

GCE

General Studies

Advanced GCE **A2 H479**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H079**

OCR Report to Centres June 2017

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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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F731 The Cultural and Social Domains

General comments

Most candidates were engaged with the examination and produced intelligent, considered, and articulate responses to the questions. The subject matter was approached in a serious and considered way with most candidates putting effort into preparing their best answer and employing effective techniques to access the marks available. Time was used effectively and appropriately with little evidence of answers being rushed or spoiled.

At times, candidates struggled to access the number of available marks available for an answer. A question worth three marks requires more than a simple statement. The answer space and the number of lines is an indicator of how much examiners expected to be written yet there was a constant problem of writing straying outside the answer lines with some candidates even writing vertically up the side of the page. This was puzzling and unnecessary since there are several pages included in the answer booklet for the continuation of responses.

Overall, the answers to essays were well-structured and easy to follow. Some weaker candidates wrote continuous prose with little use of paragraphs but the best examples were fluent, engaging and highly articulate. A good conclusion should draw together the candidate's thoughts and propose their solution to the issue in question and state their own, personal viewpoint. Too many essays consisted of a summary of points in the last paragraph most of which had already been made and for which it was not possible to give additional credit.

Poor handwriting and weak use of English continue to cause concern, especially the misspelling of common words, including those printed on the question paper.

Answers to individual questions

Section A

Engagement with this section was very good with no parts left blank. The topic (television and the media) was familiar to all candidates which resulted many scoring well. There was little variation in the answers provided but some of the better candidates made good use of examples to support their views.

Question 1

a some common themes emerged and these were usually linked to the image. Spoon-feeding, laziness and reliance/influence/control were the most common cited.

b this was well-answered and showed a good understanding of the relationship that children have with television. Common positive answers mentioned education or learning (morals; the wider world; shapes, colours and basic counting); negative influences included laziness and inactivity, disconnection from reality, and behavioural influences. Good examples with development and expansion characterised most answers.

ci the availability of on-demand services fitting around busy lives was the most common answer here.

cii screen size and/or quality was the most popular feature identified but some also mentioned the social angle of sitting with the family in a lounge. A few took 'young' to mean children (rather than teenagers) and proposed a lack of access to other devices. The ease of operating a television over more complex devices such as computers or smart phones was often included.

The possibility of playing with one's phone, texting or messaging people on it while apparently also watching television on a set was frequent point.

Most candidates were better able to identify reasons for the decline in the viewing of television than they could propose ways of making it more attractive. Common points included the wealth of (online) alternative activities; lack of relatable content, with most channels being aimed at young children or adults; half-hour slots being far too long for concentration spans; advertising breaking up the flow of programmes, and the fixed-time nature of television scheduling. Proposals for improvement tended to be reflexive answers from the first part of the question such as 'making more relatable content'. There were some other more original ideas such as using younger actors or presenters who are popular on YouTube or the less original and common suggestion of removing advertisement breaks. However, advertising television programmes on social media and introducing interactive elements such as characters having accounts on social media (with whom teens can engage more individually) showed some creativity and imagination. Watching television is clearly viewed as old-fashioned and 'uncool' by many teenagers.

Section B

Question 2

The ideas behind the question seemed to be understood by most candidates. However, the level of supporting examples and discussion varied a great deal. Many chose the evolutionary 'fight or flight' route rather than considering the consequences. More able candidates could discuss consequences beyond the individual who might be involved and instead think longer-term with some reasoning and logic. Examples were hypothetical but the use of personal experience, when used, was interesting and effective.

Question 3

A very popular question. The general conclusion posed was that social media is superior in speed but inferior in reliability. Answers were supported with varying depths of analysis and detail. Candidates could cite a range of news stories of contemporary importance and interest but better answers examined news-gathering more widely and assessed that news of a new or detailed political strategy, summit meetings such as G20, and the occurrence of any natural disaster was less likely to spread on social media as more detailed content is required; such events are sensational and less likely to be shared. The role of eye witnesses was usually seen as positive but some referred to partial accounts and or individual bias. Reliability was sometimes taken more literally in terms of access to the internet rather than the reporting of truth and actuality. Examiners saw that the phrase 'fake news' is now a common expression used in discussing the media.

