

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Paper 8660/01 and 02
Research Projects 1 and 2

General comments

The Research Projects submitted this year were generally of a good standard and Centres had obviously referred to the Guide to Research Projects Booklet. There was a wide variety of topics this session. The projects usually had a clear focus, especially where the construction of a question in the title encouraged critical analysis.

History, particularly of the post-World War II period, was the most popular and it was good to see research undertaken on subjects from a variety of locations and scales. Even recent history proved a fertile ground for ideas.

Economics was another popular subject on which to base research. These projects generally combined theory with first-hand investigation of local economic issues. The recent economic downturn formed the basis for several projects, but all focused on particular industries or businesses from individual traders to large organisations.

As usual literature was the focus of several pieces of research in both Spanish and English, but there were also projects based on psychology and science subjects.

All projects are assessed using three criteria. It was rare for candidates not to score well on the Knowledge criterion.

The Research/Skills criterion was the least satisfactory in terms of performance, though a large number of candidates performed well. Research needs to go beyond the use of Wikipedia. In a few cases the submitted projects were essays with no reference or analysis of primary or secondary sources and thus scored poorly on this criterion. Candidates must remember that referencing is required.

It was pleasing to note that Evaluation has improved and is not left to a few general sentences towards the end of the work. Candidates are, however, reminded that they need to provide evidence for interpretations and conclusions and that these should be explicit rather than implicit. Usually there will be conflicting evidence and candidates should take account of this in reaching and justifying balanced conclusions or judgements. It was rare for candidates to score less than half marks for this criterion.

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