

Examiners' report

GCSE

FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

**OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in
Food Preparation and Nutrition**

J309

For first teaching in 2016

J309/01 Summer 2025 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper 1 series overview

The paper provided an opportunity for all abilities of candidate to answer questions covering a wide range of topics from the specification. It was evident that candidates had sufficient time to answer all the questions. Questions requiring a description, discussion or explanation often required the use of some subject specific terminology which allowed for higher ability differentiation. Once again candidates were clearly well prepared for the examination which reflects the dedication and hard work of those teaching the specification. Many candidates demonstrated a passion for the subject through their responses.

When answering the extended response questions, it was pleasing to see that candidates had clearly been taught how to structure the answers. Some areas needed to be taught in more detail these included vitamins and minerals, antioxidants and cake making problems.

Some candidates did not focus on the key words in the questions, this then led to them either defining and not explaining, writing two responses instead of one, talking about the nutritional function of an ingredient opposed to the food processing function and environmental issues in general or food production in general rather than the issues food manufacturers need to consider.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• demonstrated clear knowledge of the government's guidelines for a healthy diet • demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the advantages of fortification • were able to describe the features and characteristics of an international cuisine • were able to describe decorative techniques to improve aesthetic qualities • demonstrated a broad knowledge and understanding of the environmental issues involved in food production.	• demonstrated a little understanding of decorative techniques used to improve aesthetic qualities • demonstrated limited understanding of the function of emulsifiers and stabilisers • misunderstood the meaning of the word cuisine • demonstrated limited knowledge and understanding of the environmental issues involved in food production.

Question 1 (a)

- 1 The Eatwell Guide and the 8 tips for healthy eating outline the government's recommendations for healthy eating.

(a) State the recommended number of glasses of fluid you should drink each day.

..... [1]

Most candidates gave a number in answer to this question; however, some misread the question and gave a volume.

Question 1 (b) (i)

(b) Water is one of the recommended fluids that you can drink.

(i) Identify **one other** recommended fluid that you can drink.

..... [1]

A well answered question with milk being the most popular correct answer.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) State **two** functions of water in the body.

1

2

[2]

Some candidates demonstrated knowledge when answering this question drawing on a wide range of answers from the mark scheme. However, some did not gain any marks as they responded with vague answers.

Exemplar 1

1 to regulate the body's temperature.....
2 to transport nutrients around the body..... [2]

Exemplar 1 is an example of a candidate clearly stating two correct functions of water in the body.

Question 1 (c) (i)

(c)

(i) State **two** recommendations given for eating fruit and vegetables.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

When answered successfully the most popular correct answers were - 5 portions a day, variety and 1/3 of the diet. Some candidates stated ways of preparing and storing fruits and vegetables and some stated fruit alone in their answers.

Question 1 (c) (ii)

(ii) Vegetables are classified into different groups.

Identify **one** vegetable for each of these groups.

Root

Flower

Seeds or pods

[3]

Assessment for learning



Many candidates did not have the depth of knowledge required to answer this question successfully and very few gained the full three marks. Candidates should be able to demonstrate a deeper knowledge and understanding of the classification of fruits and vegetables.

Question 1 (c) (iii)

(iii) Fruits and vegetables are good sources of fibre.

Identify **one other** good source of fibre.

..... [1]

One mark question answered as expected.

Question 1 (d) and (e)

(d) Describe the government guidelines for eating fish.

.....

.....

..... [2]

(e) Explain why government guidelines recommend that fats and oils are eaten in small amounts.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Many candidates demonstrated clear knowledge when answering these two questions.

Question 2 (a)

2 Vitamins are fat soluble or water soluble.

(a) Identify **two** fat-soluble vitamins.

1

2

[2]

A well answered question.

Question 2 (b)

(b) Identify **one** disease caused by a lack of each of these water-soluble vitamins in the diet.

Vitamin B1

Vitamin C

[2]

When answering this question scurvy was understood by some candidates, but Beri Beri was less well understood.

Assessment for learning

There are several questions on this paper relating to vitamins and minerals. These areas need to be understood in more detail as it was evident from the answers given that many candidates required a deeper level of knowledge in these areas to be successful on these questions. Many candidates were able to name correctly vitamins and minerals and the food sources of some vitamins and minerals. However, many candidates were unable to demonstrate knowledge of the functions and deficiencies of the vitamins and minerals.

Question 2 (c)

(c) State the other name for vitamin C.

..... [1]

Rarely was ascorbic acid included in answers, demonstrating the requirement for a deeper level of knowledge and understanding.

Question 2 (d)

(d) Some foods are fortified.

State **three** advantages of fortification.

- 1
-
- 2
-
- 3
- [3]

Many candidates were able to gain one mark by mentioning the increase in nutritional value of foods.