Question 4

A surprisingly unpopular question but the attempts viewed were answered well. Many candidates enthusiastically championed the role of live performances – usually music and pop/rock genre - in terms of purity of performance as opposed to recorded work. Atmosphere and connection with the audience, creating and maintaining fan loyalty, and developing a reputation were popular reasons for live entertainment. In addition, the spreading of fame or getting a record deal, especially for those starting out were good points made. Other means of gaining success were used as a contrast such as an artist's online presence or the sales of their music. The importance of live performance as a source of revenue and merchandising was noted by many especially in an age where few seem not to expect to pay for recorded music or own it in any physical form. Other definitions of success included sales, popularity (and personality), and communication of messages. Good examples were offered of candidates' own experiences of attending live shows. One or two candidates interpreted the word 'artist' in a

broader sense and included drama, art, and photography. It seemed to be somewhat of a struggle when trying to relate live performance to art and photography.

Section C

Question 5

Once again, there was a clear indication that candidates have weak knowledge and understanding of politics in the UK. The pictures painted of political leaders and their policies by the media appeared to have a profound effect on candidates' judgements.

a political disillusionment was the most popular reason here. There was little specific reference to party membership.

b as noted in previous examinations, candidates tended to repeat the words of the phrases in trying to puzzle out the answer. There was limited understanding of the traditional role of parties in the local communities which, up until quite recently, was an important part of local life and culture.

c there were very few good answers to this question as candidates tended to lift sections of the source rather than explain the reasoning behind the different strategies. This further revealed a lack of knowledge about the functions and work of political parties.

d the meaning of a pressure group proved to be a mystery for most candidates. Few candidates could explain in detail how these groups link with political parties and their policies or how their actions could increase or reduce support. Better answers could exemplify recent or historic cases and name pressure groups such as Greenpeace or The Countryside Alliance in support of their views.

Section D

Question 6

It was pleasing to see good performances and real engagement with a politics question. Most candidates knew enough about the Brexit vote, and the debate surrounding it, to gain a respectable mark and there were some very in-depth discussions that were exceptional. A few tended to focus on whether the decision would or should be implemented, and the mechanics of the referendum, rather than the debate surrounding the key issue. However, it was pleasing to read interesting, informed and well-reasoned perspectives on a subject of great contemporary importance. Examiners noted many answers that were unhappy that the vote was confined to over 18 year olds, considering that it is the young who will grow up and live with the consequences of the decision.

Question 7

Many of the essays consisted of a travelogue of the attractions that one can expect when holidaying in the UK (and abroad) with varying degrees of accuracy. One candidate had moved Stonehenge to Scotland, for example, and another believed that Wales has the UK's highest mountain. Better essays were more analytical and considered the appeal of Britain to its visitors, the economic and social aspects contributing to trends, and some speculation about possible changes in fortune of our tourist industry post-Brexit. The poor weather was usually cited as a strong disincentive for residents to take their holiday in the UK. Alternatively, sampling a new culture, new foods, and speaking a foreign language were ideas that were posited as to why Britons holiday abroad.

Question 8

Despite being involved in a National Curriculum many candidates were not aware of its influence and breadth. There was some confusion between curriculum and exam specifications. Most answers cited equality of access and opportunity to acquire core skills and knowledge. The ability to compare schools and individuals featured regularly as did the ease of transferring between different schools for both students and staff. Negatives were seen mainly in terms of a lack of choice and individual needs, as well as restrictions on teachers' specialisms and interests. Core subjects were usually advocated while concerns were expressed regarding the minimal role for the Arts.

F732 The Scientific Domain

General Comments:

This session the overall performance of candidates was good and there were very few responses commented on by examiners which suggested that time had been an issue.

The use of mathematical skills in Section A suggested that the candidates had responded to previous comments about showing working out and stating their answers clearly. Only in a few responses was it obvious that a candidate had missed the part of the question stating 'Explain'.

In Section B, examiners there was a clear use of communication skills, and good vocabulary particularly, but often personal examples were lacking.

A large number of candidates were able to demonstrate a range of knowledge learned from their General Studies course, and from other AS courses they were involved in. There were no rubric errors reported.

In each question, particularly for Section B, there were key words which the candidate should bear in mind when offering their response. In particular for Question 5 where the question asked for assessment of the 'ways' offered in the response, candidates often missed the opportunity to enhance their mark.

Assessment Objective 4 (Communication) is assessed throughout the paper, in Section A in Question 1b and Question 2c and Section B. It was obvious that Centres had worked on this element of the specification with their candidates. The responses, on the whole, showed an improvement in quality from previous sessions. Only a small number of responses displayed poor handwriting skills.

Section A

Question 1

1ai Responses to this question were usually correct; only a few candidates were unable to estimate the correct percentage. Very few failed to offer an answer.

1aii This question was generally answered correctly. However, a few candidates offered responses which either referred to the wrong figure, or social media rather than text messaging.

1aiii Candidates had a good understanding of the calculation of a percentage. It seemed that most candidates had access to a calculator; it was rare to see an attempt at a percentage calculation without one. There were very few incorrect instances of rounding off the final answer.

Only a few responses considered part of the calculation as $120/37$ rather than $37/120$.

1b This question asked candidates to offer three pieces of additional information to make the pie charts more meaningful. On the whole candidates were able to provide a very good range of these pieces of information. Many responses included age and gender and explained that it was possible that males and females might use their phones differently. The location where the interviews were taken and how many teenagers this involved were also well explained in terms of the difference between small and large sample sizes and the reliability of larger samples.

It was noted that candidates had a good knowledge of the problem of access to and the type of social media. This was important for the survey.

Some weaker responses were seen where the candidate had simply referred to details already on the charts, rather than 'additional' as per the question. Most of these responses included reference to defining 'less often'. Other weaker responses were more of a list without the explanation required.

Question 2

- 2a** It was unusual to see an incorrect list as most candidates could write down the five different ways. In a few responses there were only 3 or 4 ways but candidates were still able to gain some marks.
- 2b** On the whole, candidates were able to find the next two numbers in sequence. Many explained that the numbers were squares of odd numbers, or worked out that the differences between the numbers in the sequence were multiples of 8. Most explanations were very clear. However, some responses showed the correct answers and differences but written over the sequence in the question itself; this was not an organised response. Candidates should be reminded of the need for clear structure when answering questions similar to this.
- 2c** Most candidates answered this question very well, showing a clear explanation of how the information in the bullet points might help the company to increase sales. Some very good explanations were seen where candidates suggested that the types of energy already in use would help this company determine their competitors and offer better packages. When considering the sales from last year, there was usually a reference to being able to find a trend and that might help the company to forecast future sales. Comments regarding the third bullet point were not always as clear as many candidates simply repeated the 'target' aspect in their response. Good responses included an explanation suggesting that possibly money and time could be saved if the company knew who and where to target. As the question itself referred to 'increase sales' and the third bullet point included reference to 'targeting', candidates who used these in their explanation did not fully answer the question, they were merely repetitions of part of the question.

Section B

Question 3

The crux of this question was the importance of monitoring air quality and many candidates who answered this provided very good examples together with development. The health of the population of both humans and animals was a common reason. This was often developed with reference to future generations and examples of pollution in rainforests hence lack of animal habitats. It was evident that candidates had a good knowledge of the gases which might need monitoring. This was often developed in terms of climate change, although some lengthy developments were seen where the response was simply 'global warming' rather than a link to the question. Car usage and industrial pollution were also included. Candidates suggested that industries could be fined if the monitoring showed they had breached any contracts. The Kyoto Protocol was used as an example in some responses. Some candidates evaluated their ideas by commenting on the cost or the timescale involved but suggested that in the long term, the monitoring was important. A few weaker responses included a simple list of gases, a brief explanation of each one and no overall view of why monitoring was important.

Question 4

There were some good responses to this question where the candidate had included some different examples and developed comments on each one. Many responses included the use of mathematics in shopping, including in particular discounts, percentages and quantities of items. The use of mathematics in terms of content of calories and components in food was also mentioned. This was useful for people with allergies or those needing to monitor their weight. Home improvements was a common theme showing how we need the skills of mathematics for the calculation of areas and volumes for different tasks, for example laying wooden floors, painting and the construction of extensions.

There were some candidates who developed their ideas a bit further than just their own daily lives and commented on the use of it for space research and rocket launching, together with how architects might use it for the design of buildings. The Golden Ratio was often quoted in the latter case.

It was also pointed out that the reverse of the question was also true, that technology had determined our use or not of mathematical skills. It is now too easy to rely on a calculator or a computer programme.

In some weaker responses candidates often provided a list of how we use mathematics for shopping or working out the time so they knew how long it was before they met their friends.

Question 5

There were some very good explanations of an unhealthy lifestyle, mostly including diet and exercise. Some responses also included reference to smoking, alcohol and stress. Some of these explanations were developed further to indicate that sometimes it is lack of education that causes it or lack of willpower on behalf of the person.

The most common changes that could be made were offered as doing regular exercise and having a balanced diet. The initiatives of 5 a day or the Eatwell Guide were often included as an example of how we are being educated to try to be healthy. In some essays candidates included comments on the effect of exercise on different parts of the body, for example the heart. They showed a good knowledge of the chemicals that were released during exercise and how some foods were both good and bad for us.

Assessment of the two ways was not always included, despite being part of the question. However, when it was seen as part of a response it usually concluded that we needed a balance between exercise and diet, but added that at times, it was difficult. Fast foods were more available, more advertised and cheaper than the foods we should consider eating. Most families would not be able to afford some of the healthy options for food, or to pay for gym memberships for a family.

Weaker responses merely had a focus on 5 a day and suggested a list of food we should eat. Exercise was often simply walking a dog or not using a car.

F733 Domain Exploration – Applying Synoptic Skills

General Comments:

Candidates engaged well with the paper and it proved accessible to a wide range of levels with most students managing to attempt all the questions. There were few rubric errors, but candidates need to pay attention to how many examples a question is asking for. This is generally requested in bold so there is little excuse for error here. Most students demonstrated good levels of time management; there were very few unfinished scripts and the handwriting was generally legible.

Section A was well received, particularly questions 1 & 4. Question 1 provided some interesting examples personal to the students and Q4 providing some wide-ranging answers and some heartfelt engagement. That being said, this is a synoptic paper and, as such, requires candidates to approach it from social, cultural and scientific perspectives. Although candidates did attempt to cover all three domains in question 4, many produced rather simplistic answers in terms of the scientific element.

Section B produced some wide-ranging, knowledgeable and insightful essays that were an absolute pleasure to read. Not only did candidates show general awareness of how to structure an essay with an introduction and conclusion, but they also included some thoughtful evaluation throughout their writing. The level of engagement with the paper was high with candidates using pertinent current examples and demonstrating a general political engagement not always prevalent in previous years.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

Question No. 1

Candidates responded well to this question with the best answers addressing artwork that they were personally acquainted with and which had moved them. The better candidates demonstrated an understanding of Moss's views without resorting to quotes directly from the stimulus and illustrated their answer with the use of original examples. Weaker candidates lifted directly from the quote and either failed to address two examples or used examples with very similar arguments.

Question No. 2

This question proved somewhat of a discriminator for candidates. It was obvious that some students knew little about social sciences and in these cases the cartoon just confused them, some had little idea of the meaning of objectivity or subjectivity sometimes muddling the two. In fact, in some instances this question was not even attempted. When the illustration was understood it proved an effective stimulus with candidates dividing their answer into two sections, one focusing on the role of opinion/bias and the other on methodology. Some candidates made good use of transferable knowledge in this question, although students should always keep in mind that this is a General Studies paper not a Sociology or History paper.

Question No. 3

Candidates accessed this question in a number of ways. The majority focussed on particular methods of research for example questionnaires, site surveys etc. Very few students referenced

primary or secondary research or addressed the question in terms of quantitative or qualitative research. It was rare to see an answer that adequately covered all the bases, detailing research, the construction and the council. Most candidates addressed two methods, but sometimes in basic terms and with little sophistication. That being said there was some obvious technical knowledge present that was often times simply underdeveloped.

Question 4.

Most candidates managed to give a reasonable answer to this question. This question spoke to many of the students in terms of their own personal experience in their towns and villages. The best answers covered a wide range of ideas and developed them in terms of the three domains. However, many essays lacked balance and therefore did not reach the higher marks. Candidates found the social and cultural domains much easier to address. There were some insightful references regarding using the library to educate in order to promote understanding and cultural acceptance in the light of rising immigration and some use of Bryant's comment on inequality, although this was often not comprehensively developed. Another popular theme was the library as a place to socialise particularly with children e.g. story time or singing groups. Generally, students found the scientific domain harder to access with many simply referencing access to science books and research promoting scientific careers or discoveries. This question should be approached as a short essay and therefore the better candidates produced answers that were not only balanced, but fully developed and evaluative.

Section B

Question 5

This question was accessible across levels, but did not tend to elicit much in terms of the higher scoring answers. Many responses showed a clear understanding of the political bias of newspapers and of the need to embellish stories to sell more newspapers. Not surprisingly many students used common political examples from the most recent election and it was heart-warming to see such a general level of genuine political engagement from 17 and 18-year-old students. The better essays showed in depth knowledge of the role of differing types of newspapers in our society and an evaluation of comparative levels of reliability in both the UK and the USA. The weaker papers lost focus, did not use specific examples and drifted into discussions about social media and or television/the media in general.

Question 6

This question engaged many students who produced some very high-level essays that were informative, wide-ranging and evaluative. The better essays marshalled their arguments well producing well-balanced essays that contained synthesis. This essay was host to many specific examples from both the UK and abroad, which used the stimulus to good effect. That being said the top scoring scripts also evidenced problems and solutions with which they were personally acquainted and highlighted cultural and social differences in car usage and congestion. Many showed specific knowledge of particular solutions, for example London's congestion charge or "Barclay Bikes" and evaluated them in a balanced and critical manner. Poorer answers were either light on solutions or causes and gave little in the way of balanced evaluation or examples. In this instance the use of examples had a tendency to be totally gleaned from the stimulus material, many used the driving test, but failed to relate it realistically to their argument.

Question 7

This question again proved quite a discriminator, with candidates seemingly able to do either very well or rather poorly; there seemed very little in the way of middle ground here. Better candidates produced wide-ranging essays that covered religions, culture and continents and topics such as gay marriage, religious garments, abortion and FGM, comparing and contrasting in terms of values and the law. Some of the strongest answers showed an awareness of law changing in response to a shift in societal values. There were many ways in which to approach this essay and candidates took full advantage of this fact, as it produced some of the best essays I have seen on a General Studies paper. The less able candidates approached this

essay in a very basic manner generally focusing less on how values relate to the law and more on crime, using examples of people breaking the law as evidence of the validity of the statement.

Overall this exam paper presented some excellent responses. It showcased students that are socially, culturally and scientifically aware and who are capable of formulating evaluative arguments under pressure. It was generally accessible at all levels and allowed candidates to draw on personal experience alongside theoretical knowledge to boost their marks. Candidates demonstrated some engaged responses and there was very little disinterest evident.

