



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Level Examination
January 2013

General Studies (Specification B)

GENB4

Unit 4 Change

Insert

STIMULUS MATERIAL

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

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

Text A

Classicism versus Modernism

A new skirmish in a long-running and often bitterly fought architectural 'style war' between modernists and traditionalists has broken out over the stadiums and arenas of the London Olympics park.

Prince Charles's favourite architects have accused the head of England's national architectural review body of 'overt prejudice' after he made a barbed attack on the heir to the throne's love of traditional buildings, and heaped praise on the resolutely modernist designs beamed around the world as the backdrop to the 2012 games.

Paul Finch, chairman of the Design Council's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, applauded the selection of Zaha Hadid, the *avant garde* Iraqi-born architect who designed the sinuous aquatics centre, and Populous, the designer of the main 80 000-seat stadium. But, more provocatively, Finch celebrated the fact that the country's leading traditional architects, who are favoured by the Prince of Wales, were not in any way involved. "One of the good things about the London Olympics is the realisation that we have a set of buildings produced not by Quinlan Terry, and Robert Adam, but by Hadid, Populous and others – none of it endorsed by the Prince of Wales, none of it to do with heritage."

The Traditional Architecture Group, whose members include Terry and Adam, both leading exponents of classical buildings, complained to the culture secretary and to the communities secretary that Finch's remarks, made in the *Architects' Journal*, displayed "significant prejudice against one style of architectural philosophy at the highest level". The group said its members were "dismayed and alarmed".

Prince Charles has previously enraged some British architects by speaking out against modernist designs. He said the brutalist concrete Birmingham Central Library, designed in 1974 by John Madin, looked like "a place where books are incinerated, not kept". In 1984, he torpedoed a modernist extension to the National Gallery in London by complaining that it was "like a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend". In 2008, he said the Ivor Crewe building at Essex University "looks like a dustbin from the outside". Then, in 2009, Richard Rogers was dropped as the designer of a £3bn housing development at Chelsea Barracks after the Prince questioned his design in a private letter to the Qatari client. He backed Quinlan Terry's alternative designs which were inspired by the work of Sir Christopher Wren, the 17th Century architect of St Paul's Cathedral.

Now the Prince's architectural allies feel they have found a lightning-rod for their own simmering sense of injustice that a parallel 'modernist establishment' is seeking to marginalise them, with the result that some traditional architects believe that commissions for Olympic projects were effectively closed to them. "It was considered a waste of time to go for the Olympic work", said Adam, a classicist who has designed a new 4000-home settlement in Wales with the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment.

Source: adapted from 'London 2012 park sparks architectural argument'
article by ROBERT BOOTH, *The Guardian*, 1 August 2011
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Text A continued
A Selection of UNESCO* World Heritage Sites in the UK

Site	Location	Built	Site added
City of Bath (Roman remains & Palladian architecture)	Bath, Somerset	1st–18th Century	1987
Derwent Valley Mills (Richard Arkwright; birthplace of factory system; workers' housing)	Cromford, Derbyshire	1771	2001
Edinburgh Old and New Towns (New Town: James Craig, Robert Adam, William Chambers et al.)	Edinburgh, Scotland	11th–19th Century	1995
Greenwich Maritime (Royal Observatory; Queen's House, Inigo Jones; Royal Naval College, Christopher Wren)	Greenwich, London	1635–1705	1997
Ironbridge Gorge (First iron bridge, designed T.F.Pritchard; factories, workers' housing)	Ironbridge, Shropshire	1774	1986
Kew, Royal Botanical Gardens (Designed Charles Bridgeman, William Kent, Capability Brown)	Kew, London	1759–1841	2003
Liverpool, Maritime Mercantile City (Slave trade port, innovative dock construction techniques)	Liverpool, Merseyside	18th–19th Century	2004
Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal (Thomas Telford; Ellesmere Canal over Dee valley)	Trevor, Wrexham, Wales	1795–1805	2009
Saltaire (Titus Salt, model village; Salts Mill)	Bradford, West Yorkshire	1853	2001
Westminster Palace (Westminster Hall; Gothic Revival Parliament, Charles Parry, W.A. Pugin)	Westminster, London	1397–1840	1987

*UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation

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Text B

Ending the Death Penalty

Soon after its creation in 1961, Amnesty International began sending appeals to prevent prisoners of conscience from being executed. In 1977, our campaign to abolish the death penalty began. Only 16 countries had abolished it then – now that number is 96.

