



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2011**

Anthropology

ANTH1

(Specification 1111)

Unit 1: Being Human: Unity and Diversity

Report on the Examination

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ANTH1

General

The June examination series saw a significant improvement in the overall quality of answers and in the number of candidates producing quality answers. There was a significant increase in the number and breadth of ethnographic examples. Although some candidates struggled with completing all the questions in the allotted time, the vast majority seemed to manage their time effectively.

Positive features:

- Use of detailed ethnographic studies, with knowledge shown of the context and specifics of the society/culture chosen.
- Reference to specific ethnographies, showing evidence of wider reading and knowledge of specific anthropologists.
- A wide range of different ethnographic examples used to answer the questions. Many candidates were able to use interpretive skills to apply what they knew to the questions in a variety of ways.
- Understanding of biological anthropology.
- Some use of theoretical and analytical concepts; the best answers were ones that combined ethnographic detail with analysis.
- Explicit cross-cultural comparison.
- A wide range of material was present both between and within centres, indicating that candidates were discouraged from memorising 'model' answers. Anthropology is such a wide subject that examiners should expect to see considerable variation in the actual ethnographic material presented.

Key Issues:

- The main issue was a focus on descriptive detail rather than analysis.
- There was a tendency to juxtapose descriptions of different cultures or societies rather than explicitly to compare and find specific similarities and differences.
- There was the tendency for candidates to generalise rather than point out the complexity in cultural differences.
- Candidates should identify exactly where an ethnographic study was conducted and name the anthropologist who did the work.
- Though the mark scheme allows for examples that are not specifically anthropological, some candidates relied on common sense and over-generalised examples, possibly from other subjects, throughout the exam paper.

Question 01

Most candidates appear to have studied this area and therefore the question was generally well answered. However, some of the answers simply reused the words in the concept itself as opposed to defining what 'gift exchange' means anthropologically. Not all candidates acknowledged the reciprocal or social nature of gift giving. Examples that were ethnographic were easier to reward since the meaning of the gift was generally clearer. Non-ethnographic examples were generally too simplistic to gain the full two marks. Candidates need to be aware that to gain both marks for the example they need to provide some evidence of what the concept is or does.

Most candidates did not spend too much time on this question.

Question 02

Most candidates answered this question well, giving clear reasons with some development. A few candidates used the Item even though they were explicitly instructed not to do so. Some candidates focused on physical differences rather than intellectual superiority. The two reasons given sometimes needed to be more clearly distinct.

Question 03

This question was well answered on the whole. Candidates had clearly studied biological evolution and knew a variety of physical differences. Some answers, though, did not identify the 'ways' clearly enough. Some answers did not have enough development, for example explaining why the human body is the way it is today, eg referring to how evolution works. Some answers focused too much on ape characteristics rather than on how the human body had evolved from the apes. Few candidates developed the AO2 skills required to earn full marks, for example by considering the problems with the evidence of physical evolution such as fossils.

Question 04

There was considerable variation in responses. Many candidates seemed to find this question difficult, whereas some managed to use ethnographic examples effectively, including the Item, to derive two anthropological explanations. Other candidates used theoretical perspectives such as Marxism and feminism effectively.

The Item was not always used effectively. It needs to be made clear to candidates that when an Item is in brackets that they may find an explanation in the Item, but they are not specifically required to use the Item.

Some candidates did not focus explicitly on the issue of *economic* inequality.

Question 05

This question was, on the whole, very well answered. Candidates clearly knew a number of ethnographic examples to use to illustrate the explanations of misfortune, which were often presented in considerable detail.

The problem with many answers, however, was that candidates did not exhibit many AO2 skills. They did not explicitly compare the different explanations nor did they 'examine' any of the explanations.

When referring to western culture, there was a tendency to make generalisations. Candidates should aim to make specific references to particular beliefs/practices rather than just refer to 'the west'.

Question 06

A wide range of good material was used to answer this question. This shows that candidates don't all have to learn the same ethnographies or examples to produce quality answers.

Most candidates argued some kind of position, but most did not actually consider both sides of the argument before coming down on one side. Most candidates accepted the statement in the question uncritically.

Some candidates simply described differences in attitudes without any analysis, for example by considering why these attitudes exist or by offering an explicit comparison.

A few candidates used the question to write their personal opinions rather than an anthropologically informed answer.

The Item was largely used effectively but some candidates took the use of the expression 'theme park' too literally and seemed to think it meant the creation of a Disneyland in the wilderness.

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