F734 Culture, Science and Society: Making Connections

General Comments:

It was pleasing to note that, as in previous years, most candidates were well prepared for essay writing and there were some very good responses. Examiners commented that all candidates engaged with the subject matter raised in each of the questions.

Each question has two parts: to demonstrate knowledge, and use experience to construct a response which includes the three domains; and the other part is to consider the extent of an issue. It is disappointing to note that weaker candidates continue to copy or paraphrase material from the source thus limiting their opportunity to access the higher marks. The source is offered as a springboard for answers, it is not intended to be regurgitated as a complete response. Too often the part of the question which requires analysis and evaluation is either ignored or receives simplistic and unqualified assertions, almost as an afterthought. To access the higher marks, it is important for candidates to consider both aspects of the question in equal part.

Candidates appeared to be able to spread their time evenly between both questions. There were few instances which demonstrated that candidates had 'run out of time'. Equally, it was pleasing to note that there were very few 'spoiled' responses containing matter which bore no relevance to the topics in the questions.

Examiners remain concerned about the quality of communication. Perennially there are comments within the reports about the quality of handwriting, spelling, paragraphing and punctuation. Examiners commented on homophonic errors, conjugation of verbs, and the absence of apparent knowledge about when to use the apostrophe, comma and full stop. The examination is not testing the construction of English language, however some basic principles of grammar need to be applied when responding in essay form.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No.1

The question contained two sources: one which outlined some information about crime, and changes in combatting crime since the end of World War Two; and the other gave some information about the sentencing of crime. Candidates were asked to discuss the factors from the domains which contribute to the number of crimes being committed in the UK today., and then to discuss to what extent the sentences for crimes are an effective deterrent. This question offered the opportunity for good differentiation of candidates .

A pleasing number of candidates showed a good understanding of the reasons that contribute to the number of crimes and used recent examples to support and illustrate their work. Those candidates accessing the higher marks incorporated the ideas from each source using it as a 'springboard' and discussed the extent of effectiveness of sentencing as a deterrent by comparing specific examples and in some instances offering their own suggestions.

Weaker responses wrote in general about crime without offering examples or considering the extent to which sentencing was effective. The weakest responses lacked clarity, and often followed the source, or re-phrased it.

The inclusion of examples was one way to differentiate between responses. The stronger answers included a wide range of examples and were often able to make connections between the domains. These included examples such as cybercrime (including phishing, cyberbullying,

and fraud) gang crime, hate crime, religiously motivated crime, to name a few. A number of responses commented on events which had occurred in the weeks immediately before the examination was taken. Weaker responses were sometimes able to identify reasons in general terms, such as increased population, poverty, scientific developments, but were unable to elaborate on exactly how these contributed to the number of crimes.

Common themes within the cultural domain related to religion, race, and the changing attitudes of different groups over time. Most often there was a discussion about the change in the cultural 'make-up' of the UK and how this impacted on race and hate crime. Some candidates chose to discuss terrorist and racist events which had happened in the weeks leading up to the examination. Here the discussions demonstrated good awareness of the motivations of such groups. Another common area for discussion was that of gangs and the crime which results from that such as knife crime, vandalism, graffiti, and drug crime. A number of candidates attributed the rise in crime to peer pressure, related to the need to 'fit in'. Within this domain there was often quite perceptive commentary about the changes within the UK since World War Two in terms of attitudes to discipline in schools, removal of corporal punishment, increased single parent families, and changes in music styles. This often afforded the opportunity for good synoptic discussion about the number and type of crimes committed.

The scientific domain tended to include references to mental illness, research into criminal behaviour, and developments in technology to assist the detection of crime. There was awareness that the developments in DNA testing and forensic science would increase the successful detection of crime. This was regularly linked to a rational discussion about the merits, or otherwise, or a re-introduction of the death penalty. Other Candidates concentrated their discussion on issues relating to mental illness and the existence of the 'crime gene'.

