



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Level Examination  
January 2010

## **General Studies (Specification B)**

## **GENB4**

**Unit 4 Change**

### **Insert**

### **Stimulus Material**

These texts are to be read in conjunction with questions in Unit GENB4.

The questions arise from the texts, but they should **not** be answered by reference to the texts alone.

---

## Text A

### **Making poverty history at home**

A recent report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlighted that, in spite of 10 years of New Labour, inequality is at a 40-year high, and that rich and poor are increasingly living geographically separate lives. Are we seeing the re-birth of the 'Two Nations' that so exercised the likes of Booth, Shaftesbury, Disraeli and Dickens?

The richest one per cent of the population now owns a quarter of the total wealth of the nation. Last Christmas a couple of City bankers strode into Umbaba, one of London's trendiest night-spots, and asked for a drink. Not content with any old drink, they asked for the most expensive cocktail – which came in at £333 per glass. They ordered two rounds for their table of eight. Final bill for the night: £15 000.

Work is not an automatic ticket out of poverty. Whilst boardroom bosses regularly reward themselves with multi-million pound bonuses, countless others work hard for long hours and, in the absence of a living wage, still fall below the poverty line.

Sophia, with a disabled husband, her own mother and four children to look after, has three jobs. Her working day starts at 5.00 a.m., with two shifts as a school cleaner and kitchen assistant, followed by two hours cleaning at a nursery and two more hours cleaning at a community centre – finishing at 7.30 p.m. Even with tax credits, she earns just £200.75 per week – and less in school holidays. Her weekly outgoings include £130 for food, toiletries, travel and clothing. Holidays and outings to the cinema or restaurant are out of the question.

But enough of the problem: what can be done to narrow the gap? Virtually the same day that Rowntree published its research, the richest Scot, Sir Tom Hunter, announced that he is to give away £1 billion before he dies. Are faith groups, charities, and 'new philanthropists'\* now better placed to tackle poverty than the state?

Philanthropy is able to reach certain groups which the state is not good at serving – or has turned its back on. In many towns and cities, for example, churches are now at the forefront of serving the needs of destitute asylum-seekers. But, as they themselves would recognise, food-parcels and hand-outs are not a just or long-term solution.

One of the cruellest paradoxes of being poor in a wealthy society is that those with the least end up paying the most for basic goods and services. Research by Save the Children recently revealed the poorest pay a 'poverty premium' of up to £7 000 per year, in higher gas and electricity bills, over-priced (and poorer quality) food, and extortionate interest rates.

These kinds of structural inequalities cannot be addressed by philanthropic acts alone.

Source: adapted from the article '*Making poverty history at home*', by NIAL COOPER, Reform Magazine – The United Reformed Church, November 2007

---

\* Philanthropist – one who makes large charitable donation

**Text A** (continued)**Table 1**

<b>Pupils on free school meals at age 11 in all UK state-maintained schools, by ethnic group, 2005/6 (%)</b>	
White	12.1
Black	32.4
Asian	32.6
Chinese	12.2
Mixed	36.9

**Table 2**

<b>Participation in higher education at age 19 in all UK state-maintained schools, by gender and ethnicity, 2005/6 (%)</b>		
	Males	Females
White		
On free school meals at age 11	6	9
Not on free school meals	26	34
Ethnic minorities		
On free school meals at age 11	24	30
Not on free school meals	42	51
Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR), all groups	38	48

[Note for comparison: HEIPR of students from independent schools (male and female) = 93%.  
Source: Independent Schools Council]

Source: STIJN BROECKE and JOSEPH HAMED, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills  
DIUS Research Report 08 14 (2008)  
© Crown Copyright 2008

**Turn over ▶**

---

## Text B

### Crossed Wires

The human brain is the most complex organ in the body and contains 20 billion cells, responsible for everything from dreaming and movement to appetite and emotions.

It consists mainly of grey matter – the brain cells or neurons where information is processed. It also contains white matter – the nerve fibres which, like electric cables, send out chemical messengers and relay information between the cells.

In fact, the brain contains more nerve fibres than there are wires in the entire international telephone network and sometimes the brain's 'wires' can become crossed, as a result of injury, illness or genetics.

Scientists used to think a brain injury resulted in permanent damage to the brain's functions, but new research suggests this is not necessarily the case.

'When one area of our brain is damaged we now know from scans that the functions of that area are distributed elsewhere,' says Dr Keith Muir, a senior lecturer in neuroscience at Glasgow University. 'That is why after a stroke people sometimes lose the use of their hand or leg then regain it because another area of the brain eventually takes up the job of movement.'

In fact, says Dr Muir, rather than talking about different areas of the brain it is better to think of it as having numerous different systems which link up and work together. When the brain is injured, the systems learn to link up differently – sometimes with surprising results.

