



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

Mark scheme

June 2003

GCE

General Studies A

Unit GSA3

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Unit 3

(GA3W Society, Politics and the Economy)

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 the relationship between them, appreciating their limitations.

Note on AO2

In all instances where quality of written communication (AO2) is being assessed this must take into account the following criteria:

- select and use a form or 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 on 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 experience 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 knowledge, evidence or arguments, for example, used in a text, set of data or other form of stimulus material;
- understanding of the crucial difference 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.

Q1

Read Source A. Using information from the source, identify the methods used by Médecins Sans Frontières to meet its aims.

(5 marks)

Target: Comprehension of Source

Candidates are required only to *identify* methods used by MSF to meet its aims. Candidates are not required to explain them or to evaluate the source.

Notes:

- Fighting infectious diseases by using case-based solutions.
- Working internationally to get politicians and communities to recognise their responsibilities in fighting infectious diseases.
- Supporting research based on not-for-profit initiatives.
- Supporting developing countries in their efforts to improve access to essential drugs.
- Encouraging cheaper production of drugs through production of generics.
- Persuading patent holders to cut prices in the developing world.
- Help in countries afflicted by war.
- Focusing on neglected diseases.
- Providing an international team of medical staff.

Mark Scheme:

- Level I:** *Bare, undeveloped points e.g. “fighting infectious diseases”, “supporting research”, “affordable prices” or one/two identified methods.* (1-2)
- Level II:** *At least three clearly identified methods.* (3-4)
- Level III:** *Clear identification of at least five methods.* (5)

(AO1 : 2 marks; AO3 : 3 marks)

Q2

Read Source B. To what extent does the evidence in this source support the headteacher’s view that critics of the school’s smoking policy are making “a fuss over nothing”?

(10 marks)

Target: Evaluation of evidence from source.

Notes:

Candidates will be required to review the evidence contained in *Source B* and to decide how much of it supports the headteacher’s view that critics of his smoking policy were making “a fuss over nothing” (first sentence, second paragraph). Candidates are required only to use evidence from the source and, on that basis, there are several pieces of evidence in *this article* which might be used to support the policy. Equally, there are some counter-arguments about health dangers and moral responsibilities of schools which might suggest that critics are not necessarily “making a fuss over nothing”.

The crucial phrase in the question is *to what extent* – good conclusions are likely to be based on *a matter of degree*. A candidate could certainly gain high marks by using arguments which challenge the head’s view that it is a fuss over nothing.

Points which candidates may use to support the headteacher’s view

- Smoking at school was a privilege rather than a right.
- Pupils needed parental permission to smoke at school.
- Prevented students leaving school grounds/lighting up where others would be exposed to their smoke.
- Removed potential source of conflict in a school for pupils with behavioural problems.
- Smoking area could be observed by staff.
- School continued to teach about dangers of tobacco/celebrate success of sporty, non-smoking pupils.
- Claimed that policy reduced glamour often associated with ‘illicit’ early smoking experiences.

Candidates will not be expected to include all of these points to reach the top mark band.

Possible counter-arguments that might be introduced

- High number of smoking-related deaths – smoking is dangerous and damages health.
- Schools are wrong to permit/give tacit approval to smoking.
- It is part of a school’s/teacher’s duty/moral obligation to prevent/discourage smoking.
- Some students smoking might encourage others (perhaps younger than them) to start.

Mark Scheme:

Level I: *Simple answer with limited evidence, perhaps relying heavily on unexplained words from the source.* (1-3)

Level II: *Demonstrates some ability to consider a mostly limited range of evidence in support of headteacher’s view though this may not be fully sustained. Little or no recognition of why it might or might not be “a fuss over nothing”. Limited evidence of seeking to reach a conclusion.* (4-6)

Level III: *Demonstrates ability to use a wider range of evidence to look more critically at the headteacher’s view which is mostly sustained and shows some ability to consider counter-arguments. Clear, if limited, attempt to reach a conclusion, on the extent to which critics of the school’s smoking policy are “making a fuss over nothing”.* (7-8)

Level IV: *Demonstrates clear and sustained ability to use a comprehensive range of evidence to look critically at support for the headteacher’s view taking into account of counter-arguments. Demonstrates clear ability to reach a logically argued conclusion which is sustained and demonstrates the ability to reach a logical conclusion on the extent to which critics of the school’s smoking policy are “making a fuss over nothing”.* (9-10)

(AO1 3 marks; AO2 2 marks; AO3 2 marks; AO4 3 marks)

Q3

Read Source C. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this source as a contribution to the debate on sex education?

(10 Marks)

Target: Assessing strengths and weaknesses of a source.

Possible strengths of source

- Published by *The Western Mail*, a generally reliable non-tabloid newspaper.
- Clearly written/free from jargon/accessible to the general reader.
- Shows both points of view. Allows the reader to make his/her own judgement.
- Backed by research findings (Cardiff University, *British Medical Journal*).
- Highlights a major social problem (high rates of teenage pregnancy).
- Some attempt to quantify the problem (Britain has second-worst teenage pregnancy rate in the world).
- Effective and eye-catching headline.
- Illustrate advantages of sex education.
- Highlight the need for specially trained teachers to provide good sex education lessons.

