



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

Citizenship Studies

CIST4

(Specification 2100)

Unit 4: Global Issues and Making a Difference

Report on the Examination

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

General

This is third time this unit has been examined and it is pleasing to see that entry numbers continue to grow and that the standard of students' answers shows a steady improvement.

More schools and colleges seem to have recognised the need to encourage students to engage in independent research into the pre-released topics and evidence from this research was used to good effect. Good use was also made of contemporary events; both the situation in Syria and the antics of Bob Diamond et al provided suitable material for analysis for several questions.

For an A2 qualification, more marks are awarded for the skills of evaluation, analysis and synthesis than knowledge and understanding. Students are rewarded for the appropriate use of material from any area of the specification and from their own research provided that it addresses the question. Also rewarded is the key citizenship skill of using language effectively (including specialist terms) to construct an argument, particularly one that draws upon the student's own participation or engagement with the topic.

SECTION A - GLOBAL ISSUES

The fall-out from the Arab Spring continues to provide a wealth of material relating to almost all questions in this section. A critical skill at this level is the ability to use selected case studies to support an answer to a generic question. Some students were able to use a detailed knowledge of a particular case study to provide material of relevance to more than one question. Other students seemed determined to use whatever case studies they knew even if they bore little relation to the question asked. A useful classroom exercise would be to hold debates around the generic issues in the specification to enable students to better prepare their case study material beforehand.

Question 1

The Question 1 and Question 2 pairing was by far the most popular, with about half of the students attempting it. Question 1 was reasonably straightforward with any two mechanisms accepted. Mediation, sanctions, boycotts, use of force and targeted aid are all mentioned in the specification: other mechanisms included negotiation, treaties, no fly zones, and the use of UN peace-keepers. More problematic was the suggestion that the international bodies (eg UN, NATO, Arab League, ICC) were in themselves mechanisms, and such answers were rarely in the top band. Effectiveness was generally evaluated through the use of case studies, Syria and Libya being the two most popular.

Question 2

This question was rather more challenging in that it expected students to be able to articulate the relativism v universalism debate in relation to human rights. An appreciation of the way in which rights had changed over time and differed between cultures was evident in virtually all answers, generally illustrated by examples such as gay rights and gender equality. Case studies of human rights abuse were presented in profusion but it was not always clear how they related to the debate. Weaker answers tended to assume that the fact that the UDHR was not implemented consistently throughout the world effectively undermined its claim for universality. Stronger answers tackled the debate full on and often provided a mature analysis which attempted to reconcile both positions. At this level, students are expected to be able to appreciate the complexities of Global Citizenship. Some at least are promising global citizens.

Question 3

About 30% of students answered this pair. Question 3 asked for a critical examination of (any) recent case study in which citizens attempted to bring about change in relation to human rights. A liberal interpretation of 'citizens' was permitted, ranging from individual citizens (Diane Pretty, Aung San Suu Kyi) to citizen-led movements (Arab Spring, Syria again) to pressure group and charities. The recent internet campaign regarding Joseph Kony was also popular and provided some good analysis of the role of social media. Some students tried to use organisations such as the UN or ICC which were not applicable. Good answers had a clear outline of the human rights issue involved and a critical analysis of the role of the citizens involved. This included an evaluation of the effectiveness of the campaign itself and the methods used.

Question 4

This question asked students to evaluate critically the use of force by international bodies such as the UN and NATO in conflict resolution. Strong answers used Libya or Afghanistan to good effect. Those answers that used Syria, Iran, Iraq or Rwanda tended to get a little more confused because the question focused on the use of force by international bodies rather than individual nations. The large number of such interventions in recent times perhaps underlines the need for a clear appreciation of their effectiveness. This lends support to the suggestion in the introduction to this section that class debates between those for and against the use of force in current conflicts could provide scope for students to develop their skills in constructing a coherent argument and their capacity to appreciate a counter argument.

