



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
January 2012**

**Anthropology**

**ANTH2**

**(Specification 1111)**

**Unit 2: Becoming a Person: Identity and  
Belonging**

***Report on the Examination***

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available from: [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

**Copyright**

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).

Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

## ANTH2

### General

Overall, based on a small number of scripts, the vast majority of students performed well, with some centres and students performing particularly well. Students were able to manage the time effectively and to complete all questions. Answers were largely of sufficient length, although some students still wrote a disproportionately large amount for Questions 01 and 02. There did not appear to be any one question that caused particular difficulties for students. The responses to this paper showed that centres and students had responded to the feedback from the previous series, in this second Unit 2 examination.

### Positive features:

- Almost all students attempted every question.
- An awareness of the specific demands of Unit 2, particularly the process of becoming a person, which was referred to in many of the responses.
- Use of detailed, well contextualised ethnographic studies (many students drew on studies encountered in Unit 1 and applied them successfully to Unit 2).
- Use of relevant concepts, often well unpacked or developed.
- Knowledge of the work of specific anthropologists (both ethnographic and theoretical).
- A wide range of material was present, both between and within schools and colleges, and students were confident enough to draw on different areas of the specification.
- Anthropology is a broad subject and examiners saw considerable variation in the ethnographic material presented. Better answers applied a range of perspectives and concepts in order to develop their analysis and discussion of the ethnographic examples.

### Key Issues:

- There was a disappointing lack of use of anthropological theories in some students' work, especially in question 04.
- There was a lack of analysis and evaluation in some work, with some answers being overly descriptive.
- There was a lack of critical understanding of the discipline itself; while students are not expected to know about the history of anthropology in depth, it is useful for them to appreciate the context in which classical and contemporary fieldwork and theoretical work has been carried out.
- There were too many references only to western societies and Britain, with the odd reference to an unidentified 'tribe', especially in weaker answers.
- There was a tendency for students to over-generalise rather than to point out the complexities in cultural differences and similarities. A greater sensitivity in discussing other cultures through ethnographic detail is required to achieve the very best marks.
- Although the mark scheme does allow for examples that are not specifically anthropological, some students relied on commonsense and on over-generalised examples, possibly from other subjects. Where students did explain the concepts and ideas in general terms, their answers were often lacking in ethnographic examples.
- There was not enough explicit comparison – in many cases, answers were simply a juxtaposition of descriptions of two cultures.

### **Question 01**

Many students were successful in explaining 'ethnic group' and in providing an example. Often, however, weaker students failed to explain the term, or merely used an example rather than defining the concept. Some students failed to develop the example; for instance simply stating the name of an ethnic group without explaining how this group was a distinct ethnic group. Therefore a significant number of students failed to gain the full four marks available. Students who gained full marks tended to use examples drawn from ethnographic studies. Students should be encouraged, where possible, to use anthropological examples because their meaning will be clearer in relation to anthropological concepts and issues. Most students wrote the right amount for this question and the better answers generally received full marks in about 5-6 lines.

### **Question 02**

This question continues to challenge students in terms of layout. Students are far more likely to gain the full 6 marks if they set out their responses clearly, ie if their identifier is distinct from the explanation. In some cases the students came up with one identifier but then gave two examples of the same identifier, which meant they were not able to gain full marks. However, many students were able to come up with two separate ways in which rituals may reinforce gender inequalities, such as through men gaining power and knowledge, or through reinforcing male dominance through rituals such as female circumcision.

Students need to be aware of the structure of the marks: one for identifying and a further two for unpacking and offering examples. Again, ethnographic studies, where used to support a difference, often produced highly successful responses.

### **Question 03**

This question prompted some strong responses, although there was a range in the quality within and between centres. Students were generally able to discuss two or three cross-cultural examples of rituals related to death and dying. Weaker students tended to limit their discussion to features of western funerals. There was a tendency to be descriptive rather than analytical, listing types of death rituals rather than comparing them or drawing out similarities.

Stronger responses referred to the differences between death and dying rituals in different cultures, including ethnographic detail to illustrate the points made. In stronger answers, concepts such as ritual, rites of passage, personhood and cultural relativism were frequently used. This question elicited some impressive analytical and well organised responses.

**Question 04**

It was clear that some students did not feel adequately prepared for this question. There were some successful attempts to define identity, but more often examples of identity were merely given. Alternatively, students recycled the views put forward in the Item but did not go far beyond them, which was disappointing. This question showed that there was some lack of preparation for a theoretically based question. There was a tendency for students to recount knowledge and understanding of general facts about an example of ascribed identity, for example the caste system, without exploring a range of examples from different societies.

Very few students took the opportunity to highlight the ways in which identity is created through the use of technology, for example, through cyborgs. Students frequently understood the question but did not have the ethnographic examples to support an informed discussion about the theoretical positions of structure vs agency.

**Question 05**

Just over half of the total number of students chose this question and there was a very wide range in the quality of responses, most answered well, and with a few students reaching full marks. Weaker students considered the fact that personhood varies from culture to culture but their answers lacked depth in the ways personhood differs and lacked ethnographic detail. Alternatively, weaker students tended to limit their discussion to western views of personhood, or to drift into more general discussions about identity. Some students answered in a list-like way, describing different concepts of personhood without being discursive. This meant that the responses were not sufficiently analytical or evaluative to meet the AO2 demands of an 'assess' question satisfactorily.

Stronger responses discussed a number of different concepts of personhood, using referenced evidence and ethnographic detail, drawing out the differences and similarities between concepts. For example, students discussed western individualism, relational and sociocentric concepts of personhood, considering examples from Malawi, India, Ojibwa, Pueblo and African societies backed up with specific anthropological research. Stronger students were also often able to cite cyborg studies as a challenge to concepts of personhood in recent years, and to note that all societies have concepts of personhood and that these may be changing.

**Question 06**

This question elicited varied responses, with some students able to incorporate a sense of changing boundaries within their answers. Some students focused on boundaries between human groups. However, these responses tended to lack a theoretical dimension, eg Barth discussing the relativity and dynamic nature of boundaries. Disappointingly, there were few attempts to define boundaries and few attempts to discuss animals or cyborgs.

Stronger responses focused on ethnographic studies of ethnic conflict and/or of boundaries between spirits and humans. Some students effectively discussed the ways national boundaries may be replaced by complex cultural boundaries in the context of globalisation. Alternatively, students were able to demonstrate the differences between western and non-western boundaries in relation to spirits. These ethnographic studies were often very well linked to the question. Concepts were more numerous and integrated, and explained and appropriately applied to the question.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>

## **Converting Marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

**UMS conversion calculator** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)