



General Certificate of Education

General Studies 5761

Specification A

GA3W Society, Politics and the Economy

Mark Scheme

2006 examination - January series

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.

Unit 3 (GA3W Society, Politics and the Economy)

INTRODUCTION

The nationally agreed assessment objectives in the QCA Subject Criteria for General Studies are:

- 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

In previous General Studies syllabuses, there has been a focus on the knowledge and understanding of facts (AO1), and the marshalling and evaluation of evidence (AO3) – on what might be called ‘first-order’ knowledge. AO4 is about understanding what counts as knowledge; about how far knowledge is based upon facts and values; and about standards of proof – what might be called ‘second-order’ knowledge.

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.

NB

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 in Questions 2–5, according to the **overall quality**, then to allocate a single mark within the appropriate level except in the instance shown in Q5.

With *some* questions it might be feasible to think in terms of awarding 1 mark for each valid and coherent point made. It may also be appropriate, within the level descriptors, to award marks for depth and sophistication of comment, development of ideas, use of supporting illustrations etc, as well as the range covered. The number of ticks, therefore, need not equal the final mark awarded for each attempt, and the final mark should reflect the overall quality of the candidate's response as expressed in the Mark Scheme.

Half-marks are **not** to be awarded.

A response which bears no relevance to the question should be awarded no marks.

Q1 Read Source A. Using information only from the source, identify five advantages of the government's plans for truancy fines and parenting orders.

(5 marks)

Target: Comprehension of source

The essential requirement is that candidates need to use their ability to comprehend the source and *identify* the five advantages from the source and reject any source information that is not relevant. No explanation is required and, although some candidates will use at least some of their own words, those who do not should not be penalised in this instance. No credit should be given for any information used that is not taken from the source.

Indicative content notes:

The possible advantages are:

Fines

- are a necessary/valuable halfway point (a compromise/a 'wake up' call) between doing nothing about/ignoring truancy and using the law
- help to make parents more responsible for the actions of their children
- underline the fact that many excuses given by parents for the absence of their children from school are unacceptable.

Parenting orders

- help to improve parenting skills in many cases/80% of parents found courses useful
- Dfes estimates that 70 000 parents can benefit from parenting orders
- reflect/underline the determination/seriousness of the government to make education a priority.

Fines/parenting orders

- fear of punishment may make parents more co-operative.

Mark Scheme:

1 mark for each relevant point up to a maximum of five.

AO1: 2 marks ; AO3 : 3 marks

Q2 Read Source B. Using information from the source and your own knowledge, briefly examine the case for and against the use of vending machines in schools.

(10 marks)

Target: Ability to use own knowledge and understand and interpret information contained within source.

Indicative content notes:

Possible arguments for vending machines in schools

- Vending machines need not only be used for the sale of unhealthy products such as fizzy drinks, crisps and chocolates. They can be used to dispense water, juice and fruit.
- Whatever the claims made by government about increased funding for schools, additional money is always required and, depending on the circumstances, machines can provide significant additional revenue for individual schools.
- It is too easy to over-simplify the issue of child obesity. The issue is much wider/more complex and one which needs more positive government/local authority initiative (e.g. Hull's healthy free meals for all primary pupils).
- Young people should be able to choose what they wish to consume. It is the responsibility of the individual to make decisions about food consumption. Outside school, they are used to having this degree of choice.
- Availability of vending machines might mean that fewer pupils go off-site, perhaps causing difficulties at nearby shops. Vending machines offering a wider choice might be a better option than nearby fast-food outlets.

Possible arguments against vending machines in schools

- Vending machines encourage the consumption of unhealthy foods and this is contributing to the growing problem/ "epidemic" of child obesity with research showing that 1/3rd of the children u/15 are overweight.
- By providing vending machines, it might be said that schools are condoning unhealthy eating habits instead of promoting those which are healthy.
- Schools should be properly funded and should not have to depend on indirect subsidies from vending machine operators.
- Long-term health problems will start at an earlier age, putting additional pressure on NHS resources.
- Schools should not be used by major retailers as a cheap form of advertising sites.

Mark Scheme:

- Level I:** Simple answer with limited evidence and/or relevance, perhaps relying heavily on largely unexplained words of source or using very narrow range of points. (1–3 marks)
- Level II:** Demonstrates some ability to examine reasons in support of/opposition to the use of vending machines in schools. Might take a one-sided view (maximum of 5 if answer deals only with ‘for’ or only with ‘against’) or uses limited range of arguments. Mostly clearly structured/communicated. Some evidence of seeking to reach a conclusion although this might be more implied than explicit. (4–7 marks)
- Level III:** Demonstrates clear and sustained ability to examine a wide range of reasons in support of/opposition to the use of vending machines in schools. Clearly structured/communicated. Recognisable ability to reach a logically argued conclusion. (8–10 marks)

AO1 : 3 marks; AO2 : 2 marks; AO3 : 2 marks; AO4 : 3 marks

Q3 Read Source C: What are the weaknesses of this source in informing the public about changes in examinations?**(10 marks)****Target: Critical assessment of the potential weaknesses of a source dealing with aspects of education.**

Candidates are asked to focus only on the source's *weaknesses*. No credit should be given for any references to the possible strengths of the source.

Indicative content notes:

- Excessive use of generalisations and sweeping statements such as “half-baked government schemes” and the education of those born in the 1980s “coincided with a slide in rigour of examinations”.
- Does not use research/empirical evidence, say on whether or not examinations have/have not got easier since the 1980s or the extent to which V1th formers “are still gravitating to arts or sciences”.
- Fails to define key terms such as “the rigour of examinations”.
- Very one-sided – does not give the reader a more balanced view.
- Tells the reader what to think/reinforces existing prejudices. Does not allow the reader to draw his/her own conclusions.
- Comparing GCSEs to Boy Scout badges is cheapening/belittling the achievements of a great many young people and projecting them in an unduly negative light.
- The *Telegraph* is a right of centre newspaper, attacking the Labour government for its “half-baked schemes”, for using pupils as “guinea pigs”, for “interference” and not “leaving well alone”. The article is titled “*Will Labour never learn?*”

Mark Scheme:

- Level I:** Little understanding of the requirements of the question and/or very limited explanation of source's weaknesses. (1–3 marks)
- Level II:** Some understanding of the requirements of the question. Some explanation and mostly clear communication of at least 3 relevant weaknesses. Perhaps not always consistent/fully explained and/or limited in range. (4–7 marks)
- Level III:** Clear and mostly sustained understanding of the requirements of the question. Explanation and clear communication of at least 5 relevant weaknesses reflecting a wider range. (8–10 marks)

AO1 : 2 marks; AO2 : 2 marks; AO3 : 3 marks; AO4 : 3 marks

- Q4 Read Source D. To what extent do you agree with the claim that “school uniform reinforces discipline and respect and enjoys support among parents, teachers and the community”? In your answer you may use social, economic, educational and political arguments. (10 marks)**

Target: Using a source to demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge.

Candidates who write in general terms about school uniform are unlikely to reach the highest mark level.

The focus of answers is likely to be on:

- (a) the link that is claimed between school uniform and discipline
- (b) the extent to which the wearing of school uniform is supported by parents, teachers and the community.

Indicative content notes:

- Most schools now have school uniform/school dress. There are *many* reasons for this – tradition, creating a sense of shared identity, avoiding extremes of fashion, reducing the stigma felt by children from poorer families, helps to reduce bullying.
- The extent to which school uniform reinforces discipline and respect is unknown despite the claims made by Education Minister, Ivan Lewis. (It might be argued that politicians court popularity to stay in power and that Ivan Lewis is saying what many electors want to hear.)
- Students may or may not appear smarter but many countries do not have a school uniform so will obviously need to base their discipline policies on other things.
- ‘Discipline’ and ‘respect’ are words that need to be unpicked. Discipline might be imposed or self-discipline could be applied. ‘Respect’ is a word much favoured by young people. Once adults seemed to be able to gain respect because they were older/had positions of authority.
- The opening sentence implies a link between “the re-introduction of school uniforms” and the encouragement of “traditional educational values and discipline” which might be very difficult to establish in argument.
- Schools still depend on discipline but it depends to some extent on the consent of young people, just as respect has to be earned rather than coming automatically. It might be argued that this, irrespective of whether uniform is or is not worn, is a fundamental part of the educational process.
- Limited evidence from surveys suggests that there is widespread support among parents, teachers and the community for school uniforms.
- The views of young people are less well known and this might emerge as an issue, perhaps in terms of consultation with them on school dress and/or a rigid v flexible uniform/dress policy.
- The source refers to a school which planned to adopt a school uniform but where there was opposition from some pupils, parents and teachers who cited the important issue of *freedom of choice*. (Although would freedom of choice lead, say, to a uniform based on denim?)

Mark Scheme:

Level I: Simple, unexplained points and/or points which rely on very generalised comments on school uniform with very limited reference to ‘discipline’, ‘respect’ and ‘support’. (1–3 marks)

Level II: Some ability to present and communicate a restricted range of relevant arguments with some references relating uniform to ‘discipline’, ‘respect’ and ‘support’ with some reasoning which might not always be maintained. Some ability to work towards a conclusion. (4–7 marks)

Level III: Mostly sustained ability to present and communicate a range of relevant arguments with clear references relating to ‘discipline’, ‘respect’ and ‘support’, consistently reasoned and leading to a logical conclusion. (8–10 marks)

AO1 : 2 marks; AO2 : 2 marks; AO3 : 2 marks; AO4 : 4 marks

Q5. David Miliband praises the achievement of 270 000 students and the extension of educational opportunities. He dismisses the views of critics.

Using examples from Source E, at least one other source, and your own knowledge, consider how far you would support Mr Miliband’s claims.

