



General Certificate of Education

General Studies 1766

Specification B

GENB1 Conflict

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - January series

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GENB1 Conflict

General Comments

The majority of candidates used the cues provided in the question to structure their answer, although it is not a requirement to do so. 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 prevented some from accessing the higher assessment levels.

There were fewer examples included in candidates' responses than in previous examinations. Candidates should be encouraged to include appropriate examples to illustrate their answers as advised in the rubric.

Question 1

This question was very popular, but was not always answered well. Some candidates answered the question with a narrow focus on the advantages and disadvantages of online shopping, making little or no reference to small and large businesses. A number of candidates assumed that a small business equated to a shop and failed to mention online shopping at all. Candidates should ensure that they read the question carefully and address all the different elements of the question.

Many candidates focused too much on the first cue, so their answers became descriptive of the reasons why people choose to shop online. The cues are intended as a guide, but the candidates need to use them in the context of the question.

Examples of online businesses were usually restricted to large businesses such as Amazon, Play.com and the online sites for large supermarkets such as Tesco and Asda. Fewer examples of small businesses online were offered, although better answers acknowledged that eBay offers an unusual combination of individual sellers being responsible for the success of the large company.

Where candidates followed the cues, weaker answers did not adequately address the quality of service provided by businesses online. Basic responses tended to be descriptive rather than analytical of the quality of service; better responses discussed the advantages of large businesses in building on existing customer loyalty and the reputation of their brand name to enhance the service offered.

Question 2

Most candidates followed the three cues to some degree and they were generally well-used. The least successful answers were too generic, often lacking structure and making little or no reference to specific situations in schools and colleges. Better answers gave specific examples of the strategies used by schools and colleges to equip students with the skills needed to become tolerant members of a multi-cultural society. These included formal Religious Education lessons, facilities such as prayer rooms and events to celebrate cultural diversity.

Many candidates also referred to faith schools and their impact, both positive and negative, on the attitudes of young people. These were often well exemplified with personal examples.

The best answers, however, recognised that it is not just religion that requires understanding and tolerance. Many discussed the tolerance of differences in gender, sexuality and ability.

Cue 3 (whether schools and colleges and society share similar values) was the least well addressed. Better answers discussed the way schools and colleges prepare students for their future roles in society and thereby try to develop similar skills and attitudes, such as respect and cooperation. Many candidates showed awareness of the influence of bodies outside the education system, such as the media, family and friends and the government, in both discouraging and encouraging tolerant attitudes.

Few candidates drew a convincing conclusion about the success or failure of schools and colleges to achieve their aim; those that did usually concluded that they were indeed successful, but failed to substantiate that claim.

Question 3

Although the question stem relates to police recruitment targets, the question itself gave candidates the opportunity to discuss positive discrimination in a wider context. Many candidates, however, restricted their answers to police authorities, which limited their answers in terms of examples and breadth of discussion. Better answers moved beyond the stem, giving examples of discrimination, both positive and negative, in other workplaces such as the NHS. The best answers recognised that positive discrimination has a role in areas other than employment, such as the position taken by the press on different groups in society.

Most candidates followed the three cues, addressing cue 1 (why there might be a need for positive discrimination) the most thoroughly. Once again, AO3 was the least well addressed, as candidates often did not consider the values represented in positive discrimination.

The focus of the question was whether positive discrimination is helpful to society, but a number of candidates discussed racial equality. They should take care to read the question carefully

The least successful answers repeated a narrow range of ideas with no supporting examples. They lacked balance, only discussing the benefits of positive discrimination without acknowledging the impact it might have on those who do not fall into an under-represented group, or indeed those who are favoured by positive discrimination.

Question 4

Many candidates did not demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the topic and answers were often narrowly focused on a few points. Many candidates restricted their answers to the example of the school-leaving age given in the stem, sometimes ignoring the actual question. The most successful responses, however, were those that moved beyond the stem to discuss other examples of press challenge to the government, such as the Iraq war and the MPs' expenses scandal.

Some candidates confused "the press" with the media, mainly discussing the challenge of television shows such as "Mock The Week" and "Have I Got News For You."

Cue 3 was generally well addressed in this question. Most candidates recognised the press as “the voice of the people”. Comparisons were made with dictatorial systems and it was acknowledged that the press is as entitled to freedom of speech as the general public.

Most candidates showed good awareness of the political position of different newspapers and their ability to make or break a government, often citing the recently changed allegiance of The Sun newspaper. The best answers also discussed the power of newspaper owners such as Rupert Murdoch, evaluating how far too much power could be said to rest with one person, resulting in a potential threat to democracy.

Answers were usually balanced, showing awareness of both the advantages and disadvantages of press challenge to the government in the short and longer term.

Question 5

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 topic.

Candidates applied their knowledge effectively to the question and most systematically worked through the different components of the question. Weaker responses offered a list of electronic equipment with very little comment on how it might or might not have made our lives easier.

The best answers developed each example given, such as the way in which the obsessive use of games consoles might lead to a lack of exercise and, therefore, obesity. This point was further developed to show that electronic equipment can have a positive effect, such as where electronic gym equipment or life-saving equipment is used to improve health or even save lives.

AO3 was more evident in responses to this question than to any other. Most candidates integrated the issue of improved quality of life into their whole answer, which gave more coherence to their argument.

Conclusions were often weak. The most successful answers concluded that, like many things in life, technology that is used in a positive way can have an enhancing effect on our lives.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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