

version 1.1

General Certificate of Education

General Studies

Specification A

GENA3

Unit 3 A2 Culture and Society

Mark Scheme

Specimen mark scheme for examinations in June 2010 onwards
This mark scheme uses the [new numbering system](#)

The specimen assessment materials are provided to give centres a reasonable idea of the general shape and character of the planned question papers and mark schemes in advance of the first operational exams

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

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Unit 3 (A2 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 Sections B and C more weight should be given to AOs 1 and 2 than to AOs 3 and 4.
 - *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 the highest level.
 - A response which bears no relevance to the question should be awarded no marks.

Distribution of marks across the questions and assessment objectives for this unit

Question Numbers	Section A		Section B	Section C	Total AO
	1	2	3 – 6	7 – 10	
Assessment Objectives 1	2	2	8	8	20
2	6	2	7	7	22
3	2	2	5	5	14
4	2	2	5	5	14
Total marks per Question	12	8	25	25	70

1 Compare the views on the role of religion and belief of Tony Blair and Richard Dawkins as expressed in the three extracts.

(12 marks)

A good answer will provide an analysis of the views expressed by both the major protagonists, recognising the differences in viewpoint between them. They may choose to deal with each comment in turn or to look at the similarities and differences in each area of their comments. A higher level answer should be comprehensive and might refer to the strengths and weaknesses of each extract. The context of each man's reaction to the issues should be recognised at the higher level.

Levels	Marks	Criteria Descriptors
Level 3	9 – 12	Good to comprehensive evaluation recognising the differences between the views of Blair and of Dawkins and the similarity of the contexts they use, presented fluently and accurately.
Level 2	5 – 8	Modest to quite good attempt to assess the views, touching on some of the comparable elements in the extracts, perhaps with some gaps of coverage, written with reasonable clarity and accuracy of expression.
Level 1	1 – 4	Bare to limited response, with few points to offer and significant gaps in coverage, lacking in clarity and with significant errors in expression.
Level 0	0	No valid response or relevance to the question

Points that might be made include:

Blair

- religion is a positive force

BUT Dawkins

- religion is a mere panacea/comforter

Blair

- religion is relevant to many people

BUT Dawkins

- religion is irrelevant to most people's lives

Blair

- religion could enhance civilisation and eradicate poverty

BUT

Dawkins

- religion is indoctrination and labelling – especially of the young

Blair

- religion should be respected – not left to extremists

BUT

Dawkins

- religion does not deserve respect.

Blair

- not enough people accept religion because they think it is too harsh in practice.

BUT

Dawkins

- more people are beginning to articulate their opposition to religion.

Blair

- gives the impression of the Blair Foundation being politically acceptable

BUT

- Dawkins feels that religion should not be given special consideration.

2 What is your response to both the statements that religion is ‘simply a comfort’ or ‘a force for good’?

(8 marks)

These two views from the extracts could be argued to be two ends of the religious spectrum or as two complementary ideas. It is not necessary to argue them from the points of view of Blair and Dawkins though candidates may wish to make reference to the passages. They may agree or disagree with either of the views.

Marks will be allocated on the basis of the overall quality of the ideas/arguments/opinions presented and supported by strong factual references.

Levels	Marks	Criteria and descriptors
Level 3	7 – 8	Good to comprehensive response, able to state clear arguments/opinions supported with justifications and appropriate references, written coherently and convincingly with fluency and accuracy.
Level 2	5 – 7	Modest to quite good attempt to assess these comments, touching on some of the issues and style of the comments made, perhaps with some gaps of coverage, written with reasonable clarity and accuracy of expression.
Level 1	1 – 3	Bare to limited response, with few points to offer and significant gaps in coverage, lacking in clarity and with significant errors in expression.
Level 0	0	No valid response or relevance to the question

Points that might be made include:

Religion is ‘simply a comfort’

- The function of religion as a comfort is a *raison d’etre*
- Shared experiences can be comforting
- Religion offers people a moral framework
- Religion takes away the necessity to make difficult decisions
- Religion is far more complex than this
- There is no rational basis for religion and therefore it is nothing beyond ‘a comfort’

Religion is 'a force for good'

- Religion has humanitarian dimensions
- Religion provides a moral framework
- Religions promote values such as forgiveness and compassion
- Religious strife is the basis of much of the warfare today and for all recorded history
- Religions promote exclusivity and dogmatism
- Religions are intolerant of each other

Any other valid points should be credited.