(15 marks)

Target : Extrapolation and exposition of arguments from a range of sources.

Indicative content notes:

It is most likely that answers will refer to Source C which takes a contrary view.

Source C summary

- Exams lack rigour.
- Too many changes and too many examples of meddling ministers.
- Reform of A level based on ideological (anti-elitist) considerations rather than educational values.
- GCSEs not held in high esteem by private schools.
- Gap between state and independent schemes has widened.

Source E (The Labour junior minister’s view)

- Greater sense of meritocracy (success based on educational attainment rather than privileged background).
- AS and A2 results in 2003 were better than ever before.
- Critics who have claimed that exams are too easy/meaningless have produced no evidence to support their assertions.
- Much more equality of opportunity which has been of particular benefit to girls, students from poorer backgrounds and those from ethnic minorities.
- Opponents too often deal in slogans (of the “more means worse” variety) when educational opportunity is extended.

Possible arguments

- Sources C and E are not objective. The *Telegraph* is sometimes accused of clinging to the past. It is a supporter of the Conservative Party’s policies. David Miliband clearly has a political axe to grind on behalf of the Labour Party.
- Do politicians meddle too much? (Non-stop ‘reforms’ initiated by both main parties.)
- AS and A2 results in 2003 were the best ever so it could be argued that Miliband is right to praise those concerned and that more people need to be positive about the achievements of young people who are often stereotyped/criticised.
- Is too much store set by exam performance and league tables? (A narrower, more utilitarian, ‘training’ approach which neglects wider aspects of education?)
- Opportunities have increased and higher education has expanded. Girls have done well – the proportion of those from poorer homes/ethnic minority background succeeding (depending on how success is defined) might be questioned.
- Are ‘too many’ students now going on to higher education, taking ‘easy’ courses?
- Employers are often among the most vociferous critics of school leavers. Because of the increase in post 16 education, they are often choosing from a shallower pool and some employers do not have a distinguished record in providing/supporting employee training.

- A counter-argument might be that the UK has a poor framework for vocational education and that there are still far too many leavers at 16 who lack basic skills.
- Social scientists/educational researchers are divided over claims that exams lack rigour or that there has been ‘grade inflation’. ‘Now’ and ‘then’ comparisons are often difficult.
- There is sometimes a sense that students and their teachers cannot win. If they do better, it is said that exams are too easy. If the rate of improvement slows, teachers and students are often blamed. An unduly negative ‘spin’ can be discouraging/demotivating.
- Achievement and change are notoriously difficult to deal with and progress (or lack of it) cannot always be measured with precision. Conclusions need to show some awareness of this and the way knowledge can be used in different forms and for different reasons.

Mark Scheme for content (AO1, AO3, AO4)

- Level I:** Undeveloped/insufficiently relevant/very narrow comments from source(s)/own knowledge on David Miliband’s claims with limited analysis and exploration of reasons that might be used to support/refute them. (1–4 marks)
- Level II:** More developed comments from sources/own knowledge, mostly relevant and relating to David Miliband’s claims. Some recognisable and sometimes more sustained analysis and exploration of some reasons/arguments that might be used to support/refute the claims. Some evidence of critical awareness. Attempts to reach a conclusion but this might be more implied than explicit. (Candidates who use **either** some sources **or** only their own knowledge should be restricted to a maximum of 6 marks for content.) (5–8 marks)
- Level III:** More detailed, sustained and clearly reasoned/argued analysis of David Miliband’s claims using information from at least two sources and own knowledge. Clear evidence of critical awareness and recognisable progress towards a logically argued conclusion. (9–11 marks)

Mark Scheme for COMMUNICATION (AO2)

- 4 marks:** Clear organisation, structure and relevance; fluent with only minor errors in expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 3 marks:** Clear attempt at organisation, structure and relevance; mostly fluent with few errors in expression, spelling and punctuation.
- 2 marks:** Limited organisation and structure and/or little relevance; some fluency, with some errors in expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 1 mark:** Lacking organisation, structure and fluency and/or limited relevance. Frequent errors in expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 0 marks:** No response or response that is wholly irrelevant.

Note:

- A totally irrelevant response should also receive 0 marks for communication.
- Responses at **Level 1** for **content** should be awarded up to 2 marks for communication.
- Responses at **Level 2** for **content** should *normally* be awarded up to 3 marks for communication.
- Responses at **Level 3** for **content** may be awarded up to 4 marks for communication.
- The mark for communication must not exceed the mark for content.

AO1 : 4 marks; AO2 : 4 marks; AO3 : 3 marks; AO4 : 4 marks

**Distribution of marks across the questions and Assessment Objectives
for the Sources and Issues Analysis**

Question Numbers		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	AO marks per unit
Assessment Objectives	1	2	3	2	2	4	13
	2	-	2	2	2	4	10
	3	3	2	3	2	3	13
	4	-	3	3	4	4	14
Total marks per Question		5	10	10	10	15	50