

# **Citizenship Studies**

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J269**

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

## **OCR Report to Centres**

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**January 2012**

**J269/J029/R/12J**

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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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# A342 Identity, Democracy and Justice – Understanding our Role as Citizens

## General comments

This paper constitutes 40% of the marks for the short course and 20% of the marks for the full course. It was available for both January and June sessions in 2012 with one option of a re-sit for candidates.

Mark awarded to candidates ranged from 40 to 0 with some outstanding work seen at the top level. Candidates in most of the larger centres had been prepared well for the exam. Most were able to apply their good knowledge and understanding of the specification content to those high tariff questions on the paper that required analysis or evaluation.

Many candidates enjoyed using a range of interesting and suitable examples to support their points, especially in relation to questions 11 and 17. They scored high marks as a reward for their intelligent use of relevant subject knowledge on these questions and also on the multiple choice and short answer questions in Section A. Candidates from a minority of centres had greater difficulty drawing upon appropriate citizenship concepts and background knowledge. Lack of this specific knowledge led to these candidates performing markedly less strongly across almost all questions on the paper.

## Comments on individual questions

### Questions 1-5

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. This was clearly a helpful process to those who used it.

- Q1 Over 70% of candidates knew that the UK is a member of the Commonwealth, EU and UN.
- Q2 This question was answered correctly by over 80% of candidates who correctly identified the jury's role in a Crown Court as deciding whether or not a defendant is guilty. A significant minority thought that juries decide sentences while some felt that the jury's role was to check on the judge.
- Q3 This question was straightforward for candidates who understood the difference between emigration and immigration. 70% of candidates correctly matched the description "moving into a country" with the term "immigration" rather than "emigration". Few candidates chose either of the other two alternatives available to them.
- Q4 "The rule of law" is a key concept in the specification content and nearly 80% of candidates were able to correctly identify its meaning as, "all citizens are expected to obey the law". A minority of candidates incorrectly linked the rule of law with the incorrect notion that "decisions made in a crown court cannot be challenged".
- Q5 Well over 70% of candidates knew that it is a political party that, "tries to get its members elected to decision-making positions". A significant minority claimed that pressure groups have this aim but few opted for the other two alternatives on offer.

## 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 word "solicitor" would be an adequate response to question 8.

- Q6 This question differentiated particularly well between candidates just over 50% of whom were able to state an advantage of the UK being a culturally diverse society. Some candidates misread the question to explain why the UK is culturally diverse. Others answered with tautologies such as, "one advantage is the diverse culture". Those that gave a correct answer offered a wide range of advantages from increased tolerance to the variety of food and music available to UK citizens.
- Q7 This question was relatively well answered with 65% of candidates offering a correct response. Many of the correct responses focused on the need for politicians to obey the law or to be honest. This is an unsurprising consequence of the general view that many politicians have been less than honest recently. More sophisticated responses mentioned politicians' responsibilities to their political party or to their country.
- Q8 Just over 60% of candidates gave a valid response to this question with most mentioning solicitors, the Citizens Advice Bureau or the police being sources of legal advice. Some candidates failed to read the question properly and offered pieces of legal advice or stated particular laws such as "you can vote at 18".
- Q9 Candidates who answered this question correctly (47%) often had an impressive command of the specification content and went on to perform well across the whole paper. Many answers referred correctly but relatively generally to the responsibility armies have to protect the interests of those who surrender or those who are uninvolved in the conflict. More knowledgeable candidates were able to offer more specific "rules" by quoting the provisions of International Humanitarian Law far more precisely.
- Q10 This question asked candidates to state why a free press is important in a democracy. 66% were able to offer a valid reason usually linked to the importance of citizens being well-informed or having access to different opinions. A minority of candidates did not pick up the significance of the term "democracy" in the question and so often produced vague responses about having a variety of newspapers. A point that could apply in non-democratic societies.
- Q11 Candidates were more likely to perform well on this question if they used the bullet points to help them structure their answer. This helped candidates to focus on examples of how people can play an active part in elections and the need also to explain why it is important for people to take part. Nearly all candidates were able to use voting as an example of how to play an active part in elections with many going further to gain a second mark by mentioning different forms of campaigning or membership of a political party. Most candidates noticed the command word "explain" in the question and gave reasons why it is important for people to vote.
- Q12 and 13 As in the summer series of 2011, many candidates had difficulty with these questions with less than half answering question 12 correctly. This may have been because, with the current economic gloom, many candidates expected alternative (i) to be correct and, without studying the data, selected it incorrectly as their response. This difficulty applied to candidates across the ability range. Question 13 proved more straightforward with well over 60% of candidates identifying (i) as the correct response. A significant minority of candidates thought incorrectly that repeating the survey again in 20 years time (iii) would

be useful to someone wanting to find out more about the feelings European citizens have for the future. It is likely that these candidates were rushing and were distracted by the reference to “the future” in the question to select alternative (iii).

- Q14 As with questions 11 and 17, the use of PEE - point, evidence, explanation helps candidates to reach higher levels in this type of question. The use of evidence or an example to back up a point is extremely important to candidates aiming for high marks. For this question, candidates were asked to refer specifically to the survey in Document 1 for evidence to support their explanation of why surveys are useful to decision-makers. Those that did so were among the few who gained full marks.

95% of candidates attempted this question and most were able to state at least one advantage of surveys to decision makers. The more convincing answers referred to the importance of democratic government being responsive to people’s needs. Many candidates stated simply and correctly that decision-makers need information to take action and that surveys provide a quick and inexpensive way of finding out what people think. Good answers then referred specifically to some of the information from the survey in Document 1 to comment, for example on people’s fears about rising inequality and the possible action governments could take in response.

- Q15 and 16 Almost all candidates attempted these questions and most had a fair understanding of aspects of the law as it related to the cases described. Most candidates understood that bullying is a crime, and that the police and school would take action in the case described in question 15. A very small minority of candidates felt that bullying and threatening behaviour were too trivial to warrant police involvement. While most candidates were able to describe the bully’s responsibilities, some lost sight of this part of the question and provided no answer. Few explained why it was important for the bully to exercise these responsibilities even though the command word “explain” had been used as part of the question. Candidates usually gave accurate responses to question 16 by suggesting that Andy should be arrested and explaining themselves with reference to his actions being both illegal and a threat to people’s safety. They were less sure about the police officer’s responsibilities other than her responsibility to carry out an arrest. Good answers to question 16 gave a thorough explanation of why police officers need to treat arrested people carefully and with respect. The majority of candidates scored at least two marks on these questions but many could have done better if they had gone beyond a mere description of responsibilities to explain why the responsibilities are important.

- Q17 94% of candidates attempted this question and most were prepared to write detailed answers. All knew something about the influence of the media on decision-making and most made some kind of personal response to the viewpoint in the question.

This question differentiated well between candidates. Those who had a good understanding of the specification content were able to draw on their studies of the media, pressure groups, political parties and even the power of the European Union to evaluate the extent of media influence on public opinion. Most were able to consider the usefulness of the media to citizens and politicians with reference to blogs, tweets, and even television, newspapers and magazines.

Candidates who used the bullet points to help them structure their answer were able to produce more worthwhile responses than those who did not. The majority of candidates were able to use reasonable evidence to support their views with significant numbers discussing a range of domestic and overseas examples. These included environmental issues, recent military campaigns, taxation, tuition fees and pensions. Those candidates who used such examples to help them evaluate the role and significance of the media in relation to the power of pressure groups, political parties or the electorate almost invariably scored high marks.

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