



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **General Studies 1766**

*Specification B*

**GENB2      Space**

# **Report on the Examination**

*2010 examination - January series*

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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## **GENB2    Space**

### **General Comments**

The paper seemed to be accessible to most candidates who appeared to manage their time well, with relatively few writing incomplete answers to question 3 which was usually the last to be tackled. The rubric stated that candidates were advised to spend about 30 minutes on each question and this was probably reinforced by their teachers to good effect. As a consequence, answers to Question 3 were often comprehensive or at least completed. Unlike last summer, very few candidates produced two-sided responses to 2(a), 2(b), 3(a) and 3(b) which was pleasing. Calculators are always likely to be needed for Question 1(b) and, this session, it appears that most candidates were prepared and equipped.

Quality of English was, again, generally good and many candidates had been well prepared. It is clear that, for the most part, the specification is being taught and that candidates had a sound body of knowledge on which they could draw. A general point that relates to most of the written parts is that far too often candidates do not back up their points with examples. To do that is the easiest way to raise marks.

Question 2 requires the candidate to make at least three points, explain them and provide examples or illustrations to support their answer. If a candidate is to achieve Level 1, they must do that. Four or five points may get them to the top of Level 2 but exemplification is the gatekeeper to Level 1.

With regard to the two parts of question 3, it seems that many candidates are unaware of how to score highly on this question. They appear to be following the formula for question 2 above of making three points plus development. These two questions require a much more comprehensive answer that involves a number of points with development and exemplification. They are, in effect, short essays and should be treated as such. There needs to be evidence of breadth and depth.

### **Question 1**

#### **Q1 (a)**

Candidates are unlikely to score high marks unless they make specific reference to the data. In this case, candidates would have been awarded marks for interpreting the percentages migrating to America from the countries identified and by making some simple comparisons. Many misunderstood the data and assumed it showed the percentage of the population of that country who migrated and not the percentage of America's migrants in terms of their country of origin. Weaker answers were of a general nature, citing such factors as poverty at home or searching for jobs and then applying that idea generically. Most candidates were aware that the USA shared a land border with Mexico and that migration from Mexico had a long history. Knowledge of geography was woeful at times with some candidates thinking that Jamaica and Colombia, for example, were on the other side of the world. Several referred to the earthquake in Haiti and the tsunami of 2006 as major factors. Historical knowledge was equally poor with very few candidates knowing about links between the USA and the Philippines or Vietnam. Few were aware of America's large ethnic Chinese population or why people migrated from India. Interestingly, many candidates were aware of violence and drug issues in Colombia and Mexico. Most candidates reached Level 2 but very few progressed beyond that.

### **Q1 (b)(i)**

Centres are to be advised to make sure that their candidates can calculate percentages. Many lost marks by not realising or forgetting that the figures provided were in thousands and so ended up with an accurate number through calculation that needed to be multiplied by 1000 to get the correct answer. This emphasises the importance of showing working so that candidates can still gain some of the marks. Several, did not provide a total percentage despite the clear wording of the question.

### **Q1(b)(ii)**

The majority of the candidates gained full marks for this question. Those who did not either wrote very vague reasons why people might migrate, such as “It’s a warm country” or “There are lots of jobs”. Other weak responses showed an ignorance of the social and economic fabric of the country writing things like “People enjoy a lot of freedom in Russia”. Several, regrettably, talked about holidays and not migration. The weakest answers gave a single generic reason for migration to a group of countries rather than taking each country independently and explaining the factors affecting each. Some candidates wrote far too much in response when short focused reasons were required. There were many misconceptions about freely available benefits to migrants to the UK, a point that also occurred in answers to Question 1(c).

### **Q1 (c)**

Most candidates could give some points on both sides of the argument and the vast majority were balanced. Almost all concentrated on Britain but several discussed the impact on the donor country with varying degrees of success. It was pleasing to read that the majority of candidates felt that the impact of migration was a positive experience and there was good discussion and exemplification in terms of the sorts of work that migrants might undertake and of the enrichment of our culture. Exemplification was generally good with some really interesting personal and local experiences. A significant number of candidates compared regions within Britain comparing those with a history of immigration with those which had little experience of it.

