



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

Mark scheme

June 2003

GCE

General Studies A

Unit GSA1

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Unit 1 Question 1 (GSA1/1 Culture, Morality, Arts & Humanities)

This component is an objective test for which the following list indicates the correct answers used in marking the candidates' responses

1.1	A	1.14	C
1.2	C	1.15	D
1.3	B	1.16	C
1.4	C	1.17	A
1.5	D	1.18	A
1.6	B	1.19	B
1.7	A	1.20	B
1.8	A	1.21	D
1.9	D	1.22	D
1.10	C	1.23	C
1.11	B	1.24	B
1.12	D	1.25	A
1.13	B		

Unit 1 Question 2 (GSA1/2 Culture, Morality, Arts & Humanities)

INTRODUCTION

The overall assessment objectives for General Studies are set out below:

- AO1 Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines.
- AO2 Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.
- AO3 Marshal evidence and draw conclusions; select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.
- AO4 Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge and of the relationship between them, appreciating their limitations.

All mark schemes will allocate a number or distribution of marks for some or all of these objectives for each question according to the nature of the question and what it is intended to test.

Note on AO2

In all instances where quality of written communication is being assessed this must take into account the following criteria:

- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter;
- organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate; and
- ensure text is legible and spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.

Note on AO4

This is a new element in General Studies specifications. In the past, there has been a focus on the knowledge of facts, and the marshalling of evidence – on what might be called ‘first-order’ knowledge. This is still fundamental; but AO4 is about understanding what counts as knowledge; about how far knowledge is based upon facts and values; and about standards of proof.

By ‘different types of knowledge’ we mean *different ways of getting knowledge*. We might obtain knowledge by fine measurement, and calculation. This gives us a degree of certainty. We might obtain it by observation, and by experiment. This gives us a degree of probability. Or we might acquire it by examination of documents and material remains, or by introspection – that is, by canvassing our own experiences and feelings. This gives us a degree of possibility. In this sense, knowledge is a matter of degree.

Questions, or aspects of them, which are designed to test AO4 will therefore focus on such matters as:

- analysis and evaluation of the nature of the knowledge, evidence or arguments, for example, used in a text, set of data or other form of stimulus material;
- understanding of the crucial differences between such things as knowledge, belief or opinion, and objectivity and subjectivity in arguments;
- appreciation of what constitutes proof, cause and effect, truth, validity, justification, and the limits to these;
- recognition of the existence of personal values, value judgements, partiality and bias in given circumstances;
- awareness of the effects upon ourselves and others of different phenomena, such as the nature of physical, emotional and spiritual experiences, and the ability to draw upon and analyse first-hand knowledge and understanding of these.

GENERAL MARK SCHEME

Level of response	Mark range	Criteria and descriptors: knowledge, understanding, argument, evaluation, communication
LEVEL 3	7-8-(9)	A good to comprehensive response demonstrating overall grasp of the range and nature of issues; knowledge and understanding of key principles and evidence; interprets and illustrates arguments coherently and convincingly with fluency and accuracy.
LEVEL 2	4-5-6	A modest to reasonable attempt showing some competence and grasp of the issues; some understanding and realisation of key principles; moderate arguments and exemplification; reasonable clarity and accuracy of expression.
LEVEL 1	1-2-3	A bare to limited response showing uncertain grasp, knowledge and understanding; lack of clarity of argument and little appropriate exemplification; weak expression.
LEVEL 0	0	No valid response or relevance to the question.

Approximate distribution of marks across the questions and assessment objectives for examination

Question Numbers		2.1	2.2	2.3	AO marks per Unit
Assessment Objectives	AO1	2	2	2	6
	AO2	2	2	2	6
	AO3	3	2	1	6
	AO4	1	3	3	7
Total marks per Question		8	9	8	25

Note: It is the questions themselves which are designed to elicit the range of response appropriate to the assessment objectives for each question. Examiners are required to assign each of the candidates' responses to the most appropriate level above according to **its overall quality**, then allocate a single mark within the level.

2.1

Using ideas from the passage, as well as any of your own if you wish, outline

- (a) the strengths and
- (b) the weaknesses

of denominational schools.

8 marks

Points that might be made include:

STRENGTHS

- provides a choice of school of a particular character for those who wish to exercise it
- religion and its associated values will be more prominent in the curriculum and general ethos of the school
- followers of the religion will be more confident that the particular beliefs and values to which they subscribe are being taught or promoted
- ‘core values’ may be easier to establish in schools with less diverse views
- denominational schools appear to achieve higher academic standards and moral and spiritual input.