SECTIONS B AND C

GENERAL MARK SCHEME FOR A2 ESSAYS

Each essay should be awarded a single mark out of 25. In awarding the mark examiners should bear in mind the overall assessment objectives for General Studies (see INTRODUCTION) which the essay questions are intended to test in the following proportions:

AO1 – 8 marks

AO2 – 7 marks

AO3 – 5 marks

AO4 – 5 marks

<i>Level of response</i>	Mark range	Criteria and descriptors: knowledge, understanding, argument, evaluation, communication
		Good to very good treatment of the question
LEVEL 4	20 – 25 (6)	Wide ranging and secure knowledge of topic (AO1); good range of convincing and valid arguments and supporting illustrations, effective overall grasp and logically argued conclusion (AO2); good understanding and appreciation of material, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO3); well structured, accurate and fluent expression (AO4).
		Fair to good response to the demands of the question
LEVEL 3	13 – 19 (7)	Reasonable knowledge of topic (AO1); a range of arguments with some validity, appropriate illustrations with reasonable conclusions (AO2); some understanding and appreciation of material, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO3); mostly coherent structure and accuracy of expression (AO4).
		Limited to modest response to the demands of the question
LEVEL 2	6 – 12 (7)	Limited/modest knowledge of topic (AO1); restricted range of arguments and illustrations but some awareness and attempt at conclusion (AO2); little understanding and appreciation of material, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO3); weak structure and variable quality/accuracy of expression (AO4).
		Inadequate attempt to deal with the question
LEVEL 1	1 – 5 (5)	Very limited knowledge of topic (AO1); little or no justification or illustration, no overall grasp or coherence (AO2); inadequate understanding and appreciation of material, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO3); little or no structure/frequent errors of expression (AO4).
LEVEL 0	0	No valid response or relevance to the question

3 'Sometimes the arts do not easily cross cultural boundaries.'

Discuss this view with reference to a range of art forms and cultures.

(25 marks)

Candidates may wish to accept the quotation at face value or to attack it. Those who are more aware will see that some art forms are more universal than others and some cultural boundaries are more of a barrier than others.

Important issues are:

- An understanding and analysis of what makes a cultural boundary. There is a variety of interpretation depending on a cultural definition.
- It may be that national boundaries define culture for some
- religious divides
- larger cultural groupings such as 'East and West'.

Candidates may well consider there to be a strong boundary between youth and crabbled age and argue that some arts forms are divided into these two areas. Whatever is argued has, as always, to be argued with strong analysis and sensitive exemplification.

Those who accept the quotation will need to

- define their boundaries clearly
- offer arguments which are defensible
- have a range of exemplification from a range of both genres and cultures.

Anything which argues from only one art form is limiting and will not access higher levels. It would be very difficult to argue from only one culture and we could accept two cultures as a range. Wider exemplification may well be more fruitful but someone who argues across a couple of art forms and over the two sides of one perceived boundary could offer a very acceptable essay.

Those who reject the quotation will need

- similarly careful contextualisation.
- a range of arguments as above.

Those who argue a mixed economy stand a chance of accessing good levels of AO3 as they look at the variety and range of cross-cultural features.

A whole range of guidance could be given here but the question may throw up answers from a huge range so we cannot be prescriptive. Just one caveat — we do ask for an answer on 'The arts', so those who stick to recognised artistic forms — literature, music, painting, architecture, photography, sculpture, dance, film, drama etc will be rewarded. Those who stray to areas such as sport and martial arts, will, as usual, be deemed to be outside the remit of the question. Those arguing clothing and fashion are nearer the mark but only with a strong artistic input.

Any other valid points should be credited.

4 With reference to specific examples drawn from any art form, examine which criteria should be considered when deciding whether a work has the status of a masterpiece.

(25 marks)

This comes straight from the specification (Aesthetic evaluation) and has been a standard question for a number of years. One would hope for some carefully prepared answers in this area.

What then is a masterpiece?

Candidates will have to offer a range of those attributes which are currently thought to define a masterpiece. Originally, of course, the term referred to the piece which a student artist would produce to demonstrate that he had sufficient competence to take on students of his own, so denoting his ability as a master. Now the meaning is often used very loosely and we will have to contend with offerings which we may not consider to be masterpieces unless the candidate convinces us that it is so (and that is a part of their task).

Helpful criteria may be set on two planes.

Firstly, quantifiable and objective judgements

- technical merit
- form
- the number of purchases
- popularity
- production values.

Candidates should realise that on a second level there is also a more subjective set of criteria. These will cover such issues as

- novelty
- originality
- durability
- consistency
- inspiration.

Candidates should be able to argue about subjective issues such as how we can define superior quality,

- universality
- timelessness
- that very elusive trait of genius.

We would expect specific references and that particular works will be cited. For higher levels titles are not enough. There must be an attempt to argue why particular works are transcendent. It is insufficient to say that the *Mona Lisa* is a masterpiece because her eyes follow you around the room. The whole range of objective and subjective criteria should be brought to bear on each masterpiece — the connections must be made to access higher levels. The use of one example only will only be useful if it demonstrates a whole range of attributes, but it would be possible. Any artwork(s) of any recognisable genre will be admissible here providing the arguments justify their inclusion.

Any other valid points should be credited.

5 In recent years there has been a revolution in the way people have access to music. Discuss what impact this has had on the listening preferences of young people. (25 marks)

The statement offers a prompt. The answer should centre on the impact that the new means of access have had on young people (only).

Some of the points which may be considered as to how young people's preferences have changed could well include

- i-pods
- PDAs
- MP3 players

It may be useful to contrast this with portable means of reproduction in the past. There is a whole range and developmental pathway, including

- Transistor radios
- Walkmen
- Portable CD players

There are differences of capacity and shuffling which candidates may wish to explore as changing or defining listening preferences.

A major area which should be included is how devices have influenced listening preferences and where, how and what young people access. There are issues of the impact ready access to dazzling technology has had on TV Music channels and listening to Classical music.

Preferences may be characterised as listening preferences or candidates may find more scope for depth of comment about technological developments. Computer access to music, for example, may be discussed in a number of ways and from different perspectives. These include

- Downloading music from friends
- Downloading music from the Internet
- Burning from CDs or Radio

It may be some candidates wish to interpret the question as referring to music technology, in which case they might legitimately turn to

- Music technology
- Academic courses
- Music programs (e.g. Sibelius/Cubase) as educational and compositional tools

There are two possible approaches to this question. One is the impact that new methods of listening to music have had on people's listening habits in the sense of the hardware (or software) that is used or the place where music can be enjoyed. The second is the impact new technology has had on the style or type of music that young people might want to listen to.

Legitimate comment could come from all these areas. The key to the question is the IMPACT that such things have had on the listening habits of young people.

6 Discuss the view that in a civilised society there should be no censorship of any kind.

(25 marks)

The civilised society will need to be addressed. Perhaps there will be discussion of such notions as:

- shared responsibilities
- shared rights
- individual freedoms
- freedom of expression
- common morality
- protection of vulnerable individuals
- artistic freedoms
- intellectual freedom to research and obtain information freely
- religious sensitivities.

The phrase has been chosen specially to avoid unnecessary discussion of life in dictatorships or other regimes, where censorship is a common tool of the state, or anarchic situations where there is likely to be a total conflict between individual and collective freedoms.

Books might be censored for a variety of reasons.

- censorship of material offensive to others
- censorship of material deemed likely to corrupt or deprave (what evidence would be needed?)
- violent material
- deleting references which are inaccurate or misleading
- political censorship

Answers might also include.

- rights of the individual to anonymity
- military censorship (in time of war or security alert — hopefully candidates will not go overboard on this issue at the expense of other matters)
- government control
- bias of the press towards the views of the owner or a political viewpoint

The conflict between the freedom of an individual (for instance a media celebrity or politician) and the right of citizens to know details of the lifestyle, salary, expenses, personal morality etc of such a person is fertile ground.

There are barriers and limits here — what are they? — how and when should they be trespassed upon? — these and other questions should lead candidates to informed and conclusive discussion about whether or not censorship is essential.

Discussion of other relevant areas of censorship will be credited

Broader answers will be accepted with pleasure.

Any other valid points should be credited.

7 Assess the effect that the media's obsession with the cult of celebrity has on the political life of the United Kingdom.

(25 marks)

- Is the statement valid?
- Has the media an obsession with the idea of celebrity?
- If so, does it affect the UK's political life?

At the heart of the question is the issue of whether we have an increasingly presidential style of political life in this country. The popular media (and society as a whole) tend to idolise individuals according to what they look like rather than what they stand for.

It may be that candidates might pursue this idea of celebrity along these lines:

- The public are increasingly interested in celebrity lives — even those thrust into the limelight by inconsequential means — e.g. reality shows
- The press feeds on this — especially those that specialise in celebrities (Hello etc)
- Many newspapers concentrate on the lives of celebrities rather than real news
- Real news inevitably becomes trivialised by association and emphasis
- Political news is similarly presented in simplistic terms
- Speculation about personalities of major politicians follows
- Simplistic judgements are made about them
- Voting takes place on personalities and vastly over-simplified politics.

Whether the election is a fight between a small number of politicians (e.g. the Mayor of London) or on a grander scale, the issues revolve around the general public perception (often fuelled by the newspapers' over-simplification) of the rival party leaders.

Some candidates will argue that the celebrity culture does in fact trivialise political argument as a whole. Others, however, may disagree with the statement offered and may argue that:

- Politics is so complex that some simplification will always take place
- There always has been an emphasis on personalities (Pitt, Peel, Gladstone, Disraeli, Lloyd George, Churchill, Thatcher, Blair)
- The public wants its politicians to be colourful and larger than life
- The public has a right to know of the personal and intimate details of its leaders therefore the press is merely reflecting the situation.

