



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2012**

General Studies B

GENB1

(Specification 2765)

Unit 1: Conflict

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

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.

The assessment objectives (AOs) were not all addressed to the same standard. Candidates spent less time, and, therefore, put less emphasis on Assessment Objective 3 (AO3), which demands an appreciation of different types of knowledge and is the most demanding of the AOs. For some candidates, this prevented them from accessing the higher assessment levels.

Question 1

Although this was not the most popular question, the majority of candidates answered it reasonably well. A large number demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the roles of different types of pressure groups, discussing the principles of causal and sectional groups, insider and outsider groups, and providing appropriate examples. Whilst most exemplified their answers with national groups such as Greenpeace, the English Defence League and Fathers for Justice, there were also some good local examples offered.

Weaker answers did not consider whether pressure groups represent the majority view of society. Those responses tended to be more descriptive of different pressure groups. Similarly, weaker answers referred only to the example given in the stem. Although some developed the idea of animal welfare by giving specific examples, such as attacks by the Animal Liberation Front, generally most did not use them to develop their argument.

Most responses included some evaluation of the violent and peaceful methods used by different pressure groups to draw attention to their cause. There was good awareness of the effect of different methods on securing or alienating the majority view of society.

Many candidates showed good understanding of the place of pressure groups in a democratic society, especially in terms of how government can be influenced, for good or bad, by pressure groups. They referred to changes in law, for example fox-hunting, and to changes in policy where expert pressure groups had been consulted, for example the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. There was a less well-developed appreciation of how pressure groups might contribute directly to the democratic process by giving campaigners a voice, particularly in the period between general elections.

Question 2

Most responses demonstrated awareness of the nature of aggressive behaviour and gave a series of examples of different behaviours. Others gave endless and often repetitive examples of particular situations where people might lose their temper and become violent rather than aggressive. Better answers identified the factors that might result in aggression, such as protection of a loved one and self-defence, as part of the basic survival instinct.

The most successful responses showed a good understanding of the Nature versus Nurture debate. Their argument was generally well-developed with a clear understanding of aggression as both a genetic and a learned response. For example, males with high testosterone levels might naturally behave aggressively as opposed to the environmental factors affecting children who have been raised by aggressive parents, or live in an area of high crime and violence.

More successful responses identified a range of factors that might lead to aggressive behaviour, such as upbringing, film and the media, alcohol and drug abuse, and sport. These were often exemplified, such as Zimbardo's prison experiment. The most effective combined two different ideas, such as the influence of social networking sites on the 2011 riots, which took place in more deprived areas of cities.

The three cues were generally well used. The least successful answers were too generic, often lacking structure and making little or no references to specific situations. Most candidates, however, covered all three cues to some degree and AO3 was evident in most responses. There was recognition that most people are able to exercise control over their aggression depending on the situation, their personality and their motivation.

Question 3

This was a popular question, but candidates did not often achieve higher mark levels. Many candidates failed to address the issue fully of how far judging by appearances leads to stereotyping. Having defined stereotyping, they tended to focus purely on the appearances element of the question, ignoring other factors that might lead to stereotyping. Weaker responses produced a series of unrelated examples of different stereotypes, usually related to young people, such as 'chavs', 'hoodies', 'emos' and 'goths'. Whilst these examples are clearly appropriate, they were not applied to the question.

The most successful responses tended to explore each of the cues fully. Cue 2 (other influences that might lead to stereotyping) led some candidates to a discussion of the area in which people live, the media, international, national and local events, the influence of home background and peers, and behaviour. These were usually well supported by examples, such as Muslims being stereotyped as terrorists, following the events of 9/11. Some responses linked more than one influence, such as the TV programme *The Only Way is Essex*, that focuses on stereotypes of young people in Essex that support the geographically-based 'Essex Girl' stereotype. A few candidates showed the use of stereotypes in advertising, in terms of target market.

The majority of answers saw stereotyping as always negative and explored 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.

Fewer candidates saw stereotyping in a positive light; those that did so showed awareness of the benefits of identifying people similar to themselves, such as in a job interview, or ensuring their own safety. Some candidates also produced evaluative commentaries on police profiling of criminals. Weaker responses, however, lost the focus of the question as they tried to address cue 3, offering solutions to the problems caused by stereotyping or drifting into a debate about the merits of equality.

Question 4

Many responses to this question were rather generalised, with candidates paying insufficient regard to the way the arts might 'change the world'. Better responses considered this in a broad sense, referring to potential changes to an individual's personal world, whilst weaker responses took it too literally, and concluded that such change could not happen on a global scale.

Weaker responses said little beyond cue 1. They spent too long defining the arts and relating them to broad abstract ideas such as self-expression and self-discovery. Most candidates, however, showed good awareness of the range of the arts; photography and architecture were often discussed as a mean of representing cultural and historic heritage, supported by examples in the better responses. Many discussed music, citing song lyrics as meaningful to individuals, helping them to make sense of the world or encouraging them to respond to political and social situations. Both positive and negative examples from the current music scene were abundant. For example, the band, the Sex Pistols, promote anarchy, whilst John Lennon's *Imagine*, promotes world peace. Many candidates quoted various Beatles' lyrics, making the link with the stimulus in the stem.

Other examples from the wider arts were also used effectively, such as the political messages in Banksy's graffiti art, mainstream films such as *Saving Private Ryan* that change people's perceptions and, even, the impact of Shakespeare's work on the development of the English language.

Some candidates used the reference to politicians contained in the stem to compare the impact of the arts and politics. Better responses contrasted political and artistic power and saw the ability to make laws as more significant than protest songs. Various examples from history were used; the most effective bringing the two disciplines together in juxtaposition. The impact of "Live Aid" in focusing world attention on poverty was widely discussed, as was the meeting between President Obama and the rapper Jay-Z, to debate solutions to water shortages in less developed countries.

Question 5

The question was clearly understood by most candidates. The vast majority of candidates argued that brand names are important to consumers, with few making the counter argument.

Cue 1 (the techniques companies use to target consumers) was well addressed. Candidates were able to quote an extensive range of examples, usually related to either clothing brands, such as Super Dry and Hollister, or electronic goods. Weaker responses repeated the examples from the stem, but many did develop the example further. Few responses focused on other products, although in better responses there was some awareness of the influence of food branding, such as Tesco's "Every Little Helps" and John Lewis's "Never Knowingly Undersold", aimed at promoting good value for money. The relative importance of price and quality were debated and exemplified in most responses.

Peer pressure, especially among young people was recognised as being central to consumer choice of brand names. Good responses referred to the importance of the 'cool factor' in motivating young people to acquire the latest trend, and of the social effects of not being socially accepted by their peers.

Most candidates discussed a range of techniques used by companies to promote their products. They showed good awareness of advertising strategies, product differentiation, product placement and the use of celebrity endorsements to encourage consumers to buy and remain loyal to their products. These were often well exemplified, particularly celebrity endorsement. Some candidates lost sight of the question and focused on advertising, marketing and competition as benefits to the business.

Cue 3 (A03) was less well addressed than the other cues. Few mentioned values, but better responses discussed the increasing need to achieve good value for money in difficult economic times, and ethical issues, such as Fair Trade, that might influence consumer

choice. Some candidates made reference to sweat-shop labour issues with companies such as Primark and Nike.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion