

A-LEVEL

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

COMM1 – Understanding Communication and Culture
Mark scheme

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Version/Stage: 1.0 Final

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE (COMM1)

MARK SCHEME

Aims

When you are marking scripts your aim should be:

1. to identify and reward the achievements of candidates;
2. to ensure compatibility of assessment for all candidates, regardless of question or examiner.

Approach

Please be *positive* when marking scripts, looking to reward relevant points that candidates make rather than to penalise what they don't know.

A specification of this type must recognise the variety of experiences and knowledge that candidates bring to the examination. The questions have been designed to provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate what they have learned about different aspects of Communication and Culture.

The Principles of 'Best Fit'

This paper requires candidates to make three extended responses in an essay format and to answer some short answer questions which test their understanding of the techniques of critical analysis. These short answer questions have their own marking grid since they are working within a single Assessment Objective (AO2): demonstrate knowledge and understanding of concepts and critical debates relevant to the discipline of communication and culture.

In the case of the longer essay-style response a grid is used which, while recognizing the need to consider different aspects of each response (like its technical accuracy), also attempts to consider the work as a whole.

In this case, marks are notionally divided between two Assessment Objectives (AO1 and AO2) in the ratio 2:3. Individual mark ranges are suggested for each AO, but these are provided **for guidance only. Ultimately the response should be placed at a level that 'best fits' its qualities.**

The Marking Grid

The marking grid covers the generic qualities of all essays written as responses on this paper in terms of their ability to communicate in a technical register and the knowledge and understanding displayed of Communication and Culture concepts.

A set of question-specific prompts support the application of marks and are included after the grid.

Annotating Scripts

It is important that the way you arrive at a mark should be recorded on the script. This will help you with making accurate judgements and it will help any subsequent markers to identify how you are thinking, should adjustment need to be made.

To this end you should:

- identify points of merit
- write a brief summative comment at the end
- put the total in the margin at the end of each answer.

Generic AS Grid COMM1 (Questions 1, 2 & 4 - Question 3 is 20 marks AO2)

Level	Marks	AO1: This tests the ability of candidates to communicate in the register of Communication and Culture	Marks	AO2: This tests the ability of candidates to understand the content and concepts offered by the qualification	Marks
		<i>This reflects the degree to which the candidate has extended their grasp of the discourse of the subject and/or produced effective communication in their chosen medium.</i>		<i>This reflects the degree to which the work provides evidence of further knowledge and understanding of the content and concepts of Communication and Culture</i>	
4	16-20	Highly technical in its register and/or creative and/or proficient in its use of the chosen format.	7-8	Knowledge and understanding will be very good in terms of its range of knowledge and/or depth of understanding.	10-12
3	11-15	Sound in terms of its range and control and good in terms of its effectiveness.	5-6	Level of knowledge and understanding will be secure and will evidence sound subject specialist knowledge.	7-9
2	6-10	Limited vocabulary, perhaps only partly understood, rising to a degree of competence evidenced by the effective use of a fairly narrow range of terms/concepts.	3-4	Evidence will range from a limited, largely non-specialist relevance through to a simple but competent grasp of Communication and Culture content.	4-6
1	1-5	Basic, non-technical and unconvincing.	1-2	Evidence will be basic, non-specific and unconvincing.	1-3

- 1 At school we learn the ‘basics’ such as reading, writing and arithmetic. However, school also teaches us the values and priorities of our culture in more ‘hidden’ ways. For example, we learn how to deal with rules and authority, social relationships and form our own identities. This is known as the ‘Hidden Curriculum’.

Which of the following statements do you consider best describes the nature of the ‘Hidden Curriculum’ (what it says and how it says it)?

- a) The ‘Hidden Curriculum’ delivers a set of traditional values.
- b) The ‘Hidden Curriculum’ reinforces inequality.
- c) The ‘Hidden Curriculum’ helps us to understand how to make our way in life.

(20 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (16 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions.</p> <p>A clear, concise justification of the selected explanation. Explicit and convincing evidence that ideas about cultural transmission are thoroughly understood. Supporting examples are relevant, interesting and clearly linked to the chosen explanation.</p>
3 (11 – 15 marks)	<p>Likely to lead with the keywords, whatever the selection and consider the theory of the issue before the practice. Awareness of key terms and their use.</p> <p>Reasonably convincing, if partially flawed, attempt to justify chosen explanation. Some evidence that cultural transmission is understood. Examples are relevant and support the premise of the chosen explanation.</p>
2 (6 – 10 marks)	<p>Likely to work through practical answers with limited evaluation.</p> <p>The chosen statement is described rather than justified or justifications offered are less than convincing. Ideas around cultural transmission are only partially understood. For marks of 9 – 10, appropriate examples may compensate for conceptual shortcomings, or vice versa. For marks in the range 6 – 8, examples are limited or unsuitable.</p>
1 (1 – 5 marks)	<p>Candidates respond superficially and/or insubstantially to the invitation in the question, typically by rewording the question.</p> <p>At this level, any justifications offered are inappropriate. Descriptions of the chosen explanation are limited. There are likely to be serious misinterpretations. Examples lack relevance or are, in the range 1 – 3 marks, absent.</p>
0	No relevant response.

