**AQA**

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

**General Certificate of Education**

# General Studies 1766
*Specification B*

**GENB2    Space**

# Report on the Examination

*2010 examination - June series*

# GENB2     Space

## General Comments

Time management is still an issue for a number of candidates. It emerged in two different forms. The first was simply running out of time at the end and not budgeting on three lots of 30 minutes and so writing very short answers to 3(b) or providing no response at all. The other is a bit more subtle with candidates allocating their 90 minutes into three parcels and then running out of time on the last part of each. This meant that 1(c) and 2(c) were often answered more briefly or in greater haste than the other parts of the questions.

Quality of English was generally good but there was evidence of atrocious handwriting which made a number of scripts very difficult to read. A related issue is the continued use of pale inks when the rubric clearly states that it must be black. As in January, there is evidence of the specification having been taught, with relatively few candidates telling the examiners that everything is a mystery to them.

It is worth reiterating a point made in the January report which seems to have been grasped by successful candidates and consequently disadvantages less able ones, namely that questions 1(a) and 1(c) and all three parts of question 2 require 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 just that. Four or five points may get them to the top of Level 2 but exemplification is the gatekeeper to Level 1. Level 3 requires a different type of response and that is addressed below. Bullet-pointed answers to these questions were thankfully largely missing this time although extended bullet-pointed answers are acceptable for question 1(b)(ii).

Also, there was evidence of candidates mis-reading the questions, particularly in questions 2(a), 2(b), 3(a) and 3(b). These questions asked candidates to provide a one-sided response in favour of the statement. In these instances valuable time was lost.

## Question 1(a)

There was much greater use of the data this session. Candidates seemed better prepared and more adept at making specific references either by quoting directly from the Sources or by making simple calculations to illustrate a point, often identifying trends and changes. However, many still chose to ignore the data altogether and simply make a number of unsubstantiated or generalised assertions. More able candidates analysed the data whilst less able ones merely described it. Most candidates attempted some sort of balanced argument and tried to draw conclusions. Less able candidates missed the point that Source A only related to England and that there was not a decline in all religious groups identified. More able candidates tended to notice this and also picked up on the absence of some other religious or spiritual groupings from the data. Less able candidates tended to assume that the relatively low percentage of non-Christians meant a lack of religiosity and did not relate the percentage to the population as a whole. There was a tendency to present two opposing points rather than to integrate the ideas which produced a lack of cohesion in the overall example.

A candidate who does not make use of and refer to the data is unlikely to score more than half marks.

### Question 1(b)(i)

This was done a lot better than in previous sessions but there were still too many candidates who were unable to calculate percentages, with or without the permitted calculator. Far too many did not recognise, nor identify the decrease in attendance and consequently failed to achieve full marks despite being able to do the maths. It was pleasing to note that very few failed to make an attempt at this question. Many used their answer in reference to other parts of Question 1. Candidates are advised to show their working, so that marks can be awarded for method even if the final answer is wrong.

### Question 1(b)(ii)

Most candidates could provide the three reasons, though marks were often lost because there was no explanation or expansion. A "glorified" bullet-pointed answer is quite acceptable here and candidates who write words to the effect of: "The first reason is ....". "A second reason is ..." make it very easy for the examiner to award marks. Many candidates still write more than is necessary in response to this question.

### Question 1(c)

Many candidates provided good answers to this part but a significant number were confused by the phrase "integrating communities". This question allowed the candidate to write about how religion could integrate communities in terms of providing a focus for everyday life and wrote very well about the importance of faith communities for Britain's ethnic minorities or the role of religion in rural life, for example. Others drew on how religious pluralism led to better understanding between different religious groups, the role of education or how religion could create conflict with some specific references to Northern Ireland and to urban unrest on mainland Britain due to a lack of understanding. Sadly, a lot of candidates confused the question with a more general one on multiculturalism and wrote about music, dress, food, fashion and racism in a more general context. Many also failed to pick up on the specific reference to the United Kingdom in the question and wrote about such things as the Palestinian question and even Hitler and the Holocaust. There were, inevitably and very regrettably, a few candidates who used the question to voice unacceptable views usually through gross stereotyping and an often total absence of any knowledge or understanding of the real nature of Britain. However, there were some good references to extremism and bigotry which, when handled well, tended to be handled very well. Very few candidates managed not to achieve some degree of balance but sold themselves short by not making specific references, for example to festivals like Diwali or Christmas, or to cross-religious movements and events.