In the 1970s, worldwide abolition of the death penalty looked a very long way off. Most countries still had it on their statute books, although a few reserved it for extraordinary crimes (in the UK, for instance, it was limited to wartime offences, treason and piracy). The US Supreme Court suspended use of the death penalty there in 1972, but it was reinstated in 1977.

Amnesty International initially centred concern on its use against political prisoners, with a call for the suspension and eventual ending of capital punishment for peacetime political offences.

Subsequently, Amnesty adopted the view that the death penalty was a violation of the right to freedom from torture. A conference convened in Stockholm in 1977 confirmed that global support for abolition existed and led to the start of Amnesty's campaign.

Progress was substantial. The number of states abolishing the death penalty grew steadily over the years. International and regional treaties and regulations were adopted to restrict its use or abolish it altogether. Protocols abolishing the death penalty have been added to the American and European regional human rights conventions.

In 2007, after persistent lobbying by Amnesty and its partners in the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, the UN General Assembly adopted a worldwide moratorium on executions, as a step towards ending the death penalty. The General Assembly agreed a moratorium again in 2008 and in 2010.

Today, almost all countries in Europe have abolished the death penalty, except Belarus; Latvia retains it for extraordinary crimes.

In South America, all countries except Guyana have abolished the death penalty, at least for ordinary crimes.

Sixteen African states have abolished the death penalty, and another 19 have refrained from executions for at least 10 years and are therefore considered abolitionist in practice.

Source: *Amnesty Magazine*, May/June 2011
published by Amnesty International UK
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Text C**House of Lords Reform**

(Chris Mullin was Labour MP for Sunderland South; he chaired the Home Affairs Select Committee, and was a minister in three departments in Tony Blair's government. These are two extracts from his diary.)

Wednesday, 9 January, 2002

To the meeting of the parliamentary party to hear Derry Irvine bravely attempt to sell his master plan for House of Lords reform. It was, he said, a compromise for today not a solution for all time. There is, he asserted, no scope for electing more than 120 peers. 'It would be an historic mistake if we allowed a largely elected Lords to take pre-eminence over the Commons.' To begin with he was heard respectfully, but it rapidly became clear that there was scarcely a person present who agreed with the official line – including Robin Cook, whose job it is to sell it in the Commons. (I noticed Robin screwing up his face as Derry listed him as one of those on his Cabinet subcommittee who were signed up to the official line.) There then followed a good-natured debate in which just about every one of the 20 or so contributors favoured a different solution.

Wednesday, 8 January, 2003

To the House in a snow storm. Brixton Road looked almost beautiful under a carpet of virgin snow.

A long talk in the Tea Room with Jack Cunningham, who has been charged with sorting through the various possibilities for Lords reform. His committee has just reported, coming up with a list of eight options ranging from wholly appointed to wholly elected, from which we will shortly be invited to choose. Jack said that, in his opinion, the Upper House should have strictly limited powers and be wholly appointed; an independent appointments commission should be set up whose remit would include ensuring that membership reflected gender, ethnicity, age, regionality. In addition, as is already more or less the case, certain public office holders – ex-Cabinet ministers, senior judges, churchmen, the chiefs of staff and the like – would automatically qualify for a place. Finally, a percentage of appointments would be reserved to the prime minister of the day to ensure that he had enough qualified ministers. Membership would not be for life, but for a set period – one or two terms of seven years? The more I think about it, the more sense it makes. After all, it is not as though the public are demanding any more elected politicians. On the contrary, most people think we have far too many already – and they may not be wrong about that.

