



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

Anthropology

ANTH3

(Specification 2111)

**Unit 3: Global and Local: Societies,
Environments and Globalisation**

Report on the Examination

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ANTH3

General

As only a relatively small number of students sat the ANTH3 examination it is not possible to make broad generalisations on the performance of the cohort of A2 students as a whole. However, it is possible to state that some students performed extremely well and many produced sound and reasoned scripts, which is particularly pleasing as this is the first time that any student has had the opportunity to take the ANTH3 examination. Only one question (Question 03) appeared to cause particular difficulties for students and in this case it was clear that the problem was not the question itself but that some students had not studied the relevant topic and so were not able to answer the question satisfactorily. Answers for the most part were of sufficient length and most students attempted all the required questions.

Positive features:

- Most students attempted all required questions.
- An awareness of the specific demands of Unit 3, particularly the connections between specific question topics and issues related to globalisation, and the synoptic requirements of the unit.
- Use of detailed, contextualised ethnographic studies (many students drew on studies encountered in previous units and applied them successfully to Unit 3).
- Appropriate use of relevant concepts and anthropological theories.
- Knowledge of the work of specific anthropologists (both ethnographic and theoretical).
- The ability of some students to incorporate methodological discussions, where relevant, into their answers.
- Better answers applied a range of perspectives and concepts in order to develop their analyses and discussion of the ethnographic examples.

Key Issues:

- There was a lack of use of anthropological theory in some students' work. Alternatively, there was the inclusion of theoretical material which was not directly relevant to the question.
- There was an over-emphasis on descriptive material with a corresponding lack of analysis and evaluation in some answers.
- There was a lack of precision in contextualising ethnographic material with too many over-general and therefore weak statements about vague 'tribes' or 'castes' and occasional references along the lines of 'there is a tribe in Africa...' or 'indigenous people are primitive and live without modern amenities'.
- There were too many discussions based on commonsense assumptions, clearly rooted in early 21st century liberal education, presented as though they constituted reasoned and considered anthropologically informed positions. In short, there was a lack of reflexive understanding that the positions presented as 'correct' are themselves the product of the time and place in which they developed.
- There was a tendency for some students to assume that a change in a 'traditional' society constituted an automatic loss of culture and not enough understanding that cultures are not fixed and immutable entities. Change itself is not the problem, but the nature of the change and the terms under which such change takes place may be problematic.
- Students sometimes confused the societies they wrote about (the Mursi and the Masai were often mixed up in answers) or located the societies and social institutions in the wrong place or time (the Kayapo appeared in Africa for example or kula exchange in South America).

- There was sometimes a lack of explicit comparison, with students describing one case in relative detail and another briefly, and with no discussion of how the two relate or advance the understanding of the question.

Section A

Question 01

Many students were successful in explaining what is meant by 'indigenous' and in providing material on two issues that impact on indigenous peoples. However, weaker students sometimes named and discussed societies that are not indigenous or defined indigenous in inappropriate ways, labelling such societies with traits such as 'backwardness' and 'primitiveness'. Although only a minority, some students associated indigeneity solely with poverty, lack of understanding of the modern technological world, lack of education, illiteracy and violence. While some of these characteristics may apply to some indigenous groups in some places or at some times, they are certainly not defining features that encompass all or even a majority of indigenous populations.

Some students did not develop the issues they cited and this was a pity as it limited the marks they were able to gain on this question. Students should be encouraged to name specific indigenous groups and to link their discussion of issues to such groups so as to avoid slipping into unsatisfactory over-generalisations.

Having said all of this, however, a good proportion of students did achieve full marks or close to full marks on this question and managed to do this in a relatively short paragraph of writing.

Question 02

This question was well answered by a good proportion of students who gained high and, in a few cases, full marks for their answers. However, those who did not do as well as they might potentially have done failed to gain marks, often by describing the transmission of disease rather than the *consequences* of the transmission of disease, and in this way they failed to answer the question. Some of the consequences candidates were able to discuss included the loss of cultural knowledge because of the illness and deaths of those in the society who have such knowledge. Other candidates were able to reason that if women became infertile as a consequence of sexually transmitted diseases, the future birth rate of the population would be negatively impacted and this could lead to a long-term population decline. An interesting response to the question was to consider the consequences of the transmission of disease *from* indigenous *to* large-scale societies and students who wrote well on this were duly rewarded. Where students were able to link their answers to indigenous groups they had studied, the responses to the question were more focused and more detailed.

Students need to be aware of the structure of the marks for this question: one for each consequence and two for developing these in a satisfactory manner. Some students offered more consequences than they did development of the consequences.

