

General Certificate of Education
January 2008
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



**GENERAL STUDIES (SPECIFICATION B)
Unit 2 Power**

GSB2

Monday 14 January 2008 9.00 am to 10.15 am

For this paper you must have:

- 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 **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 to be marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 70.
- 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 answers should be written in continuous prose.

SECTION A

Answer this question.

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

- 1 Read the passage opposite about 'TV addiction'. It is Wade Rowland's view that television can be as addictive as a drug.

Draw on your own and others' experience of watching television to write an essay in which you agree or disagree with Rowland's view.

(40 marks)

TV Addiction

We watch television for three hours per day, on average, in industrialised countries. Apart from work and sleep we spend more time watching television than on any other activity. In the USA, 40 per cent of adults and 70 per cent of teenagers polled think they spend too much time watching television. One in ten adults has described themselves as TV addicts.

Psychologists agree that the symptoms of such addiction are:

- wanting to watch less, but being unable to
- having tried to watch less, and failing
- thinking about watching when not doing so
- sacrificing other, more significant activities
- experiencing anxiety when ceasing to watch.

Commercial television is particularly addictive, because advertisers have identified and applied techniques for holding the attention of viewers: the shocking, or disturbing, or sexy image; the sudden burst of sound; rapid cutting, zooming, and panning; and frequent changes of camera angle. Programme-makers need the advertisements to fund their programmes; and advertisers need the programmes to hold the attention of viewers between advertisements. Not surprisingly, therefore, programme-makers have adopted advertising techniques to ensure high audience figures for the programmes that fill the spaces between advertisements.

These techniques provoke physiological responses in viewers of the sort that Pavlov studied back in the 1920s. He discovered that, faced with stimuli of an 'exciting' kind, the heart rate slows, and the body quietsens, in preparation for a fight or flight response. One's metabolic rate is lower when watching television than it is for any other sedentary activity, such as sewing, or reading, or writing, or playing board or card games – hence the 'couch potato' syndrome. As soon as the television is switched on, the body relaxes; but just as the faster a drug leaves the body the more addictive it is, so as the television is switched off, the addicted viewer experiences a rush of returning unease. The nameless anxieties that beset us are laid to one side when we switch on the television; blood is diverted from key muscle groups to the brain so that it might gather more information, and we relax physically. It is no wonder that we suffer mild withdrawal symptoms on returning to reality.

The irony of all this, of course, is that, though addicts watch more television than they wish to, they themselves report that the more they watch the less satisfying it is.

Source: www.waderowland.com/blog/2006/06

Turn over for the next question

Turn over ▶

SECTION B

Answer **one** of the following questions.

You are advised to use examples to illustrate your answer where appropriate

EITHER

- 2 Our system of voting in the UK normally gives a lot of power to one party – and, in particular, to the leader of that party – sometimes for many years.

Discuss the view that, if we are to be a democracy, we should place more limits on government power.

You might consider in your answer:

- the effect of public opinion
- the media as a check on government
- the role of the opposition
- whether there can ever be real democracy.

(30 marks)

OR

- 3 Anita and Gordon Roddick opened the Body Shop in Brighton in 1976. Now it has 2000 stores in 54 countries, and has been sold to L'Oréal, the French cosmetics company.

How far does it matter that companies are bought and sold, like their products?

You might consider in your answer:

- the interests of the employees
- the effects on prices in the shops
- the motives of bosses and shareholders
- whether there might be ethical concerns.

(30 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS