

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

Paper 9239/02
Paper 2

Key messages

- It is essential that both teachers and candidates are familiar with and fully understand the assessment criteria and syllabus aims.
- The choice of essay question must provide opportunities to develop globally contrasting perspectives.
- Sources selected should offer firmly supported judgements or conclusions based on some combination of evidence, reason, argument, experience, authority and opinion.

General comments

The work seen by Examiners in this series was of very variable quality, with a minority of candidates achieving at higher levels, whilst a significant number struggled to reach Level 3. There are indications that some centres have not fully embraced a skills-based approach; specialist subject knowledge is elevated at the expense of deconstruction and reconstruction. This is particularly true when essays submitted appear to have been written for an alternative syllabus. Support and training materials are available to assist with the development of this approach which, to some, may be quite new.

However, low achievement frequently results from a poor choice of essay title or question. For instance, the question, "How is global warming/climate change a threat to future generations?", clearly implies that they are a threat and there follows a purely descriptive account of those threats, without any opportunity to generate a counter argument constituting a contrasting perspective. Much the same applies to the question "What type of voting system ensures a more representative democracy?". The choice of title is a critical issue for the candidate and a vital area of support and guidance for the teacher.

Centres should also consider an approach in which many or all candidates frame questions around a single topic or a limited range of topics, such as the death penalty or artificial intelligence. This approach is quite acceptable as long as essay titles are not replicated, which would contravene syllabus guidelines. It is noticeable that essay content tends to embrace relatively narrow and standardized approaches, suggesting a lack of engagement in some cases. Some of the strongest essays emerge when candidates have formulated an original title which is quite different to any other from that centre, suggesting that candidates have chosen to investigate an area which they find particularly interesting. Examples include, "Should free speech on social media be limited?", and, "Can terrorism ever be justified?".

As with any academic essay, planning is key to success and only a minority of submissions displayed significant deficiencies in this respect. Most candidates utilised the permissible word length very well. However, a significant number fell some way short of the word length and struggled to address all assessment criteria adequately. Essays were, generally, well structured and followed accepted conventions, making them easy to read and follow. Highly successful candidates displayed a particularly good level of planning when striking the necessary balance between the presentation of evidence, analysis, synthesis and evaluation in order to address all assessment criteria.

The demands of the assessment criteria (seven in total, each carrying equal weight) are quite rigorous and perhaps many candidates' essays do not fully address all criteria, thus limiting marks. On the whole, illuminating introductions were followed by the presentation of evidence and arguments from multiple sources. Evidence and arguments were generally understood to a good degree, as demonstrated by analysis, but evaluated with very mixed results. Whilst much of this work was strong, all too often little room was left for synthesis into coherent arguments constituting perspectives which should then have been subjected to analysis and evaluation. Many essays concluded with substantial and appropriate discussions of the evidence and arguments presented. However, many essays did not do justice to the evidence and arguments presented and concluded with a brief paragraph which often resulted from reaching the permitted word length. Again, the importance of a high level of planning cannot be over-emphasised.

The strongest essays proceeded from a well-considered introduction and clearly many candidates understood the importance of engaging the reader from the outset. Preliminary discussion of the issue in the introduction regularly led to the emergence of globally contrasting perspectives being discussed, although these perspectives were not always clearly delineated. A rather smaller number also offered their personal standpoint with reasoning, which could be used to good effect when reflecting in the conclusion, as there is a clear starting point for reference.

Several candidates included charts or diagrams in their essays. Whilst this is quite acceptable, candidates should carefully consider the value of including such material. It was often the case that candidates did not always make useful points from the material and the net effect was that the flow of the essay was unnecessarily disrupted. The inclusion of data is helpful, but candidates should consider the value of reporting such information as an integral part of the ongoing text.

Comments on assessment criteria

The first criterion focuses on communication skills. There was widespread appreciation of coherent essay structure, utilising appropriate and clear use of language. Better essays displayed a wide range of vocabulary, with the use of linking devices aiding fluency and few errors resulting from careful proofreading. Additionally, key terms were defined and concepts simplified. Bibliographies were near-universal and accurate citations showed an improvement. Several centres encouraged their candidates to use footnotes which were very effective. However, some candidates then went on to use these footnotes to add additional material, including comments relating to provenance. Candidates should not use the footnote section for any additional material as this will not be included in the word count, nor given any credit. Some discrepancies between citations and bibliography were noted, candidates should be reminded to check that sources listed in the bibliography and those cited within the essay match.

The next two criteria consider the sources used. Criterion B examines the quality of source selection. A significant minority of essays were reliant on fact-based sources, which were descriptive and devoid of argument. Several essays, including some which were particularly well formulated, were entirely reliant on Western sources, limiting them to Level 3 for this criterion. Additionally, by using limited sources it can then be difficult to develop perspectives with global content.

Criterion C concerns the treatment of sources in terms of analysis and evaluation and should be considered as containing two distinct elements, both of which require fulfilment for high achievement. A key issue here (and linking to the previous criterion) is one of quantity or quality. In order to achieve well for criterion B, sources should be detailed or full and detailed. In order to achieve well for criterion C, analysis should show a very good or full understanding and critical evaluation should be undertaken across a range of criteria. It is difficult to see how any of the above can be achieved with a large number of sources. The most successful essays tend to be limited to a small number. Successful candidates used relatively brief, yet telling, quotations from sources followed by critical analysis and few candidates achieved less than Level 3. The outcomes for evaluation were very mixed: a majority of candidates did not undertake any meaningful evaluation but merely commented on the author's credentials, without considering the content of the source. Occasionally, candidates pursued a critical engagement, showing some originality of thought, as in this example evaluating Al Gore's contribution to the climate change debate:

"It must be mentioned that while he spends extensive time raising awareness on the issue, he lacks a scientific background with no qualifications in environmental or climate science. However, the extent to which this influences his perspective is little, as he bases his beliefs on well-supported scientific research".

The next three criteria assess the perspectives. Criterion D examines a candidate's capacity to present perspectives in a balanced way, as well as accepting or understanding an opposing view and especially one they do not agree with. This does not necessarily need to be overtly stated as an essay which gives equal room and treatment to contrasting perspectives is indicative of a measure of empathy. However this balance, coupled with a clear appreciation of opposing views, will raise the level of achievement. One candidate researching into whether or not secular governments better guarantee societal progress wrote:

"This research has allowed me to understand that it may be too ideal to state that secular governments allow societies to progress throughout the world, as in some places secularism has led to conflict, anomy and radicalism. One answer cannot be applied to all countries because many factors such as the hold of religion, culture and development affect the possibility of secularism leading to progress".

The statement clearly indicates a balanced approach which allows some criticism and questioning of the favoured perspective.

Criterion E is a straightforward assessment of the quality of the perspectives developed and is largely determined by the arguments derived from source material. The majority of candidates had little difficulty in achieving Level 3 by presenting globally contrasting perspectives. However, a minority did not include a global dimension, whilst a smaller number of essays had no contrast as a consequence of generating a single or vague perspective. Two issues in particular emerged in relation to this problem. Firstly, some candidates believed that by classifying the arguments presented as emanating from differing perspectives, such as political and social, then they were contrasting. In fact, whilst these arguments could be correctly viewed as emanating from differing lenses, the thrust and conclusions of the arguments did not contrast. Secondly, there were candidates who presented an issue as a problem, as in the case of automation causing unemployment. Their arguments amounted to a coherent perspective but the contrasting perspective, that automation did not cause this problem, was absent. In its place, the candidate offered some solutions to, or mitigation of, the problem. Whilst this may reasonably be considered a perspective, it is complementary and not contrasting. As noted for criterion C, candidates are required to present a sufficient amount of evidence and argument to reach Level 4, where perspectives must be detailed, and a range of arguments on each side of the debate is required if they are to be considered 'full' at Level 5.

Criterion F concerns the treatment of perspectives in terms of analysis and evaluation. This is a key area for development across the vast majority of centres, as candidates rarely synthesise the arguments derived from sources into clearly delineated, coherent perspectives which are then open to both analysis and evaluation. A small minority of candidates did achieve this to a high standard. Others did bring arguments together and offered a brief analysis or comparative evaluation or both. A key aim of the syllabus is the development of perspectives, which requires synthesis, analysis and evaluation.

Criterion G assesses the quality of the conclusion. Whilst a supported and balanced conclusion is required, candidates are also assessed on their capacity for reflection which underlines the importance of stating the personal standpoint as a reference point. Strong answers gave substantial or insightful reflection, involving a degree of critical and creative thinking. The final element requiring candidates to make suggestions for further research was commonly overlooked altogether and reduced candidates' marks. Successful candidates accept that their research is limited or incomplete and go on to consider how they may further their own understanding, as well as indicate what research would address this. The following is a good example of reflective thinking:

"This research has expanded my understanding of how narratives are imbued into social structures. They affect individual and communal lives. One great change in my perspective has been the development of the understanding that exclusion is not inevitable. Holistic historical accounts can change narratives and processes. Further research should be done into the possibility of creating a cohesive history, and planning done into how that history must be imparted to the general public, to complement measures being taken to reduce ethnic gaps in standards of living. This is so that all citizens believe themselves equal citizens of nation, country and the world".

Not only does the candidate provide a thoughtful suggestion for further research but also outlines what learning has taken place, whilst clearly illustrating the impact of the research on the personal standpoint.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

Paper 9239/03
Paper 3

Key messages

- Candidates who define an issue rooted in their own context or experience tend to be more engaged with this assessment. Where perspectives are defined and conceptualised, they are easier to differentiate from others in the team.
- Candidates should consider how they are signposting each section of their presentation for the audience.
- It is important to leave sufficient time in the presentation for a developed conclusion. Presentations need to be kept within the 8-minute limit.
- The reflective paper is designed to allow candidates to evaluate, rather than just narrate, their experiences.

General comments

Candidates continue to produce an interesting and engaged variety of work. However as in past sessions, the comments in this report are organised by the areas assessed in the presentation, as well as the reflective paper.

Individual Presentation

Definition of the Issue

Candidates who clearly engaged with a specific issue tended to produce more effective presentations. They achieved this most effectively by selecting an issue that was of pressing contemporary or personal relevance to them and their team, and could contextualise its significance more clearly. This also tended to motivate teams to conduct detailed and varied research. Candidates who had a clear stance at the outset also found it easier to differentiate their own point of view from alternative team or research perspectives. Successful learners continue to take the opportunity to define and explain their issue at the outset. Identification of a pressing issue facilitates clarity of definition.

Effective issues included the support of society for feminist movements like “Ni Una Menos”, which was local to the candidates’ own national context. Here this issue was whether or not it is acceptable to use direct action (that causes offence and sometimes involves the use of violence) as a means of addressing gender inequality. The successful definition of the issue helped the candidates in turn to develop clear, differentiated perspectives. This was also a successful issue because the candidates were able to identify gender inequality as a global issue, which then manifested itself in their local context. Another successful issue was peat forest fires in Indonesia. Here again the candidates successfully identified a pressing local issue: deforestation exposing combustible peat. They outlined the regional implications: schools in Singapore are forced to close. They also explained clearly how the local problem has global implications: peat forest fires mean that Indonesia’s carbon emissions are comparable with those of the USA, despite its much smaller size. The identification of a pressing local problem helped the candidates to differentiate their perspectives which centred on the efficacy of contrasting solutions to the problem.

Issues phrased as interrogatives in general are less successful than declaratives, or statements. One team’s question – ‘What is the purpose and concern of advertising?’ – tended to be asked for information, rather than outlining a problem, thus making it harder for each presentation to be effectively focused. Another issue – ‘technology and culture’ did not define a problem: consequently perspectives, structure and solutions were harder to outline.

Differentiation of Perspectives

Effective submissions again clearly differentiated the learner's own perspective from those of others in the presentation. These were often defined as economic, social, cultural or political which can work well as they allow candidates to conceptualise and differentiate their approach. There were also successful examples of candidates whose solutions were sufficiently focused to form perspectives in themselves. Different solutions to peat forest fires fitted into this category, as did broader but still sufficiently focused perspectives on solutions, for example solving the problem of poverty in Uganda by overhauling the education system ('education' being the perspective).

Structure of argument

A variety of techniques are available to successful presentations for signposting their structure and content within the 8-minute limit. A common successful technique is initially outlining the local problem before locating it in its global context. This kind of analysis enables candidates to structure an argument around the efficacy of a proposed solution. Comparative analysis, which focused on the extent to which solutions that have been tried elsewhere are applicable in the local context, can signpost structure and content effectively. Analysis structured in this way also serves to enable candidates to demonstrate not only that their solution is based on the evidence presented, but also that it is effective in addressing the local problem.

Conclusion

The best solutions continue to be given substantial space for development within the presentation as a whole. Where candidates take the opportunity to define and explain their issue succinctly, with clarity at the outset, space for development within the presentation as a whole is opened up. Less successful presentations – which lacked clarity as a result of being vague about what the problem was that they were seeking to address – frequently left the solution to the problem until the final few seconds of the presentation. In some cases, the solution was absent because no problem had been identified.

Presentational Skills

There was again a good range of presentational techniques, ranging from intonation and gesture to physical objects and audio-visual materials designed to precisely support the argument being made. Materials produced by the candidate themselves are always better than those found elsewhere. Some candidates play clips sourced from YouTube, often lasting several minutes which reduces the scope they have to demonstrate their own achievement. There were an increasing number of candidates who produced effective and creative presentations through careful consideration of the design of their PowerPoint slides, and linking images precisely to the content of what they were saying. One crucial aspect of presentational control is to ensure that presentations are kept within the 8-minute limit. If they go beyond this, the conclusion is often lost and the mark for the presentation as a whole is compromised as a result.

Reflective Paper

Successful candidates continue to recognise that the purpose of the Reflective Paper is to evaluate, not just describe, the learner's experiences. Sometimes reflecting on the group solution provides candidates with a means of evaluating their own practice in working with others to identify a problem and explore possible solutions. Frequently, candidates simply describe this aspect of the process. Given the word length, this can make it harder for candidates to demonstrate their achievement.

There was an increase in the number of candidates able to reflect fully on how their personal standpoint (and sometimes also scope for future research) had been affected by alternative team and research perspectives. Such examples were invariably characterised by clarity in charting their original position, and identifying what perspective(s) had either influenced a shift in, or served to reinforce, their original position.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

Paper 9239/04
Paper 4

Key messages

- See the Cambridge Research Report as a development of previous Global Perspectives skill developments.
- Make sure that critical thinking techniques in the broadest sense are used to assess evidence.
- Ensure that reflection is appropriate to A level and is based on consideration of the process and the evidence.
- Outline Proposal Forms (OPF) without any indication of specific evidence will not be approved, and questions with little opportunity for debate or discussion are not suitable.
- A separate section headed 'Reflection' would be useful to ensure candidates address this requirement as well as separate reflection from their actual conclusions.

General comments

There were many interesting and worthwhile reports. Some reports did not follow on from, or develop, the skills built up in the first three elements of the Global Perspectives course. Some reports seemed more like essays in their own right and did not always show the key skills of analysis and evaluation of a range of evidence. Some answers did not demonstrate an awareness of the need to establish conflicting perspectives, and instead just offered description and explanation about the chosen title. Evidence in some cases was simply used to impact information or to support an argument and was taken at face value. However, one of the features of the Global Perspectives syllabus is to encourage a critical outlook in which sources and interpretations are subjected to scrutiny and claims are tested by thinking critically. When this was done, results were often impressive, with a wide range of evidence scrutinised in order to offer a supported judgement. When the focus seemed more on writing about the chosen topic, rather than using it to contextualise a demonstration of key skills, the results were limited in terms of the marking criteria.

Part of the solution does lie in preparing for the research and the report by establishing in the Outline Proposal Form the following:

- an outline of the essential debate;
- the perspectives to be considered;
- the approach to be taken;
- and the evidence to be assessed for the different views.

It is a requirement that an OPF should be submitted and it is only sensible that advice is considered before research begins in earnest.

It is unhelpful to submit only a title with a brief indication of the discussion, often doing little more than amplifying or even just paraphrasing the question and showing a few sources with little indication of what perspective they support. The initial idea should be developed and there should be a preliminary investigation into its implications and what evidence is available which would allow discussion of the issues it raises. This is part of the research process which should be assessed and these initial ideas and the initial planning and search for possible resources should be included in the log.

