



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011
Advanced Subsidiary Examination**

Communication and Culture

**COMM1 Understanding Communication and
Culture**

Mark Scheme

Final

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

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UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE (COMM1)

MARK SCHEME (June 2011)

Aims

When you are marking scripts your aim should be:

1. to identify and reward the achievements of candidates;
2. to ensure compatibility of assessment for all candidates, regardless of question or examiner.

Approach

Please be *positive* when marking scripts, looking to reward relevant points that candidates make rather than to penalise what they don't know.

A specification of this type must recognise the variety of experiences and knowledge that candidates bring to the examination. The questions have been designed to provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate what they have learned about different aspects of Communication and Culture.

The Principles of 'Best Fit'

This paper requires candidates to make three extended responses in an essay format and to answer some short answer questions which test their understanding of the techniques of critical analysis. These short answer questions have their own marking grid since they are working within a single Assessment Objective (AO2): demonstrate knowledge and understanding of concepts and critical debates relevant to the discipline of communication and culture.

In the case of the longer essay-style response a grid is used which, while recognizing the need to consider different aspects of each response (like its technical accuracy), also attempts to consider the work as a whole.

In this case, marks are notionally divided between two Assessment Objectives (AO1 and AO2) in the ratio 2:3. Individual mark ranges are suggested for each AO, but these are provided **for guidance only**. **Ultimately the response should be placed at a level that 'best fits' its qualities.**

The Marking Grid

The marking grid covers the generic qualities of all essays written as responses on this paper in terms of their ability to communicate in a technical register and the knowledge and understanding displayed of Communication and Culture concepts.

A set of question-specific prompts support the application of marks and are included after the grid.

Annotating Scripts

It is important that the way you arrive at a mark should be recorded on the script. This will help you with making accurate judgements and it will help any subsequent markers to identify how you are thinking, should adjustment need to be made.

To this end you should:

- identify points of merit
- write a brief summative comment at the end
- put the total in the margin at the end of each answer.

Generic AS Grid COMM1 (Questions 1, 2 & 4 - Question 3 is 20 marks AO2)

Level	Marks	AO1: This tests the ability of candidates to communicate in the register of Communication and Culture	Marks	AO2: This tests the ability of candidates to understand the content and concepts offered by the qualification	Marks
		<i>This reflects the degree to which the candidate has extended their grasp of the discourse of the subject and/or produced effective communication in their chosen medium.</i>		<i>This reflects the degree to which the work provides evidence of further knowledge and understanding of the content and concepts of Communication and Culture</i>	
4	16-20	Highly technical in its register and/or creative and/or proficient in its use of the chosen format.	7-8	Knowledge and understanding will be very good in terms of its range of knowledge and/or depth of understanding.	10-12
3	11-15	Sound in terms of its range and control and good in terms of its effectiveness.	5-6	Level of knowledge and understanding will be secure and will evidence sound subject specialist knowledge.	7-9
2	6-10	Limited vocabulary, perhaps only partly understood, rising to a degree of competence evidenced by the effective use of a fairly narrow range of terms/concepts.	3-4	Evidence will range from a limited, largely non-specialist relevance through to a simple but competent grasp of Communication and Culture content.	4-6
1	1-5	Basic, non-technical and unconvincing.	1-2	Evidence will be basic, non-specific and unconvincing.	1-3

**UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE (COMM1)
MARK SCHEME (June 2011)**

1 Teenagers get attracted to sub-cultural groups for a number of reasons. Which one of the following explanations do you find the most convincing and why?

1 (a) Sub-cultural groups are places where different identities can be explored in a creative way. (20 marks)

OR

1 (b) Sub-cultural groups offer a safe haven from the dangers of being an individual. (20 marks)

OR

1 (c) Sub-cultural groups are sensitive to contemporary trends in fashion, style and music. (20 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (16 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions.</p> <p>A clear, concise justification of the selected explanation. Explicit and convincing evidence that the concept of 'identity' in relation to sub-cultural groups is thoroughly understood. Supporting examples are apposite, contrasting and clearly linked to the chosen explanation.</p>
3 (11 – 15 marks)	<p>Likely to lead with the keywords, whatever the selection and consider the theory of the issue before the practice. Awareness of key terms and their use.</p> <p>Reasonably convincing, if partially flawed, attempt to justify chosen explanation. Some evidence that the concept of 'identity' in relation to the sub-cultural groups is understood. Examples are relevant and support the premise of the chosen explanation.</p>
2 (6 – 10 marks)	<p>Likely to work through practical answers with limited evaluation.</p> <p>The chosen statement is described rather than justified or justifications offered are less than convincing. Concepts of 'identity' and/or 'sub-cultural groups' are only partially understood. For marks of 9 – 10, appropriate examples may compensate for conceptual shortcomings, or vice versa. For marks in the range 6 – 8, examples are limited or unsuitable.</p>
1 (1 – 5 marks)	<p>Candidates respond superficially and/or insubstantially to the invitation in the question, typically by rewording the question.</p> <p>At this level, any justifications offered are inappropriate. Descriptions of the chosen explanation are limited. There are likely to be serious misinterpretations of 'identity' and/or 'sub-cultural groups'. Examples lack relevance or are, in the range 1 – 3 marks, absent.</p>
0	No relevant response.

UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE (COMM1)

2 Self-concept can be defined as the idea we have of ourselves as individuals. Explore one of the following statements about self-concept, using examples drawn from your studies and experience.

