



General Certificate of Education

General Studies 1761 *Specification A*

GENA1 Culture and Society

Report on the Examination *2010 examination - January series*

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Unit 1 Section A

(GENA1 AS Culture and Society)

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

1.1	C	1.16	B
1.2	D	1.17	C
1.3	B	1.18	B
1.4	C	1.19	A
1.5	B	1.20	A
1.6	A	1.21	C
1.7	D	1.22	A
1.8	C	1.23	D
1.9	C	1.24	D
1.10	A	1.25	D
1.11	A	1.26	A
1.12	B	1.27	B
1.13	C	1.28	B
1.14	D	1.29	D
1.15	B	1.30	C

Unit 1 Section A

Question 1

The performance of candidates in this component was almost identical to that of the June 2009 cohort. A mean mark of 18.3 out of 30 and a mean facility of 62% suggested that the passage was accessible to candidates and a fair test of both knowledge and analytical ability. Sixteen questions were classed as easy (with a mean facility of 65% or more) and only one – 1.20 – was classed as difficult (with a mean facility of less than 35%). This question was also one of the two questions where more candidates opted for a distractor rather than for the key – in this case 54% went for option D whereas 34% chose the right answer which was A. Similarly, in 1.23, option B (41%) proved more popular than the right answer which was D (38%). Both these questions, however, like virtually all those in the test, did discriminate well as suggested by a mean point biserial of 0.35. Only one question discriminated poorly between candidates : 1.13 proved challenging for many candidates with nearly as many opting for option A as for the right answer C – the use of “primarily” in the stem required candidates to make a careful appraisal of the author’s motives and to demonstrate an element of judgement which was demanding.

The objective component of GENA1 appears to have worked well. Candidates seemed to engage with the themes of the passage while questions seemed to be set at the right level and with the capacity to separate the able and less able candidates.

Unit 1 Section B

General Comments

In general, most candidates responded positively to the written element of the paper although the mean mark of 16.93 was slightly down on the 17.37 of June, 2009, largely explained by a weaker performance on Question 4. The sources, as a whole, were accessible to most candidates with source C being particularly well-used. Most candidates seemed to have enough time to answer all the questions although, as in previous examinations, some candidates failed to divide their time wisely spending far too much time on Question 2(a) which only carried 3 marks. The standard of presentation was as variable as ever although most candidates were able to communicate their ideas in a clear if not always organised fashion. As in past examinations, the best results in this component were obtained by those candidates who could not only use the sources effectively but were also able to deploy their own knowledge to support and illustrate arguments and analysis.

Question 2(a)

This question was answered well by most candidates, getting them off to a positive start. Most were able to identify two of the author's criticisms of television coverage of politics while half received full marks by identifying three. Very few ignored the question and introduced ideas that were not in the source but a good number wrote far too much on a question which required an accurate but fairly brief response.

Question 2(b)

Some candidates floundered because they ignored the question's demand for them to draw upon their own knowledge and tried instead to use source B. Most candidates, however, were able to offer some ideas as to why British TV might be praised for its coverage of politics. The question was done well with 60% of candidates scoring at least 3 marks and 20% achieving full marks. There was much praise for the lack of bias and the depth of coverage but the best answers came from those candidates who could illuminate their comments with specific examples: the lively debate of *Question Time*, the broadcasting of Parliament and the broad appeal of *Newsround* and satirical programmes like *Mock the Week* figured prominently in many of the better answers. Overall, candidates responded positively to the challenge set.

Question 3

This question on the Internet produced some thoughtful responses. Most candidates were able to extract a number of ideas from the source and to write at length. The fact that only 14% of candidates accessed Level 3 was largely due to a lack of balance in answers caused either by a much stronger focus on the problems of policing the internet than on the motives of governments, or by an over-reliance on the source and unwillingness on the part of candidates to introduce ideas of their own. Many seemed unaware of just how vast the internet is and how important was the need for international and global co-operation. Having said this, the very best answers showed candidates to be really knowledgeable not only about technical considerations but also about the political, social and economic factors controlling the Internet might involve.

Question 4

This question, as a whole, was not well-answered and produced many very generalised responses focusing on the plight of beleaguered "celebrities" and the wickedness of the marauding paparazzi. Many candidates made little use of source D and ignored the many

useful references it contained to human rights and the protection of the law. Too many candidates focused on the more notorious subjects of the tabloids and gossip magazines and ignored others in the public eye like politicians, academics, entrepreneurs, and even royalty. Solutions offered for the protection of privacy were often sweeping, impractical and sometimes illegal although more thoughtful candidates could see the value of more robust legislation or codes of practice, wider use of existing legislation, access agreements and even the adoption by some public figures of a more modest and restrained life-style. Better candidates understood the need for compromise between privacy and the public's right to information (many useful references to MPs' expenses here) and recognised that a number of distinctions had to be made such as between public figures and their families and between those who avoided public exposure and those who actively courted publicity.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.