

General Certificate of Education  
January 2007  
Advanced Level Examination



**GENERAL STUDIES (SPECIFICATION B)**  
**Unit 6 Space–Time**

**GSB6**

Monday 29 January 2007 9.00 am to 10.45 am

**For this paper you must have:**

- a 12-page answer book
- Source Material (enclosed).

Time allowed: 1 hour 45 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 GSB6.
- Answer **two** questions.
- Answer **Question 1** from **Section A** and **one** question from **Section B**.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

**Information**

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- You will be marked on your ability to use good English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate. All questions should be answered in continuous prose.

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**SECTION A**

Answer this question.

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1 Read **Source A** and answer the following question:

The idea of employees working at hours of their own choosing is an attractive one.

Why might it be impossible, on grounds of:

- cost
- efficient working
- fairness to other employees
- demographic trends

to give all employees the option of working flexible hours?

*(40 marks)*

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**SECTION B**

Answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.

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**EITHER**

2 Physics may be ‘easier to master than economics’ (**Source B**), but both the application of science and government policies (**Source C**) are agents of social change.

Consider whether it is the natural sciences or the social sciences that make the bigger difference to our lives.

*(40 marks)*

**OR**

3 Vivienne Westwood played ‘games with cultures and history’ in her fashion designs (**Source D**): and many Westerners acquire ‘their own DIY faiths’ (**Source E**).

Discuss the view that belief nowadays seems to be a ‘life-style’ choice.

*(40 marks)*

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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## Insert

Source Material to be read in conjunction with questions in Unit GSB6.

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## Source A

### **The rigid rules that stop flexible working**

If you're working full-time and caring for someone else, and you want to cut down your hours, what rights do you have if your employer refuses?

A British Airways pilot and mother of a young child, Jessica Starmer, took her bid to reduce her working hours to an employment tribunal – and won. This was hailed as a break-through, showing that a young mother did not have to choose between her career and the demands of being a parent. She could have the flexible hours that would make both possible.

Although welcoming the symbolic significance of the tribunal verdict, Sarah Veale, the TUC's head of equality and employment rights, says that the reality remains that there is no clear right to flexible hours. Employees can request a change in their working hours – and this must be considered seriously; but if no agreement is reached, there is nothing to force an employer to offer part-time working, says Mrs Veale. "We want the 'right to request' to be extended to parents with children under six or with disabled children up to 18."

The rules on moving from full- to part-time leave the employers with the final decision. Setting aside the question of discrimination against women, if a request for flexible working is turned down, a tribunal cannot make an unwilling employer change its mind.

There are wide-ranging legitimate grounds for refusing. This can include extra cost, difficulty in finding replacement staff, a detrimental impact on performance or quality, difficulty in reorganising work among other staff and any problems it might cause for future planned changes.

The Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) is carrying out a consultation on widening access to flexible working – and among the questions are whether the right to request should be extended to other carers, such as those looking after elderly relatives or sick partners. The DTI says that since the right to request flexible working was introduced, the rate of rejection of applications has halved. In its first year, a quarter of eligible parents asked to change their hours, and three-quarters of these were accepted in full.

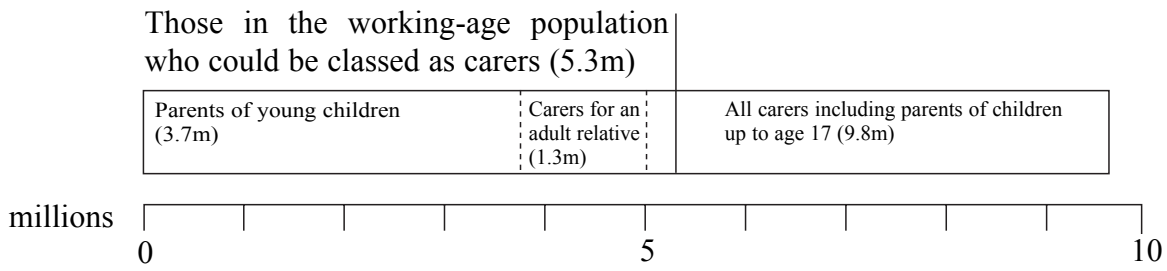
But if the path to flexible working is being opened up, the DTI's figures also show that there are some tough decisions ahead in managing the likely growth in demand. At present, the right to request flexible working is limited to 3.7m parents of young children; but if this was extended to those looking after other dependents, it could trigger a much greater demand, particularly with an ageing population.