Possible weaknesses of source

- Too short/lacks depth.
- Unrealistic to suggest that what appears to be a single sex education lesson can have such an impact.
- Insufficient statistical/quantitative evidence.
- Too generalised/does not define terms sufficiently clearly (e.g. references in the final paragraph to “the right messages” and “good sex education”).
- Might be seen to condone an activity (under-age sex) which is illegal and which some might consider to be wrong on moral/religious grounds.
- Headline and opening sentence might appear to be rather alarmist (“school lessons on the morning-after pill” and “Teenagers under the age of consent should be given school lessons on the morning-after pill”).
- Insufficiently comprehensive on the subject of sex education.
- Does not say enough about how to improve sex education.
- Format of source does not always match readers’ needs.

Mark Scheme:

Level I:	<i>Mostly simple, unexplained points about strengths and/or weaknesses</i>	(1-3)
Level II:	<i>Some explained points. (Maximum of 5 for range of explained points only dealing with strengths or weaknesses.)</i>	(4-6)
Level III:	<i>Range of mostly explained, mostly ordered points covering strengths and weaknesses.</i>	(7-8)
Level IV:	<i>Wide range of consistently explained, ordered points covering strengths and weaknesses.</i>	(9-10)

(AO1: 2 marks; AO2: 2 marks; AO3: 3 marks; AO4: 3 mark)

Q4

Read Source D. In what ways can different forms of knowledge (such as scientific, moral and religious) be used to question the view of Professor Anthony O’Hear that the creation of the designer baby is “surely a step too far”?

(10 marks)

Target: Using a source to demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge.

The focus of this question – the use of different forms of knowledge to challenge Professor O’Hear’s view – is reflected in the AO4 weighting. To score marks in the higher bands, candidates must demonstrate a clear awareness that there are different forms of knowledge – each with their limitations. Candidates do not necessarily have to cover each of the three examples used in the question and are free to bring in other examples such as a more philosophical perspective.

It is impossible to anticipate all responses so the following should be seen only as a guide and not as a definitive list.

- The use of the phrase ‘designer babies’ is not wholly neutral and could be seen as part of a wider press campaign against, say, stem cell research and which, in more extreme cases, leads to talk of ‘Frankenstein experiments’.
- The article reflects concern about the work of scientists in this area but states that the purpose of this particular piece of research is good. Some scientists might argue that the main purpose of their work is to help humans and save lives – almost a case of the end justifying the means *in certain circumstances*. While scientists might have to make moral judgements, they will often claim that the nature of their work and research methods may make them more objective than most.
- The judgement of some people might be influenced/swayed by sincerely held religious beliefs about the sacredness of human life. There are, though, many religions and nobody can hope to encompass *all* religious beliefs and practices in their writing. A further issue is the extent to which religious belief might lead to a judgement that is more subjective than objective. Humanists might wish to disregard or reduce the significance of a view based on religious beliefs.
- It might be necessary to distinguish between a *legal* and a *moral* view. In the UK, embryonic research is strictly regulated and monitored by law. A moral code requires a different sort of justification and can depend much more on personal/community beliefs and values. Some issues might be seen by almost everyone as *moral absolutes* – wrong in any circumstances. Other issues might be less ‘clear cut’.
- The article doesn’t always define its terms. What do we mean by ‘good’ or by ‘This belief is the basis of all civilised life’? What is ‘a step too far’ or “a line [that] has been crossed”? Do we agree, when an action is deemed to be ‘good’, that “a fundamental principle has been breached”? It is very difficult to answer such questions – even to reach a consensus on what might be considered ‘the truth’. This in itself indicates the possible limitations of knowledge.
- A legitimate counter-argument is that babies are *not* designed. It’s mostly a matter of mixing suitable eggs/sperms and then selecting desirable embryos. The article gives the impression that scientists can assemble genes etc as they wish, to create a baby.

Mark Scheme:

- Level I:** *Simple, unexplained points which show little or no awareness of different types of knowledge and which might be heavily value-laden.* (1-3)
- Level II:** *Some awareness of different forms of knowledge but this might not always be sustained or clearly articulated and may sometimes be restricted by value judgements.* (4-6)
- Level III:** *Mostly sustained awareness of different forms of knowledge supported by mostly articulated arguments. Perhaps some recognition of limitations of different forms of knowledge and attempt to reach a conclusion.* (7-8)
- Level IV:** *Sustained awareness of different forms of knowledge supported by clearly articulated and logical arguments. Recognition of limitations of different forms of knowledge and develops a conclusion.* (9-10)

(AO2: 2 marks; AO3; 2 marks AO4: 6 marks)

Q5

Read Source E. Using information from Sources B, C and D, and your own knowledge, discuss the extent to which you think the government is likely to meet the Health Objectives and Sex Education Targets stated in Source E.

(15 marks)

Target: Extrapolation and exposition of arguments from a range of sources.

Notes:

Clear references to the ideas outlined in Source E, potential links with Sources B, C and D, wider knowledge of the issues involved and an ability to consider what might be meant by reaching the Health Objectives listed will be central to effective answers.

