

General Certificate of Education (International)  
Advanced Subsidiary Level

**Syllabus**

GENERAL PAPER 8004

For examination in June and November 2009

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# GENERAL PAPER

## GCE Advanced Subsidiary Syllabus 8004

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### Notes

Candidates for the *General Paper* **MUST** enter as follows:

- (a) Candidates at **Caribbean** Centres must enter for **Subject 8004**;
- (b) Candidates in **Mauritius** must enter for **Subject 8009**
- (c) Candidates at **all other** Centres must enter for **either Subject 8001 or 8004**.

### Exclusions

This syllabus must not be offered in the same session with any of the following syllabuses:

- 8001 General Paper
- 8005 General Paper (Singapore)
- 8009 General Paper (Mauritius)



## INTRODUCTION

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The AS General Paper is multi-disciplinary, its subject matter drawn from across the curriculum. The syllabus encourages in candidates the ability to make cross-curricular links; to develop a maturity of thought appropriate to students at this level; and to achieve an understanding and usage of the English language which enables them to express arguments, ideas and opinions in a reflective and academic manner.

An awareness of the wider implications of particular issues will enhance the quality of the candidate's response to the questions set. However, the AS General Paper is not a test of general knowledge. The key objective must be for the candidate to convey information or opinion in a way that is thoughtful, perceptive and immediately intelligible to the reader.

## AIMS

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The aims of the AS General Paper are to:

- promote the skills of rational thought, persuasion, analysis, interpretation and evaluation;
- encourage candidates to explore and appraise social, cultural, economic, philosophical, scientific and technological issues;
- promote maturity of thought and clarity of expression;
- promote understanding and appreciation of individual, societal and cultural diversity;
- encourage independent, critical, reading.

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

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The Assessment Objectives relate to the skills of  
 knowledge  
 understanding  
 analysis  
 application  
 communication  
 evaluation.

In order to meet the requirements of the AS General Paper, candidates will be expected to demonstrate:

- knowledge and understanding in relation to the topic areas identified in the syllabus;
- knowledge of methods and techniques appropriate to a specific task;
- the ability to identify, select and interpret, through reasoned consideration, material (including knowledge) appropriate to a specific task;
- the ability to apply knowledge, understanding and analysis in relation to a specific task (e.g. in drawing inferences, providing explanations, constructing and developing arguments, understanding the implications of a suggested course of action or conclusion, etc);
- the ability to exercise evaluation and discrimination in assessing evidence, ideas and opinions in order to formulate a supported conclusion;
- the ability to communicate information, ideas and opinions in a clear, concise, logical and appropriate manner.

## **GCE (AS) Subject 8004 (June and November)**

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One 2-hour question paper will be set. It is intended primarily to be a test of the extent to which the candidate has achieved a maturity of thought and expression appropriate to sixth-form students in their second year, rather than a test of general knowledge. Questions will be general in nature, demanding discussion and evaluation. Response should normally be in the region of 500 – 600 words. In awarding marks, Examiners will consider the ability of candidates (a) to use their specialised knowledge to answer questions on the broad aspects of school subjects, (b) to discuss general topics which are not directly related to school subjects, and (c) to use the English language.

The question paper will be divided into three sections with five questions in each. Candidates will be required to answer **two** questions. These must be taken from two different sections. Questions will not necessarily be set on every topic.

It is important to note that the topic areas listed below are cross-curricular and comprehensive; some will appear in more than one section. Teachers should be aware that they do not need to cover all the topic areas in teaching the course. Candidates are expected to be able to draw upon knowledge and understanding gained in relation to other subjects which they have studied. The possible areas for consideration (in italics below) are **suggestions only**. They are intended to provide assistance to teachers in devising and planning the course.

Section 1: Historical, social, economic, political and philosophical topics.

*Possible areas for consideration:*

*the role of history and war; terrorism;  
the role of the individual in society – the family, marriage, peer pressure, class;  
cultural changes – youth and drug culture;  
education and welfare;  
sport, leisure, international competition;  
wealth; changes in work practice;  
the importance and impact of tourism on a country – implications for the economy, employment;  
public transport, environmental concerns;  
aid provision;  
the State and its institutions;  
development of State, democracy post imperialism, nationalism;  
minority groups, pressure groups;  
freedom of speech, action, thought;  
judiciary;  
matters of conscience, faith, tolerance, equality.*

Section 2: Science, including its history, philosophy, general principles and applications; geographical and mathematical topics.

*Possible areas for consideration:*

*medical dilemmas and issues of research and ethics; concept of progress in science;  
drug manufacture and provision;  
diet, health education;  
old and new industries;  
spin-offs from space industry; weaponry;  
information and communications technology; the Internet;  
environmental concerns; renewable energy resources; climate change;  
migration; population dynamics;  
feeding the global population; farming techniques for the twenty-first century;  
public transport and travel;  
the uses and applications of mathematics in everyday life.*

Section 3: Literature and language, arts and crafts.

*Possible issues for consideration:*

*literature – biography, diary, science fiction;*

*language – heritage, tradition, dialect;*

*the global media – tv, radio, satellite; influence and controls; effects on lifestyle, culture and habits;*

*cultural dilution and diversification; advertising; role models;*

*ensorship; privacy; the right to know; freedom of the press, etc. uses and abuses;*

*traditional arts and crafts; creativity; national heritage/preservation; effects of tourism;*

*architecture; painting; fashion; photography; sculpture; music; heritage; etc.*

# LEVEL DESCRIPTORS FOR ESSAY MARKING

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## Use of English

- Level 4** Paragraphs are used consistently and effectively and generally enhance the understanding of the text;  
appropriate tone and fluency throughout;  
few errors;  
evidence of extensive vocabulary;  
sound sentence structure and clear linkage.
- Level 3** Paragraphs are well arranged;  
appropriate tone and fluency, some lapses possible;  
occasionally errors detract from a clear understanding of the text;  
vocabulary is wide ranging;  
sentence structure possibly disjointed or lacking smooth linkage.
- Level 2** Paragraphs may be disorganised;  
fluency may break down and tone could be variable;  
expression mainly good enough for meaning to be clear, but mechanical errors present;  
limited vocabulary;  
sentence structure and linkage may be haphazard.
- Level 1** Lack of paragraphs possible;  
extensive mechanical errors and poor vocabulary may make understanding difficult;  
breakdown in sentence structure likely;  
high frequency of all types of error, some sections may ramble and not make sense.

## Content

- Level 5** A range of material which is relevant, interesting and thoughtfully presented;  
clear evidence of perceptive/original thought and/or opinion;  
coherent arguments demonstrating balance, sensitivity and awareness;  
well illustrated, and wide ranging discussions are well structured.
- Level 4** A range of relevant material which shows some perception/originality;  
a clear argument is offered which may not be fully developed;  
an attempt at balance;  
illustrations included, structure basically sound.
- Level 3** A range of material is presented which may include some irrelevance or digression;  
solid information offered, perhaps lacking perception/originality;  
an attempt to construct an argument;  
some illustrations, the views expressed and the conclusion may be simplistic or lack balance.
- Level 2** A range of material which may lack depth or relevance;  
no perception/originality of thought and few relevant illustrations;  
a lack of coherent understanding;  
an attempt to construct an argument and structure the essay may be evident.
- Level 1** An inadequate range of material which lacks perception/originality, illustration and relevance;  
no obvious understanding;  
poor structure, digression, and evidence of confusion.