

Home Economics (Food and Nutrition)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE J431**

Reports on the Units

January 2010

J431/MS/R/10

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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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Home Economics (Food and Nutrition) (J431)**

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Chief Examiner's Report

The number of candidates entered for this, the first examination of the externally assessed unit, was low as expected as teaching of the specification only began in September 2009.

Nevertheless the candidates entered made a good attempt and achieved positively, although the grades awarded did not cover the whole range.

It was clear that some candidates lacked examination experience and technique in reading questions carefully and also that the depth of knowledge required particularly within nutritional and science based areas was insufficient, as might be anticipated so early in the course.

The new format of the paper was successful as the whole ability range of candidates was able to access parts of each question.

B003 Principles of Food and Nutrition

General Comments

Due to the low number of entries for this series there was a limited spread of candidates which limits the conclusions that can be drawn. The candidates had only studied the specification for a total of one term.

Overall the candidates' specific nutritional knowledge was particularly poor, such as use of nutrients and specifics for age groups. Therefore, it is suggested that candidates would be well advised to revise this area of the specification more thoroughly.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

- (a)(i)** The majority of candidates were able to gain at least 3 marks for this question, demonstrating a good knowledge of convenience foods.
- (a)(ii)** Candidates were able to give at least 1 reason for convenience foods becoming popular, with the majority being able to provide 2 clear and well thought out reasons. The most popular answers were "quick" and "easy". The use of the word "convenient" was not allowed as a sufficient answer.
- (a)(iii)** Candidates found this question more difficult than Q1.(a) (ii) with fewer correct answers. The most popular answers from candidates were "more expensive" and "not as fresh", although a wide range of answers were given.
- (b)(i)** The majority of candidates gained 2 out of 3 marks for the question. The most common answers were "heart problems" and "overweight". Very few candidates demonstrated a high level of understanding as they were unable to use specialist terms such as "obesity" and "diabetes".
- (b)(ii)** The highest marks achieved for this question was 4 out of 6, with 1 out of 6 being the most common mark. Unfortunately candidates misread the question, therefore, provided similar answers to the previous question. The question was marked with the idea that the candidates were providing advice to someone who did not have a nutrition background and they wanted to reduce their sugar intake. Therefore, the suggestion should have been able to be achieved easily by someone with little/no nutritional understanding. For example "reduce the amount of sugary foods" is not helpful, whereas "reduce the number of biscuits/fizzy drinks, sweets ..." is more specific and therefore achievable.
- (c)(i)** Just over half of the candidates provided a correct answer to this question, demonstrating a range of knowledge and understanding.
- (c)(ii)** Very few candidates could provide 1 food that contained hidden sugar, no candidates were able to provide 2 correct foods that contained hidden sugar, this question demonstrated a possible area for further teaching and revision.

Question 2

- (a)(i)** The majority of candidates gained full marks for this part of the question. A few candidates failed to read the question fully, therefore, providing incorrect answers, such as other nutritional data.
- (a)(ii)** The majority of candidates gained full marks for this part of the question.
- (a)(iii)** The majority of candidates gained full marks for this part of the question.
- (a)(iv)** This section of question 2 was completed to a high standard with all candidates gaining full marks for this part of the question.
- (a)(v)** The majority of the candidates gained the full marks for this part of the question, with the most common answers being "suitable for vegetarians" or "vegetarians can eat it". The term "vegetarian" was not accepted without further qualification by the candidate.
- (b)** The majority of candidates were awarded 2 or 3 marks, no-one achieving the full 4 marks. Candidates tended to give the answers that the pasta went soft and expanded gaining 2 marks but failed to give a scientific explanation for these changes. It is suggested that this is an area the candidates need to study further or re-visit for revision.
- (c)** Generally candidates were able to gain 1 or 2 marks with the most popular answers being "versatile" "cheap" and "quick to cook". Candidates demonstrated a limited understanding of sources of energy within this question when mentioning pasta being a good source of energy/carbohydrate. Answers such as "it is a healthy choice" were not awarded marks.
- (d)** Candidates demonstrated a mixed understanding of the word "staple". The majority of candidates correctly identified 2 or 3 carbohydrate staples other than pasta. Some candidates simply gave different types of pasta or generic responses such as "cereals". The most common answers were "bread", "rice" and "potatoes", however, this question had scope for ethnic staples such as "yam" too.

Question 3

- (a)(i)** The majority of candidates gained at least 2 marks for this question, with the most popular answers relating to food poisoning, taste and texture of the food.
- (a)(ii)** The majority of candidates were awarded 1 mark with answers such as "quicker than other methods" but struggled to think of 2 reasons. Overall this part of the question was answered poorly. Answers such as "loses less nutrients" and "more convenient" were considered to be too generic to be awarded marks.
- (b)(i)** The topic of heat transference is one that the majority of candidates do find difficult, and this lack of understanding was demonstrated in this question. The majority of candidates did not gain any marks, a small number achieved 1 and very few achieved 2 marks. Candidates tended to provide the method of cooking, such as; "boiling" or "steaming" rather than the specific terms of "convection" and "conduction". Heat transference is an area that candidates need to re-visit and revise.
- (b)(ii)** This question led on from the previous question, therefore, was also not covered well. There was little usage of specialist terms and there was little knowledge and understanding demonstrated.

- (c) The candidates tended to misread the question and either give another food that could be preserved by jam making or give commercial preservation methods such as "canning/tinning", hence a large number of candidates did not gain any marks for this question. The most popular preservation methods were "freezing" and "pickling".

Question 4

- (a)(i) This was poorly answered by all of the candidates. The maximum mark scored was 3 out of 5, with the majority of candidates scoring 0 or 1 mark out of the 5 available. The majority of candidates were able to provide osteoporosis in relation to calcium and milk. However, all candidates demonstrated a poor level of knowledge and understanding for good food sources for the nutrients given (Iron, B vitamins and Vitamin A).
- (a)(ii) All of the candidates failed to gain any marks for this question. This is an obvious gap in their level of understanding of nutrition during pregnancy. The majority of the candidates attempted this question and gave answers such as "to help the baby grow" or "to help/good for the mother and baby". These answers were considered too generic. The answers that were wanted were "to reduce the risk of neural tube defect" or "part of the spine or nervous system formation" or "to normalise brain function" or any reference to brain/spin/nervous system development in the baby.
- (b) The majority of candidates gained 3 or 4 marks for this question. The main responses were in relation to planning shopping/meals, buying things on special offer, buying store brand products, using the freezer to save leftovers and generally not wasting the foods. Higher achieving candidates gave a structured answer where lower achieving candidates repeated themselves several times or failed to explain their suggestions.

Question 5

The first half of this question (factors that influence an individual's energy requirements) was answered more thoroughly than the second part (discuss the effects of an energy imbalance). The ideas given were mainly superficial with very little use of specialist terms/knowledge. The most common factors for energy requirements were "age, "type of job" and "physical activity (especially in relation to sports)".

For the imbalance of energy - When candidates discussed the effects of having too much energy it was mainly in relation to people being overweight, with a limited discussion of the increased risk of other 'diseases' such as diabetes. Only a limited number of candidates considered the effects of consuming too little energy, with some reference to anorexia and women stopping their periods. However, the majority of the coverage was superficial and lacked specialist knowledge or understanding. The majority of the candidates achieved 4 marks, with the highest mark being 10 out of 15.

Grade Thresholds

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Home Economics (Food and Nutrition) (J431)
January 2010 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
B003	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16
UMS	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16

The total entry for the examination was 30
Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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