.
- Q5** Over 80% of candidates identified the 'jury' as being the correct response to a question about deciding guilt or innocence in court.

Questions 6 to 10

These questions enable candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the specification content. As for questions 1 – 5, these questions are differentiated. All questions were worth one mark and had the command word 'state'. Candidates are required only to give short answers rather than to write full sentences. For example, the phrase 'free speech' would be an adequate response to question 8.

- Q6** Nearly 70% of candidates were able to identify an example of an organisation that supports victims of crime in the UK. Popular examples were lawyers, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the police.
- Q7** 75% of candidates answered this question correctly. Many of the correct responses indicated that judges decide sentences, keep order in court and have the responsibility to listen to both sides of the case. Incorrect responses usually claimed that judges decided matters of guilt or innocence.
- Q8** This question differentiated well between candidates with 55% able to identify a human right that might need to be curtailed to prevent racism. Most candidates cited 'free speech' correctly as an example of such a right. Many candidates misread the question and offered insights into why racism was unacceptable or mentioned legal remedies for people who may experience racism.
- Q9** 75% of candidates were able to give one reason why political parties are important in a democracy. Others had clearly given this issue little thought in advance and seemed to have little understanding of what a political party was. Such candidates usually went on to score 17 marks or less on the paper as a whole.
- Q10** This question asked candidates to state one way in which the United Nations (UN) tries to resolve conflict. 60% of candidates were able to do so correctly by mentioning peace-keeping missions, talks or treaties. Answers were also given credit if they mentioned the UN's work to safeguard human rights. A significant minority of candidates lacked a clear understanding of the UN's role or found the question too complex through becoming confused about the term 'resolve'.

Question 11

Candidates did well on this question as long as they used the bullet points to help them structure their answer. This helped them to focus on examples of cultural diversity. Candidates commonly used race and religion as examples. Surprisingly 30% of candidates either failed to answer the question or scored no marks at all. Less than 50% of candidates gained more than two marks. Those that scored well responded appropriately to the command word 'explain' and were able to give valid reasons why the United Kingdom is culturally diverse. Most successful candidates mentioned migration and the reasons for it. Some of these candidates described a sophisticated range of factors underlying migration. These candidates tended to score full marks as long as they had also given examples of cultural diversity.

Questions 12 and 13

Most candidates were able to interpret data in the table correctly to answer at least one of these questions accurately. Candidates were somewhat less successful with question 13 than with question 12.

Question 14

This question asked candidates to explain why it is important for people to know their rights in a democracy. Candidates were asked to identify two rights that citizens can expect in a democracy. Many made the link between rights and democracy to mention voting or free speech. Such candidates were usually able to go on to explain why it is important for citizens to know what their rights are. Suitable reasons included the ability to challenge unfair decisions or to support others in doing so. Other candidates mentioned rights that were not connected to democracy such as the right to life. They rarely scored more than two marks. 98% of candidates attempted this question with over half scoring 3 or 4 marks.

Questions 15 and 16

Almost all candidates attempted these questions. While most had a fair understanding of aspects of the law as it related to the cases described, only around 40% scored 3 or 4 marks.

Some candidates lost marks by failing to respond to the whole question. Each question asked for a description of the rights or responsibilities of one of the case study characters. Where this description was missing, candidates were limited to 2 marks from the 4 available.

A significant minority of candidates recommended that the characters in the short case studies should either use civil law to deal with a criminal matter or intervene personally. This was a particular recommendation in the context of the missing mobile 'phone (question 16).

Good answers to question 15 pointed out that Melissa had committed a serious criminal act, was above the age of criminal responsibility and had received a reprimand relatively recently. Most candidates also mentioned the victim's responsibility for telling the truth, assisting the police and avoiding personal revenge. Good answers to question 16 mentioned the role of the police, the importance of a police referral as part of the process of making an insurance claim, the school's disclaimer of responsibility and the dangers of accusing others of an offence of which they may have been innocent. Most candidates also mentioned Anjali's rights to contact the police and/or to own property.

Question 17

The use of PEE – point, evidence, explanation helps candidates to reach higher levels in this type of question. Evidence or an example to back up a point made is extremely important to score higher marks. Most candidates gave examples to support their points but some of these examples were too general. For example, candidates giving examples of responsibilities often mentioned such things as 'caring for others' rather than specific legal responsibilities such as reporting a road accident or paying tax.

Over 95% of candidates attempted this question and most were prepared to write detailed but sometimes rather repetitive answers. The majority understood the relationship between rights and responsibilities. For example, candidates often pointed out that people expecting legal protection should also obey the law. Those who failed to explore this relationship rarely gained more than half marks.

Candidates who used the bullet points to help them structure their answer were able to produce more worthwhile responses than those who did not. Where candidates were able to do this and to express their own opinion on the viewpoint, they almost invariably scored high marks.

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