Source: extracts from *A View from the Foothills*, CHRIS MULLIN,
first published by Profile Books Ltd, 2009

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Text D

Technological Fixes

It seems like ages, although it has been only a few short decades, since Alvin Weinberg* posed the question: 'In view of the simplicity of technological engineering and the complexity of social engineering, to what extent can social problems be circumvented by reducing them to technological problems? Can we identify Quick Technological Fixes for profound and almost infinitely complicated social problems?'

We may be amused, or perhaps shocked, by the naïveté of Weinberg's tragically optimistic question – especially when we discover his answer was a qualified 'yes', pointing to, of all things, the hydrogen bomb as a successful technological fix for the social problem of war.

The social problems we hope to resolve are as challenging as when Weinberg wrote. We hope trigger locks will reduce violent crime, cameras and facial recognition algorithms will ensure privacy and public safety, smart ID cards will quash terrorism, the V-chip will protect children from images of sex and violence.

This faith in technology as an inherently progressive force is a powerful Western *motif*. In a culture bound tightly to an economic and ideological commitment to a never-ending flow of new products, built-in obsolescence, and the false promises of advertising, the claim that technologies will fix what ails us is an all-too-familiar marketing ploy.

So, the printing-press would bring forth a new era of learning; electricity would end the tyranny of night time over human activities; radio would unite the nation into a single community; television would bring the world into our living rooms; weapons of mass destruction would banish war.

We expect technologies to intervene in precisely those aspects of society we find most troubling, those we have secretly hoped to resolve once and for all. It is a vision well suited to the Enlightenment idea that history itself is a tale of broad social progress. It is also well suited to the interests of capital, which must convince consumers that despite the familiarity of an old product, the new one is an improvement rather than a frivolous luxury.

Source: TARLETON GILLESPIE, *Wired Shut: Copyright and the Shape of Digital Culture*, excerpt,
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*US nuclear physicist (1915–2006)

Text E

A Home of One's Own

In Britain going into the credit crunch, the typical household owed more than 160 per cent of its average income – an alarmingly high figure, and one which reflects our high levels of mortgage debt and our general willingness to borrow, borrow, borrow in order to spend, spend, spend. In France the equivalent figure was 60 per cent. Individually and collectively, French households are much less stretched and much less at risk from a downturn. Economists attribute to this the fact that Germany and France were the first countries to emerge officially from the current recession.

Back in the days of my first mortgage, British loans were like European ones, in that the bank preferred not to lend you more than half, or at the most three-quarters, of the value of the property. They also preferred not to lend you more than two-and-a-half times your annual income; if two of you were buying a property together, you could stretch to three times your joint income. Back in those days it was very hard, verging on impossible, for people who do what I do now – write for a living – to get a mortgage, because we couldn't produce the relevant payslips and employment history.

All those rules have long since gone from the UK property market. A banker involved in picking over the corpse of Northern Rock told me that 'most of the loans were sound, but one or two of their books had blown up, and one of the worst of them was the 120 per cent mortgages.' I asked why anyone would want to borrow 120 per cent of the value of the thing they were buying, and he just shrugged. That product only makes sense if you are absolutely certain that the value of the property you're buying will go significantly up: and there is no reason to be absolutely certain of that. We have these crazily risky, heavily leveraged mortgages, and Europeans don't. Also, they borrow for shorter periods, a decade or twenty years at most, as opposed to the twenty-five or thirty years standard in Britain. It is also much harder for Europeans to remortgage. All these reasons, taken together, are why Europeans are more likely to rent than to own. In turn, it means that we are borrowing much more money, for longer, at much greater risk [...]

The investment products which allow people to own homes in Britain are different from elsewhere because they grew up to answer a need that is different: our obsessive need to own our own homes. Our risky, long-term, innovative (sometimes recklessly so) mortgages came into existence because the market set out to find ways to let us fulfil our heart's deepest desire, to own our own property. The appetite created the products, not the other way round.

Source: extract from *Whoops! Why everyone owes everyone and no one can pay*,
© JOHN LANCHESTER, Penguin Books 2010

END OF STIMULUS MATERIAL

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