

Examiners' report

GCSE

CITIZENSHIP STUDIES

**OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in
Citizenship Studies**

J270

For first teaching in 2016

J270/03 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](#).

Please note: OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Citizenship Studies (J270) will no longer be funded in Wales for new learners after **30 September 2026**. Please check the [Qualifications in Wales](#) portal (QiW) for more information.

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Paper 3 series overview

This paper forms the final component of the J270 GCSE in Citizenship Studies and comprises of a mixture of short and longer questions. The majority of candidates attempted most or all of the questions on the paper, though this year we saw a slight increase in the number of candidates who did not attempt any questions at all compared with 2024. The majority of candidates were well prepared and attempted all questions on the paper, though there was an increase in candidates appearing to misread or misunderstand several of the questions.

This year saw another increase in the overall percentage of candidates attempting the longer questions on the paper. The exception to this was Question 2(e) where candidates were overall less successful and it was the most omitted question on the paper. The longer response questions allow more successful candidates to apply their citizenship subject knowledge to form a balanced response to a viewpoint. The more successful candidates were able to demonstrate an appreciation of the nuanced factors that inform citizenship debates, supported by a range of relevant examples.

As is typically the case, certain topics and parts of the paper were addressed more successfully than others by candidates. Section B and the exploration of community cohesion and the links with equal opportunities and democratic values more widely, was the section that candidates found most challenging. Sections A, C and D were overall answered more successfully by candidates, though the variable quality of interpretation of the graph that formed Figure 3, suggested that many candidates were less familiar with the interpretation of quantitative statistics than in previous years.

Two continuing trends that it would benefit centres to consider on behalf of their candidates relate to the quality and legibility of written responses. There was clear evidence that some candidates struggled to gather their ideas coherently for the longer responses. A reminder of the importance of briefly planning these before they begin writing them may improve candidate marks on the extended answer responses. This year saw a further increase in the number of scripts with exceptionally poor handwriting, to the detriment of the candidate due to the illegibility of elements of their responses.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• read the question carefully and understood what was being asked of them (this included the highlighting of key words and phrases) • used relevant detail from sources when asked and made use of all of the bullet guidance when writing their longer responses • showed evidence of some planning for their extended responses • had a scribe or word processor provision to ensure their responses were legible • gave relevant examples to support their arguments and answers, demonstrating greater understanding of the complexities of key issues.	• did not read the question carefully and defined key terms rather than responding to the question • did not make use of the bullet guidance points to structure their extended responses • did not plan their responses to the longer questions in advance • did not read the sources carefully to make sure they understood them • relied on copying or paraphrasing sources for extended responses, rather than interpreting the information in response to the question.

Section A overview

In this section candidates were required to engage with a text source and apply their own knowledge to respond to three short response questions on the responsibilities, role and effectiveness of jurors in the legal system.

Question 1 (a)

- 1 Study **Source 1** and answer questions **1(a)** and **1(b)**.

Source 1

Extract from Notice sent to jurors



Your Legal Responsibilities as a Juror

By serving on this jury you are fulfilling a very important **PUBLIC SERVICE**. This means you have some important **LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES**.

As a juror you have taken a **LEGAL OATH** or **AFFIRMATION** to try the defendant based **ONLY** on the evidence you hear in court.

This means the **FAIRNESS** of the trial depends on you following a few very **IMPORTANT LEGAL RULES**. These rules are explained to you in this Notice.






DURING THE TRIAL

This is from the moment you take the juror oath until the judge finally discharges you from serving on the jury at the end of the trial.

During the trial you can **ONLY DISCUSS** the case with the **11 OTHER JURORS** on your jury and only when you are **ALL TOGETHER** and there is no risk of you being overheard.

This means that during the trial you **CANNOT DISCUSS** the case with **FAMILY, FRIENDS** or **ANYONE** else. Discussing the case means writing or speaking about the case in person or on any **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES** such as Facebook or X or on blogs and chat rooms.

(a) State **two** examples of a court where juries are **not** used.

1

2 [2]

Most candidates gained at least 1 mark on this question and the majority gained both marks. Youth, county, family and magistrates courts were the most common correct responses.

Question 1 (b)

(b) State **four** examples from **Source 1** and your own knowledge that show that the role of a juror is an **important** one.

1

.....

2

.....

3

.....

4

..... [4]

Most candidates drew their response solely from the source. Only a few added additional, mostly correct points from their own knowledge. The bold text in Source 1 helped candidates to find the relevant information and most responses gained 3 or 4 marks.

Question 1 (c)

Study the viewpoint below and answer question 1(c).

“Guilt or innocence should be decided by judges, not juries.”

(c) State **four** different points that could be used to **support** the viewpoint above.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

[4]

Most candidates gained some marks on this question by offering simple but clear points supporting the viewpoint. The question asks candidates to state four **different** points, and where candidates often lost marks it was due to a repetition of points. A simple example of this is ‘Judges should decide because they have legal training’ followed by a second point ‘Juries have no legal training and don’t know the law.’ These are in essence the same point and can only be credited once.

Section B overview

This section looks at the concept of community cohesion, especially in regard to equal opportunities, and wider democratic values. The shorter questions required candidates to engage with Source 2 and consider how local authorities and other organisations can support communities to develop cohesively. The longer response questions asked candidates to consider how community cohesion can be developed without significant government financial assistance, and how community cohesion plays a role in promoting democratic values in everyday life.

Question 2 (a)

- 2 Study **Source 2** and answer questions **2(a)–(c)** and **2(e)**.

Source 2

Guidance on community cohesion, inclusion and equality

Text adapted from Local Government Association website on
Community cohesion, inclusion and equality 2023, © local.gov.uk,
Local Government Association - removed due to third party
copyright restrictions.

- (a) Use **Source 2** and your own knowledge to answer the following question.

State **one** group or organisation, other than a local authority, that could help local people to **increase** community cohesion.

..... [1]

Most candidates were able to provide a correct response to this question, though there were some common errors. A small but noticeable number of incorrect responses stated the local council could help, not recognising that this is the same, or part of the local authority itself. Answers that included references to NGO's or charities without stating which ones were also not credited; while some organisations do increase community cohesion, this is not the main function of many such organisations. Where a specific local example was given by candidates, this was credited.

Question 2 (b)

(b) Use **Source 2** and your own knowledge to answer the following question.

State **one** example, other than equal opportunities, of what you might see in a place with **good** community cohesion.

.....
..... [1]

The majority of candidates answered this question correctly, either from their own knowledge or using information from Source 2. A small minority offered 'equal opportunities' as their answer, not recognising that they had been asked for something other than this in the question itself.

Question 2 (c)

(c) Using **Source 2** and your own knowledge, state **two** reasons why promoting **equal opportunities** is important for building community cohesion.

1
.....
2
..... [2]

While many candidates gained 1 mark, the number achieving full marks was noticeably lower on this question. Candidates often gave examples of how equal opportunities could be applied within communities for example 'everyone goes to the same school', rather than stating the impact of this on cohesion within communities.

Question 2 (d)

Study the viewpoint below and answer question **2(d)**.

“Unless the government spends more money to improve communities, there is little that local people can do.”

(d) Explain why people might **oppose** the viewpoint above.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... **[4]**

Most candidates performed relatively well on this question, with some giving very detailed answers. Where candidates did not gain many marks it was often due to a lack of detail or examples. Many candidates correctly answered that the people in the community could take action but did not exemplify how to gain additional marks.

Question 2 (e)*

(e)* Using information from **Source 2** and **information from your studies**, evaluate the following viewpoint.

“Initiatives to promote cohesive communities do nothing to promote democratic values.”

In your answer you must:

[8]

- describe ‘democratic values’
- explain how community cohesion might promote these values
- explain what else might need to be done to promote these values.

As the first of the extended answer questions this was the one most omitted by candidates, either because they wanted to save time for the other longer response questions, or because they were unsure how to address this viewpoint effectively.

