

GCSE

Humanities

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J445**

OCR Report to Centres June 2014

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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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Unit B031 Cross-curricular Themes

General Comments:

The questions seemed at the appropriate level for most candidates.

The questions based on the key concepts, section a) in questions 1 to 4, were, as last year, disappointing.

Many candidates either made no response, or a generalised response suggesting that their knowledge of the concepts was limited.

The concepts are clearly listed in the specification content and there is guidance for the type of responses required. It is disappointing that many candidates were unable to respond to them, either making no response, or with a response which failed to meet the requirements of the question.

Candidates should be reminded of the mark scheme requirement that examiners only mark the first three responses in question a(i) and (aii) and the first two responses in question b(i) and b(ii). Other responses, whether right or wrong, will not be considered. Listing three examples of the concept without development will result in only 1 mark being awarded.

The extraction questions, section b) in questions 1 to 4, were answered well by candidates of all abilities.

The response to the essay questions, section c) in questions 1 to 4, was good. There was a clear divide in the level of the responses. All candidates used the bullet points to some extent to structure their essays and many achieved respectable marks by producing answers which did not develop beyond this.

Some candidates were able to develop the points with their own knowledge and this led to them accessing the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Candidates should be advised that achievement of the highest marks depends on developing answers clearly, showing personal knowledge that has been used appropriately.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1a (i) and 1a (ii)

Answers were very general using vague terminology. 'Concrete knowledge' about human rights abuses and legislation was in very short supply. Many candidates responded with two very similar answers.

Question No. 1b (i) and 1b (ii)

These extraction questions were, in general terms, well answered. Candidates, in response to question 1b(ii) tended to give four differences between Civil and Criminal, not just the two required.

Question No. 1c

The majority of candidates followed the prompts and this produced some sound responses. There was a lot of confusion about 'who did what' in the legislative process. Many candidates referred to Parliament as though it was separate entity to the Government, Commons and Lords. Another common error was the statement that the Queen had the power to refuse legislation. That may be technically true, but is not likely to happen in practise.

Most candidates produced responses which had value.

Question No. 2a (i) and 2a (ii)

Answers were again very general using vague terminology. Knowledge about money management was limited. Few candidates talked about budgeting and balancing income and expenditure. Financial products were rarely answered with developed statements relating to loans, cards and savings.

Question No. 2b (i) and 2b (ii)

These extraction questions were, in general terms, well answered. In both questions, candidates tended to write more than they needed to in order to achieve the marks.

Question No. 2c

The majority of candidates followed the prompts and this produced some sound responses. There was confusion about implied terms in contracts and some vagueness about how to change a contract or deal with a dispute. A minority of candidates wrote with perception about ACAS, arbitration and the role of trade unions. Most simply assumed the “boss” would use the terms of the contract to bring the employee to heel.

Question No. 3a (i) and 3a (ii)

Answers were again very general using vague terminology. Knowledge about environmental issues was limited. Candidates wrote in general terms about climate change but rarely with the specificity to gather many marks. Local Agenda 21 seemed to be largely unknown. A few candidates made general statements about local people doing something for the environment.

Question No. 3b (i) and 3b (ii)

Almost all candidates scored well on this question. In question 3b (i) a number of candidates omitted “measures to avoid damage” and answered with two statements which really stated the same thing twice.

Question 3c

The majority of candidates’ followed the prompts and this produced some sound responses. There was confusion about some LEDC’s such as China, Brazil and India as to whether they were developed or still developing, and the roles of MNC’s in the development process. Many candidates were also unsure of the role MEDC’s should be playing in sustainable development, the consensus being that they should help LEDCs develop.

Question No. 4a (i) and 4a (ii)

This was probably the worst answered section a) question. In question 4a (i) the mark scheme was seeking answers related to God, stewardship, wealth held in trust, accountability to God for its use. This was not what candidates produced. Question 4a (ii) was a little more productive as most candidates identified charitable giving and responsibility for the poor.

Question No. 4b (i) and 4b (ii)

In contrast, question 4b (ii) was probably the most universally correctly answered question. Question 4b (i) was also well answered but some candidates failed to achieve marks because they used only a partial statement.

Question 4c

Unusually, this was one of the essays in which the majority of candidates’ scored well. They followed the prompts and this produced some good responses. There was a little confusion from a few about Jews/Hindus worshipping in a Mosque but the vast majority wrote about Islam and Christianity. Many candidates were able to write essays which developed as comparative comments on the two religions. Some detail was inevitably transposed and some misunderstandings were quoted but, generally, candidates were rewarded in direct relation to their knowledge.

Question 5b (i)

Quite a lot of candidates did not pick up on the steer in the question, relating to the government, and produced another answer than – “Ministers said teaching was patchy.”

Question 5b (ii)

There was a spread of years offered and many responses showed signs of arithmetic computations.

Question 5b (iii)

Well answered.

Question 5b (iv)

Very well answered.

Question 5b AO1/02

Many candidates wrote lengthy answers which showed good use of the sources and their own opinions. One weakness, by most candidates, is still the lack of direct quotation from the sources. This means that the AO2 mark is usually lower than it ought to be because it can only be awarded for implicit use of sources. However, marks for most candidates were usually above average.

Unit B032 Application of Knowledge

General Comments:

In general terms the questions were at the appropriate level for most candidates. The paper differentiated quite well.

The extraction questions 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9 were generally successfully attempted by a large number of candidates.

The skills based questions 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12 had a more mixed response.

There was evidence that candidates were not utilising the research skills each section demands. Each section is clearly identified, both in the specification and on the paper, with the types of skills which are required.

Despite this, many answers were narrative rather than analytical in approach. There was a continued improvement in the responses to questions 6 a and b. Candidates in general wrote better than last year, linking their answers more closely to the specific type of research identified in the question.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No.

1. Almost 100% of candidates correctly extracted the percentage.
2. The vast majority of candidates were successful in extracting the percentage.
3. Most candidates achieved Level 2 and 2marks by correctly identifying the problems with groceries online. Few achieved the third mark as they did not compare groceries with books and CDs.
4. Many candidates scored well but failed to comment on the validity of the two documents in order to get the maximum marks.
5. An increasing number of candidates are achieving higher scores on this question by citing from the sources, and using the evidence to both agree and disagree, in their answers.
- 6a. Responses for the usefulness of media sources for social research tended to come in two styles – those which saw the benefits in the ease of access and variety of data available and which saw only pitfalls from out of date, unreliable and biased data.
- 6b. Responses for structured interviews were a little more varied. The conclusions on their advantages and disadvantages were at times vague and contradictory.
7. A very high percentage of candidates were successful.
8. A very high percentage of candidates were successful.
9. A very high percentage of candidates were successful. A few candidates made the mistake of writing Mass mounted not Mast mounted.

- 10.** A large number of good responses were seen, giving both sides of the argument for and against wind turbines. Most candidates scored well.
- 11.** The same problem as in past years. Too many candidates took the document at face value and simply wrote about what it said, without any sort of challenge to its validity. Some pointed out that it was an advertisement and therefore likely to be biased. A few wrote about triangulation and testing the validity against other sources.
- 12.** Many candidates produced pleasing responses to this question; challenging the sources;, using the sources in detail to argue for and against the statement; finishing with a personal conclusion based on the information they had gleaned from the sources and based on their view of the validity of the sources.

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