



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2011**

General Studies B

GENB1

(Specification 2765)

Unit 1: Conflict

Report on the Examination

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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GENB1 Conflict

General Comments

The paper was accessible, with candidates clearly understanding the requirements of the questions. Low-scoring responses usually failed to apply the points made to the context of the question.

The majority of candidates used the cues provided to structure their answer. This paper tests all four of the assessment objectives (AOs), although not with equal weighting. Many candidates are still not addressing AO3 sufficiently, which demands an appreciation of different types of knowledge and is the most demanding of the AOs. This continues to prevent some from accessing the higher assessment levels.

Question 1

Many answers were narrowly focused on the stereotyping of women, taking their lead from the stem. These answers, however, were often thorough, with the most successful offering some good knowledge and understanding of the context and changes that have refocused the way women are now viewed in society.

Weaker responses produced a series of unrelated examples of different stereotypes, usually related to young people, such as chavs, emos and goths.

Whilst these examples are clearly appropriate, they were not related to the question: whether their existence is a matter for concern.

The majority of answers saw stereotyping as always negative and were able to demonstrate the impact it might have on individuals. Many supported their argument with a range of examples of how stereotyping might lead to low self-esteem, lack of confidence, depression and even, in extreme cases, suicide. A number of candidates described how stereotyping might lead to discrimination; a few confused stereotyping with discrimination and racism, assuming that stereotyping was the only cause of both.

Few candidates mentioned the possible positive effects of stereotyping; those that did so usually engaged in an evaluative discussion of its pros and cons, thereby achieving a higher level.

Cue 3 was less well-addressed than the other cues, although many acknowledged the effect of education and legislation in helping to break stereotypes. The best answers gave a good account of how stereotypes can change over time, with old ones dying out and new ones replacing them, thereby reflecting the contemporary values of society. Most candidates referred to the equality that now exists between genders, but not necessarily between races, in an increasingly multicultural society.

Question 2

Most candidates followed the three cues. Cue 1 (what we mean by entertainment) was taken out of the context of the question in some weaker responses. Candidates described the various forms of entertainment, but did not explain how entertainment might provide value for money for different people. Such entertainers are wealthy because they have the support of their fans.

Many answers were narrowly focused on the examples given in the stem. Weaker answers focused entirely on Madonna and/or footballers, offering little beyond that given in the stem. As with question 1, however, some of those answers covered a range of issues within the context of the two examples. For example, Wayne Rooney's worth as a footballer in securing a £250,000 per week contract with Manchester United was contrasted with his lack of personal integrity demonstrated by his infidelity to his wife.

Most candidates achieved a good balance between the positive and negative aspects of the impact entertainers might have. There was a good awareness of how entertainers can act as both positive and negative role models, especially for young people. This was well exemplified; the personal lives of Tiger Woods and Lindsay Lohan might lead young people to believe that extra-marital affairs or drug-taking are acceptable, but the Beckham Football Academy is evidence that footballers can influence young people for good. Many examples of entertainers undertaking charity work were cited, such as Angelina Jolie working in Africa and X Factor contestants recording a charity single for Help for Heroes.

A number of candidates applied a business perspective to the issue of worth. Entertainers are simply doing their job, often very skilfully, and are paid well because they generate a lot of money in record sales and ticket sales. Many, however, did not see a connection between the money paid out by the public and the money earned. Some thought entertainers are on a salary that could be cut. Candidates were aware that very few entertainers command such high incomes; such successful careers are rare and often short-lived.

In response to cue 3 (how we might measure someone's worth), many candidates compared entertainers with medical workers, such as doctors and nurses who save lives, and soldiers, who fight for the freedom of others.

Answers were generally well-balanced, well-exemplified and attempted to address all three cues.

Question 3

The question was well understood by most candidates. Most covered a range of points, often following the structure of the cues.

Most candidates argued that the arts are indeed important subjects and that they should feature prominently in the school curriculum. Cues 1 and 2 were addressed well. Most candidates suggested a range of arts experiences, particularly those offered during the school day, sometimes recognising that other areas of the curriculum are enhanced by arts subjects. For example, role play in Humanities and design in DT.

Cue 2 was discussed at length, sometimes creating an imbalance in the focus of the answer overall. Most candidates discussed a wide range of skills and attitudes that are developed through the arts, including creativity, communication skills, confidence-building, team-work and technical skills.

Although a large number of candidates argued that the arts might not be as important as the more traditionally academic subjects such as Science, Maths and English, very few offered any further discussion of why the arts might not be included in the school curriculum.

Cue 3 (the quality of the arts experience in schools) was usually attempted, but was less well addressed than the other cues. Some recognised that funding might be an issue, especially at a time of government cuts. The most successful discussed ideas ranging from the arts not being experienced at all were it not for schools offering theatre and museum trips to enhance

the classroom experience, to the idea that school is but an introduction to the arts and the standard is inevitably lower than that of professional artwork.

Question 4

Although this was not a popular question, candidates clearly had some knowledge and understanding of the issues. Most covered all three cues to some degree, and AO3 was attempted.

Cue 1 (the differences and the similarities between the political parties) was generally answered well. Although most candidates focused on the three political parties mentioned in the stem, they were able to differentiate between their policies. The best answers also referred to minority parties such as the Green Party and the BNP, noting that they are often disadvantaged in terms of political influence. The weakest responses gave sometimes inaccurate descriptions of the policies of the three main political parties. This was often without reference to the question – whether having different political parties is worthwhile. The least successful answers were too generic, often lacking structure and making little or no reference to specific parties.

Many candidates gave a brief history of the journey of party politics in the UK in recent years, explaining how consensus politics has had a centralising effect. Whilst they might not have been able to use the correct terminology, there was clear understanding of the concept.

Unsurprisingly, the Coalition Government was referred to in many answers as an example of co-operation between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Fewer candidates recognised the differences of opinion within the government, although many were aware that the increase in tuition fees was contrary to the Liberal Democrat election manifesto.

Although many candidates did attempt to address cue 3 (the value people place on democracy), some struggled to set it in the context of the question. The best answers discussed dictatorship as an alternative to democracy, and understood the concept but few had specific knowledge of dictators and their impact on their countries. Many candidates were not aware that Hitler was democratically elected.

Question 5

Some candidates discussed aggression in general terms rather than relating their answers to the specific focus of how far aggression can be justified, but most kept a clear focus on the question.

Candidates generally followed the three cues. Cue 1 led most to identify verbal and physical aggression, although some also included emotional aggression.

Most candidates showed good awareness of the negative effects of aggression, particularly the physical and emotional impact on individuals, leading to low self-esteem, and on communities, leading to segregation and conflict.

Cue 2 (why people become aggressive towards others) was particularly well addressed. The majority of candidates referred to a variety of different scenarios where aggression could be justified, such as for protection, self-defence, or due to medical condition such as ADHD. These scenarios were generally well exemplified; for example where family members had been attacked, or where domestic violence had been experienced in childhood. The most informed responses went on to relate the nature-versus-nurture argument to the justification of aggression.

Most candidates showed understanding of how strong beliefs might be used to justify aggression. Various examples of wars were offered, alongside recognition that religious and political beliefs often provide a justification for conflict, even though the warring factions take different perspectives. Terrorism, and the specific examples of 9/11 and the London Bombings were commonly cited.

Many failed to come to a conclusion as to whether or not aggression can be justified. Those who did simply concluded that aggression is largely unacceptable when it leads to harm.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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