Question 5

The least popular pairing, this pattern is similar to previous years; the order of presentation seems to be a stronger factor than the nature of the questions. This question tended to be answered rather well or very badly, perhaps because students either knew something about the role of the International Criminal Court or/and UN tribunals in trying to convict those accused of War Crimes or they did not. Those in the latter category tried to compensate with detailed accounts of the crimes themselves without comment on the effectiveness of the international bodies commissioned with prosecuting those responsible. Saddam Hussein, Gadaffi and even Hitler featured as war criminals without reference to any international bodies. Good answers showed detailed knowledge of the organisations involved and a critical appreciation of their track record to date in bringing war criminals to trial. Charles Taylor and Slobodan Milošević (various spellings) featured as successful if problematic cases and Joseph Kony (again), Omar al-Bashir (Sudan) and Gadaffi (and son) featured as the ones that got away.

Question 6

This question gave the student the freedom to choose their own issue: global warming and globalisation of trade were most popular. Students often wrote at length about their choice of issue. However, the question asked for a justification of why they regarded this as a key global issue. To do this well, students needed to show an appreciation of global economic and political factors rather than simply describe the issue itself. For example, the mixed success of Kyoto20 could have been expected to feature more often than it did. Stronger answers were able to explain the interrelationship of various issues and touch upon the reasons why no simple solution was available.

SECTION B - MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The topics were made available as usual on the Secure Key Materials section of the AQA web-site in November and a link was provided from the Updates section of the A level Citizenship page. Most schools and colleges now seem to be familiar with this procedure. However, a few students still produced answers which suggested that they had no prior familiarity with the topic. Students are expected to demonstrate evidence of research into the topics in their answers. These are synoptic questions, so evidence of understanding of synoptic themes from other areas of the specification can be used. Also in Secure Key Materials, under the Teacher Support Materials section, are topic-specific activity sheets designed for students to use. These are freely available to all registered schools and colleges and provide photocopy-able independent research suggestions for students to follow individually or in small groups.

Both topics were equally popular. Most schools and colleges focused on one.

Topic 1 – Transition Towns

Question 7

This question demanded a synthesis of students' knowledge of the transition model and an understanding of the nature of their own community. Many students discovered that there was a transition initiative in or near to their own community (over 350 in the UK). Generally, this question was answered well; those who had undertaken detailed research and had some experience of active citizenship in their own communities were able to provide some insightful answers. Often students from the same centre would provide a well-argued case for and against the application of the model to the same community!

Question 8

This question demanded an understanding of the aims and methods of the Transition movement and also of governments' (local, nation and international) efforts to manage the effects of climate change. Many answers were strong on transition initiatives or on action by governments but fewer were well informed about both. Some students were able to make good use of their experience of community-led initiatives from their active citizenship participation in constructing an argument (both for and against). Many came to the reasonable conclusion that both community-based initiatives and government action were needed to have any real impact. However, it was the analysis of evidence supporting the conclusion that carried the marks. Strongest answers were able to combine a critical approach to both the transition movement and to government actions with a synoptic appreciation of global economic and political factors from their study of other units.

Topic 2 – The Co-operative Bank

Question 9

The issue of ethical banking could not have been more topical at the time of the exam and many students were able to include the latest revelations into their answers concerning the importance of ethical factors to customers in choosing a bank. As well as their research into the Co-op Bank's ethical stance, many students had completed their own research into the views of their peers or in some cases bank customers outside their high street banks. Where this was effectively analysed, and the limitations of sampling accepted, some excellent and comprehensive answers were provided. In contrast, the rather waffle-prone weaker answers suggested that students who had not done their research had chosen this topic.

Question 10

At this level, students are expected to demonstrate criticality and not to take company websites at face value. Many students had used research skills to examine critically the practices of the Co-op Bank which put them under a harsh light in respect to their own stated policies. Interesting statistics were revealed regarding executive salaries and bonuses together with some allegedly unethical investments. However, most students had to admit that compared to recent revelations from other high street banks, the Co-op came out with a relatively clean (if not perfect) bill of health. Variations on the strap line were proposed such as 'Good – but not perfect – with Money'.

Some appreciation of difference between the co-operative model and shareholder banks featured in stronger answers together with synoptic links to ethical trade, global finance and sustainability.

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 marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion