



ASSESSMENT and  
QUALIFICATIONS  
ALLIANCE

# Mark scheme January 2003

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## GCE

### General Studies A

### Unit GSA1

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**Unit 1: Culture, Morality, Arts & Humanities****Question 1**

This component is an objective test for which the following list indicates the correct answers used in marking the candidates' responses

1.1	A	1.14	C
1.2	A	1.15	D
1.3	C	1.16	B
1.4	C	1.17	D
1.5	C	1.18	B
1.6	A	1.19	A
1.7	B	1.20	A
1.8	B	1.21	D
1.9	B	1.22	D
1.10	C	1.23	C
1.11	D	1.24	B
1.12	B	1.25	A
1.13	A		

**Question 2****Introduction**

The overall assessment objectives for General Studies are set out below:

- AO1 Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines.
- AO2 Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.
- AO3 Marshal evidence and draw conclusions; select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.
- AO4 Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge and of the relationship between them, appreciating their limitations.

All mark schemes will allocate a number or distribution of marks for some or all of these objectives for each question according to the nature of the question and what it is intended to test.

**Note on AO2**

In all instances where quality of written communication is being assessed this must take into account the following criteria:

- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter;
- organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate; and
- ensure text is legible and spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.

**Note on AO4**

This is a new element in General Studies specifications. In the past, there has been a focus on the knowledge of facts, and the marshalling of evidence – on what might be called 'first-order' knowledge. This is still fundamental; but AO4 is about understanding what counts as knowledge; about how far knowledge is based upon facts and values; and about standards of proof.

By 'different types of knowledge' we mean *different ways of getting knowledge*. We might obtain knowledge by fine measurement, and calculation. This gives us a degree of certainty. We might obtain it by observation, and by experiment. This gives us a degree of probability. Or we might acquire it by examination of documents and material remains, or by introspection – that is, by canvassing our own experiences and feelings. This gives us a degree of possibility. In this sense, knowledge is a matter of degree.

Questions, or aspects of them, which are designed to test AO4 will therefore focus on such matters as:

- analysis and evaluation of the nature of the knowledge, evidence or arguments, for example, used in a text, set of data or other form of stimulus material;
- understanding of the crucial differences between such things as knowledge, belief or opinion, and objectivity and subjectivity in arguments;
- appreciation of what constitutes proof, cause and effect, truth, validity, justification, and the limits to these;
- recognition of the existence of personal values, value judgements, partiality and bias in given circumstances;
- awareness of the effects upon ourselves and others of different phenomena, such as the nature of physical, emotional and spiritual experiences, and the ability to draw upon and analyse first-hand knowledge and understanding of these.

## General mark scheme

Level of response	Mark range	Criteria and descriptors: knowledge, understanding, argument, evaluation, communication
LEVEL 3	7-8-(9)	A good to comprehensive response demonstrating overall grasp of the range and nature of issues; knowledge and understanding of key principles and evidence; interprets and illustrates arguments coherently and convincingly with fluency and accuracy.
LEVEL 2	4-5-6	A modest to reasonable attempt showing some competence and grasp of the issues; some understanding and realisation of key principles; moderate arguments and exemplification; reasonable clarity and accuracy of expression.
LEVEL 1	1-2-3	A bare to limited response showing uncertain grasp, knowledge and understanding; lack of clarity of argument and little appropriate exemplification; weak expression.
LEVEL 0	0	No valid response or relevance to the question.

## Distribution of marks across the questions and assessment objectives

Question number		2.1	2.2	2.3	AO marks per Unit
Assessment Objectives	AO1	2	3	1	6
	AO2	2	2	2	6
	AO3	4	2	-	6
	AO4	-	2	5	7
Total marks per question		8	9	8	25

**Note:** It is the questions themselves which are designed to elicit the range of response appropriate to the assessment objectives for each question. Examiners are required to assign each of the candidates' responses to the most appropriate level above according to **its overall quality**, then allocate a single mark within the level.

**2.1**

**Using arguments from the passage, as well as any of your own if you wish, summarise (a) the case in defence of Martin's actions and (b) the case against.**

**8 marks**

Points that might be made include:

**FOR**

- defending his property against intruders
- isolated situation/police protection inadequate
- others in his situation may have reacted in the same way
- sentence excessive/unjust
- concern that system favours criminal rather than victim
- did not set out to kill intruders (not in article), but used in own defence.

**AGAINST**

- set out to kill intruders
- shot Barras in the back with an illegally-held gun
- unstable personality obsessed with idea of defending his property
- response excessive and unacceptable in civilised society.

**NB** The question asks for responses on Martin's actions and not the punishment given out to him.

It may be feasible to think in terms of awarding 1 mark for each valid and coherent point, and in addition, for development of ideas, use of argument or illustration, depth of comment. The number of ticks need not however equal the final mark awarded, which should reflect the overall quality of the candidate's response, as expressed in the General Mark Scheme. There must be a balance of arguments for and against in any response receiving a top Level 2 or Level 3 mark. Candidates may choose to respond with separate paragraphs for (a) and (b) or in a more synthesised form; either approach would be equally valid.

**2.2**

**Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a free press.**

**In your answer you may consider the role of the press in providing news, information, debate, entertainment, and the quality and control of what is produced.**

**9 marks**

Points that might be made include:

**STRENGTHS**

- vital in a democratic society with open elections
- convey information and comment on events and people, views of the world
- expose wrong-doing of individuals and organisations
- offer more detail and choice than other news media
- enable readers to develop knowledge and understanding, opinions
- provide a pastime and entertainment, e.g. features, crosswords, cartoons.

**WEAKNESSES**

- commercial pressures often dictate what is published
- selection of material can be partial, biased and ‘hyped-up’
- some publications more concerned with scandal and gossip than ‘serious’ news
- frequently infringe on individuals’ right to privacy
- material may be offensive, pornographic, unsuitable for some readers
- controlled by a small number of powerful, unelected, private owners.

**NB** The question is explicitly about the press and not the news media in general.

Use the General Mark Scheme to allocate marks on the basis of the scope and quality of response with some marks reserved for the ability to set an overall context and synthesise ideas and arguments into a coherent whole. There must be a balance of advantages and disadvantages in any response receiving a top Level 2 or Level 3 mark. Also crucial to a high mark will be the ability to deal with the relationship between a free press and democracy and what ‘free’ might mean in this context (i.e. potential AO4 dimension).

## 2.3

**To what extent do newspapers actually shape or simply reflect public opinion?**

**8 marks**

Points that might be made include:

- most readers choose a newspaper which represents their preferences
- newspapers need to satisfy their readers and therefore seek to reflect their views and likely responses
- occasionally individual newspapers claim to have influenced their readers to support one cause or another, e.g. in 1997 *The Sun* changed its political allegiance and told its readers to vote for Tony Blair. It claimed to have won the election for New Labour.
- newspapers 'invent' news stories or run campaigns from time to time to fit current interests or create 'new' issues
- process of shaping opinion might be said to be a continuous one of action and reaction, i.e. one feeds off the other
- newspapers do have a clear role in confirming opinions is perhaps the most that can be said with absolute confidence.

NB. The major assessment objective in this question is AO4.

The strongest candidates should recognise that there is a problem with generating clear evidence for the case that newspapers 'shape' public opinion, although some have been known to 'invent' news to help sell their product. Use the General Mark Scheme to allocate marks on the basis of the relative scope and quality of response. Good Level 2/3 marks should be awarded for evidence of appreciation of the subtlety and complexity of the concepts and the development of a coherent thesis.