AQA

AS
GENERAL STUDIES (SPECIFICATION A)

Unit 1 AS Culture and Society

Insert

Source Booklet

Sources for use with **Questions 1.1** to **1.30** and **Questions 02** to **05**

Section A

Source A for Questions **1.1** to **1.30**.

More than a matchstick man

(1) I'm trudging along a busy road in Salford, past small industrial sites, scraps of buddleia-choked wasteland and the entrances to crouching, cul-de-sac council estates. Manchester's Chapel Wharf area with its trendy bars and restaurants is just a few hundred yards away. But here you're adrift in a post-industrial hinterland that isn't quite city or suburb. Welcome to Lowry Land 2013.

'Going to Work' by LS Lowry

(2) Mention the name LS Lowry to anyone in Britain and a certain urban landscape will be evoked: factory walls, belching chimneys, looming mills, the streets below teeming with figures, invariably described as 'matchstick', moving with a kind of tidal drift towards, or away from, mill gateways, football matches, political meetings. It's a vision of Britain that older people know from the time when the country's grimy, productive industrial North was simply a fact of life, even if they never went to look at it. And it's a vision every child knows because Lowry's art is taught in schools as a means to understanding a Britain that now barely exists.

(3) Here in Salford you're walking over the long-flattened rubble of that world, from which all trace of the red-brick terraces, the mills, the soot-blackened Gothic churches seems to have been erased. Yet the question that hits you isn't so much where did it all go, but whether or not it ever actually existed – certainly in the way Lowry portrayed it.

(4) At the entrance to the Lowry, the arts centre in Salford's newly revitalised Quays area that contains the world's largest collection of Lowry paintings, an emphatic and faintly perplexing legend greets the visitor: "LS Lowry is one of Britain's favourite artists." What's in question isn't the word 'favourite' – Lowry has enjoyed a grassroots popularity known by few other artists – so much as the fact that he is both much more and much less to the British people than a mere artist.

(5) A tall, ungainly man in a raincoat who tramped the Salford streets, a rent collector by day and an artist by night, a lifelong Tory voter and teetotaller, who lived with his mother and never formed relationships with women, Lowry is seen as a social and cultural curiosity: a naïve outsider, whose relentlessly repetitive work hints at an intellectual and emotional constriction. He's universally known in this country, but means pretty much nothing anywhere else.

(6) Now, however, a major exhibition at Tate Britain aims to strip away the layers of myth, cultural embarrassment and romanticised biography to present Lowry simply as an important 20th century artist.

(7) "The myth of Lowry the non-artist has a great deal to do with metropolitan British snobbery," says curator TJ Clark. "People talk about Lowry as old-fashioned, nostalgic and lacking in competence, which is just a set of codes for the fact that an artist dealing with the reality of working-class life in Britain can't be taken seriously."

(8) One of the most intriguing things about this revisionist view of Lowry is that it is being generated not by some long-established authority in the north of England, but by a couple of highly influential Californian academics: Clark and his long-term collaborator Anne M Wagner who have worked intensively on early Modernist painting from Edouard Manet onwards. It is within this tradition that they want to place Lowry. "The more we looked at Lowry, the more it started to ring a bell," says Clark. "There's an evenness of tone, a deliberate understatement, a quietness in approaching a subject. We discovered that the French themselves recognised these qualities when Lowry first exhibited in Paris in 1928."

(9) Travelling along a multi-lane dual carriageway through Pendlebury, once the heart of industrial, working-class Salford, you spot the last few remaining Victorian rows: now sites on the heritage trail. Down a side street stands the three-storey terraced house, unmarked and unremarkable, in which Lowry lived and worked for more than 40 years.

(10) Lowry's childhood was, by his own account, unhappy and repressed. His father was weak, while his mother, a former teacher, was an intelligent but manipulative woman. On leaving school without qualifications, Lowry took a menial job with a firm of accountants, but soon began evening classes in drawing.

(11) In 1916, by which time he was working as a rent collector for the Pall Mall Property Company, he had an experience that was to crystallise his approach to painting. "One day I missed a train from Pendlebury, a place I had ignored for seven years, and as I left the station I saw the Acme Spinning Mill: the huge black framework of rows of yellow-lit windows standing out against the sad, damp-charged afternoon sky. The mill was turning out. I watched this scene, which I'd looked at many times without seeing it, with rapture." Those aren't the words of a naïve or primitive person, of someone who struggles to empathise and communicate.

(12) Lowry's earliest paintings, such as 'Home on Eccles Old Road' of 1913, are executed in a kind of provincial Post-Impressionist manner. The scene is viewed from ground level, as is the huddle of figures in 'Pit Tragedy' of 1916. The characteristic Lowry view – panoramic, as though viewed from an upper storey, with the milling figures clearly delineated against the pale-coloured street – has yet to appear. Lowry was to produce a vast number of works with this later format, giving rise to the sense of a compulsive outpouring from an artist who couldn't see the world in any other way. In fact, far from being the result of autism, as some experts have claimed, this way of painting was

consciously developed by Lowry. His use of white grounds was a result of an argument with one of his teachers, who thought Lowry's pictures were too dark.

(13) Lowry's construction of space, even in his most apparently primitive works, is highly sophisticated. Buildings recede in minutely-judged relationships worthy of a Renaissance master. Yet into these precisely-realised spaces he drops his 'pipe cleaner' people with their sloping shoulders and clown's feet, the 'matchstalk men and matchstalk cats and dogs' – elements that can appear to push his paintings towards the brink of kitsch.