Many candidates struggled to discuss how community cohesion could promote democratic values but could describe democratic values and so gained some marks for linking the two concepts. Even some of the stronger responses did not address the final bullet point in the list, which in some cases cost them several marks.

Exemplar 1

Democratic values are when people feel valued in their democracy and also hold power ~~want~~ within their country.

Source 2 shows that ~~can~~^{better} community cohesion promotes these values as it encourages equal opportunities between people of different background which means that people feel valued and that their opinions and voices hold power and are not ignored. This also promotes democratic values for example if people feel valued in their community then they are more likely to engage in local decision making and also elections and the voting system. // Community cohesion also promotes these values as I know that if people engage more with their local people it discourages discrimination and racism and this promotes democratic values as Rule of law is upheld as people have the same treatment & opportunities as others of different backgrounds. People of cohesive communities feel more sense of belonging & sense of equality. // It could also be improved by holding local events revolving around politics which encourage local involvement in decision making which helps promote democratic values as well as encouraging people to get involved in national politics for example standing in election which means better decisions made for local ^{area} & ^{people}.

This is a good example of a response that gained full marks, demonstrating a strong understanding of both community cohesion and democratic values. The candidate has clearly linked community cohesion to equal opportunities, expression and engagement with voting, reduction of discrimination, and the rule of law. Very few candidates were so organised and thorough in their approach to this question, and the depth of understanding of democratic values in particular is evident.

The candidate then goes on to address the final bullet point of the guidance that asks what else might be done to promote democratic values. They discuss how holding events not only brings the community together but also allows for the sharing of a wider range of ideas and encourages people to consider getting involved in national politics. This is further exemplified as the candidate goes on to say this could be by members of the community choosing to stand in elections themselves.

It should be noted that without addressing the final guidance bullet point the candidate would have been limited to only 5 marks for an otherwise impressive response. This highlights how important it is for candidates to pay attention to the whole question.

Section C overview

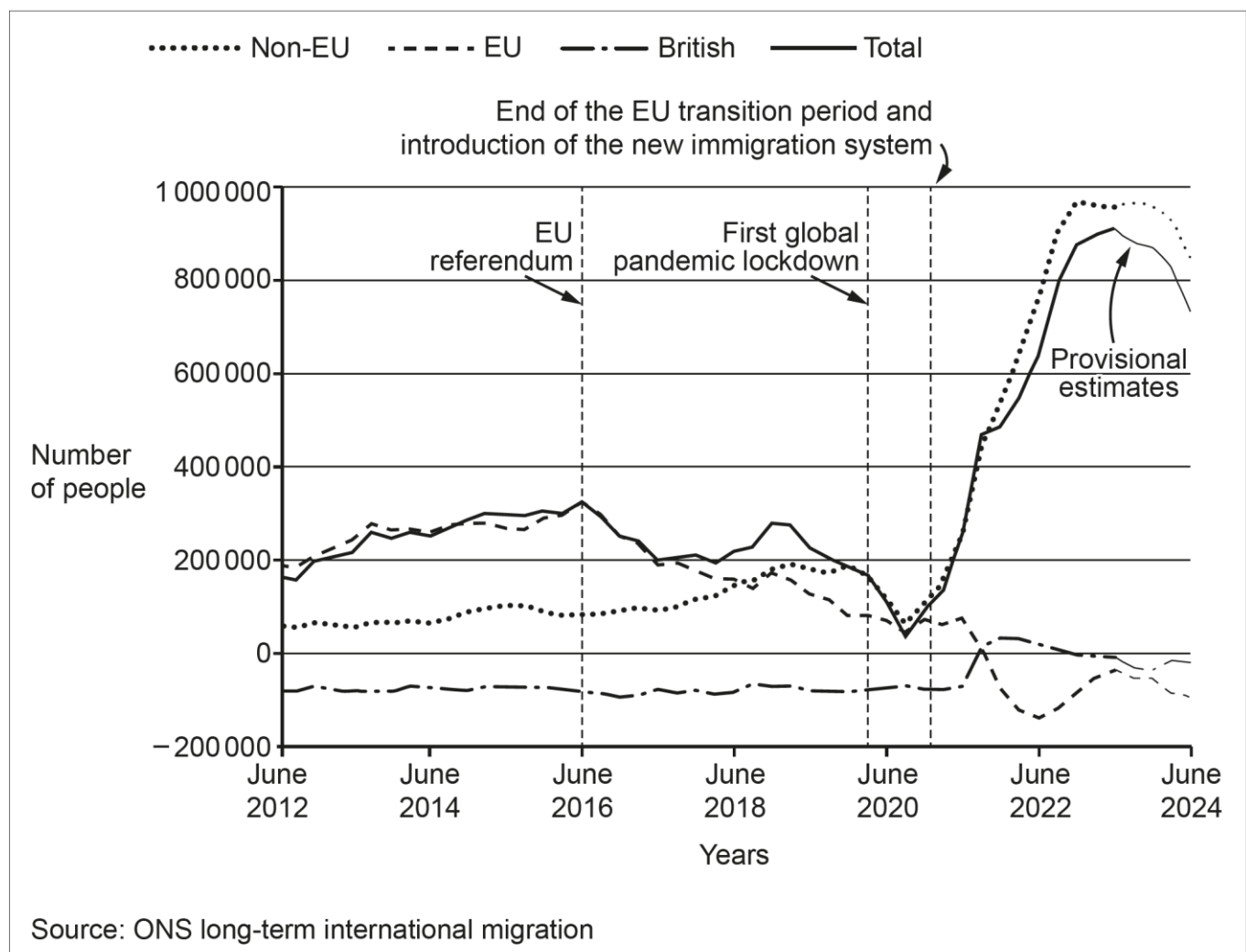
This section explored immigration to the UK and the impact of the UK government's policies on levels of immigration. Figure 3 provided a detailed breakdown on migration to the UK by the nationality of the individuals migrating and highlighted the timing of relevant key government decisions. This allowed candidates to evaluate the possible impact of the respective government decisions on the numbers and nationality of immigrants to the UK. Question 3(b) was designed to assess candidates' ability to effectively evaluate the source and viewpoint, selecting appropriate evidence from Fig. 3 and their own knowledge, in a two-sided response.

Question 3 (a)

3 Study Fig. 3 and answer questions 3(a) and 3(b).

Fig. 3

Long-term net migration of non-EU, EU, and British nationals in the UK



(a) State **two** examples of evidence in **Fig. 3** that could be used to **support** the following viewpoint:

“Decisions by the UK government have had a significant impact on migration.”

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

This question proved to be challenging for some candidates as they struggled to link decisions to impact. It was also clear that not all candidates understood what the graph represented with a number misinterpreting the key and assuming the lines represented migration to those areas, rather than the nationality of the different people migrating to the UK.

Question 3 (b)*

(b)* Use information from **Fig. 3** and **information from your studies** to evaluate the following viewpoint:

“UK government policies on migration are working.”

In your answer you must:

- use information from **Fig. 3**
- explain why people might think the policies are working
- explain why people might think the policies are **not** working.

[8]

Most candidates performed more successfully on this question than 2(e), finding the viewpoint easier to argue both for and against.

In most cases candidates used Fig.3 well to support their evaluation and some candidates also referred to knowledge of immigration policies and issues not mentioned in the source in their responses. Where this was the case, the Rwanda scheme and the government response to illegal small boat migration were common policies named.

Where candidates did not score well it was usually due to one of two reasons. Either there was a misinterpretation of Fig 3 that had potentially also impacted the marks they gained on Question 3(a), or they chose instead to discuss the benefits and issues that migration can cause. Here candidates were evaluating whether immigration itself 'works' for the benefit of the UK, not whether government policies on migration were having the intended effect. Again careful reading of the question may have helped avoid this error.

Exemplar 2

The new immigration system was introduced ~~at the end of 2020~~ near the end of 2020, and since then, there has been a rapid rise in total net migration from around 100,000 people to around around 900,000 people in the space of a year. This shows that the government policies are encouraging more and more people to migrate to the UK, meaning that the policies are not working, as the Conservative party is in power at the time that implemented the policy.

aimed to reduce the number of migrants coming to the UK.