2 (a) Our self-concept relies heavily on the feedback we receive from others. (20 marks)

OR

2 (b) Our self-concept reflects our levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. (20 marks)

OR

2 (c) Our self-concept is significantly affected by our hopes and expectations. (20 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (16 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions.</p> <p>Clear, confident explanation of how the chosen element offers the indications of our true 'identity', including, probably, some reference to why other candidates are less convincing. There is some explicit evidence of conceptual understanding, demonstrating links between identity and the chosen statement.</p>
3 (11 – 15 marks)	<p>Likely to focus on keywords and address theory in advance of practice. Attention to detail is key here.</p> <p>Reasonably well-informed explanations of how the chosen element operates. Some evidence that key terms in the question, particularly 'self-concept' are understood. In the range 11 – 12 marks, descriptive material may predominate over conceptual references.</p>
2 (6 – 10 marks)	<p>Likely to focus on what was learnt rather than what was understood. There may be a pre-prepared Case Study offered. Likely to come to easy conclusions without arguing through the case. Unfounded assertion through to competent responses.</p> <p>Likely to be a descriptive rather than analytical or evaluative account of the chosen element. Limited or partial understanding of key terms in the question, particularly 'self-concept'.</p>
1 (1 – 5 marks)	<p>Uncritical explanation of the statement. Little else offered.</p> <p>Explanations are inappropriate or inept. Little or no understanding of key terms in the question.</p>
0	No relevant response.

UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE (COMM1)

- 4 **When A level Communication and Culture was launched in 2008, it was not well received in all quarters. Several newspapers including the *Daily Mail*, questioned the legitimacy of an A level dealing with popular culture and everyday life. Read the extract from the *Daily Mail*, 26 May 2008, before attempting the task below.**

For anyone who spent two years poring over the intricacies of the War of the Spanish Succession to scrape an A-level in foreign history, it may be best to look away now.

You might have felt duty bound in those days to ration the time you spent shopping, listening to pop music or discussing dates.

But there is no such problem for today's teenagers...because they can get a qualification in it.

As part of a controversial A-level in popular culture, pupils will learn about the tradition of kissing in cinemas and ponder such questions as 'is skateboarding better than polo?'.
The qualification, being offered by the country's biggest exam board from September, also entails a study of celebrity body images and allows pupils to write about clothes and hairstyles.

One assignment requires them to 'explore the relationships between cinema-going and dating' with the aid of source material like 'The Drifters hit Kissin' in the Back Row of the Movies'.

Another asks students to describe the cultural significance of their bedrooms and friends.

The A-level in 'communication and culture' is billed by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance as 'excellent preparation' for higher study.

The course spec insists the 'everyday is worthy of study' but critics are concerned it will lack academic rigour.

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They also warn it could help schools maintain strong league table positions while sidelining disciplines such as history and English literature.

How do you respond, as a student of this AS level, to the *Daily Mail's* attack? (20 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (16 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions (eg establish criteria for evaluation).</p> <p>Confident, well-informed analysis with strong evidence that relevant debates about culture and value are understood. Alternative explanations are convincingly rooted in conceptual understanding. Polemical responses may feature at this level if ideas are well supported by evidence and argument.</p>
3 (11 – 15 marks)	<p>Likely to lead with a thorough exploration of 'cultural values' as a key focus and to relate this to the 'practice' of self-presentation. Evidence will be sound and detailed.</p> <p>Competent understanding of the passage is evident with some analytical elements. Alternative explanations demonstrate some familiarity with the terms of debates about the construction of identity.</p>
2 (6 – 10 marks)	<p>Likely to offer a reading of the text and to address the examples in it. Likely to focus on the examples only (largely) or anecdotally.</p> <p>Responds to the text at a personal rather than analytical level. In the range 9 – 10 marks, comments indicate some awareness of relevant sections of the unit but in the range 6 – 8 marks are more likely to be based on barely substantiated assertions.</p>
1 (1 – 5 marks)	<p>Limited response to question, which results in unsupported assertions.</p> <p>May be based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the stimulus material and/or the task. Superficial account or one which is too brief to constitute a serious response to the question.</p>
0	No relevant response.

UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE (COMM1)

Separate Marking Grid for Question 3 (AO2 only)

These questions are meant to test knowledge of critical techniques. They thus only address a single Assessment Objective and require a simpler, streamlined marking grid.

Text: This photograph of a telephone box of traditional design was selected from an internet image bank.

3 (a) Do you consider this image of a telephone box as an open or closed text? Give reasons for your answer. (4 marks)

3 (b) Choose two signs within the image and explain what each sign both denotes and connotes. (6 marks)

3 (c) This traditional design of a telephone box has been retained in some UK locations because of its cultural significance. Using the concepts of signification and myth, explore the meanings of this traditional design in contemporary culture. (10 marks)

	3 (a)		3 (b)		3 (c)	
Level	Open text	Mark	Denote / connote	Mark	Cultural meaning	Mark
4	A skilful response which demonstrates secure knowledge. Knowledgeable and specialist.	4	Handles the key terms in a mature fashion, teasing out the subtleties. Knowledgeable and specialist.	6	Fluent and detailed analysis of this feature of the text. Knowledgeable and specialist.	9-10
3	Sound understanding of 'openness' demonstrated in reference to the text.	3	'Denote' and connote' are clearly understood and applied relevantly. At least one example of each is used.	4-5	Sound understanding of relevant Communication and Culture content and concepts. Strong knowledge or application.	6-8
2	Beginnings of awareness of the key content of the course. Competent understanding of anchorage.	2	Communication and Culture concepts are generally understood even when not skilfully applied.	2-3	Competent, active reading of the cultural product with some technical knowledge or analytical skill.	4-5
1	Little or no evidence of knowledge or understanding of the concepts or content of the course.	1	Little or no evidence of knowledge or understanding of the concepts or content of the course.	1	Little or no evidence of knowledge or understanding of the concepts or content of the course.	1-3
0	No relevant response					