Question 03

This question divided students between those who had studied assimilation policies and those who had not. Weaker students either did not answer the question at all or attempted answers which were loosely based on ideas of assimilation (often of recent migrants to western nation states) rather than specifically on assimilation policies. Stronger answers were well focused and often included the example of the 'stolen generations' from the Unit 3 Specimen Paper. Assimilation policies that included government support for the conversions of indigenous populations to Christianity, for example, were discussed in terms of both what was lost (traditional religious knowledge, ritual specialists, cultural links between a people and a place) and what might have been gained (access to western goods, medicines, education). Other policies, such as those which led to a loss of original language, were discussed in terms of ethnocide as children were deprived of a direct means of communicating with their elders and of understanding their cultural heritage through shared language. Some candidates were able to describe how, in some instances, indigenous groups had been able to record native language speakers before their deaths in order to preserve languages that would otherwise be lost and then to use these recordings to teach a new generation of children the language of their ancestors. In this way the assimilation policies of the past were undermined using the technologies also brought by those who implemented the assimilation policies. The very best responses to this question demonstrated the ability to examine both the immediate and the long-term consequences of assimilation policies, as well as to outline the rationales, both explicit and implicit, for such policies. Some students were also able to discuss assimilation policies in more than one society (mostly Native American and Australian examples) and to compare these in their answers to the question.

Section B**Question 04**

Of the optional questions this was perhaps the one that elicited the weakest answers, with just a few very good essays. This was also the least popular of the three questions in Section B. The main weakness in this question was the failure of students properly to read and understand the question. Several students wrote general essays on 'development' but failed to consider any 'development projects' as the question required. Students who were able successfully to define 'development projects' were those who were best able to then go on to consider both the economic and environmental implications of specific development projects they had studied. Some students answered on only the 'poverty' aspect of the question and others focused rather heavily on the 'environmental' without sufficiently tackling the economics of development projects. Students who were able to locate specific development projects were those best able to describe and assess the goals and various outcomes of the development projects most thoroughly. Some of these latter students were able to discuss development projects in terms of neo-colonialism, the power inequalities of the different groups involved in the development projects and both the positive and negative outcomes of specified development projects. Some of the development projects discussed by candidates included the large dam building projects in South America, China and India. These development projects enabled candidates to discuss and evaluate both the positive (energy, employment etc) and the negative (displacement, corruption, environmental harms etc) outcomes of such policies.

Question 05

This was the most popular choice of question in Section B and students varied considerably in their ability to answer this. The best answers were excellent with detailed and relevant ethnographic examples evaluated using appropriate concepts and theories. Some schools and colleges had clearly prepared students very well with a thorough knowledge of the historical, ethnographic and theoretical perspectives available to engage with in the anthropological study of tourism. Less strong answers tended to list general and rather vague impacts of tourism on local societies, writing in basic commonsense terms and demonstrating no actual study of tourism. While most students mentioned the economic impacts of tourism on a host society, very few were able to discuss the jobs typically offered to locals when tourism is developed as seasonal and low level, while outsiders may repatriate much of the profit to be made from tourism development. Popular studies of tourist destinations included those that involve indigenous groups and discussed 'culture' as reified performance in post-colonial and post-modern settings. Ecotourism, viewed both positively and negatively, was also a popular choice for students, who were often able to evaluate and analyse specific ecotourist destinations in a sound and informed manner.

Question 06

This question elicited varied responses, with some students failing to focus on 'communication technologies' and writing more generally simply on globalisation and technology. Such answers failed adequately to address the requirements of the question. Other less strong answers were very general, based on commonsense and common knowledge. These answers tended to show little evidence of any specific ethnographic studies or any conceptual or theoretical knowledge derived from anthropological study.

Many students, however, did write on 'global communication technologies' using appropriate ethnographic materials to show knowledge and understanding. The range of marks for these students varied, with some achieving excellent marks on the basis of the depth of knowledge of ethnographic material and the interpretation of this using relevant concepts and theories applied to communication technologies. While many students were able to name relevant concepts, for example, 'time-space compression', not all were able to show clearly how these worked in relation to particular ethnographies or in relation to specific communication technologies. Again, the scripts that were best able to meet the requirements of both AO1 and AO2 assessment criteria were those where students had clearly studied ethnographies in which global communication technologies were central. Such studies included those of diasporic populations who use the internet, for example to retain or in some cases revive, language skills and cultural knowledge, or where groups such as the Zapatistas could be shown to have used global communication technologies to garner international support for their cause. Stronger responses were also better able to integrate a range of concepts which were appropriately applied to the question and included knowledge, for example of the requirements for anthropologists to undertake multi-sited ethnography in order to study online communities. A few students were able to discuss the methodological implications for ethnographers of working in virtual space.

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>

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