

General Certificate of Education
June 2003
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



GENERAL STUDIES (SPECIFICATION B)
Unit 2 Power

GSB2

Wednesday 21 May 2003 Afternoon Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GSB2.
- Answer the question in **Section A** and **one** question in **Section B**.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 70.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.

Advice

- You should write your answers in continuous prose.
- You will be assessed according to your ability to:
 - 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;
 - ensure text is legible, and spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.

SECTION A

Answer this question.

- 1 Read Jeremy Paxman's account of the Plowden family, opposite.

It could be argued either that the real power in Britain still lies with such families; or that they have lost hold of the power they once had.

Argue one way or the other, as if you were a member of such a family.

You might consider in your account:

- the source, and present basis, of your wealth
- whether this wealth gives you power and influence
- where the power that you once had might have gone.

(40 marks)

TURN TO PAGE 4 FOR THE NEXT QUESTION

The Plowdens

William and Valerie Plowden are moving out of the house their family has occupied for the last 800 years. It is a squat, half-timbered manor house squirrelled away in the blue remembered hills of A.E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*. There is no sign to Plowden Hall, there are no open days, no pots of National Trust jam on sale, no teas served by sturdy ladies in tweed skirts. On the drive, immature, tailless pheasants scuttle out of the way as you pass. In the drowsy fields, sheep and cattle wander aimlessly. A gardener is clipping the edges of the lawn outside the big house. Hidden away from the rest of the world, the loudest sound is the slicing of his shears. No cars, no trains, no aircraft.

The Plowden family have been 'seated' here at least since the twelfth century, when one of their ancestors fought at the Crusader siege of Acre. The Plowden family have seen it all, over the years. And still they are here, the Plowden family, living at Plowden Hall, in the village of Plowden, in a land of quiet contentment.

Their life revolves around farming, half-a-dozen black Labradors, hunting, shooting and fishing. It is not the sort of life that brings your name to the attention of editors of *Who's Who*: public service is restricted to sitting on the bench of magistrates and occasionally turning out as High Sheriff when the Queen visits the county. For the rest, it is *Farmers Weekly*, *Horse and Hound* and the *Shooting Times*.

The received wisdom about this type of English family is that they have been consigned to history, destroyed by the First World War, death duties, taxation, Lloyd's and congenital incompetence at handling their affairs. The image is of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead*, ancestral piles abandoned by families unable to meet the demands of modern life. Like all images, it is partly true. But among those who have survived, it is utterly wrong. William Plowden was twenty, on army service, when his father died, leaving him Plowden Hall. There seemed little chance of hanging on to the family home and he began trying to find a tenant who would rent the Hall. But no one was prepared to take it on. So he resigned his commission, went to Oxford, 'discovered my brain wouldn't function', and took himself off to the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester. When he took on the estate, he had 450 acres 'in hand'. Within a few years, he was running 2,000 acres. Now, the estate employs a manager, twelve people on the farm, another five in the woods, a full-time mason, a carpenter, gamekeeper, odd-job man and gardener.

Plowden and his wife are moving out of the ancestral home for a farm on the estate, so that their son can move in. Assuming William Plowden lives another seven years, Plowden Hall will pass to another generation of Plowdens, free of tax. He hands on a thriving business that gives the lie to the claim that time is up for all these old families who embody a traditional idea of Englishness.

Source: JEREMY PAXMAN, The English (Penguin Books), 1999

SECTION B

Answer **one** of the following essay questions.

You are advised to use examples to illustrate your answers where appropriate.

EITHER

- 2 There are signs that nuclear energy may be coming back into favour. Examine the strengths and weaknesses of the case for putting nuclear energy back at the heart of British energy policy.

You might consider the following in your answer:

- the costs of building and decommissioning nuclear reactors
- fossil and renewable alternatives to nuclear fuels
- the environmental consequences of present policies
- the moral implications of nuclear waste disposal.

(30 marks)

OR

- 3 The comprehensive school was designed to equalise opportunities for all, regardless of social class, gender, or ability at age 11. Now, a number of state schools select pupils on the grounds of religion, gender, ability, or aptitude for a particular subject or skill.

Discuss the view that all schools should be open to all pupils, no matter what their abilities or backgrounds.

You might consider the following in your discussion:

- the value of a diversity of school types
- whether 11 is a suitable age for transfer to different types of secondary school
- whether different types of school affect pupils' life chances
- the right of access for all pupils to the same body of knowledge.

(30 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS