



General Certificate of Education

General Studies 1766 *Specification B*

GENB1 Conflict

Report on the Examination *2009 examination - June series*

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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General Comments

The majority of candidates used the cues provided in the question to structure their answer. This paper tests all four of the assessment objectives (AOs), although not with equal weighting. Many candidates did not address AO3, which demands an appreciation of different types of knowledge and is the most demanding of the AOs, as fully as the others. This is always represented in the third cue of the questions and its omission prevented some from accessing the higher assessment levels.

Question 1

Although this was not the most popular question, there was a clear difference between those candidates who had specific knowledge of business and those who had a general understanding. The former were able to discuss the impact of takeovers on price, quality and choice of products, employment, and customer service. There were particularly high quality answers from a few candidates who had an extensive understanding of the impact of takeovers on the public and included reference to the less obvious aspects of the debate, such as environmental effects.

Many candidates produced general answers about the advantages and disadvantages of large and small companies to the public, with no reference to specific takeovers. A large number reiterated the Procter and Gamble and Nestlé examples given in the stem, although some did develop these examples, commenting that Nestlé's takeovers provide opportunities for the public to lead healthier lifestyles. Better answers moved beyond the examples in the stem; for example such as Cadbury's takeover of Green and Black's, the Santander takeover in the banking sector, Tesco taking over the Cullens chain to create Tesco Express, and Morrisons' takeover of Safeway.

Some candidates related their answer to benefits to the company, particularly in terms of profitability and expansion, rather than to the public. Candidates should ensure that they read the question carefully to avoid irrelevant material.

Where candidates followed the cues, weaker answers did not adequately address the effect of takeovers on company values. The best answers demonstrated where company values can determine the success or failure of a takeover, such as the L'Oréal take-over of the Body Shop and its continuing commitment to natural products.

Question 2

This question was very popular and was generally well answered. It was the strongest answer of many candidates, with the majority demonstrating a good level of knowledge and understanding of the BBC.

Candidates applied their knowledge effectively to the question and most systematically worked through the different components of the question – that the BBC informs, educates and entertains and that it also enriches the lives of people in the UK. Better answers went beyond the question, and indeed, beyond the UK to discuss global broadcasting such as the BBC World Service and the availability of BBC programmes online. A few candidates referred to national and local radio, BBC iPlayer and the various BBC television channels specialising in a different genre of programmes.

Most candidates exemplified their argument well, offering appropriate examples of programme genre and individual programmes that were used to support a line of argument. These were often related to the BBC catering for different ages and tastes in programmes. The most successful developed this argument to include different communities, such as the Welsh.

Most argued that the BBC does indeed achieve its purpose. Few took the opposite view that it is unsuccessful, although a number referred to the “Sachsgate” affair and the BBC’s response to Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand as evidence that there is insufficient programme control.

Cue 3 was less well addressed than the others. Few got to grips with the idea of quality, making general statements about the quality of actors and directors, although many acknowledged that quality is a subjective judgement that is dependent on the viewer or listener. Many also argued that the BBC must be pleasing to its audience as it clearly maintains its popularity.

Question 3

Most candidates began their answer with a definition of community. The most common interpretation was that of a local neighbourhood, but some thought more broadly, arguing from a global perspective, that the world is a global village and including, for example, online communities via social networking sites, religious communities, and school communities. The most successful answers were those that established their definition at the outset, as this formed the basis for the development of their answer. Some candidates focused too much on this cue, at the expense of the other cues, so their answers were narrow. These responses also tended to lack structure.

Weaker responses listed activities that might take place in a local community; everything from barbecues to football matches. These tended to be repetitious and often not used to support an argument. Better responses analysed the success of existing examples of community activities such as Gloucestershire Cheese Rolling.

The focus of the question was how relationships might be improved within local communities, but many candidates devoted a large part of their answer to descriptions of communities in the past and why communities are breaking down. This approach was successful when candidates demonstrated awareness of tensions within communities and how improvements might be made. For example, modern lifestyles can lead to isolation as people are work-centred and often travel long distances, but that might mean that their work community becomes their priority.

The least successful answers were too generic with no references to specific communities or people within them. They lacked balance, only discussing the positive elements of community living. More successful were those that referred to their own communities, giving personal examples of ways in which their community functions

Question 4

Although the question stem relates to stem cell research, the question itself gave candidates the opportunity to discuss any scientific procedure. Many candidates, however, restricted their answers to stem cell research in the context of “saviour siblings”. This often, therefore, limited their answers in terms of examples and breadth of discussion.

Many candidates did not demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the topic and knowledge of stem cell procedures was often inaccurate. The most successful responses,

however, were those that moved beyond the stem to discuss other procedures such as euthanasia, abortion, bone marrow transplants, IVF and the development of controversial drugs using animal experimentation. Some, for example, referred to the mistakes of the past, such as the thalidomide case.

The majority of candidates followed the three cues. AO3 was more evident in responses to this question than to any other. Most focused particularly on whether such procedures are the right thing to do and made a strong moral argument, debating the issue of whether it is right to create an embryo with the sole purpose of saving the life of another. Many also developed this moral argument to include the threat of such procedures being taken to the extremes of human cloning and the desire to perfect the human race. The religious argument, whether such procedures are “playing God”, was also well explored, as were the cost implications of such procedures.

Question 5

The three cues were generally well used. The least successful answers were too generic, often lacking structure and making little or no reference to specific situations or to the idea of “duty”. Most candidates, however, covered all three cues to some degree, and AO3 was quite well addressed.

A clear distinction was usually made between those who need help through no fault of their own, such as the elderly or disabled people, and those who have brought their situation upon themselves, such as drug addicts and alcoholics. Candidates showed clear understanding of our moral duty to support the sufferers in the former group.

The issue of individual versus collective responsibility was less well addressed. There was some discussion of the role of organised charities, which were well exemplified (Comic Relief, Oxfam and Cancer Research, for example) to illustrate collective responsibility, but many candidates did not adequately address the concept of collective responsibility. Other candidates discussed the role of government and professional carers through the welfare state system as a means of providing collective support and the compulsory contribution made by taxpayers to the care of the less fortunate.

Cue 3 was attempted by most candidates. Basic responses recognised that everyone has the choice to help or not, but better responses offered reasons why people were unable to help, such as the lack of time, skill, or the demands of work and family.

Few candidates argued that individuals should take full responsibility for themselves. Most taking the humanitarian view that people should support and protect vulnerable members of the species.

There was some pertinent discussion around the motives for helping others, such as the “feel-good” factor and the knowledge that the tables might one day be turned and we all might find ourselves in need of such support.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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