



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Level Examination
June 2010

General Studies (Specification B)

GENB4

Unit 4 Change

Insert

Stimulus Material

These texts are to be read in conjunction with unit GENB4.

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

Text A

What the future holds for...

Employment

Many workers throughout Britain have lived free of the spectre of unemployment for more than a decade, but as job losses ripple out from the City to include giants such as Woolworths, a large number of people may now be forced to search in some unlikely places for work.

Those without families might decide to take a break from their careers or accept offers of unpaid leave from employers forced to save cash by cutting back the hours staff work. The four- or three-day week could become commonplace, and employees with less cash in their pockets may seek second, part-time jobs to top up their pay. We could be about to enter an era of moonlighting.

More secure if less well-paid jobs in the public sector will be highly sought after, and some high-fliers who were once picked off by City banks or hedge funds may join the civil service instead.

Young Britons

For the nation's twenty- and thirty-somethings, the last downturn was lost in a blur of 'Madchester' and hip hop.

These young men and women have been suckled on student loans, then weaned on to credit cards, but a deep recession will provide a rude awakening for their generation, empowered by credit.

As the years of plenty draw to a close, plans for a second gap year will be shelved, and expensive holidays may be sacrificed for the odd weekend in the country. For the first time in a long time, the younger generation may even learn to save surplus cash as they attempt to survive the downturn, cutting back on disposable income. The implication for trendy restaurants, clubs and bars could be frightening.

As the sleeping beast of unemployment stirs, young Britons are being forced to address their casual relationship with money – learning to deal in hard cash, not plastic. And they may also find they now have only one bank to turn to – their parents.

The elderly

For people looking forward to retirement or those who are already claiming state pensions, the economic crisis is likely to mean that life will now be far less comfortable. Many company pension schemes, most of them invested in the stock market, have been falling in value as share prices have declined.

The result for savers is that they may have to defer the day when they clock off for the final time, at least until the market improves and their pension recovers in value. The Bank of England's decision to slash interest rates to kick-start the economy means that savings will now be earning considerably less interest than they were just six months ago.

Some will have to make economies or become part of the trend for remaining in, or returning to, the workplace after retirement age in order to make some extra cash. But with unemployment rising rapidly, even that may not be a viable option for much longer.

Selected Economic Indicators (2008)

- Gordon Brown has pumped an extra £20bn into the economy raising government borrowing well above the £100bn mark.
- This fiscal boost centred on a £12.5bn, 13-month-long reduction in VAT, from 17.5 to 15 per cent.
- Bank lending rate has been reduced to 2 per cent, the lowest level since 1951; it was at its peak at the beginning of 2008, at 5.75.
- In mid-December 2008, a pound would buy less than €1.12, the weakest the pound has been since the euro was launched in 1999.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) calculates that the average UK pension has declined in value by more than 15 per cent in 2008.
- Unemployment rose by 140 000 in the three months to September 2008, to hit 1.8 million.
- The number of mortgage products available fell by 65 per cent in 2008; more than half the house loans now on offer require a deposit of 25 per cent or more.
- It is estimated that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the UK is falling at an annual rate of 4 per cent.

Source: adapted from HEATHER STEWART, ZOE WOOD, and JAMES ROBINSON, *The Observer*, 14 December 2008
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Text B

Living on the frontline of the new cold war

On Wednesday, Russia's president, Dmitry Medvedev, said he would deploy Iskander nuclear missiles in Kaliningrad – the small Baltic Sea chunk of Russian territory encircled by what are now NATO countries. The hardware would be pointed at US missile defence and radar bases in Poland and the Czech Republic, Medvedev said. Russia would use sophisticated radio jamming equipment to sabotage the Pentagon's ambitious missile defence system.

Residents in Kaliningrad – the former German city of Königsberg seized by Stalin after the Second World War – say they support Medvedev's uncompromising stance. Russia had little choice but to react following its hostile encirclement by the US and the new countries of NATO, they suggested.

"This is the right step. NATO isn't behaving properly," said Ivan Radin, 72, leaning on a banner embossed with a portrait of Lenin. Radin, a communist supporter who turned up yesterday to a rally commemorating the 91st anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, said the West tricked Russia when the Soviet Union fell apart.

These days, Kaliningrad is a booming part of capitalist Russia. With its European-style plazas, Japanese restaurants, and dinky ice-cream bars, the city is thriving economically, a sort of Russian Hong Kong. Its proximity to the EU means that locals are more westernised than elsewhere.

Residents said they were confident Kaliningrad would get through this latest stand-off. "In the past capitalist countries surrounded us. We got through that. Now it's the same situation," said Nikolay Perov, 82, taking part in yesterday's communist rally. The answer was socialism, he suggested. "With capitalism war is inevitable. Only socialism can deliver peace and friendship."

Source: adapted from LUKE HARDING, *The Guardian*, Saturday 8 November 2008
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Text C**Visiting Fairfax House**

One of the finest Georgian town-houses in England, Fairfax House is open to the public for self-guided and guided tours. Remember to visit the Fairfax House shop which sells a range of antiques, books and gifts.

Fairfax House is owned and run by York Civic Trust who promote the conservation of the City of York's unique historic fabric. Fairfax House is home to an outstanding collection of Georgian furniture and clocks assembled by the late Noel Terry of Terry's Chocolate fame.

The sumptuous plasterwork and beautifully proportioned interiors harmonise with the remarkable collection of Georgian antiques, to create what Sir Simon Jenkins described in his book *England's Thousand Best Homes* (2003), as 'the most perfect eighteenth-century town-house I have come across anywhere in England.'

As part of a major, city-wide heritage lighting scheme, intended to enhance York's evening economy, the front of Fairfax House on Castlegate is now bathed in light from dusk to midnight. To celebrate the initiative we now open the house for evening tours.

York sixth-form students are invited to take part in a Georgian Ball. Students will have the opportunity to work with professional dancing-masters and wear wigs and costumes that will be hired for the event. York scholars will teach etiquette and social graces, and students will have the opportunity to explore aspects of 18th Century life. The food will have a distinct Georgian flavour and will use recipes popular in Yorkshire in the 1770s.

Source: adapted from York Civic Trust publicity material

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Text D

Scientific Integrity

There is an idea that we all hope you have learned in studying science in school – we never explicitly say what this is, but just hope that you catch on by all the examples of scientific investigation. It's a kind of scientific integrity, a principle of scientific thought that corresponds to a kind of utter honesty – a kind of leaning over backwards. For example, if you're doing an experiment, you should report everything that you think might make it invalid – not only what you think is right about it: other causes that could possibly explain your results.

Details that could throw doubt on your interpretation must be given, if you know them. You must do the best you can – if you know anything at all wrong, or possibly wrong – to explain it. If you make a theory, for example, and advertise it, then you must put down all the facts that disagree with it, as well as those that agree with it.

In summary, the idea is to try to give *all* of the information to help others to judge the value of your contribution; not just the information that leads to judgement in one particular direction or another.

The easiest way to explain this idea is to contrast it, for example, with advertising. Last night I heard that Wesson oil doesn't soak through food. Well, that's true. It's not dishonest; but the thing I'm talking about is not just a matter of not being dishonest, it's a matter of scientific integrity, which is another level. The fact that should be added to that advertising statement is that *no* oils soak through food, if operated at a certain temperature. If operated at another temperature, they *all* will – including Wesson oil. So, it's the implication which has been conveyed, not the fact, which is true, and the difference is what we have to deal with.

Source: adapted from RICHARD FEYNMAN, *Surely You're Joking, Mr Feynman!*, Unwin Paperbacks, 1985

Text E

A decade of the Scottish Parliament

In terms of public policy, devolution has certainly enabled the passage of significantly more Scottish legislation, though this fact has not been without its critics. There have been examples of policy divergence (e.g. tuition fees, personal care, and local electoral reform), policy innovations emulated elsewhere (the smoking ban), and decisions to follow the English line (on anti-social behaviour, for instance). But Whitehall has, in some cases, clearly been a (not necessarily insurmountable) obstacle to policy innovation, such as Treasury reluctance to hand over money saved from Attendance Allowance.

The evidence of improvement in governance is also mixed. The Executive – at least when it has a majority – has come to dominate the legislative process as at Westminster, though there are indications of success at delivering a more transparent system of government, and one which citizens find easier to engage with (via the petitions process, for instance). The SNP victory of 2007 may have been a shock to some unionist advocates of devolution, but independence remains a minority view among MSPs and, more importantly, the Scottish people as a whole.

On the other hand, the low turnout in all three Scottish parliamentary elections to date has confounded expectations of a new, more trusting relationship of citizen and state. Likewise, many of the policy outputs of devolution have not met with overwhelming acclaim. But the legitimacy of devolution itself is beyond question: a clear majority favour retaining the present Parliament, though a renegotiation of its powers and its relationship with Westminster may hold the promise of enhancing its status still further.

Source: www.commissiononscottishdevolution.org.uk

END OF STIMULUS MATERIAL

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