### Question 2(a)

Some candidates chose not to do what the question asked which was to explain why recycling is 'increasingly necessary' and instead wrote about different methods of recycling giving long and often tedious accounts of how they and their local council undertook the process. There was evidence of poor understanding of the science behind global warming but most candidates were aware of the issues surrounding the need to conserve finite resources, social and political considerations and the issues of the "throw-away" society. Very few were unable to tackle this question but there were inevitably some who wrote two-sided answers or wrote against recycling.

**Question 2(b)**

This was not as well done as 2(a) with some of the same issues, often arguing against landfill and unnecessarily writing a balanced two-sided response. It was evident that some candidates had never heard the term landfill or did not understand. Some had the idea that it was simply a method of storing garbage until it could be recycled. It was clear that many candidates had the notion that landfill was bad and so could not think of much to say in its favour; paraphrasing Disraeli when asked for his view on sin, they were against it.

**Question 2(c)**

Less able candidates simply did not address the actual question and often gave rehearsed answers about recycling ideas, writing about such things as bottle and can banks at supermarkets and the different coloured boxes and bins they had at home. On the positive side, there were some very good evaluative answers dealing with issues surrounding incineration, dumping at sea and exporting waste abroad that dealt with scientific, environmental, social, economic and moral issues. Many wanted to fire the waste into space (impractical) or bury it ('landfill') or store it in big warehouses (unrealistic). Bizarre answers included saving it all for bonfire night or Hallowe'en, organising community events around the waste and burning it as to do this would be more environmentally friendly than incineration (*sic*). This question does require evaluation of the ideas proposed, something lost on many candidates.

**Question 3(a)**

On the downside, there are still candidates who wish to write a balanced two-sided argument for this question and for 3(b) where an argument in favour of the proposition is required. On the plus side, there were some very clear answers that equated building and urban status although most got hung up on tourism as the only real reason to justify city status. Few candidates strayed very far from the source and even fewer understood the reason for the inclusion of the Arnos Grove underground station and chose to write about why the underground system attracted people to London. The most popular non-source example was the Eiffel Tower which was acceptable because of its shop, restaurant, offices and other 'building' features. Better candidates did use their own knowledge and wrote about buildings like York Minster and Edinburgh Castle.

This question allows the candidate to write more freely and several came unstuck with a format too close to 2(a) and 2(b) and delivered a very narrow response based on a couple of examples. Dubai and Kuala Lumpur were also popular choices in terms of status through buildings but many candidates wrote about countries and not towns and cities. Many candidates used interesting local examples to good effect.

**Question 3(b)**

This was not as well done as 3(a) and some candidates fell into some of the same traps. Far too many wrote about areas of natural beauty like the Lake District without linking the region to an urban area. Seaside towns (Brighton, and Blackpool in particular) and religious centres (Lourdes, Jerusalem, *inter alia*) fared rather better as examples as did specific and unique centres like Wimbledon, Castle Donnington, Las Vegas and Glastonbury. Few candidates seemed to recognise that their own home town might have attractions and ignored shopping centres, football and sea ports. The only regular exception seemed to focus on Liverpool. As in 3(a) examples are absolutely crucial to this question and the skill of being able to write a coherent argument that develops key issues and ideas.

Better candidates focused on the function of the urban area and how it provided something beyond its appearance.  Many candidates wrote about the importance of the inhabitants and the ethos that was generated by a town being welcoming or not.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the <u>Results statistics</u> page of the AQA Website.