Without seeing an explanation of the issues raised and what the different perspectives are going to be and without seeing that some research has been done to establish that evidence available can support a sustained discussion, there is no real point in submitting the OPF. Forms without any indication of specific evidence will not be approved. Questions with little opportunity for debate or discussion are not suitable. Also questions do have to lead to a sustained discussion and should open up enough issues for this substantial report to be sustained.

Cambridge can be helpful in suggesting amendments to questions to allow the formulation to match what is in the proposal or to lead to an open discussion. However, with very limited information about how candidates see the possible debate it is more difficult to give helpful advice. The better the preparation and the clearer the idea of the nature of the discussion given in the proposal, the easier it is for Cambridge to judge whether this is a viable topic and title. Cambridge can also give advice on modification and development for candidates to consider. The OPF should only be submitted after the candidate's thinking about the whole research plan has progressed. It should not be a brief outline of first thoughts. Conversely, overlong OPFs can also be unhelpful as the whole report may be sketched out before any serious research has been done. Candidates should be open minded enough to allow research to modify or challenge their first thoughts.

The result of inadequate preparation is sometimes revealed by reports that lack enough real discussion and have a somewhat restricted range of sources. Perspectives in weaker answers were not developed and were sometimes based on rather 'everyday' observations not the critical use of a range of evidence. When preparation has been stronger, as is shown in the logs, and there has been sustained thought about the implications of the question and about what different arguments there are, results have been much better.

AO1 Research

Comments were generally helpful from centres, but it should be remembered that comments should be on process rather than product. The quality of the report itself should be commented on in other sections. Here marks should be awarded for developing the question and for research skills. The teacher Record Form is used to comment on the approach taken and the candidate's management of the process. This should be consistent with the candidate's log entries, hence the importance of including the log as an integral part of the evidence for marks awarded.

AO1 Analysis

This assessment objective involves relating the evidence and arguments to the issue in the question. In general candidates worked hard to find a range of sources and they were generally relevant. However, it is important that centres do indicate when there is only limited evidence or when the evidence is irrelevant or tangential to the question. Also for higher-level marks there should be clear and supported perspectives and not just an explanation of a particular point of view. Limited evidence should not be over-credited

AO1 Evaluation

The evaluation element is the area where there is most disagreement between Moderator marks and those given by centres. It is very helpful to see in marginal comments where there has been evidence of evaluation and how well it is supported by critical analysis or by supporting evidence. There were cases where centre annotation referred to 'evaluation' where there was merely explanation. Evaluation requires clear judgement and not just the use of evidence to support an argument or to impart information. Despite sustained advice to the contrary there was a substantial amount of 'evaluation' which focused on the author's status and experience, rather than their arguments and the basis of the views held. Ad hominem evaluation should not be over-credited and nor should basic comparison. Two sources may agree but this alone does not make them credible evidence. Juxtaposing different views or perspectives without a clear judgement was sometimes given too much credit.

AO2 Reflection

Inexplicably this was sometimes completely omitted as a section, even though, as indicated above, this is a vital part of research and an essential skill. Instead of reflecting on the way the investigation was approached and the evidence it used, too often candidates were over general or personal. The key test is whether the reflection is on research in general, which could just as easily have been applied to an Economic project or a piece of History coursework, or whether the reflection relates to the specific question and the specific approaches and evidence chosen to engage with it.

AO3 Communication

It is important that the centre explains how well the final interview showed the candidate's communication skills. In general this was done well but in some cases the analysis was quite limited and generalised. While the written accuracy was often impressive, there was some tendency to look at absence of error rather than on the more demanding task of the effectiveness of communication in developing an argument.

Though it is easy for an interesting topic to take over, it is important for candidates to be aware of the essential marking criteria and to be more conscious of the skills which they are using and how they should be at a higher level than during the first part of the qualification. While there were perceptive and, thorough surveys of often demanding topics which augured well for future study, there was some tendency for evaluative skills not to be sufficiently developed and for there to be insufficient awareness of the whole process from initial idea to the conclusion of a substantial piece of analytical and critical writing. It is the approach taken and the extent to which the research and writing shows understanding of critical analysis that is being assessed, not scientific, historical, philosophical knowledge as such.

Centres are reminded that there is a range of support material available online from Cambridge International Assessment. Centres are thanked for their hard work in preparing candidates, monitoring process and in assessing the results. For larger centres with different reaching groups, the importance of standardising marking cannot be overstated and it was good to see evidence of careful internal moderation.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

Paper 9239/11
Paper 11

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they read the paper carefully, looking at the key words, in order to answer the questions set. This was particularly relevant in **Question 2** where many candidates evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the argument rather than the evidence itself, as required in the question.
- Candidates should avoid formulaic approaches to a question. Candidates should read and evaluate the documents carefully rather than make assumptions based on preconceived ideas about what makes a good argument. Candidates are required to engage critically with the documents, rather than make generalised comments that could apply to any document.
- The length of each answer should reflect the number of marks available. Many candidates wrote overly long answers to **Questions 1** and **2**, leaving insufficient time for the demands of **Question 3** which was worth almost half of the total available marks for this paper.
- The key skill, particularly in **Question 3**, was that of comparative evaluation supported by precise references to the documents in relation to the question set.
- Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents. Equally, copying sections from the documents, without any relevant supporting comment, except when asked to identify in **Question 1(a)** and part of **1(b)**, will not gain credit.

General comments

There was little evidence of candidates misunderstanding the documents and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. However many candidates did not pay careful enough attention to the command words in the questions and this limited the level they achieved. This was particularly true in **Question 2** where many candidates evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the argument rather than the evidence.

