



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2012**

General Studies A

GENA1

(Specification 2760)

Unit 1: Culture and Society (AS)

Final

Mark Scheme

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 events which all examiners participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process 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 standardisation each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

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Unit 1 Section A

(GENA1 AS Culture and Society)

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

1.1	A	1.16	C
1.2	C	1.17	D
1.3	B	1.18	A
1.4	C	1.19	B
1.5	B	1.20	C
1.6	A	1.21	A
1.7	B	1.22	B
1.8	A	1.23	D
1.9	D	1.24	B
1.10	D	1.25	B
1.11	B	1.26	C
1.12	A	1.27	C
1.13	B	1.28	C
1.14	A	1.29	B
1.15	D	1.30	A

Unit 1 Section B (AS Culture and Society)

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** Marshal evidence and draw conclusions: select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.
- AO3** Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge, appreciating their strengths and limitations.
- AO4** Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.

- The mark scheme will allocate a number or distribution of marks for some, or all, of the above objectives for each question according to the nature of the question and what it is intended to test.
- In most cases mark schemes for individual questions are based on *levels* which indicate different qualities that might be anticipated in the candidates' responses. The levels take into account a candidate's knowledge, understanding, arguments, evaluation and communication skills as appropriate.
- Examiners are required to assign each of the candidates' responses to the most appropriate level according to **its overall quality**, then allocate a single mark within the level. When deciding upon a mark in a level examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of AOs (see below). For example, in question four more weight should be given to AOs 2 and 4 than to AO1, and AO1 should have more weight than AO3.
- *Indicative content* is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and other valid points must be credited. Candidates do not have to cover all points mentioned to reach Level 3.
- A response which bears no relevance to the question should be awarded no marks.

Distribution of marks across questions and assessment objectives for Unit 1, Section B

Question Numbers		Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Total marks for Section B
Assessment Objectives	AO1	–	3	3	4	10
	AO2	3	–	4	3	10
	AO3	–	–	2	3	5
	AO4	–	2	4	4	10
Total marks per question		3	5	13	14	35

01 Question 1 is an objective test section marked separately by AQA.

Read Source B

02 Give three reasons from Source B why TV soaps might be criticised.

(3 marks)

Indicative content

All points must come from the source

- They are 'chewing gum for the eyes'
- Viewers can become addicted
- May be viewed as a mindless form of entertainment
- Used as a form of escapism from home life
- Used as an (indisputable) source of advice on personal problems.

Award 1 mark for each of the above to a maximum of 3 marks.

03 Using your own knowledge suggest three ways in which soaps do not reflect real life.

(5 marks)

Indicative content

Award 1 mark for each developed point in relation to **three** of the following areas, or **others** that you may feel are appropriate, plus up to 2 marks for communication.

- the majority of families are often portrayed as somewhat dysfunctional
- storylines are prone to exaggeration and characters to caricature to attain maximum effect
- mundane ordinary people or events are often ignored as lacking sufficient interest
- within a relatively short time span, significant action is often constant
- story focus remains almost exclusively within the context of one small unrepresentative area of the country, possibly excluding reference to ethnic minorities
- insufficient coverage exists of more pleasant events
- smoking is discouraged owing to broadcasting occurring before the watershed time
- scenes containing violence, unsuitable language or excessive sexual nature are modified accordingly.

Any other valid points should be credited.

Questions 4 and 5: Level mark scheme for all assessment objectives.

Level of response	Mark range	Criteria and descriptors for Assessment Objectives 1–4
LEVEL 3	11 – 13 (14)	<p>Good response to question</p> <p>Good to comprehensive knowledge and understanding and approach demonstrating overall grasp of the range and nature of issues (AO1).</p> <p>Capacity to interpret evidence and sustained ability to present relevant arguments, analysis and exemplification, focusing on the main points of the question (AO2).</p> <p>Some understanding of different types of knowledge, with some appreciation of their limitation in seeking to reach a reasoned and logical conclusion (AO3).</p> <p>Ability to communicate clearly and accurately in a fluent and organised manner (AO4).</p>
LEVEL 2	6 – 10	<p>Reasonable response to the question</p> <p>Modest to quite good knowledge and understanding demonstrating some grasp of the nature of some key issues (AO1).</p> <p>Moderate range of arguments, analysis and exemplification covering some of the main points of the question (AO2).</p> <p>Limited understanding of different types of knowledge but some ability to work towards, or achieve, a conclusion (AO3).</p> <p>Mostly clear and accurate communication and organisation (AO4).</p>
LEVEL 1	1 – 5	<p>Limited response to the question</p> <p>Restricted / narrow knowledge and understanding of key issues (AO1).</p> <p>Simple, perhaps mostly unexplained points – or very narrow range – with limited interpretation or analysis and exemplification (AO2).</p> <p>Lacking in understanding of different types of knowledge with little or no evidence of ability to work towards a conclusion (AO3).</p> <p>Variable levels of communication and organisation (AO4).</p>
LEVEL 0	0	<p>No valid response or relevance to the question.</p>

04 Using evidence from Source C and your own knowledge, explain why soaps continue to dominate the national TV audience ratings.