- 2 Your friend has been invited to an interview for a place on a course at their first choice university and has asked you for your advice. How would you, as a Communication and Culture student, assess the likely impact on interview performance of one of the following:
- a) dress and appearance
 - b) paralanguage
 - c) body language

(20 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (16 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions.</p> <p>Clear, confident explanation of how the chosen element might influence in the stated context. There is some explicit evidence of conceptual understanding, demonstrating understanding of how these codes might work within an overall 'performance'.</p>
3 (11 – 15 marks)	<p>Likely to focus on keywords and address theory in advance of practice. Attention to detail is key here.</p> <p>Reasonably well-informed explanations of how the chosen element operates. Some evidence that key concepts (identity, communication, code, context) are understood. In the range 11 – 12 marks, descriptive material may predominate over conceptual references.</p>
2 (6 – 10 marks)	<p>Likely to focus on what was learnt rather than what was understood. There may be a pre-prepared Case Study offered. Likely to come to easy conclusions without arguing through the case. Unfounded assertion through to competent responses.</p> <p>Likely to be a descriptive rather than analytical or evaluative account of the chosen element. Limited or partial understanding of key terms in the question, particularly how non-verbal codes reveal us.</p>
1 (1 – 5 marks)	<p>Uncritical explanation of the statement. Little else offered.</p> <p>Explanations are inappropriate or inept. Little or no understanding of key terms in the question.</p>
0	No relevant response.

- 4 The extract below talks about the way Jamaican Patois has come to have an influence on both interpersonal communication and popular culture. Patois, pronounced *pat-wah*, is a form of non-standard spoken English. This article deals with the use of Jamaican Patois in the Moss Side area of Manchester. Read the extract carefully and then respond to the task below.

Patois in the Media and Code Switching

Patois has been apparent in the media for some years now. In urban music, also described as 'black' music, words, phrases and grammar used in Patois are constantly being used in hip hop musicians' lyrics. The popular British Asian Hip Hop artist M.I.A, is an example of the language usage in music.

Her first single, 'Galang', features Jamaican Patois in its chorus. It shows the commercialisation of the language as it is being used by a worldwide artist. Our fieldwork shows that there is a Jamaican influence in the Moss Side society as several college students explained that their non-Jamaican peers use some form of Patois in their speech. This, however, has taken on a description as part of youth slang, rather than Patois.

Code-switching is very popular when using Patois in the Moss Side, as many of the interviewees tended to switch to Patois when portraying a certain feeling or attitude. It is also heard on the local radio station 'peacefm.co.uk'. As we listened to it for a few hours, we noted phrases such as, 'wah you wan', 'ear' and, 'nuff said' mixed with British English.

(SOURCE: report on 'Multilingual Manchester by academics from the University of Manchester's School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures)

How do you as a Communication and Culture student respond to the issues raised in the extract?

(20 marks)

NOTE: This is NOT a question (necessarily) about 'code-switching' but rather about any of the passage's potential C&C 'issues (identity, dialect, mass culture, convergence, ethnicity, language, power etc)

Level	Descriptor
4 (16 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions (eg establish criteria for evaluation).</p> <p>Confident, well-informed analysis with strong evidence that relevant debates about language, culture, identity and meaning are understood. Alternative explanations are convincingly rooted in conceptual understanding. Polemical and personal responses may feature at this level if ideas are well supported by evidence and argument.</p>
3 (11 – 15 marks)	<p>Likely to lead with a thorough exploration of ‘cultural values’ as a key focus and to relate this to the ‘practice’ of self-presentation. Evidence will be sound and detailed.</p> <p>Competent understanding of the passage is evident with some analytical elements. Alternative explanations demonstrate some familiarity with the terms of debates about language the construction of meanings.</p>
2 (6 – 10 marks)	<p>Likely to offer a reading of the text and to address the examples in it. Likely to focus on the examples only (largely) or anecdotally.</p> <p>Responds to the text and issue at a personal rather than analytical level. In the range 9 – 10 marks, comments indicate some awareness of relevant sections of the unit but in the range 6 – 8 marks are more likely to be based on barely substantiated assertions.</p>
1 (1 – 5 marks)	<p>Limited response to question, which results in unsupported assertions.</p> <p>May be based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the stimulus material and/or the task. Superficial account or one which is too brief to constitute a serious response to the question.</p>
0	No relevant response.

- 3** People with various carrier bags.
- a)** Identify two functions of these carrier bags. **(4 marks)**
- b)** Identify the significant sign sets (paradigms) that contribute to the meanings of these cultural products as texts. **(6 marks)**
- c)** 'I am what I carry'. Through a semiotic analysis, examine the messages about identity conveyed by one or more of these carrier bags. **(10 marks)**

	3 (a)		3 (b)		3 (c)	
Level	Cover functions	Mark	Paradigms	Mark	Semiotic	Mark
4	A skilful response which demonstrates secure knowledge. Knowledgeable and specialist.	4	Handles the key term ('sign-sets/paradigms) in a mature fashion, teasing out the subtleties. Knowledgeable and specialist.	6	Fluent and detailed analysis of the text as a chain of signs. Knowledgeable and specialist.	9-10
3	Sound understanding of 'function' demonstrated in reference to the text.	3	Sign sets are largely understood as means by which meaning is suggested and the text is organised. At least three examples are used.	4-5	Sound understanding of relevant Communication and Culture content and concepts. Strong knowledge or application.	6-8
2	Beginnings of awareness of the key content of the course. Only one function identified.	2	Largely descriptive and non-specialist response to this text feature. Competent.	2-3	Competent, active reading of the cultural product with some technical knowledge or analytical skill.	4-5
1	Little or no evidence of knowledge or understanding of the concepts or content of the course.	1	Little or no evidence of knowledge or understanding of the concepts or content of the course.	1	Little or no evidence of knowledge or understanding of the concepts or content of the course.	1-3
0	No relevant response					

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