Some people are actually born with this kind of altered wiring. At birth we all have far more brain cells than we need and as we develop there's a period of so-called 'pruning' – when only the connections and brain cells needed and used survive.

In some cases it's thought that this process goes awry – perhaps because of a faulty gene – resulting in cross wiring or extra connections.

Source: LUCY ELKINS, *The Daily Mail*, 12 August 2008

---

**Text C****Hats: the way to do it**

When the history of hats is written, the noughties\* are likely to be decreed something of a low patch.

Secretly (well, not so secretly now, I guess), I am pleased that hats are currently a bit naff, because I can't do hats. Some people put on a hat and look like a more mysterious, more exciting version of themselves. I put on a hat and I look as if I'm in bad fancy dress. This is quite annoying, because being able to look more cool, mysterious and exciting just by putting on an accessory would be a handy trick. I also suspect that the right hat, if only I could carry it off, may even make me look as if I had cheekbones and, as the grudging owner of a few stray hamster genes in the cheek department, this last is something of a lifelong ambition.

Funny to think that the wearing of hats once signified respectability and due deference to occasion. These days, they mean quite the opposite: hats are for show-offs. To wear a hat on any occasion other than a wedding or at the races is one great big look-at-me. Forget about hiding below the brim; hats make you more visible, not less. Which is why your boyfriends-of-pop-stars and your youth-TV-presenters go about in a hat.

For once, though, I suspect celebrity style might be a force for good. Now that the gossip-column classes would not dream of spending a summer afternoon at a festival or a fashionable west London pub without the right panama or trilby, hats are becoming normalised again. Add in the vogue for hat-wearing as sun-protection on holiday, and it may not be long before hats are a standard part of the average wardrobe again. Although not, alas, for me.

Source: JESS CARTNER-MORLEY, *The Guardian Weekend*, 2 August 2008  
© Guardian News & Media LTD 2008

---

\* noughties = the time period 2000 to 2009

**Turn over for the next text**

**Turn over ►**

**Text D****Gross Domestic Happiness**

The French economy has been sluggish in recent years. The President, Nicolas Sarkozy, believes that if a measure of happiness is included in France's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the economy might look more buoyant.

Unemployment is at historically high levels, and the French work on average only 35.9 hours per week against an EU average of 37.4 hours per week. As turmoil in financial markets has raised prices of almost all commodities, economic growth in France is likely to fall short of government targets.

Accordingly, Sarkozy has asked economists and Nobel laureates Joseph Stiglitz of the USA, and Amartya Sen of India, to conduct an economic analysis that takes other considerations than the value of goods and services over a calendar year into account. He wants them to measure aspects of French life such as community spirit, solidarity, and leisure time – something the French are well-endowed with. Governments are normally rated according to the nation's GDP; but Sarkozy thinks there is more to being French than ruthless competition, where everyone is trying to outdo everyone else.

Jean-Philippe Cotis, head of France's Office of Statistics, said he looked forward to a 'passionate debate' that would raise economics above a mere counting of coins.

'Statisticians are also interested in happiness,' he said. Presidents are, too – certainly this one is. Nicolas Sarkozy, newly-married to onetime model Carla Bruni, would like to think that his countrymen are happy, too.

---

**Text E****Nostalgia for Paradise**

All business is show business. This is partly because so-called ‘cultural production’ is now the biggest industry in the West. In the United States, it has taken over from defence as the main employer. But Hollywood is offering the model upon which all forms of production are based. Management consultant Tom Peters claims that ‘it is barely an exaggeration to say that everyone is getting into the entertainment business’. Admittedly, it may still be a small percentage of people who see work in these terms, mostly people who are young and often Western, but it may be a sign of the future for most of humanity.

In this new world, to go shopping is not primarily to buy objects. It is to take part in the ‘retail drama’. The new vast shopping malls are designed as places of entertainment where you can have interesting experiences, and live in fantasy worlds and play with virtual reality. In America they are called ‘destination entertainment centres’. Increasingly, social tension is developing around who is allowed into these worlds of play. They are becoming guarded, private spaces from which the poor are excluded: they would only spoil the game.

Could it be that in our society, in which many businesses are becoming show business, this explosion of entertainment is a vague nostalgia for the Christian promise of Paradise, when, as Jeremiah says: ‘their life will be like a watered garden. They will never be weary again. Then the young girls will dance, and the men, young and old will be glad’? For a generation that has lost its hope of heaven, is Disney World the last echo of our dreams?

Source: adapted from *What is the Point of Being a Christian?* TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE,  
published by Continuum International Publishing Group, Burns & Oates, 2005

**END OF STIMULUS MATERIAL**

**There is no stimulus material printed on this page**