Assessment for learning

The advantages and disadvantages of fortification needs to be understood in more detail. Very few candidates could demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of fortification to answer with three correct advantages. Many candidate answers included how it improves flavour and/or texture of foods or about health and shelf life.

Question 2 (e)

(e) Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP®) is fortified.

State **three other** reasons why people choose to eat TVP®.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- [3]

Answered as expected.

Question 3*

3* Choose **one** international cuisine you have studied.

Describe the culinary traditions of your chosen international cuisine.

Your description must include:

- the traditional ingredients used
- cultural and religious factors
- cooking methods.

International cuisine chosen

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

[8]

Misconception



Candidates were not clear about the meaning of the word cuisine, often naming and describing a dish.

Candidates must focus on the key words in all questions. Some candidates stated British or Jewish as the chosen international cuisine.

Many candidates, who answered this question correctly, described Indian or Italian cuisine yet there was also a range of different cultures and dishes discussed. Some of the candidates referred to 'my' which inferred students from different cultural backgrounds or those with family from different cultures were describing a cuisine they were familiar with. Some candidates also described a cuisine from a country they had visited.

Question 4 (a)

4 After food is grown it is often processed.

(a) Explain what **primary processing** of food means.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Many candidates struggled with this question answering with cleaning and bacteria. Some were able to achieve one mark with the example of wheat to flour or mentioning first stages.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Identify the type of wheat usually used to make pasta.

..... [1]

Many candidates incorrectly named a type of flour, possibly not reading the question carefully enough or were unable to show the understanding needed to answer the question correctly.

Question 4 (c)

(c) Describe how flour is made into pasta.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [4]

Candidates had clearly made pasta and successfully answered this question.

Question 5*

5* Osteoporosis is a condition that affects bone health.

Explain the nutritional advice that should be followed to prevent osteoporosis.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [6]

Many candidates gained a mark from the low or middle mark band as they could demonstrate and apply knowledge of some or all the following nutrients - calcium, vitamin D and protein. Very few candidates could demonstrate a wider knowledge and understanding and some candidates chose to discuss incorrect nutrients such as iron and vitamin C.

Assessment for learning



It was evident from candidate answers that knowledge of the functions and sources of vitamins and minerals could be further developed. Nutrition is a topic which requires candidates to demonstrate a deeper knowledge and understanding..

Question 6 (a)

6

(a) Glazes are a decorative technique used to improve the appearance of a food product.

Complete the table below to:

- identify the type of glaze and
- give **one** example of a food product, other than a cheesecake, where the glaze could be used.

Use the types of glazes in the list below. Use each type once or not at all.

- Cornflour
- Egg wash
- Jam

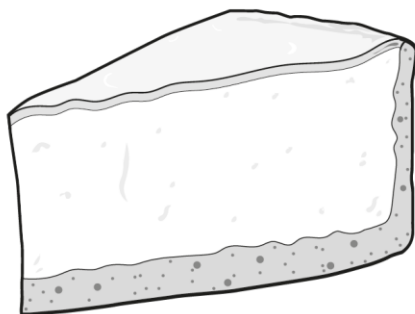
Description	Type of glaze	Food product where the glaze could be used
Applied to a product before baking to give a shiny finish.		
It is warmed and brushed on cooked food.		

[4]

Answered as expected.

Question (b) (i)

(b) Cheesecake is a layered dessert.



(i) A glaze can be used to improve the appearance of a cheesecake.

Describe **three other** decorative techniques that could be used to enhance the appearance of a cheesecake.

- 1
- 2
- 3

[3]

Exemplar 2

- 1 sieving icing sugar over the top for a decorative dusting
- 2 arranging sliced strawberries (or other fresh fruit) on top
- 3 ~~possibly~~ piping whipped double-cream on top

[3]

This candidate described **sieving** icing sugar and **piping** cream correctly. **Arranging** or **adding** an ingredient is not a description of a technique and therefore cannot gain any marks. Stating the name of an ingredient such as edible flowers is not a description of a technique and therefore cannot gain any marks.

Misconception



Candidates misunderstood the wording of the question and didn't often name or describe a technique to decorate the cheesecake. There was an understanding of how to generally improve the appearance, but candidate answers focused more on general ideas, such as adding lots of sprinkles or just cream, rather than specific decorative techniques.

Question 6 (b) (ii)

(ii) Identify **one** type of cheese that would be suitable for making a cheesecake filling.

..... [1]

One mark question answered as expected.

Question 6 (c) (i), (ii) and (iii)

(c) Food manufacturers use additives in food production.

(i) What specific texture do emulsifiers and stabilisers create in a cheesecake?

..... [1]

(ii) What do emulsifiers and stabilisers prevent happening in a cheesecake?