Looking at the negative side, the better answers examined potential strains on services and resources, short-term adjustments and unfamiliarity for both existing residents and newcomers. Sadly, a few decided to use the question as an opportunity to express broad anti-immigration views but, gratifyingly, few stepped across the line and produced overtly racist answers.

## **Question 2**

### **Q2 (a)**

This question proved to be very accessible with most candidates being able to discuss the strengths of chain stores. The vast majority focused on Marks and Spencer and discussed its appeal but the more adventurous candidates examined the merits of other stores to some effect. Many used the image to discuss issues of brand, location, convenience and, indeed, picked up on the shop window advertising for Christmas and used it to discuss how such stores responded to occasions like that to attract customers. Quite a large number also broadened the question to discuss Internet shopping in terms of the relationship with the brand name. Weaker candidates did tend to give an often extensive list of why such shops are appealing at the expense of any detailed explanation or development.

**Q2 (b)**

Answers were often pedestrian and lacked flair. The Celtic influence and antiques were picked up and there was a lot of second guessing about the location of the shop with villages, away from town centres and somewhere in Scotland being the most popular. (It is in Grafton Street, Dublin, for the sake of interest). Getting the location wrong did not mean that the candidate lost marks. Sadly, some candidates chose to write about the importance of the corner shop to local communities which showed that they had not interpreted the image or read the question carefully. To get to Level 1, candidates needed to show some degree of exemplification by focusing on the service provided by such shops, a unique wedding ring or a particular gift that would have long-lasting significance or by using other examples, perhaps from their own locale, to support the observation. There were some good comparisons of the shop in the image and chain retail jewellers.

**Q2 (c)**

There were some very good responses to this question that developed either practical reasons or theoretical economic models for production in Britain or globally. Reference to the EU partnership was common as was the role of trans-national companies. Useful examples to illustrate points included reference to sweat shops supplying cheap garments, often citing particular British stores, and the recent take-over bid for Cadbury. Most realised that production only in Britain would limit choice in general terms as Britain no longer has a large manufacturing base, and appropriate skill levels. Candidates also mentioned the seasonal nature of some items and consumer demand in terms of what we now expect and the multi-ethnic nature of our country. Surprisingly, few referred to Britain's climate and its inability to produce certain foodstuffs. Where answers were weak, it was usually because the candidate produced a list without examples to support their points.

**Question 3****Q3 (a)**

This was not well done, overall. Most candidates re-wrote the source or confused space tourism with space travel. Fanciful ideas were expressed about living in space once up there with many candidates assuming you could simply get off at the other end and everything would be there for you. Few looked to the future. Richard Branson and Virgin appeared frequently but with little development. Provision of jobs in the embryonic industry and dependent industries featured without much specificity for the most part, although good responses did expand on what jobs might be available and why. Other generalising tendencies included the need to write about vague economic and business benefits.

**Q3 (b)**

This was generally done rather better than 3(a) with candidates addressing issues like the environmental impact (particularly global warming and pollution), cost, safety and danger, entertainment for the wealthy few and the unrealistic nature of the Source's aims. The earthquake in Haiti was frequently used to support comments on the better use of money. Very few seemed aware that the Source reflected the opinion of a small group and seemed to believe that this was happening now and that one could simply pop down to the travel agency and book a flight. Many developed the view that the money could be better spent on solving problems on earth such as global poverty, cancers and dealing with the current fiscal situation. Weaker responses lost focus on the recreational angle and went on flights of fancy about the wider universe, the risk of potential alien encounters, the time taken to get to other planets and the general dangers of "the unknown". One candidate was wary of meeting dragons!

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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

### **Please note:**

For **June 2010** and beyond centres should be aware that this unit will be in a new format. AQA will produce this unit as a **combined 'Question Paper/Answer Booklet' with an insert for the Source Material**. The actual style/type of the questions themselves will be retained.

Examination Officers have received notification of the changes affecting this and other subjects. However, further information, details and examples of the changes are available on the [Examination Officers](#) pages of the AQA website.