Source B

The most obvious link is between measures to tackle smoking and the extent to which smoking contributes to target diseases such as heart disease and cancer. It is conceivable that some candidates might refer to the education of children in care given the nature of the school described in this source.

Source C

Sex education in schools remains a contentious issue. It is difficult to evaluate how effective it has been but teenage pregnancy rates in Britain have remained extremely high by European standards. Part of the problem is the ambivalence surrounding the subject and the paradox of a much more open society hedged in by Victorian inhibition. Governors and teachers often remain reticent in the face of unrelenting criticism from those who are fundamentally opposed to any move that appears to condone sex among those under-age or, possibly, unmarried.

Source D

The possibilities of stem cell research have been widely discussed. Scientifically, it is still in a relatively early stage of development and ethical dilemmas may remain unresolved. Reporting has often been less than objective and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between ‘scare stories’ and the genuine danger that experiments (in, say, cloning) might take place without sufficient scientific support/research to satisfy the interests of individuals/pharmaceutical industries. Who knows, however, what may have happened by the target year of 2010?

Points raised from own knowledge

These are meant to be indicative points to guide examiners. Credit should be given for any other relevant point.

- No indication in E of how targets are to be reached (resources, political will, changing attitudes, public/private provision).
- Targets may be seen as vague. Politicians known (and not trusted) for making extravagant promises which may be seen as little more than potential vote winners rather than serious and realistic targets.
- Who can say what is likely to happen in 2010 and which government may be in power?
- Other important targets within health?
- Conflicting priorities/claims of other public services (e.g. crime, transport etc).
- Variable progress so far – especially in reducing teenage pregnancy rates.

- Schools uncertain about their role as providers of sex education.
- How much do we depend on changing attitudes? (People taking more responsibility for improving their own health, recognition of the problems associated with high teenage pregnancy.)
- Close link between health problems and socio-economic groupings. Tackling this would require major re-distribution of resources/provision which would seem very unlikely. It might be laudable but it also seems hopelessly over-ambitious and unrealistic.
- How are often complex medical needs of patients defined? The private sector can do this because it can charge accordingly and thus limit numbers in a way that the NHS cannot. Can management/organisational systems/resource provision ever be refined in the NHS “to treat patients at times that suit them in accordance with their medical needs”?
- Children in care have often been poorly provided “for” a long time. What is going to change to produce more equitable provision?
- Should more emphasis be placed on prevention (better diets, healthy lifestyle, reduction on tobacco advertising etc)?
- To what extent will a majority of the British electorate accept that high quality health care depends on a willingness to pay more towards it. Health spending in the UK remains, relatively speaking, some way behind most comparable countries.
- Attitude/principles of religious leaders can be important in some circumstances depending on their position in any debate that might involve beliefs and values.

Mark Scheme:

- Level I:** *Mostly undeveloped comments usually relating to a limited number of targets with no/superficial analysis and in a mostly generalised and restricted context.* (1-4)
- Level II:** *Some explained comments and arguments from at least one source and own knowledge about possibilities of reaching some of the targets. May sometimes be more descriptive with limited understanding of processes which might affect policy making and target setting in the context of Source E. Some evidence of analysis likely to be rather superficial in parts. (Maximum of 8 for candidates who use only sources or own knowledge.)* (5-8)
- Level III:** *A number of clearly explained comments and arguments with reference to at least two sources and own knowledge relating to possibilities of reaching some or all of the targets listed. Mainly analytical with mostly clear understanding of processes which might affect policy making and target setting in the context of Source E. Some ability to bring discussion to a conclusion.* (9-12)
- Level IV:** *Detailed and clearly explained comments and arguments with reference to all of the sources and own knowledge relating to possibilities of reaching at least four of the targets listed. Analytical with clear understanding of processes which might affect policy making and target setting in the context of Source E leading to clearly recognisable conclusion.* (13-15)

(AO1: 6 marks; AO2: 4 marks; AO3: 3 marks; AO4: 2 marks)

**Approximate distribution of marks across the questions and assessment objectives
for the Sources and Issues Analysis**

Question Numbers	1	2	3	4	5	AO marks per unit
Assessment Objectives AO1	2	3	2	-	6	13
AO2	-	2	2	2	4	10
AO3	3	2	3	2	3	13
AO4	-	3	3	6	2	14
Total marks per Question	5	10	10	10	15	50

AO1 (K & U): 13; AO2 (Com): 10; AO3 (A & E): 13; AO4 (U & K): 14 = 50

NB 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, according to its **overall quality**, then to allocate a single mark within the appropriate level.

With *some* questions it might be feasible to think in terms of awarding 1 mark for each valid and coherent point made. It may also be appropriate, however, to award marks for depth and sophistication of comment, development of ideas, use of supporting illustrations etc, as well as the range covered. The number of ticks, therefore, need not equal the final mark awarded for each attempt, which should reflect the overall quality of the candidate's response as expressed in the Mark Scheme.

Half-marks are not to be awarded.

A response which bears no relevance to the question should be awarded no mark