..... [1]

(iii) Give **two** examples of food products, other than a cheesecake, that require the use of thickeners.

1

2

[2]

The use of emulsifiers and stabilisers, thickeners and antioxidants were not well understood. Candidates required a deeper level of knowledge to be able to answer these three questions correctly.

Question 6 (c) (iv)

(iv) Explain why food manufacturers use antioxidants in food production.

.....
.....
.....
..... [2]

Many candidates found this question challenging struggled to answer correctly and answers given were not linked to food production.

Misconception



There were several different misconceptions when answering this question. Candidates explained benefits to health, helping to protect us against disease and preventing cancer. Some candidates' answers included the nutritional benefits of antioxidants and improving shelf life of food.

Question 7*

7* Discuss the environmental issues that food manufacturers need to consider when producing food.

Your discussion must consider:

- food waste
- carbon footprint
- transportation of materials and goods
- sustainability of resources.

[12]

Candidates required a more in-depth knowledge of environmental issues involved in food production to achieve a mark from the high mark band. Candidates demonstrated a deeper knowledge of carbon footprint and transportation. The two less successful areas when answering this question were food waste and sustainability. Many candidates repeated wording from the question in their answers.

Assessment for learning



Answers were generally well structured and logical, candidates were clearly well practised and could demonstrate this. Extended writing practice should be encouraged in order that all candidates are able to write a well-developed structured and detailed response to these questions.

Question 8 (a) (i), (ii), (b) (i), (ii) and (iii)

8 A sponge cake can be made using the creaming method.

(a) Explain why the following ingredients are used when making a sponge cake using the creaming method.

(i) Butter

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

(ii) Self-raising flour

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

(b) A sponge cake has the following faults.

(i) State **two** reasons why a sponge cake has sunk in the middle.

1

.....

2

..... [2]

(ii) State **two** reasons why a sponge cake has a heavy texture.

1

.....

2

..... [2]

(iii) State **one** reason why a sponge cake has risen unevenly.

.....

..... [1]

Candidates could not demonstrate the knowledge required to answer this group of questions successfully. Many answers given were very vague or based on unsupported ideas. Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the functions of ingredients in basic recipes.

Question 8 (c)

- (c) Describe **two** ways to check that a sponge cake is cooked and ready to be removed from the oven.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

The most common answers to this question were golden brown colour or knives/forks coming out clean.

Assessment for learning



Candidates often did not gain marks due to giving answers such as use a temperature probe or described shaking the cake to see if it wobbles, or of using a knife but not saying what to look for when the knife is removed. Candidates should be able to demonstrate and provide a full description in their answer when the command word describe is used.

Question 9 (a)

- 9 The ingredients listed below are used to make a home-made pasta dish.

Bacon
Cheese
Eggs
Garlic
Olive oil
Salt
Spaghetti pasta

- (a) Explain why the pasta dish is **not** suitable for someone who is lactose intolerant.

.....

.....

..... [2]

Cheese was regularly identified but few candidates could link it to the inability to digest lactose.

Question 9 (b) (i)

(b) Sensory feedback shows that the pasta dish looks unappealing.

(i) Explain **one** way to improve the appearance of the pasta dish.

.....

.....

..... [2]

Many candidates could name a suitable garnish, but many did not explain why a garnish would improve the appearance of the pasta dish.

Question 9 (b) (ii)

(ii) Sensory feedback shows that the texture of the pasta dish is too soft.

Explain **one** way to improve the texture of the pasta dish.

.....

.....

..... [2]

Answered as expected.

Question 9 (c)

(c) Sensory feedback is analysed using a star profile.

Explain how a sensory star profile could be used to evaluate the pasta dish.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

Unfortunately, many candidates gave a list of senses when answering this question.

Question 9 (d)

(d) Describe **one other** test that could be used to evaluate food.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Some candidates named a correct test but could not describe it correctly or described a test but did not name it correctly.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should be able to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding of preferential and sensory testing panels. Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the styles and forms of rating, ranking and profiling systems with the use of appropriate descriptive terminology.

Question 10 (a)

10

(a) Explain **one** way you can prevent food poisoning when preparing high-risk foods.

.....

..... [2]

Some candidates did not read or address the word preparing in the question and answered the question with information about cooking temperatures, cooking food, temperature control and danger zone.

Exemplar 3

Wash hands right after preparing the food to prevent cross contamination to other foods and surfaces. [2]

Exemplar 3 is an example of one point that is well explained.

Question 10 (b)

(b) Describe how you should store fresh meat in a refrigerator.

.....
..... [2]

Answered as expected.

Question 10 (c)

(c) State **two** ways you can try to ensure the quality of the food you buy.

1
2 [2]

Answered as expected.

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