However, provisional estimates show the number of people migrating to the UK decreasing, and policy often takes time to come into effect, as organisational process takes time. Further laws might be passed as well to better enforce the new governmental policy and decrease the number of migrants coming to the UK.

The ~~Rwanda~~ Conservative party in power tried to implement the Rwanda scheme into UK policy - deporting migrants to Rwanda. However, the House of Lords refused to pass the bill, and the crown court would not deem ~~make~~ Rwanda a safe country, so it failed. Whilst this is arguably a good thing as it upholds human rights, it still shows how government policies on migration are not working, and might discourage many.

All migrants are being held in processing tents upon arrival in the UK, so many citizens will not be aware of the numbers of migrants coming

3	10	to the UK, so might be under the
		impression that there are not many
		UK migrants, when, in fact, there are.

In Exemplar 2, the candidate has made several accurate points evaluating both sides of the viewpoint and considering why people may hold the opinions they do on the effectiveness of the government's policy on migration. The candidate begins by discussing the impact of the new immigration system with reference to accurate figures from Fig. 3. They then go on to explain how the rapid rise in migration demonstrates the failure of the policy of the Conservative government which intended to reduce immigration to the UK. The provisional data in Fig.3 is accurately analysed and used to support a point that the policy may work when it has had time to fully come into effect. The candidate then uses their own knowledge to discuss the Rwanda scheme and how this failed to pass in the House of Lords. There is a slight diversion into a discussion of the benefit of this not passing as it could have potentially violated human rights law. They conclude with a final slightly unfinished point that addresses the lack of visibility of illegal migrants and how this may impact people's perceptions. This links to the wording of the guidance bullet points that asks candidates to 'explain why people might think..' rather than just to argue the points themselves.

Misconception



Reading and interpreting the graph in Fig.3.

Many candidates pointed out that as immigration rose rapidly following the introduction of the new immigration system it must have been a success. This suggests that they hold a misconception that an increase in a statistic is automatically a positive and planned effect. Given that the new system was a policy aimed at curbing migration and ensuring an increase in skilled worker migration to the UK, this is an incorrect interpretation of the data. It would be useful for teachers to provide candidates with guidance and practice in the critical evaluation of quantitative sources to help them interpret such evidence more successfully.

Section D overview

This section focused on the European Union, looking at key events in the history of the organisation, and the impact that leaving the EU has had on the lives of the citizens of the UK. This year two sources were provided for candidates to use in their answers to the questions in this section.

Question 4(b) asks candidates to evaluate a viewpoint, allowing candidates the opportunity to argue both sides of the issue, and incorporate a range of evidence from both their own knowledge and the sources provided. The marking guidance for this question requires assessment criteria AO3a (source and evidence analysis) and AO3c (evaluation of evidence and quality of argument) to be considered separately though recorded as a joint mark.

Overall candidates responded well to the viewpoint with an increase in the number achieving full marks on this question compared to 2024. Where candidates were less successful it was due to the overuse of the sources and not linking the points within these to a benefit or negative impact on citizens as individuals, rather than the country as a whole.

Question 4 (a)

4 Study **Sources 4.1** and **4.2** and answer questions **4(a)** and **4(b)**.

Source 4.1

EU events

Table showing EU Timeline, Lisbon Treaty,
adapted from <https://european-union.europe.eu> - removed due to third party
copyright restrictions.

Source 4.2

UK government to set its own laws for its own people as the Brexit Freedoms Bill is introduced

The Bill's introduction will build on the significant progress the government has made since delivering Brexit on 31 January 2020, which include:

- ending free movement and taking back control of our borders – replacing freedom of movement with a points-based immigration system and making it easier to deport foreign criminals
- restoring the UK Supreme Court as the final appeal court that applies to the UK – UK judges sitting in UK courts now determine all the law of the land in the UK
- striking new free trade deals with over 70 countries, including landmark deals with Australia and New Zealand.