According to the DTI, there are 5.3m in the working-age population who could be classified as 'carers', including those looking after adult relatives and partners. If eligibility for flexible working was extended to parents of children up to the age of 17, then another 4.5m people would enter the equation.

The DTI says changing demographics – longer lives and smaller families – will mean that more of us than ever will be looking after someone else. Already, 1.3m employees are carers for an adult relative, and there is every indication that this will rise. The need for part-time working could become an increasingly full-time question for both employees and employers.

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### All Carers



UK population (2001): 58.78m  
 Total working population: 25.6m

Source: Adapted from SEAN COUGHLAN: *The Guardian*, 14 May 2005

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## Source B

### Science and humanity in the twenty-first century

The twentieth century saw more momentous change than any previous century: change for better, change for worse; change that brought enormous benefits to human beings, change that threatens the very existence of the human species. Many factors contributed to this change, but – in my opinion – the most important factor was progress in science.

Academic research in the physical and biological sciences has vastly broadened our horizons; it has given us a deep insight into the structure of matter and of the universe; it has brought better understanding of the nature of life and of its continuous evolution. Technology – the application of science – has made fantastic advances that have affected us beneficially in nearly every aspect of life: better health, more wealth, less drudgery, greater access to information.

However, these very advances in science have led to the acquisition of the capacity for self-destruction, to the development of the means to destroy the human species itself.

Why have the natural sciences, especially the physical sciences, advanced so much faster than the social sciences? It is not because physicists are wiser or cleverer than, say, economists. The explanation is simply that physics is easier to master than economics. Although the material world is a highly complex system, for practical purposes it can be described by a few general laws. The laws of physics are immutable<sup>1</sup>, they apply everywhere, on this planet as well as everywhere else in the universe, and are not affected by human reactions and emotions, as the social sciences are.

<sup>1</sup>Immutable – fixed, unchanging

Source: SIR JOSEPH ROTBLAT, 1995, Nobel Laureate in Peace <http://nobelprize.org/peace/articles/rotblat> first published September 6 1999 (last modified June 29 2004) © 2005 The Nobel Foundation



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**Source C****Less well-off are Brown's merry men**

Gordon Brown has long been known as a Robin Hood chancellor – taking from the rich to give to the poor.

But the extent of his redistribution became clear yesterday in an analysis from the Institute for Fiscal Studies, a think-tank. It showed Mr Brown's changes to the tax and benefit system made the poorest 10 per cent of households nearly 10.8 per cent better off, while the richest 10 per cent were 4.4 per cent worse off.

The changes were similar in size but in the opposite direction, to those made under the Thatcher and Major governments.

An earlier IFS study, published in 1994, found that from 1985 to 1995 the tax and benefit changes introduced by chancellors Nigel Lawson, John Major, Norman Lamont and Kenneth Clarke had the effect of boosting the incomes of the richest 10 per cent by 5.8 per cent while cutting the incomes of the poorest 10 per cent by 2.9 per cent. Under the Tories, income tax cuts favoured the rich while tax increases ranging from increased petrol duties to value added tax on fuel were spread more evenly across society.

Mr Brown has not simply taken from the rich and given to the poor; he has also discriminated between different groups so that pensioners and families with children have benefited while those who are not pensioners and do not have children have lost out.

On average, tax and benefit changes have led to a 6.9 per cent rise in pensioners' net incomes and a rise of 1.9 per cent in the net incomes of families with children. Families without children paid for this with the current tax and benefit system leaving them with 2.6 per cent lower incomes than they would have had if the 1997 tax system had remained in place. Mike Brewer of the IFS said: "The most striking aspect of the tax and benefit changes since 1997 has been the extent of the redistribution introduced by the government." Mr Brown has become more ambitious with this redistribution over time.