(13 marks)

Indicative content

- they attempt to be realistic by focusing on domestic and personal everyday issues such as death, friendship, marriage, romance and divorce **(S)**
- the impression of time lapse between episodes helps viewers feel the continuity of stories **(S)**
- major newsworthy incidents occurring within the real world may be integrated appropriately into the programme **(S)**
- familiarity and continuity with the characters are emphasised owing to the closeness of the soap community **(S)**
- viewers often form an identification, a 'friendship' with one particular on-screen character **(S)**
- speculation and suspense are used as key elements to retain audience interest **(S)**
- programmes are broadcast at peak viewing times **(OK)**
- schedule timings are generally fixed, thus providing viewers with a fairly strict diet each week **(OK)**
- key social issues may be built into the story line to draw the audience's interest; sexual orientation issues, dealing with a cot-death, war effects on soldiers and family etc **(OK)**
- famous celebrities may be encouraged to play a cameo role within the programme **(OK)**
- female characters may be portrayed as strong individuals, thus appealing to the majority of the audience who are female **(OK)**
- programmes are aimed at the family, having characters that reflect all ages, thus widening their audience appeal **(OK)**
- storylines are often quite simplistic in their delivery, thus not requiring focused attention at the times broadcast and allowing the viewer space to catch up on events they may have missed **(OK)**
- major storylines may be introduced from time to time to increase audience ratings, these may often be very dramatic in nature **(OK)**
- interest is increased by advertisements, trailers or the appearance of key characters in other programmes, magazine articles or public events **(OK)**
- quality of acting is often highlighted as being very good **(OK)**

Any other valid points should be credited.

Candidates should be able to achieve marks in the highest band with a selection of relevant points, not necessarily the complete range

Candidates only using either source material or their own knowledge must remain within Level 2.

(S) = Source

(OK) = Own Knowledge

05 Using evidence from Source D and your own knowledge, discuss the extent to which the content of TV programmes should be censored.

(14 marks)

Candidates are expected to address the ‘extent’, mentioned in the question, by offering some judgement or opinion.

POINTS FOR CENSORSHIP

- thousands of viewers complained regarding the cot-death, baby-swap storyline broadcast within Eastenders, forcing changes and the relevant actress decided to resign from the programme **(S)**
- key social issues should not be sensationalised **(S)**
- consideration should be taken regarding people who have experienced the trauma being enacted, eg families losing a baby from cot-death **(S)**
- obsessive and insensitive ‘boundary pushing’ by comedians exploiting ‘soft targets’, eg cancer sufferers or the disabled, should be questioned **(S)**
- real life is the challenge, with people coping with serious illness, divorce or bereavement, sometimes the death of a beloved child. They do not need to be shocked further or be ridiculed **(S)**
- TV executives may be viewed as arrogant in their treatment of issues **(S)**
- TV’s role should be restricted to entertaining, informing and consoling viewers without overstepping the boundaries **(S)**

POINTS AGAINST CENSORSHIP

- TV producers do have a moral responsibility to reflect social mores at the time of broadcast **(OK)**
- we live in a country where freedom of speech is a right. However, current legislation seeks to control that right with respect to certain issues, eg race and gender. The emergence of political correctness must be taken into consideration by the media **(OK)**
- society may often benefit from programmes delivered by investigative reporters **(OK)**
- who decides what exactly are the boundaries? What is permissible? Who appoints them? **(OK)**
- regulation of the media already exists in the form of OFCOM **(OK)**
- individuals may CHOOSE to watch a programme or not. With an off-switch they have their own form of censorship **(OK)**
- with the advent of satellite TV and the Internet, many programmes are produced and broadcast outside of the UK, thus proving difficult to control **(OK)**
- we live in a rapidly changing society, where boundaries and taste are continually changing **(OK)**
- individuals or groups may use the courts to defend their position regarding contentious issues being broadcast **(OK)**
- some in society may agree with Voltaire’s views regarding any form of censorship. *“I do not agree with what you have to say, but I’ll defend to the death your right to say it.”* **(OK)**
- BBC Drama controller, John York, would counteract this implied criticism by noting that controversial issues are taken very seriously **(S)**
- programme controllers acknowledge the challenging nature of the material but defend their right to take risks within the shows **(S)**

Any other valid point not included should be credited.

Candidates should be able to achieve marks in the highest band with a selection of relevant points, not necessarily the complete range.

*Candidates only using either source material **or** their own knowledge must remain within Level 2.*

(S) = Source

(OK) = Own Knowledge

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