

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE Global Development 6GL01
Understanding Global Development

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1 a i

Resource-based questions prompt students to take as much as they can from the material offered. In this case the role of the elite was obvious as was, although belatedly, the role of multinationals. Most got the first but some missed the second.

1 a ii

Impacts can be both positive and negative and, of course, they fall unequally with some groups benefiting whilst others do not. Students who recognised this could set up a matrix with several different possible combinations. It was also possible to pick up on the resource which set up at least one possible response. There were many well informed responses that balanced benefits in terms of employment with costs that were often environmental but, in the best answers, the environmental impact was translated into economic costs as in 'pollution from factories can damage health and cost money in lost production'.

1 b i

There were some strong answers to this question but not always balanced; with education featuring more strongly than health. The latter was too often treated tautologically as in 'a healthy population isn't ill and so doesn't cost so much' but education was usually treated with more profundity as in 'an educated population widens the skill base for the population and provides more opportunities for businesses'. Some used theory such as modernisation theory to help them address the relationship; for example 'if institutions such as schools and universities are created then the economy will be stimulated by new ideas which will develop new technologies'.

1 b ii

This produced a range of responses but many were let down by a lack of supportive case study support with no obvious location on view despite the clear instruction to do so in the question. The most popular choice of technological stimulus to economic growth was the development of computers and the internet but only rarely was that rooted in an identifiable location, 'the development of computers and the growth of IT companies in Silicon Valley in California has been very important to the US economy'. Science, at least pure research science, was rarely addressed with 'the Cern laboratory may well lead to major breakthroughs creating jobs globally but largely in the developed world' a rare exception, albeit only loosely located. In general terms technology was much stronger than science although, in truth, most students didn't distinguish. Historical examples could work very well indeed as in 'scientific breakthroughs in the UK over steam power were quickly turned into technological changes with steam engines used to fuel industrial growth in many parts of the UK'.

2 a i

As with 1a this was resource-based, with plenty of ideas available in the extract. Too many students lost marks by making simple statements with no supporting detail for the second mark making it clear what was challenging about the position of African women.

2 a ii

For the most part students dealt with culture and religion as though they were inseparable. This was an obvious missed opportunity in a four mark question which should prompt two basic ideas with an extension on both. Some candidates honed in on the cultural points made in the resource so could comment on, 'African women are treated as second-class citizens and are rarely able to own land which weakens their economic position', whereas many more were able to make a comment about the impact of religion as in 'In many religions women are taught to be obedient to men – this is true in some interpretations of both Christianity and Islam'. Putting these together would produce a 4 mark answer.

2 b i

These were well answered although federal government caused a few more problems than parliamentary government. The latter could produce unhelpful tautologies such as 'Parliamentary government is government by parliaments' but most grasped the general idea that it was an elected body in a democratic society. Federalism was often seen to be 'local' in some way but without necessarily being a sub-set of democracy.

2 b ii

This produced very few strong answers. Many seem confused about the idea that there was any potential relationship at all despite the very clear specification requirement to assess the role of politics. The few stronger answers knew something about corruption indices and the possible impact of corruption on economic development. The best answers recognised that, in theory, democratic societies associated with capitalism tend to promote economic development with a wider franchise 'promoting greater economic development because people need to be kept happy if they are to vote for a governing party'.

3 a

This question was well answered with most students managing at least two different measures. The most popular was the Human Development Index but others also featured including the Happy Planet Index. The most obvious weakness in the responses was the lack of detail in description with simple statements of what the measures were with no further information about how they were calculated. Some students made the mistake of explaining why certain indicators were chosen which could not be credited in a 'describe' question.

3b

There was evidence of 'fatigue' with both this question and its alternative 4b in that many students wrote relatively little here. However there wasn't much evidence of lack of time in terms of unfinished or visibly rushed answers but a lack of understanding quite what to 'do' with the title. Many not so much answered the question but simply presented some information about development in general. It is obviously important to instruct students not only how to deconstruct essay titles but also how to present an essay with an introduction, a middle and a conclusion. Content was often very thin with far too many obvious insecurities over dependency theory – 'dependency theories shows how dependent some countries are' to make much impression on this contentious title. The better responses were able to extend beyond truisms to offer some evidence about the (widening) development gap and its possible causes including the relationship between core countries and the periphery. A few identified the role of local elites in maintaining this very uneven relationship but in all cases evidence was rather thin with very little obvious case study information on show.

4a

There were several answers which confused supranational with national but most had a pretty clear idea what these organisations were and could produce a decent list that featured the UN, the WTO, The IMF and a number of others. Unfortunately too many stopped at that point, missing the word 'role' in the question altogether. Those who did 'see' the focus of the question struggled to say much more than 'they oversee the global economy' with little detail of what this might amount to.

4b

The general standard of responses was low, with quite a number writing a good deal without actually engaging with the title. Lack of preparation began with insecurity over what exactly the Millennium Development Goals actually were/are. Thus a significant minority wrote in wholly generic terms about the goals with, as a consequence, an obvious lack of clarity about the possible reasons for this. Those who could pick apart at least some of the goals largely attributed relative lack of success to a lack of effort on the part of the least developed countries and said little or nothing about the role of supranational institutions in promoting change. Essays were not always constructed with care: lacking a clear opening statement, coherent paragraph structure in which a point was made, exemplified and commented upon and, and unfortunately in many cases there was no meaningful conclusion. Conclusions should express a view and offer candidates the opportunity to do so. The essay title prompted this explicitly by asking students to consider at least one other point of view in their answer; an instruction that many did not follow and this was reflected in the responses.

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