



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

General Studies B

GENB3

(Specification 2765)

Unit 3: Power

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.

GENB3 Power

General Comments

Students and centres are now well aware of the requirements of this unit and recognise that, as well as the need to use the texts relevantly, personal examples that are evaluated and applied to the question are also required in order to access marks in the upper levels of the mark scheme

Centres should note the changes to the mark scheme for this series. There has been a reduction in the number of levels and the key descriptors within these have also been modified.

Questions 1 and 2 overview

The requirement of a one-sided argument is understood by most students now, as is the need to provide some examples of their own. A few less able students did still rely wholly on the texts, which meant marks in level 3, but there was some good analysis at times. It is this analysis and development of the points made that raises marks into and up the higher levels.

Question 1

The texts were clearly understood, but not well developed by less able students, many of whom were distracted by issues surrounding tobacco (Text A) and a few lost sight of the question, about countries, and wrote about individuals. Text B proved fruitful for many who were able to develop points about trade and exploitation with references to Primark and Nike prominent by way of supporting evidence. Some good examples covered the development of nuclear programmes and the need to limit countries such as North Korea and Iran and a number made reference to Afghanistan and Iraq. These examples scored best when they were explored in terms of the need for limits; some students missed the opportunity, however, giving the examples without explanation of their significance and this often meant a mark in Level 3 only.

Question 2

Some students had difficulty applying the texts to this question and either opted to explain and comment on the content, some being diverted into an essay on racism, or they ignored them entirely. Few recognised that Text D, in contrast to the call for co-operation in Text A, indicated a need for individual countries to solve their own health problems and serve their own people. Good responses had a focus on the duty of governments, usually assumed to be elected, to serve the interests of those who had put them in power. Very good students recognised that the criticism of the nuclear programmes of Iran or North Korea in question 1 could be turned on its head and argued as a positive for these countries looking to develop and defend themselves.

Taking their cue from Text C, many developed good arguments around recent examples of the Diamond Jubilee, European Championships and Olympics and used the UK as the focus for their response.

Questions 3 and 4 overview

Writing an essay requiring a balanced response is clearly an exercise that students understand and with which they engage. Less able students were unable to recognise the need for a two-sided debate in response to “How much...” and “To what extent...” and relied on assertions and opinion, which resulted in Level 4 marks. Nevertheless, most were able to provide some examples of their own and to make use of one or more of the texts, although occasionally not going beyond these and, as a result, not moving beyond marks in Level 3.

The format for these questions is: a stem followed by a question. Students should be reminded that it is the question that needs to be answered and that the stem is there to aid them, not direct them.

Question 3

Not attempted by so many as Question 4, the responses were best when they recognised that the key words in the title were “desirable”, “possible” “free” and “fair” and that these needed to be dealt with in a balanced way, looking at both sides and often seeing “desirable” and “possible” as alternatives.

‘Fair Trade’ was often taken as the organisation, which was acceptable, and led to a number of examples, with Cadbury and the Co-Op faring well. Generally, students assumed, better ones argued, that these were desirable forms of trade, but not possible, with TNCs often cited as the problem. Oil and Gas supply was also discussed to good effect as examples of resources never open to free trade.

The question was approached from a number of different angles, with philosophical discussions of morality and ethics often being as successful as those that showed detailed knowledge of banana production and the emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China. Indeed, those with extensive and detailed knowledge sometimes under-performed because they described rather than analysed what they knew and, as a result, failed to rise above level 3 marks.

Question 4

This was a popular question with many taking their lead from Texts A and D, as well as the stem, which provided a few with the plan for their response. Sometimes, those relying on the stem were steered away from the actual task of investigating the role of medical science into a description of how our health is affected by location, income and lifestyle; extensive criticisms of smoking and alcohol consumption, diet and obesity were evident. Without a focus on the actual question, many of these types of response scored poorly. Students offered a variety of examples, some relating to themselves, family and friends. There was some good reflection on how medical science has developed so that we now accept what was, at one time, revolutionary: penicillin, antibiotics, chemotherapy, but how these are not ‘cure-alls’, in part creating further problems. There was, for example, some sound awareness of the MRSA bug.

Usually, the argument was that we do expect too much, especially of a beleaguered, underfunded NHS and that we need to do more for ourselves. The role of governments in providing advice and protection, with smoking laws to the fore, was an alternative to medical science and some discussed homeopathy and other alternative approaches to some effect.

Counter-arguments tended to revolve around funding, especially if the focus was the NHS, and the right to treatment given the huge amounts invested via taxation. Others suggested that our expectations should be high because of contrasts with other countries, notably Africa [sic], and the positive media coverage of new discoveries and medical technologies.

An interesting approach by one student, who achieved in the top level, was the discussion of a society that has come to expect so much that they resort to the courts and suing when they feel let down; this blame culture, in particular, suggesting a huge expectation of medical science but raising the problem of “a profession unwilling to take risks because of the potential consequences”.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **results statistics** page of the AQA Website - <http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>

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