Source: Chris Giles: *The Financial Times*, 21 April 2005

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## Source D

### Postmodern Fashion

What constitutes postmodernism in clothes design is often perplexing and not altogether straightforward. On first showing, aggressive and 'outré'<sup>1</sup> fashion statements seem to be the name of the game when it comes to dress design, and these do not appear to be the province of any single designer. However, even a business in which to shock is virtually *de rigueur*<sup>2</sup>, has its postmodern rebels, from the funk and punk of Vivienne Westwood to the imitative parodies and 'pop' styles of Jean-Paul Gaultier. Westwood's designs draw upon a rich visual syntax, generating a greater sense of freedom to express affinities with different 'lifestyles'. Her association with Malcolm McLaren led her to the influence of the *Sex Pistols* and punk rock in the 1970s, when she launched her Punk Collection at her shop *Seditionaries*; her *Pirates Collection* in 1981, 'plundering' styles and images from the buccaneering age, emerged in conjunction with McLaren's work with the pop group *Adam and the Ants* and their combination of Geronimo face paint and pirate costumes; her *Savage Collection* had ethnic references; her *Buffalo Collection* drew its inspiration from the American folk heritage; and her *Nostalgia of Mud Shop* drew upon African Styles. Playing games with cultures and history, Westwood challenges expectations and traditions at virtually every turn. Similar anti-status clothes which break down the accepted Western views of fashion and sexuality can be seen in Rei Kawakubo's designs, the presiding spirit at *Comme des Garçons*. Although Japanese in style, it is the Japan of stylised, ritual violence to which she appeals, with creased, torn and slashed clothes evoking a vulnerable, abandoned, shorn-of-sophistication look.

Source: TIM WOODS: *Beginning Postmodernism*, 1999, Manchester University Press

<sup>1</sup>Outré – shocking, 'way out'

<sup>2</sup>de rigueur – a 'must', a necessity

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## Source E

### DIY Faiths and Follies

'I have known since Reagan was elected that they [Ronnie and Nancy] went to astrologers,' the *Washington Post's* style reporter Sally Quinn wrote, neglecting to add that she and her husband, Ben Bradlee, were private clients of the *Post's* own resident astrologer.

Astrology might appear an odd, even heretical hobby for a man who proclaimed himself a Christian and often cited the Book of Revelation. Here, however, Ronald Reagan represented the spirit of the times. Over the past couple of decades many Westerners have acquired their own DIY faiths, hybrids comprising elements from Christianity, Hinduism, alchemy, geomancy<sup>1</sup>, the teachings of the Dalai Lama, the ancient wisdom of Atlantis and much else. And, since we live in a 'non-judgemental' era, otherwise intelligent people will pander to these follies. When writing a regular column for the *Observer* in the early 1990s, I once sneered at a rival broadsheet, the *Sunday Times*, for introducing a weekly horoscope. You can guess the sequel: the *Observer*, Britain's most venerable liberal newspaper, acquired its own horoscope page soon afterwards. Not to be outdone, *The Times* announced in a leading article at Christmas 1995, that 'over our next 12 issues we shall consider what the next year holds in store for famous and less famous people born under each of the Zodiac's signs.'

Even the no-nonsense Margaret Thatcher was a devotee of mystical 'electric baths' and Ayurveda therapy<sup>2</sup>. But she was a mere dabbler compared with more recent inhabitants of Downing Street. Cherie Blair found her devout Catholicism no impediment to flirtations with New Age spirituality – inviting a feng-shui expert to rearrange the furniture at No. 10 and wearing a 'magic pendant' known as the *BioElectric Shield*, which has 'a matrix of specially cut crystals' that surround the wearer with a 'cocoon of energy' to ward off evil forces. (She was, predictably enough, 'put on to the idea by Hillary Clinton'.)

Source: FRANCIS WHEEN: *How Mumbo-Jumbo Conquered the World*, 2004

<sup>1</sup>geomancy – fortune-telling from shapes and patterns, particularly of earth

<sup>2</sup>Ayurveda therapy – healing based on meditation, diet, yoga, astrology and herbal medicine

**END OF SOURCES**

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