Hopefully, candidates will offer a balanced and rational viewpoint with good illustrations and evidence. They may, of course, agree with, disagree with or be ambivalent towards, the notion put forward. What they should weigh up is the extent to which they believe (and can show) that UK politics are substantially different **because** of a tendency to idolise celebrities and perhaps specifically what effect this has (or has had) on public perception of the work of figures such as Gordon Brown.

Any other valid points should be credited.

8 Examine the advantages and disadvantages of belonging to a supra-national body such as the EU, NATO or the UN.

(25 marks)

A two part question requiring an assessment of advantages **and** disadvantages.

As exemplification, candidates may wish to choose one of the bodies outlined or choose their own. As always, the quality of argument is important.

To take the EU as an example, the kinds of issue offered may be similar for other organisations — strength in unity; increased power; increased awareness; increased security.

Advantages of the EU might include:

- Economies of scale
- Free trade between members
- No visa control among EU countries
- Europeans abroad enjoy the same legal rights as their home country
- Cultural and educational exchange programmes, such as Erasmus
- Educational and professional qualifications can be recognised in other community countries
- Single currency?
- As a whole body they are more powerful
- Can become self-sufficient in trade
- More international influence
- More concerted action on the environment
- Stronger protection for human rights
- Help with natural disasters
- Sense of belonging to a united Europe
- Easier travel, can work in other countries, and many other benefits of the European Union.

Disadvantages might include

- Lack of sovereignty
- Lack of local self-determination and decision-making
- An inflow-outflow of EU citizens. It is commonly accepted that too many migrants into metropolitan areas might denude the rural areas of their workforce
- Inadequate protection of minority groups (e.g. Basques in Spain could be affected by universal EU laws).
- Lack of local financial control
- Increasing domination of powerful member states
- Cultural insensitivities
- Bureaucracy
- Inability to react quickly to local situations.

Should candidates wish to discuss the UN, NATO or even multi-national corporations or transnational corporation (MNC/TNC), many of the issues will remain the same — financial, trade, large vs small, ability to react, ethical consideration.

Any other valid points should be credited.

9 'The press has a responsibility to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.'

Discuss this view of the role of newspapers.

(25 marks)

A question with plenty of opportunity to explore AO3 issues. The question prompts them, we hope, to realise that there is a sense in which the quotation cannot be fully valid — it is a partial view of the role of newspapers.

Issues include

- Does the press indeed have any such responsibility?
- If so, how is it exercised by newspapers?
- Which newspapers take on which degree (or kind) of responsibility?

It would be wise for candidates to contextualise their comments. These will obviously depend on the type of paper they are discussing.

Newspapers also have responsibilities to

- their owners,
- their readership,
- their investors (their sales)

and also will be constrained by matters of

- taste
- decency and
- governmental constraints
- legal limitations.

Candidates should realise that these matters are in a sense specific to particular newspapers or genre of newspapers. We will expect comments, unless they are particularly relevant and inspired, to be confined to recognised daily or weekly newspapers — not magazines.

Further issues include:

- What is truth in this area?
- How is it manifest or even recognised?
- How far is truth recognisable or shared between those examining it from different viewpoints?
- What is meant by 'nothing but the truth'?
- Can this ever be true of the press?

Informed discussion on bias and an overview of the remit of the newspapers in their various forms will also be well rewarded

Any other valid points should be credited.

10 Discuss the moral and ethical problems that have arisen in armed conflicts in the last 20 years.

(25 marks)

Among the recent armed conflicts we would expect the Gulf Wars, Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq, Dafur, and possibly recent conflicts in the Balkans and in Gaza.

Each conflict has its own rationale and we would expect candidates to be familiar with some of the issues that have led to wars. Any recent conflict is permissible, not just those involving the UK. It may be that candidates wish to answer on a more local level (gangland killings etc). As we do not specify military conflict, there may be some mileage in such discussion though it is unlikely to raise a wide enough range of moral and ethical problems.

Among the ethical and moral problems we should expect reference to some of the following:

- Legitimacy of war, especially the role of UN mandates
- Perceptions of hidden agendas, such as oil supplies
- Notions of a 'just war'
- War as retribution
- War as a response to genocide/ethnic cleansing
- Armed struggle in the name of peace keeping
- The religious dimension
- The justification for war (cf self determination / WMD)
- Perceptions of American (Christian) Imperialism vs Muslim self determination
- Treatment of Prisoners
- Treatment of suspects
- Legitimacy of killing
- Suicide and terrorism (vs freedom fighting)

Discussion should centre on the moral and ethical problems of armed conflict at a personal and national level — *moral and ethical problems faced by society and individuals*. Candidates may well take a particular view and so long as that view is argued coherently it can be credited. Those who point to dilemmas inherent in the question are also likely to be credited. We do need some hard evidence. Assertion will not be enough to score higher level marks. The greater the level of understanding and analysis the better the marks will be.

Any other valid points should be credited.