WEAKNESSES

- religious schools are divisive
- choice of or a place in a local school may be denied as many denominational schools are oversubscribed
- freedom of individual religious expression may be restricted or denied for the same reason
- parents can withdraw children from assemblies and RE, but not from an ‘all-pervasive ethos’
- they may be obliged to sign a home-school agreement which implies a commitment to which they don't subscribe
- non-denominational schools may be perceived as providing an inferior education and discipline.

NB. What are seen as strengths by some may be perceived as weaknesses by others of a different persuasion and this point itself may also be made by perceptive candidates.

It may be feasible to think in terms of awarding 1 mark for each valid and coherent point, and also for development of ideas, use of argument or illustration, or depth of comment. The number of ticks need not however equal the final mark awarded, which should reflect the overall quality of the candidate's response, as expressed in the General Mark Scheme.

There must be a balance of strengths and weaknesses in any response receiving a top Level 2 or Level 3 mark. Candidates may choose to respond with separate paragraphs for (a) and (b) or address the question in a more synthesised form; either approach should be regarded as equally valid.

2.2

To what extent do you think schools should be under a legal obligation to

- (a) hold a daily session of collective worship,**
- (b) teach about religion, and**
- (c) promote spiritual and moral values throughout the curriculum?**

Give reasons to justify your opinions in each case.

9 marks

We might expect individual candidates to hold different views about the relative importance, value and the appropriateness of the legal obligation for each of the above and therefore to discuss them separately in a developed response. Equally some might regard all three as a single and coherent package. The criterion for awarding marks will be the justifications given rather than just bare statements of opinion.

Arguments put forward might include:

collective worship:

- perhaps the most contentious of the three and possibly will be condemned as the least profitable experience for most
- on the positive side it is an opportunity for a whole school, year group to come together and promote a degree of cohesion and shared values and experience
- on the negative side it may be perceived that assemblies are difficult to organise successfully on a daily basis, and a traditional hymn, reading and a prayer may meet with stoney non-participation
- requirement for ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’ and its relevance for non-Christians
- many schools do not actually conform to the legal requirement, and certainly not at the post-16 stage.

religion:

- should be taught as one of the oldest of the activities and pre-occupations of humankind and which lies at the base of most human societies and culture
- the opportunity to explore fundamental questions about the meaning of life and one of the foundations of moral behaviour, ethical codes and many social rituals
- as valid a part of the National Curriculum as any other, but should not be taught as a single set of beliefs
- a personal and private matter which should be taught in church, etc rather than learned in school
- individual parents can withdraw children from RE if they feel it is not appropriate for them
- the extent to which the legal obligation for post-16 RE in schools is actually observed.

spiritual and moral development:

- as important an aspect of a person's development as any other area of knowledge, skill or curriculum to be learned or experienced
- all societies operate though the application of a moral code and related value systems and the nature and function of these need to be taught to everyone.
- may have strong links with RE but should also be integrated into other subjects as issues which need to be thought about and views which need to be formed for people to operate fully and autonomously in society.

Use the General Mark Scheme to allocate marks on the basis of the scope and quality of response. It may be possible to think in terms of a notional 3 marks for arguments given on each element in a fully balanced answer, but this should not wholly override the award of more marks for particularly extensive discussion on one or two aspects. There should however be reference to all three aspects in any response receiving an upper Level 3 mark.

2.3

It is often claimed that we now live in secular society dominated by materialistic values. How far do you believe this to be true?

What relevance do you think religious belief and practice in the United Kingdom have to contemporary social and cultural values?

8 marks

Candidates are free to take whatever line they wish in response to this question:

- they may take the view that religious belief and practice are largely irrelevant to them as non-believers and that we do live in a secular and materialistic society;
- they may assert the opposite and demonstrate that religious belief and practice continue to be relevant and that they do relate closely to major social and cultural values which are still upheld;
- they may argue that religious belief and practice are important, but that they do not necessarily relate closely to other values in a pluralist society; they live (perhaps uncomfortably) side by side with each other.

The challenges inherent in the two basic questions need to be recognised as demanding at AS level and examiners should be ready to award a candidate's ability to show appreciation of the possibilities and difficulties of the question itself. Is the candidate clear about the meaning of 'secular' and is some understanding shown of various meanings associated with 'materialism', e.g. from the strictly scientific and philosophical to a more economic and consumerist dimension? Is a distinction drawn between religious belief and practice? (85% of the UK population claim to believe in a god, but less than 5% regularly go to worship.) Are the spiritual and material aspects of life incompatible with each other, or out of balance in modern society, or can they live harmoniously together meeting different human needs?

Use the General Mark Scheme to allocate marks on the basis of the scope and quality of response. Any candidate who is able to present a range of coherent points, perhaps supported by some illustrations and/or personal experiences, will be demonstrating a level of sophistication which should qualify for a good Level 2 or 3 mark.