



General Certificate of Education

Communication and Culture

COMM3 Communicating Culture

Mark Scheme

Specimen mark scheme for examinations in June 2010 onwards
This mark scheme uses the [new numbering system](#)

The specimen assessment materials are provided to give centres a reasonable idea of the general shape and character of the planned question papers and mark schemes in advance of the first operational exams.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

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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 two extended responses in an essay format. Thus, although aspects of each response (like its technical accuracy) can be addressed separately, the ultimate discretion of the examiner must be reserved for an appreciation of the essay as a whole.

In this case, marks are notionally divided between three Assessment Objectives (AO1, AO2, AO3) in the ratio 1:4:5. 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 grid below covers the generic qualities of all essays written as responses on this paper in terms of: their ability to communicate in a technical register: the knowledge and understanding displayed of communication and culture concepts: the evidence that knowledge is being applied in order to facilitate understanding.

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 adjustments need to be made.

To this end you should:

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

Generic Marking Grid

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	AO3: This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge	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>		<i>This reflects the degree to which the content of the work manages to provide insightful analysis of more sophisticated texts and situations.</i>	
4	31-40	Highly technical in its register and/or creative and/or proficient in its use of the chosen format.	4	Knowledge and understanding will be very good in terms of its range of knowledge and/or depth of understanding.	13-16	Analysis will be exploratory and open and will offer insights into its chosen theme.	16-20
3	21-30	Sound in terms of its range and control and good in terms of its effectiveness.	3	Level of knowledge and understanding will be secure and will evidence sound subject specialist knowledge.	9-12	Analysis will be good in the sense that it will offer a specific informed commentary on the candidate's cultural practices.	11-15
2	11-20	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.	2	Evidence will range from a limited, largely non-specialist relevance through to a simple but competent grasp of Communication and Culture content.	5-8	Analysis will rise from being of limited use through to the establishing of competence.	6-10
1	1-10	Basic, non-technical and unconvincing.	1	Evidence will be basic, non-specific and unconvincing.	1-4	Analysis will be ineffective or unduly derivative.	1-5

Question Specific Prompts

Section A

Question 1

0 1 Both traditional media and ‘new’ media such as the internet have made increasing use of user-generated material. This material is contributed by amateurs rather than media professionals and covers every topic imaginable.

Opinion is divided on the implications of this development for contemporary culture. Carefully examine **Argument A** and **Argument B** (opposite) before attempting the task below.

Task:

Use your knowledge of theoretical approaches and key concepts to evaluate the contrasting views of user-generated material expressed here. (40 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (31 – 40 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions.</p> <p>Responses at this level fully engage with the stimulus material, recognising contrasting and comparative elements. There is clear and convincing evidence of an evaluative approach; evidence which may be biased towards the effective use of practical examples or towards cogent argument. Theoretical and conceptual material is confidently applied in the context of the task.</p>
3 (21 – 30 marks)	<p>Likely to lead with the keywords “user-generated material” and “amateurs rather than media professionals” and then conduct a discussion around the issues. May focus on the variety of communication contexts and their impact.</p> <p>These sound responses demonstrate an awareness of issues raised by the stimulus material. There is some evidence of an evaluative approach which may focus on either argument or practical examples. Some theoretical perspectives are applied relevantly.</p>
2 (11 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to work through the given texts in a straightforward way with limited evaluation.</p> <p>At this level, responses tend towards description rather than analysis or evaluation. Perspectives and/or key concepts are likely to feature in the range 16-20, but application of these in the range 11-15 is likely to be limited, inappropriate or based on misunderstanding of basic principles.</p>
1 (1 – 10 marks)	<p>Candidates respond superficially and/or insubstantially to the invitation in the question, typically by rewording the question.</p> <p>Little understanding of the arguments put forward in the stimulus material is evident here. Conceptual material is either absent, severely limited or totally inappropriate in its application. The range 1-5 includes those accounts which are too short to constitute a serious response.</p>
0	No relevant response.

Note: Specialist or technical knowledge of user-generated material above and beyond the information in the stimulus material is not expected.

