



General Certificate of Education

Citizenship Studies 2101

**Unit 4 (CIST4) Global Issues and Making a
Difference**

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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Unit 4 (CIST4): Global Issues and Making a Difference

General Comments

This was the first cohort of the new A2 specification. All candidates would have taken the AS last year and were enthusiastic enough about the subject to have continued it onto A2. Because of its synoptic component this unit was not available in January.

It was pleasing to see a wide range of responses; some candidates demonstrated impressive knowledge of current world events and a deep appreciation of the underlying political, economic and environmental issues. Many were passionate and articulate in their presentation of arguments for and against issues that they clearly cared about. At the other end of the scale, some candidates appeared to have little interest and/or participation in citizenship activities other than a superficial familiarity with those stories which made the news, or in some cases celebrity magazines.

As an A2 qualification, rigorous critical analysis of contemporary events is expected and a depth of study is required, particularly in relation to case studies which demand particular research skills from a citizenship perspective. Teachers would be well advised to study the generic mark scheme which is available on the website as the balance of Assessment Objectives differs between questions and is indicative of the emphasis expected in the answers.

Some candidates took a legal, political, economic or sociological perspective in their answers. This could reflect their other subjects or their teacher's specialism, but the best answers were able to move beyond individual disciplines and take a holistic, ethical stance which is an essential prerequisite of an effective global citizen.

Section A – Global Issues

Questions are presented in pairs, with each part from a different area of the specification.

Question 01

Questions 01 and 02 were by far the most popular. Most candidates were able to explain what was meant by human rights and outline relevant legislation or case studies. However the question invited a more critical examination of the term, in particular the extent to which human rights can be universal in a diverse and changing world. Most marks were awarded for analysis and evaluation (AO2), so wholly descriptive responses fared badly.

Question 02

There were some excellent responses to this question; most candidates showed an awareness of the positive and negative consequences of globalisation and some reflected on the way in which the view taken depended on where the observer was situated in the world. Weaker answers tended to lack balance and focus only on one aspect of globalisation (eg economic).

Again, more marks were awarded for analysis (AO2) than knowledge but extensive knowledge of different aspects of globalisation could gain marks for synthesis (AO4). This assessment objective is unique to the A2 units and it enables students to select material (concepts or case studies) from any aspect of their course (or other subjects) and use them as evidence in constructing their answers.

Question 03

Questions 03 and 04 were the least popular questions, perhaps because this question specifically referred to theories of globalisation, although this is part of the specification content. Those few who did answer it generally made a good job of it. The AO2 marks were awarded for an explanation of the differences between the theories chosen rather than a discussion of each in isolation.

Question 04

The specification required study in detail of a specific international conflict and to have an understanding of strategies for conflict resolution. This question combined both. Some candidates fell into the trap of writing everything they knew about Darfur or Rwanda rather than assessing critically the role of the UN, NATO or the EU in the conflict.

Question 05

Some candidates took a rather generic (or even interpersonal) approach which left them little scope to demonstrate their understanding of global citizenship. Most students used international case studies to illustrate the use of the term 'conflict resolution' and many featured the strategies used.

Question 06

This question was generally answered well and given the popularity of Questions 07 & 08 it was surprising that more candidates did not answer it. Many candidates were able to select material from their study of Amnesty International to illustrate their answers. Equally valid were answers which focused on individual citizen's campaigns to bring about a change in the law or attitudes.

Section B - Making a Difference

By pre-releasing topics for section B in November, it was assumed that centres would then be able to support candidates' research in these areas. The differences in approach were quite apparent here, the best responses demonstrating some real depth of analysis, with others appearing to have only encountered the topic for the first time in the exam room.

Question 07

The stem material referred to the Close Guantanamo campaign but students were invited to explain any of Amnesty's methods for this type of campaign (which is virtually all of them). Those students who had studied Amnesty's campaign methods were able to provide some very good answers. Most marks here were awarded for synthesis (AO4) when students used their Amnesty research and knowledge from other units (eg campaign methods in CIST2) to construct a commentary.

Question 08

This builds upon the previous question and provides an opportunity for some critical analysis and invites a conclusion. Once again AO4 (Synthesis) is vital but equally important is AO3 (Communication and Action). Candidates are expected to select and organise evidence to present a coherent assessment of effectiveness against clearly identified aims. Many candidates did this well and it reflects a progression from AS.

AO3 also provides scope for reflection on the candidates' own involvement as active citizens. Those who had participated in Amnesty's or similar campaigns would have had a clear advantage.

Question 09

Again in-depth research was expected based on the pre-released topic. Evidence of this research was not always apparent in some of the rather generic responses provided. Some recognition that the campaign was targeted at young people was required. AO4 marks were awarded when material from their research was used effectively and by reference to other parts of the specification (eg political participation in CIST3, pressure groups in CIST2).

Question 10

As with Question 8 over 70% of the marks are given for the ability to select and synthesise knowledge based on in-depth research (AO4) and to be able to advocate (AO3) a position using that evidence. In this case a convincing argument was expected for both sides of the debate even if a strong conclusion was presented in favour of one. Some excellent arguments were presented here; particularly appealing was the idea that successful completion of GCSE in Citizenship be a prerequisite for voting at age 16.

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>.