It was encouraging to see some candidates applying a higher-level skill by comparing the arguments put forward in the documents in **Question 3** and coming to a judgement. However, many candidates simply compared content or repeated, without evaluation, the arguments of the authors. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning for the higher mark questions and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

There were few candidates who ran out of time. However, the allocation of time relative to the number of marks available is an important issue. Many candidates spent too much time on **Question 1(a)** and **1(b)** where a few lines would have been sufficient. This had a detrimental impact on the amount of time spent, particularly on **Question 3** that was worth nearly half of the total marks. As a result, some answers to **Question 3** were not fully developed or supported by precise references to the documents.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content in order to evaluate the sources, perspectives and arguments to reach an overall judgment regarding which, if any, was stronger. Candidates should provide brief and relevant references from the documents to support their evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised, containing only assertions or claims. They should also explain what impact this has on the argument or chosen evidence, which goes beyond a generic statement like “weakens/strengthens”. They need to explain how the assessment does this.

Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents and evaluated their significance. This demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being presented. Stronger responses also reached a supported judgment of the relative strength of the two documents either as a conclusion, or throughout the answer. Weaker responses simply compared the content of the two documents.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Only **brief** statements were required. For ‘identify’ questions, information could be copied directly from the text. The key words were “countries” and “polluted rivers”. Candidates should be encouraged to carefully read the document to aid their understanding. They clearly referenced rivers in China and India but this was not the case for Nepal and Pakistan, where reference to water supply was more generic. Mexico City is not a country. Most candidates correctly identified India and China.
- (b) (i) This was also an “identify” question, the following two simple statements were required: “...confuse increased water supply with clean, safe drinking water” and “...they confuse sanitation with wastewater management”. In this part there is no requirement to explain these points. Most candidates correctly identified these points.
- (ii) To explain one of the two confusions identified in **1(b)(i)** most candidates chose sanitation and wastewater. Explanation requires the candidate to show a clear understanding of the authors’ meaning by using their own words and interpretation, or paraphrasing the words of the authors. Simply copying verbatim from the document is not considered to be explanation. Candidates could gain one mark for putting the idea in context and the other for the consequences for, or impact on, people.

An example of a 2 mark answer: (demonstrating context and impact)

‘90 per cent of households in Delhi have indoor toilets so the authors are saying that India has mostly adequate, good sanitation. However, they do not manage the water correctly since the untreated wastewater goes into the River Yamuna which they then consume water from.’

An example of a 1 mark answer: (demonstrating context only)

‘Countries like Mexico have high levels of sanitation but dump their wastewater into the Mezquital Valley where the water is used to water crops, meaning that Mexico can have advanced sanitation but poor waste water management.’

An example of a 0 mark answer: (undeveloped from authors’ words)

‘...where they have adequate sanitation, but they also have wastewater being emptied into the Yamuna River which is a source of drinking water.’

Question 2

The candidates achieving the highest marks addressed strengths and weaknesses of the evidence and gave a judgment on its convincing nature. However, many candidates evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments, rather than the evidence used. Although these candidates used some evidence in their answer, frequently the emphasis of the answer was on the argument and consequently higher-level marks could not be achieved.

For some candidates there appeared to be an expectation that the question would ask for the strengths and weaknesses of the argument so their responses consequently adopted a formulaic approach, assessing the argument rather than engaging with the question. These responses provided explanations such as: the credibility of the author, the range of arguments and the use of language, which were erroneously used in this context. Many candidates were able to identify that much of the evidence came from a range of authoritative sources, even when evaluating the argument rather than the evidence. The credibility of the author is only acceptable in this case where it relates directly to the author’s ability to select appropriate evidence.

For strengths of the evidence, the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

'...these percentages are given for many different countries like: China, Pakistan, Nepal and others. This shows that the problem is indeed global. Also, the document very clearly states which authorities provided this data. These authorities are official government institutions like Pakistan's National Assembly, for instance. This makes them very credible sources.'

For weaknesses of the evidence, the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

'Pakistan's National Assembly heard that 77 per cent of water was polluted. The use of the word "heard" demonstrates that the government body is producing these statistics based on second-hand information. It suggests that no investigation has been initiated, therefore the information is circulated through hearsay. This reduces the reliability of the evidence as there is no mention of the credibility of who they heard the evidence from.'

Question 3

There were two main approaches used to answer this question. The first was to discuss the argument of the author of Document 1 separately from that of Document 2 and then attempt to synthesise the arguments to come to an overall judgment as to which was the stronger. This approach was only partially successful for many candidates, as the more sophisticated evaluation came at the end of the answer and was often limited in its scope. This approach also featured much narrative description, in particular, extensive quotation from what the authors stated rather than undertaking evaluation of the strength of the arguments. This limited the marks that could be credited.

This does not show clear evaluation of the arguments but merely states the differences between the two. To gain higher marks it would be necessary to use evidence from the documents to evaluate how the authors have arrived at these statements and to explain its impact on the assessment.

The second, and most frequent, approach was to directly compare the two documents throughout the answer. There was no correct answer and candidates were free to argue that Document 1 or Document 2 was stronger or that both were equally strong. Weaker answers tended to directly compare the content of the documents without evaluating their relative strengths. Many candidates were able to pick out the aspects that reflect a strong argument, e.g. the credibility of the authors and the amount of supporting evidence provided. Candidates achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents and their impact on the overall assessment, whilst weaker answers relied on undeveloped quotes from the text.

Some candidates evaluated the theme of the argument in terms of their own opinion of the problems with drinking water. This is not appropriate, as the question requires evaluation of the authors' arguments.

The strongest responses adopted the second approach with:

- methodical evaluation of the relative strengths of the argument;
- appropriate use of examples from the documents;
- analysis of impact;
- and a reasoned judgment at the end.

For example:

'Document 2 fails to make its evidence reliable since the sources it uses are very vague and cannot be verified. It uses sources such as "one brand", "an employee in a bottled water business" or "studies". Document 1 is stronger as it shows precise sources with credibility such as: "The World Economic Forum", "The Third World Centre for Water Management" and "India's Central Pollution Control Board."

This gives a developed evaluation of the relative strengths of the authors in relation to sources of evidence.

'Document 2 only deals with the situation in China, while the authors of Document 1 made references to many countries, such as India and Nepal, and more global organisations, such as "The Third World Centre for Water Management"

This gives a clear, concise evaluation of the differences of the global impact of the argument of the authors of the two documents.

Some candidates scored less well on **Question 3** as they appeared to be limited by time as the structure of the answer appeared rushed or incomplete. Care should be taken to allocate time appropriately according to the number of marks available for each question.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

Paper 9239/12
Paper 12

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they read the paper carefully, looking at the key words, in order to answer the questions set. This was particularly relevant in **Question 2** where many candidates evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the argument rather than the evidence as required in the question.
- The length of each answer should reflect the number of marks available. Many candidates wrote overly long answers to **Questions 1** and **2** leaving insufficient time for the demands of **Question 3** which was worth almost half of the total available marks for this paper.
- The key skill, particularly in **Question 3**, which candidates needed to demonstrate to achieve high marks, was that of comparative evaluation, supported by precise references to the documents and in relation to the question set.
- **Question 3** required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content in order to evaluate the sources, perspectives and arguments to reach an overall judgment regarding which, if any, was more convincing.
- Candidates should provide brief and relevant references from the documents to support their evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised, containing only assertions or claims. They should also explain what impact this has on the argument or chosen evidence which goes beyond a generic statement like “weakens/strengthens”. Candidates need to explain how the assessment does this.
- Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents. Equally, copying sections from the documents without any relevant supporting comment, except when asked to identify from the documents, will not gain credit.
- In **Question 3** the strongest responses reached a supported judgment about the relative convincing nature of the two arguments. Weaker responses simply compared the content of the two documents

General comments

There was little evidence of candidates misunderstanding the documents and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. Many candidates did not pay careful enough attention to the command words in the questions and this limited the level they achieved particularly in **Question 2**.

It was encouraging to see some candidates applying a higher-level skill by comparing the arguments put forward in the documents in **Question 3** and coming to a judgement. However, many candidates simply compared content or repeated, without evaluation, the arguments of the authors. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning for the higher mark questions and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

In **Question 2** many candidates assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s argument rather than the evidence used. It is important for candidates to carefully read and understand what the question requires.

There were few candidates who ran out of time. However, the allocation of time relative to the number of marks available is an important issue. Many candidates spent too much time on **Question 1(a)** and **1(b)**

where a few lines would have been sufficient. This had a detrimental impact on the amount of time spent on **Question 3**, which was worth nearly half of the total marks.

As a result, some answers to **Question 3** were not fully developed or supported by precise references to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents and evaluated their significance. This demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being presented. Stronger responses also reached a supported judgment of the relative convincing nature of the two documents either as a conclusion, or throughout the answer.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Only **brief** statements were required. For such ‘identify’ questions, information could be copied directly from the text. The key words were “different” and “groups of countries”. Most candidates used the two groups: “wealthy developed economies” and “oil-rich Gulf states”. It was possible to gain a mark for mentioning, “India **and** China” which together constituted a group. “India” on its own was insufficient.

An example, gaining two marks was:

‘The author identified oil- rich Gulf States and emerging economies (such as Brazil and China)’

- (b) The answer did not need to be extensive. The key words were “explain” and “two purposes” and “buying the land”. In order to explain it is necessary to identify a purpose. A simple correct statement identifying a purpose would gain one mark, with further explanation required for the second mark. For the latter explanation it is expected that candidates should paraphrase the author’s words or explain in their own words. Simply copying verbatim from the document does not explain.

For example, a developed answer was:

‘Food is grown on these purchased lands and then sold by the foreign investors within their own countries or elsewhere, thus increasing the availability of food worldwide and making profits from the food sold.’

The explanation was drawn from information found throughout the document.

Question 2

It was important in **Question 2** to read the requirements of the question carefully. The candidates achieving the highest marks addressed strengths and weaknesses of the evidence and gave a judgment on its convincing nature. However, many candidates did not recognise the need to address the evidence used and instead evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the argument instead. Although these candidates used some evidence in their answer, frequently the emphasis of the answer was on the argument and consequently higher-level marks were not achieved.

For some candidates there appeared to be an expectation that the question would ask for the strengths and weaknesses of the argument rather than the evidence, and responses consequently adopted a formulaic approach assessing the argument rather than engaging with the question. These responses provided explanations such as: the credibility of the author, the range of arguments and the use of language, which were erroneously used in this context. Many candidates were able to identify that much of the evidence came from a range of authoritative sources even when evaluating the argument rather than the evidence. The credibility of the author is only acceptable in this case where it relates directly to their ability to select appropriate evidence.

For strengths of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

‘In the evidence provided, Singer also mentions the United Nations Human Rights Committee and the World Bank, which are both prestigious and trustworthy organisations. Evidence from these organisations is likely to be credible as it is in their interest to provide accurate information and maintain their reputation. So, when Singer stated that the World Bank agreed there had been an abuse of rights in land purchase, it is most likely true and backs up Singer’s own claim.’

For weakness of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

'Document 1's evidence lacks many sources to back up its credibility. For example, the author's reference to, "a report by a European Research Institute" has no properly cited source. It is simply just vague evidence, as it has no proper source to back up the author's argument.'

'Also, the evidence contains many estimates in its data and statistics making the evidence inaccurate. For example, in paragraph 2... "roughly 45 per cent and "more than 40 per cent" indicates the uncertainty of the exact or actual amount making the evidence weak.'

Question 3

The most frequent approach was to directly compare the two documents throughout the answer. The strongest candidates achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the documents. There was no correct answer and candidates were free to argue that Document 1 or Document 2 was more convincing or that both were equally convincing. Weaker answers tended to directly compare the content of the documents without evaluating their relative strengths. Many candidates were able to pick out the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility of the authors and the amount of supporting evidence provided.

Candidates achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents and their impact on the overall assessment, while weaker answers simply relied on a formulaic approach of what should constitute a strong argument without using supporting examples from the documents. Such answers were consequently superficial and relied on undeveloped quotes from the text.

The alternative approach was to discuss the argument of the author of Document 2 separately from that of Document 1 and then attempt to synthesise the arguments to come to an overall judgment as to which was the more convincing. This approach was only partially successful for candidates as the more sophisticated evaluation came at the end of the answer and was often limited in its scope.

This approach also featured much narrative description, in particular, extensive quotation from what the authors stated rather than undertaking evaluation of the strength of the arguments. This limited the marks that could be awarded as this approach does not show clear evaluation of the arguments but rather, merely states the differences between the two.

To gain higher marks it would be necessary to use evidence from the documents to evaluate how the authors have arrived at these statements and to explain its impact on the assessment. Some responses largely concentrated just on the strengths and weaknesses of the argument in Document 2 without any comparison with Document 1. The question requires a judgment to be made so this approach meant a candidate could not obtain more than middle marks in Level 2.

Some candidates evaluated the theme of the argument in terms of their own opinion of the problems associated with land grabs. This is not appropriate as the question requires evaluation of the authors' arguments.

The strongest responses adopted a methodical approach to the question by evaluating the relative convincing nature of the arguments, using appropriate examples and impact, before coming to a reasoned judgment at the end. For example:

'Document 1's evidence and claims are backed up by many clear and precise examples throughout the passage such as, when the German coffee company forced eviction of people, supporting the idea of foreign investors not caring for the local people. This makes Document 1 more convincing than Document 2 which only vaguely explains its claims. For example, in paragraph 3, "land grabbing is unsustainable and needs to be limited" which is not supported by named sources or examples.'

This shows a developed explanation of the difference in the credibility of sources.

'Document 2 may appear less convincing than Document 1 as Bassey is a Director of Environmental Rights Action and may have a vested interest in supporting environmental rights and portraying the negative side of land grabs. Singer, on the other hand, is a Professor of Bioethics and an influential contemporary thinker. It may be in his interest to support what he believes is taking place, (using evidence), rather than simply being biased towards environmental rights.'

This gives an example of how the background of the authors can be evaluated in order to come to a judgement based on their relative reliability. Other candidates were able to justify the reverse argument.

Some candidates seemed to be looking for a formulaic approach to the question by making assumptions based on preconceived ideas about what makes a good argument, rather than reading and evaluating the documents clearly. Candidates are required to engage critically with the documents, rather than make generalised comments that could apply to any document.

Some candidates scored less well on **Question 3** as they appeared to be limited by time as the structure of the answer appeared rushed or incomplete. Care should be taken to allocate time appropriately according to the number of marks available for each question.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

Paper 9239/13
Paper 13

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they read the paper carefully, looking at the key words, in order to answer the questions set.
- The length of each answer should reflect the number of marks available. Many candidates wrote overly long answers to **Questions 1** and **2** leaving insufficient time for the demands of **Question 3** which was worth almost half of the total available marks for this paper.
- The key skill, particularly in **Question 3**, which candidates needed to demonstrate to achieve high marks, was that of comparative evaluation, supported by precise references to the documents and in relation to the question set.
- **Question 3** required candidates to consider both documents, and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content, in order to evaluate the sources, perspectives and arguments to reach an overall judgment regarding which, if any, was stronger.
- Candidates should provide brief and relevant references from the documents to support their evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised, containing only assertions or claims. Candidates should also explain what impact this has on the argument which goes beyond a generic statement like “weakens/strengthens”. They need to explain how the assessment does this.
- Candidates will not be awarded marks for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents. Equally, copying sections from the documents, without any relevant supporting comment, except when asked to identify explicitly or implicitly in **Question 1(a)** and part of **1(b)**, will not gain credit.
- In **Question 3** the strongest responses reached a supported judgment about the relative strength of both arguments. Weaker responses simply compared the content of the two documents.

General comments

There was little evidence of candidates misunderstanding the documents and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. Many candidates did not pay careful enough attention to the command words in the questions and this limited the level they achieved.

Some better responses demonstrated higher level skills by comparing the arguments put forward in the documents in **Question 3** and coming to a judgment. However, many candidates simply compared content or repeated, without evaluation, the arguments of the authors. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning for the higher mark questions and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

There were few candidates who ran out of time. However, the allocation of time relative to the number of marks available is an important issue. Many candidates wrote too much for **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)** where a few lines would have been sufficient. This had a detrimental impact on the amount of time spent, particularly, on question 3 that was worth nearly half of the total marks.