Section B**Question 2**

0 2 Choose **two** of the three cultural sites. Identify some examples of cultural products and/or cultural practices at the intersection between your two chosen sites. Show how critical theoretical approaches have helped you to understand these examples.

(40 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (31 – 40 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions.</p> <p>Products and/or practices chosen are contrasting and thoroughly appropriate to the exemplification of intersection. Responses demonstrate an informed awareness of the two cultural sites as well as the intersection. The selected examples are analysed and discussed in a response which draws widely and convincingly on theoretical perspectives and key concepts. However, the systematic and comprehensive application of all perspectives and key concepts is not expected.</p>
3 (21 – 30 marks)	<p>Likely to focus on “<i>theoretical approaches</i>” as a way of defining the “intersections”.</p> <p>Products and/or practices chosen are suitable for an informed discussion of the intersection. Both of the relevant cultural sites are featured. The discussion uses theoretical perspectives and key concepts convincingly to make a reasonable case that these have been helpful in understanding the examples.</p>
2 (11 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to focus on what was learnt rather than what was understood. Likely to come to easy conclusions without arguing through the case. Unfounded assertions.</p> <p>Examples are identified but these may be limited in their relevance to the intersection between two cultural sites. Grasp of the idea of intersection may be vague or incomplete. In the upper half of the level there is likely to be some attempt to apply perspectives and/or concepts but in the range 11-15 these may be limited or inappropriate in their application.</p>
1 (1 – 10 marks)	<p>Uncritical explanation of the question. Little else offered.</p> <p>Examples may be present but flawed. Very limited conception of intersection. Conceptual material is either absent, severely limited or totally inappropriate in its application. The range 1-5 includes those accounts which are too short to constitute a serious response.</p>
0	No relevant response.

Question 3

0 3 Choose **one** of the three cultural sites. Explain why mode of address is a significant concept in the understanding of this site. (40 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (31 – 40 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions. (e.g. establish criteria for evaluation).</p> <p>Clear, confident understanding of the concept of <i>mode of address</i> in the context of a chosen cultural site. In addition, theoretical perspectives and further key concepts are incorporated into well-informed, convincing explanations. Responses are likely to be well illustrated with telling examples of cultural practices and/or cultural products.</p>
3 (21 – 30 marks)	<p>Likely to lead with a thorough exploration of “mode of address” as a key concept and to relate this to the chosen site. The concept is likely to be used as an interpretative tool.</p> <p>Some attempt to explain the significance of mode of address with references to theoretical perspectives and further key concepts. Responses are likely to be illustrated with appropriate examples of cultural practices and/or cultural products.</p>
2 (11 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to offer evidence of study of a specific site and then to attempt to present “mode of address” in this context.</p> <p>Some understanding is evident of the chosen cultural site but at this level responses may struggle to integrate an explanation of <i>mode of address</i> in this context. In the upper half of this level, the suitability of practical examples may compensate for conceptual knowledge, but in the range 11-15 anecdotal, vague or inappropriate evidence is likely to predominate.</p>
1 (1 – 10 marks)	<p>Limited response to question, which results in unsupported assertions.</p> <p>In the upper part of the range (6-10) there is some attempt to engage either with <i>mode of address</i> or with a legitimate cultural site. Conceptual material is either absent, severely limited or totally inappropriate in its application. The range 1-5 includes those accounts which are too short to constitute a serious response.</p>
0	No relevant response.