Adapted from a Government press release of 22 September 2022

(a) State **two** reasons why the EU was formed.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Most candidates gained at least 1 mark on this question. The question does not ask for the response to come from a source which confused some candidates. The careful wording of the question was missed by some who referred to current benefits/advantages of EU membership that were not reasons why the organisation was formed. Correct answers here related only to founding rationale, not current EU policies.

Question 4 (b)*

(b)* Using information from **Sources 4.1** and **4.2** and **information from your studies**, evaluate the following viewpoint:

“UK citizens have benefited overall from the country leaving the EU.”

You must include:

- arguments that support the viewpoint
- arguments that oppose the viewpoint.

[12]

Most candidates responded to this question and addressed the viewpoint well. Candidates used Source 4.2 well and were able to incorporate key points from this in their answers, though a few less confident candidates copied large sections of the source without specifically addressing how these have impacted citizens. Most candidates were able to address the viewpoint accurately and provide a rationale for their own opinion.

It is clear this is a topic candidates were confident with, and some gave very thorough answers using a range of information from their own studies to support a coherent and well-structured response to the question. Fewer candidates this year showed any evidence of planning their responses before they began writing. While this did not have a significant impact for many, there were candidates who would have achieved higher marks if they had taken a few minutes to organise their ideas before writing, resulting in responses that were more coherent and accurate.

Exemplar 3

Some people may agree that UK citizens have overall benefitted from leaving the EU, whereas others might disagree.

Some people might agree that the UK has benefitted from leaving due to having more power over trade and the economy. Whilst in the EU, countries were encouraged and obliged to form certain trade deals / links maybe preventing a country from reaching successful trade deals with those outside the EU. Source 4.2 shows after Brexit the UK was able to sign new trade deals with over 70 countries, benefitting UK economy.

Some people might disagree that the UK has benefitted from leaving the EU. They might argue that the EU was a strong international body that gave Europe a voice in the wider world and by leaving, the UK has become politically alienated and irrelevant. For example, the EU is the force behind many treaties e.g. Treaties of Rome and Lisbon Treaty in Source 4.1 that benefitted Europe and the wider world through promoting peace and human rights.

Some people might agree that ~~B~~ the UK has benefitted from leaving the EU due to having more control over borders and migration. Source 4.2 shows the UK now has power over introducing a points based migration system and no longer follows the EU free border movements. Some UK citizens could see this as a good thing, as they are fearful of pressure on local services or wages being undercut by migrants. However, ~~the~~ levels of migrations haven't fallen that significantly from the UK leaving the EU, so people may argue that the UK has not really benefitted.

Some people might disagree that the UK has benefitted due to the loss employment and education opportunities across Europe. For example, the Erasmus scheme enabled students across Europe to

Study abroad at lower costs but was removed as part of Brexit. Therefore, opportunities have been removed by the UK leaving the EU.

Overall, some UK citizens might feel they have benefitted due to the UK government having more control over trade and migration, however these changes could be minor. Some may feel they have not benefitted due to

END OF QUESTION PAPER

losing a place in an important, respected international organisation and losing education and employment opportunities in the EU.

Exemplar 3 is a well-constructed and coherent response that evaluates the viewpoint convincingly and analyses a range of evidence including both of the sources provided. The candidate has considered the advantages to the economy of new trade possibilities linked to Source 4.2, the loss of international ties and cooperation with reference to Source 4.1 and has drawn from their own knowledge to support the discussion where relevant.

A key strength of this response is how the candidate has explicitly linked their arguments to the impact on citizens' lives directly. The discussion of the ending of free movement is linked to the loss of job and overseas study opportunities for people. Likewise, their discussion of the impact of leaving the EU on migration considers why this is seen as important for people who fear the resultant pressure on local services or possible undercutting of salaries.

Candidates who gained the highest marks on this question paid close attention to the viewpoint's wording, which focused on UK citizens rather than the country itself.

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Question 3: Net migration to UK year ending June 2011-2023, Migration Watch UK from ONS 2023, Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 23 November 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending June 2023, available under the Open Government Licence v3.0

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