As a result, some answers to **Question 3** were not fully developed or supported by precise references to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents and evaluated their significance. This demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being

presented. Stronger responses also reached a supported judgment of the relative strength of the two documents either as a conclusion, or throughout the answer.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Only **brief** statements were required. For such ‘identify’ questions, information could be copied directly from the text. The key words were “types of material” and “extracted by recycling processes”. Candidates should be encouraged to carefully read the document and understand what the authors said. Most candidates correctly identified glass (from bottles) and metals (from cans) for the two available marks. Others correctly identified paper (from books and boxes) as an alternative.
- (b) The answer did not need to be extensive. The key words were “explain” and “two ways” and “upcycling better than recycling”. A simple correct statement identifying a way that upcycling is better than recycling would gain one mark, with further explanation required for the second mark. For the explanation it is expected that candidates should paraphrase the author’s words or explain in their own words. Simply copying verbatim from the document does not explain. Most candidates were able to identify the ways but the explanation in many cases was not sufficiently developed.

‘One way that upcycling is better than recycling is because it uses less energy, (1 mark for identifying) by not going through reprocessing or extraction, which stops waste going into landfill sites that produce methane, a greenhouse gas (explanation copied exactly from the text so no further mark.) Another way...is that it can help communal memory and heritage (1 mark for identifying) by taking old but valuable items and making them into something new and useful. For example, taking an old African fishing boat that is no longer functional and making into a desk of some sort (explanation in own words for explanation mark).

Question 2

It was important in **Question 2** to read the requirements of the question carefully. The candidates achieving the highest marks addressed strengths and weaknesses of the author’s views and gave a judgment on how convincing they were. The question related to views as the author put forward a series of ideas rather than developing a full argument. The highest achieving candidates recognised that the best approach to answer the question was to evaluate points such as: the credibility and reliability of the author to put forward appropriate views, the credibility of evidence and examples used and the convincing nature, or otherwise, of the structure and language used in the document. A significant minority answered the question by describing what the author had said, rather than undertaking any evaluation of strengths and weaknesses which limited marks.

For strengths of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

‘One strength of the document is the amount of upcycling arguments presented. Significantly, the author provides environmental benefits, economic benefits, cultural benefits and societal benefits in conveying the advantages of upcycling. It is this scope that is compelling in convincing the reader of the author’s view. Moreover, the author provides specific evidence to support each of his claims. He cites SoleRebels, Artlantique and WREN as African companies that add credence to his view.’

For weaknesses of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

‘The author does not give a balanced perspective. There is barely an acknowledgement of recycling’s benefits. The one-sided approach, therefore, lacks a contrast, thus making the author’s view less convincing. There is also a lack of specific statistics to back up the claims, particularly: “reducing demand for newly manufactured goods” and “provides jobs” weakens the view as a lack of clear evidence makes the document less convincing.’

Question 3

The most frequent approach was to directly compare the two documents throughout the answer. The strongest candidates achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the documents. There was no correct answer and candidates were free to argue that either Document 1 or Document 2 was stronger or that both were equally strong. Weaker answers tended to directly compare the content of the documents without evaluating their relative strengths. Many candidates were able to pick out the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility of the authors and the amount of supporting evidence provided. Candidates achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents and their impact on the overall assessment. The weaker answers simply relied on a formulaic approach of what should constitute a strong argument without using supporting examples from the documents, such answers were consequently superficial and relied on undeveloped quotes from the text.

An alternative approach was to discuss the argument of the author of Document 2 separately from that of Document 1 and then attempt to synthesise the arguments to come to an overall judgment as to which was stronger. This approach was only partially successful for candidates as the more sophisticated evaluation came at the end of the answer and was often limited in its scope.

This approach also featured much narrative description, in particular, extensive quotation from what the authors stated rather than undertaking evaluation of the strength of the arguments. This limited the marks that could be awarded as it did not show clear evaluation of the arguments but rather, merely stated the differences between the two. To gain higher marks it would be necessary to use evidence from the documents to evaluate how the authors have arrived at these statements and to explain its impact on the assessment. Some largely concentrated just on the strengths and weaknesses of the argument in Document 2 without any comparison with Document 1. The question requires a judgment to be made so this approach meant a candidate could not obtain more than middle marks in Level 2.

Some candidates evaluated the theme of the argument in terms of their own opinion of the benefits of upcycling. This is not appropriate as the question requires evaluation of the authors' arguments.

The strongest responses adopted a methodical approach to the question by evaluating the relative strength of the arguments, using appropriate examples and impact, before coming to a reasoned judgment at the end. For example:

'Alicia takes into consideration the negative view of her own argument. She admits that the "circular economy is an attractive idea but will not happen immediately". By doing this the reader can trust the author's word much more as she understands that we still need to get to that level. Tapfuma does not consider negative points and talks (in a one-sided way) only about the benefits. There is much more balance in what Alicia is saying compared to what Tapfuma is stating.'

This shows the difference in the balance of the arguments and includes an intermediate judgment.

'Document 2 is stronger as it is global. Multinational companies are cited such as Rolls Royce and MUD Jeans to demonstrate the potential global impact. Document 1 is limited to Africa, (with examples like soleRebels) which consequently weakens the argument due to a lack of globalism.'

This shows the difference in global extent. Both documents have examples but the candidate recognises the impact of the narrow focus in Document 1 and comes to a conclusion that Document 2 is stronger.

Few candidates clearly assessed the reliability and credibility of the authors. Those that did tended to answer in a superficial way by making assumptions about the likely strengths of a freelance writer and an external consultant.

Some candidates seemed to be looking for a formulaic approach to the question by making assumptions based on preconceived ideas about what makes a good argument, rather than reading and evaluating the documents. Candidates are required to engage critically with the documents, rather than make generalised comments that could apply to any document.

Some candidates scored less well on **Question 3** as they appeared to be limited by time as the structure of the answer appeared rushed or incomplete. Care should be taken to allocate time appropriately according to the number of marks available for each question.