Discussion in the social domain tended to include the issues of costs, education, family background and poverty. When discussing this domain, many candidates could demonstrate an empathy with the situations that prisoners may encounter on completion of their sentence and that these issues (lack of money, lack of employment, being ostracised by their community and so on) may well in themselves contribute to re-offending. Some could give pertinent local examples of establishments which were helping released offenders to overcome this. There was discussion about 'everyday crime'. Including speeding, under-age drinking and or smoking, drink-driving, and graffiti. Again, this offered opportunities for synoptic discussion, and consideration about the effectiveness of deterrents.

Where the extent of effectiveness was considered candidates could recognise the difficulties of the sentencing system. Some candidates believed the only way that sentencing would be an effective deterrent would be to have inflexible guidelines, while others recognised the difficulties of creating a fair and just system. Some candidates made their own suggestions about the ways in which sentencing might be improved to reduce re-offending. The responses gaining higher levels were able to compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of the current system. Weaker responses were usually only able to state that sentencing was or was not a deterrent but without any discussion or debate.

Question No.2

For this question, the source comprised two sources: the first was a picture of an advert for The National Lottery; the second was a text box containing some information about advertising. Candidates were asked to read the sources and then discuss the extent to which advertising media can mislead people, and suggest ways this might be addressed. The discussion required consideration of all the domains.

When answered well, candidates offered a wide range of their own examples to support the notion that people were misled. In addition, the responses accessing higher marks offered a range of ways in which the issue could be addressed, and evaluated the potential of each. The

weakest responses often followed the source and offered few, if any, original examples, or spoke in very general terms about media.

Within the cultural domain discussion often centred on the way that access to advertisements had changed. This offered links to the scientific domain when talking about internet advertising and the use of social media by advertisers. More able candidates recognised that no age group was exempt from advertising and discussed the various ways advertisements were tailored to these groups. Weaker responses merely referred to the source material and failed to introduce any additional examples or ideas. A wide range of examples were offered when discussing advertisements which had the potential to mislead. These included Subway when discussing cultural issues, and Kinder, Ronald McDonald when discussing advertisements targeting children. Fosters and Yorkie were cited as examples when discussing gender bias in advertisements. The use of celebrity endorsements was also mentioned when discussing advertisements for make up or beauty products

The discussion in the scientific domain often related to different types of technology available for advertisers but also included health issues in relation to advertisements. The better responses were able to introduce specific and relevant examples to support their argument. These included the use of 'pop ups' on web sites, cookies, and 'spam' emails. Virtually all candidates could offer examples relating to health. The more able candidates offered examples such as gym memberships, health foods, weight loss and body exercising or toning equipment. The weaker responses concentrated on developing ideas from the source and often failed to cite named examples. Discussion about misleading food advertisements often led to a discussion about the potential for increased strain on the NHS in terms of diabetes, obesity and heart disease. The majority of candidates were aware that companies often highlighted apparent benefits while disguising or omitting the drawbacks. Dolmio was cited as a positive example of an advertisement where guidance was offered.

Discussion in the social domain largely focussed on advertisements relating to payday loans. Here there were plenty of pertinent examples including Wonga, QuickQuid, and Satsuma. This often led to a discussion about encouraging an escalation into poverty. Further examples of misleading advertisements were Paddy Power and other gambling sites such as Foxy Bingo. Discussion relating to this domain regularly offered opportunity for links to be made with other domains.

While a number of candidates were able to offer measures to counter misleading advertisements, only those accessing higher marks were able to evaluate the merits of their suggestions. Several candidates referred to the issues relating to smoking and the situation surround advertisements relating to cigarettes when discussing the effectiveness of any measures. The majority of candidates were aware of existing support mechanisms for those who were victims of misleading advertisements. There was reference to campaigns such as Gamble Aware, Drink Responsibly, and Just Say No. The weaker responses tended to offer existing measures, or comment that the consumer should read the small print more carefully.

By far the most common mistake in many weaker responses was to ignore the focus of the question and instead answer one relating to the benefits of advertising or the media in general.

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