(14) While the term 'matchstick men' has been endlessly used in relation to these figures, Clark doesn't object to it. "Modern art is always simplifying and schematising. This is what happens when Lowry schematises. But the idea that because these figures are simplified they are all the same or lack vitality is wrong. People complain about Lowry's figures looking tired and uniform. Well, tired and uniform is what you feel after a day's work in a mill or down a mine."

(15) Lowry appears to give us an industrial society at its zenith. Yet he was aware that this world was disappearing even as he was painting it.

(16) Lowry died in 1976. Unlike many artists, he was a wealthy man. But the really odd thing about Lowry, for which the art establishment has never forgiven him, is simply that he didn't give up his day job. He didn't play the art game by the conventional rules: full-time art education, moving to London, supporting himself by teaching while building up esteem through small exhibitions to become a 'real artist'. Instead, Lowry kept on his rent-collecting job with the Pall Mall Property Company until the day he retired. And it is exactly that which makes him great.

(17) As Clark points out, working-class life, for all its social and economic importance, plays a relatively minor role in our conception of 'British culture'. This is at least partly because the work of working-class writers and artists has tended to be about the flight from the industrial world to the metropolis; think of the novels of DH Lawrence or David Storey. Lowry, however, kept himself in the world he portrayed. Far from working class himself, he nevertheless cultivated a staunchly lower-middle-class persona, maintaining a kind of passionate detachment from the industrial area in which he spent his most important painting years. While he achieved the position of chief cashier, he maintained his rent-collecting round because of the access it gave him to his subject matter. "I owe a lot to my tenants," he maintained later in life. "I put them in my pictures."

Source: Daily Telegraph Review, June 2013

END OF SOURCE A

Turn to page 6 for Section B sources

Turn over for Section B sources

Section B

Sources for Questions **02** to **05**.

Source B

Sport and Society

"Winning in sport is not a matter of life or death – it's more important than that." Is this the present attitude to sport within British society? This may indeed reflect the ideas expressed more than a century ago by the philosopher William James who called for the creation of a "moral equivalent of war"; the search for something, other than war, that would enhance a person's self-discipline, courage, and self-sacrifice.

However, in some areas of society there exists a very elitist view that sport is of the body and not the mind, thus not sufficiently intellectual or refined to warrant such public attention. Perhaps these people have forgotten how prevalent sport has become today. Media coverage of sport has surpassed that of the economy, politics or any other single topic, occupying a significant share of television programming time, with many channels entirely dedicated to sport. Indeed for many devotees, sport is now more important than any religion.

Source C

Runner's death will raise questions about extreme sports

The tragic death this week in the Lake District of a 63-year-old runner is bound to raise questions about the nature of extreme adventure sports. He was competing in the gruelling fell run, the Buttermere Sailbeck Mountain Race; a 9.5 mile route, climbing 4250 feet. His body was found by mountain rescuers at 9.45 am on Monday in a sheltered area, way off the main route.

The race had been run the previous day and the alarm was raised by his wife at 8 pm on Sunday when he failed to return to his hotel. Sunday was a wet and windy day and race competitors have described sleet and freezing rain on the tops. It seems that the organisers had not raised the alarm because they believed that all the competitors had completed the race.

Questions about exactly what happened on Sunday will no doubt be asked at the inquest into his death. In the meantime, some people will wonder if there are enough rules and regulations controlling the way people use the beautiful, but often treacherous landscape.

The Fell Runners Association has rules and safety requirements which must be followed, although it stresses that, ultimately, the competitor should take primary responsibility for his or her own safety on the fells.

These are health and safety-conscious times and many people think the 'nanny state' approach can go too far and impose unnecessary restrictions on how we live our lives. Part of the thrill of fell running – and other adventure sports like kayaking and climbing – is matching yourself

against the elements. It is right that people's rights to enjoy a little adventure are not taken away from them by too many stifling rules. Overall this sport has a good safety record, with very few deaths during races.

Nevertheless, it looks likely that fell-running and other extreme sports throughout the UK are going to come under a strong spotlight again.

Source: The Westmorland Gazette, May 2012

Source D

It's time to wake up to women's sport

The London Olympics in 2012 were a reminder that women are capable of doing extraordinary things when nurtured in an environment that doesn't make them feel inferior. Here's hoping the media coverage will now pave the way for greater recognition of our country's able and disabled female athletes.

Women's football is one of the keys. The most accessible, most popular sport in this country for men is also the most accessible, most popular sport for women. The Football Association (FA) blocked the progress of women's football by banning women from all FA-affiliated pitches for 50 years from 1921 to 1971. The women's game is recovering but still needs a boost from either the FA or the Premier League.

Women's rugby union matches are played at Twickenham before internationals and it seems to work. More than 80 000 people came to Wembley to watch USA beat Japan in the final of the women's Olympic football and not one of them would argue that they would have got more enjoyment out of watching the men's final. Many would say they witnessed superior skill and a greater respect for the referee than in some men's games, but we don't have to play one-upwomanship here.

Media coverage is essential for all sport, and the best formula seems to be a combination of committed coverage on subscription channels – such as ESPN doing the Women's Super League – along with the BBC or ITV taking internationals. But I would love to see one of the big channels bid for highlight rights to domestic matches. I would not argue for a women's sport channel but I would suggest to the equalities minister Lynne Featherstone that she has a word with the key decision makers about how little female athletes or women's sport is mentioned on radio sports desks or in sports sections of newspapers.

In Olympic years, the profile of women's sport rises dramatically; however in the future, possibly until the next Olympics, I fear we will be back in the dark ages. It's time for Great Britain to wake up to women's sport and I pledge here and now to help that happen.

Source: Clare Balding, broadcaster, journalist and author, August 2012

END OF SOURCES

There are no sources printed on this page