



General Certificate of Education

General Studies 2766

Specification B

GENB3 Power

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - January series

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GENB3 Power

General Comments

Most candidates completed the three questions required and selected one from the choice of two essays in Section B. The Assessment Objectives were covered by most, although there was some weakness evident in the appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of knowledge as represented by the different texts, AO3.

In both the compulsory questions, 1a and 1b, and the optional essays, 3 and 4, many candidates were over-reliant on the texts and failed to provide additional examples from their own knowledge, which is urged both in the rubric on the front page and at the head of each section where the questions themselves are printed.

Questions 1a and 1b overview

The task of having to provide one side of an argument confused a number and some candidates deliberately opposed the view called for, more often on 1b than 1a, which seriously affected marks. Others provided a balanced response, which is not called for; this could score well but wasted time. Examples from beyond the texts were not always provided, with some candidates taking the approach that they should merely comment on and/or analyse what was in front of them, and this also affected marks.

Centres need to ensure candidates understand that this is an academic exercise in arguing from a single point of view, one with which they may well not agree; it builds on some of the skills first utilised in GENB2, questions 2 and 3.

Question 1a

Despite being in the Specification, the term “empower” confused some; occasionally it was taken to mean to remove power. Text A was well understood and quite well used. Text B was more challenging and this was evident. It required a more lateral approach, but many took it as it stood and quoted statistics from it, although these were of limited direct use to the task as set. Good responses drew on a variety of examples from personal experience and had examples of professionals, politicians and others who had achieved their positions through the power of their education.

Question 1b

A small number interpreted “people’s power” as the power of “The People” and were usually outraged at the suggestion, argued against the question and consequently earned marks in the lower levels. On the whole the question was well done by many. There were more examples here, historical, contemporary, political and financial as well as those from the texts themselves. Candidates were able to draw from a variety of other subjects, notably Milgram and Zimbardo from Psychology, checks and balances in the US constitution, often compared with the situation in Britain, from Politics, *Macbeth* and *Lord of the Flies* from English Literature and sundry dictators and autocrats from History, as well as examples from Business Studies, Law, Sociology and Economics.

A few made good use of the photograph in C and recognised that the power of protestors might need to be limited, as well as the powers of the scientists themselves. It was this ability to

interpret material from the perspective required by the question that differentiated between many candidates with the same ideas but who used them often to argue against the task set.

Questions 2 and 3 overview

Candidates were generally more at home with the more recognised format of an essay requiring a balanced response. Both questions allowed for a personal response, which many candidates took advantage of to supply. Weaker responses lacked examples and placed reliance on the texts, which kept them in levels 3 and 4. Those who did support their arguments with specific material were able to reach the higher levels.

The paper allows time for candidates to plan their response but there were a large number who showed no evidence of having considered their response before starting to write. In both questions, the best candidates provided a balanced response, arguing one side then the other before coming to a considered conclusion.

Question 2

There were a lot of personal responses. Text A was heavily used by some, again. There was a lack of examples, as in all the questions, and many candidates relied on assertion and Text A, thereby not reaching the upper levels. The most widespread element not considered was the impact on schools and their timetables, though some proposed Art be moved to after-school clubs and others that the proposals in the stem could be covered elsewhere, in PE and Group Tutor meetings, for example.

Where there were examples, they were often very impressive with artistic movements, specific artists and architectural delights featuring. A large proportion of answers made impassioned pleas for Art to remain on the curriculum; the best provided a forceful argument in favour of its inclusion.

Question 3

Text D was used a lot by many, often the less able candidates. Examples were frequently personal and divorce, custody, positions of responsibility in school and brushes with the law featured. A lot of responses failed to distinguish well within the age range covered by “under 18” and some clearly dealt only with those just under, i.e. 16/17. Issues of maturity were usually well addressed with adults also identified as being at fault on occasions.

Better candidates had a broader range of examples covering the various ages at which responsibilities are acquired and discussed the arguments for lowering the voting age. Issues of maturity and understanding were tackled by many, the better responses attempting to define and exemplify these factors, but often conceding that there was a need for age limits and arguing convincingly either for 18 or a different (usually lower) age.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Please note:

For **June 2010** and beyond centres should be aware of the 'Question Paper new numbering system' being introduced by AQA. This will have little impact on this unit other than the question numbers themselves;

- i.e. Question 1(a) will be **1**,
- Question 1(b) will be **2**,
- Question 2 will be **3**,
- Question 3 will be **4**.

Examination Officers have received notification of the changes affecting this and other subjects. However, further information, details and examples of the changes are available on the [Examination Officers](#) pages of the AQA website.