Question 4

0 4 It has been argued that **places and spaces** ‘speak’ to us in ways which reinforce our cultural identity. Drawing on contrasting examples, critically evaluate this view of places and spaces. (40 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (31 – 40 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions (e.g. establish criteria for evaluation).</p> <p>All the key elements included in or implied by the question i.e. places and spaces as a cultural site, cultural identity and mode of address (‘speak to us’) as concepts are thoroughly understood and integrated into a well-informed discussion. Examples clearly demonstrate different aspects of the ways in which cultural identity may or may not be reinforced.</p>
3 (21 – 30 marks)	<p>Likely to focus on the issues of the question: the relationships between “places and spaces” and “cultural identity”.</p> <p>At this level responses are able to engage at a conceptual level but the implications of the question may not be fully grasped. Examples of places and spaces are thoroughly explored with clear evidence of the candidate’s ability to ‘read’ such texts. There is some attempt to evaluate the statement, but responses may only consider one side of the debate (i.e. may only consider the argument that places and spaces do reinforce cultural identity).</p>
2 (11 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to focus on specific examples of places and spaces, which have formed the basis of their preparation for this examination.</p> <p>At this level, responses are likely to offer generalised readings of examples with only limited consideration of cultural identity. For marks in the upper part of the level (16-20) there should normally be a contrastive dimension to the selected examples and/or some attempt to deploy relevant concepts. In the range 11-15, description is likely to predominate over analysis.</p>
1 (1 – 10 marks)	<p>Responses lack any real understanding of the terms of reference of the question. Likely to focus exclusively and anecdotally on personal experience.</p> <p>Conceptual material is either absent, severely limited or totally inappropriate in its application. The range 1-5 includes those accounts which are too short to constitute a serious response.</p>
0	No relevant response.

Question 5

0 5 'The fictions and stories of contemporary culture are the most powerful forces in shaping our identities as cultural beings.'

Discuss this view of fictions in contemporary culture.

(40 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (31 – 40 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions.</p> <p>The key concepts narrative and identity are thoroughly well understood and explored in the context of the question. The discussion is well-illustrated by apposite and clearly contrasting examples. Ideas are supported by evidence and argument. Theoretical perspectives are used appropriately.</p>
3 (21 – 30 marks)	<p>Likely to lead with the keywords “fictions” and “identities” and evidence the discussion with reference to theories/theorists. May focus on one kind of narrative.</p> <p>Examples are relevant and appropriate. Well-informed discussion, though at this level the full implications of the question may not have been grasped.</p>
2 (11 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to identify specific examples and use them as a starting point for a discussion or use generalised examples to conduct a general “talkthrough”. Likely to focus on the examples rather than the arguments.</p> <p>Some understanding of ‘fictions’ as a cultural site and of the relationship between selected examples and cultural experience, probably at a personal level.</p>
1 (1 – 10 marks)	<p>Struggles to understand what the question demands.</p> <p>Conceptual material is either absent, severely limited or totally inappropriate in its application.</p> <p>The range 1-5 includes those accounts which are too short to constitute a serious response.</p>
0	No relevant response.

Question 6

0 6 'The design and marketing of consumer products tells us all we need to know about power relations in contemporary society.'

Assess this statement using your knowledge of **objects of desire**. (40 marks)

Level	Descriptor
4 (31 – 40 marks)	<p>Likely to explore and/or challenge theoretical positions.</p> <p>The implications of the statement are thoroughly understood and explored. The relationship between objects of desire and power relations in society is examined in the light of contrasting theoretical perspectives and key concepts (probably including ideology). Criteria for the assessment of the statement are clear if not explicit.</p>
3 (21 – 30 marks)	<p>Likely to lead with the key idea of “power relations”, probably in the context of a discussion about ‘ideology’: its character and function. Likely to examine the functions of design/marketing in this context.</p> <p>Responses at this level demonstrate a good understanding of ‘objects of desire’ as a site for the study of cultural products and practices. Well informed discussions draw on a range of relevant case studies/examples. The implications of the statement may be discussed in general terms rather than, necessarily, assessed.</p>
2 (11 – 20 marks)	<p>Likely to lead with the experiences of texts and practices and work back towards the question with broad, generalised examples.</p> <p>Some understanding of ‘objects of desire’ as a cultural site is evident here. For marks in the upper part of the level (16-20) there are relevant references to power relations or to clearly contrasting and implicitly relevant case studies. In the range 11-15, description is likely to predominate over analysis.</p>
1 (1 – 10 marks)	<p>Likely to focus anecdotally on personal experience. Struggles to cope with the demands of the question.</p> <p>Conceptual material is either absent, severely limited or totally inappropriate in its application. The range 1-5 includes those accounts which are too short to constitute a serious response.</p>
0	No relevant response.

Note: technical knowledge of ‘design and marketing’ is not expected, though case studies focusing on the ways in which products are transformed into objects of desire should form the basis of responses to this question.