



General Certificate of Education

General Studies 2766 *Specification B*

GENB3 Power

Report on the Examination *2010 examination - June series*

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General Comments

Most candidates attempted three questions, as required, covering the two compulsory questions, 1 and 2, and a choice of essay, question 3 or 4. There was some over-reliance on the texts for information, particularly in the compulsory questions, and a shortage of material from the candidates' own knowledge, despite this being suggested in the 'Advice' on the front cover and being part of the rubric for 'Section A' and 'Section B'. This adversely affected marks for Assessment Objective 1 "Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines".

Questions 1 and 2 overview

As in January, the task of having to provide one side of an argument caused some difficulties. Both questions suffered from this problem and the marks for some candidates were low as a result. Some quite detailed responses argued little of relevance, but could have scored well using the same material but adopting the angle called for in the question. Candidates need to understand that this is an academic exercise in arguing from a single point of view, one with which they may well not agree; it builds on some of the skills first utilised in GENB2, questions 2 and 3.

A number of responses limited themselves to commenting on the texts provided, sometimes with little concern for the task. Others took a balanced approach and self-penalised, as a proportion of their answer earned them little or no credit.

Question 1

Good responses recognised that the texts offered points about the merits of experience and expertise. Developing from the House of Lords, some argued they did not suffer the problems faced by those seeking election; the need to win and retain popularity; the parochial concerns of constituencies. Additional material varied from references to the media and businesses, to doctors, teachers and others in professional occupations. Use was also made by some of material from philosophy with references to Locke, Hume and Mill, amongst others, with others using their historical knowledge from a variety of periods.

Less able candidates lifted material from the texts indiscriminately, discussing the issues around stem-cell research and confusing members of the Lords with MPs. Some were concerned about the right of the public to exercise power and many ignored the reference to "best exercised".

Question 2

Good responses recognised the power of the Media and the importance of customer feedback as a form of check. Examples came from a variety of areas, including Psychology, Sports Studies and Business, with good references to Ofcom, *The One Show*, *Despatches* and the Royal Family.

Less assured responses confused the "public interest" with what the public are interested in, and argued about whether checks are necessary rather than "sufficient". A number of candidates thought that the BBC website could be used to pass on complaints about the House of Lords for action. A lot were cynical about the BBC and whether complaints really received

attention, whilst many wrote at some length about Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand without applying this example from the text to the question.

Questions 3 and 4 overview

Candidates were again more confident with the format of an essay requiring a balanced response. Some good use was made of a number of the texts and good answers provided a balanced argument and came to a firm conclusion. Weaker essays were brief, often less than two sides of an answer booklet, poorly structured and lacking in focus.

Candidates are rewarded, as in questions 1 and 2 for examples from their own knowledge, AO1, and this is necessary in order to reach the higher levels. This knowledge might come from various subjects or from general knowledge and both essays offered ample opportunity for candidates to draw on contemporary events.

Question 3

Less popular than question 4, nevertheless, this produced some very strong answers. Good use was made of texts B and C, which encouraged some wide-ranging discussion of the media, politics, medicine and scientific research, with a number making use of knowledge from other subjects on the need for ethical guidelines. The term “public interest” was sometimes interpreted quite broadly to include businesses, but this could score well if properly presented.

A number wrote about the expenses scandal and media celebrities, with varying degrees of success, often depending on whether the focus was on ethics or on a personal view of individuals like John Terry, David Laws and Kerry Katona.

Less able candidates did not understand “ethics” and a few confused the term with ‘ethnic’, leading to some discussion on racism that was of little significance. However, there was some sophisticated argument around the morality of war, euthanasia and assisted suicide that marked out some very able students.

Question 4

This question gave candidates plenty of scope for examples from a variety of sources. There were many references to offensive comedy, with examples from Jimmy Carr, Frankie Boyle and *Mock the Week*, as well as various celebrities and other role models, notably Sarah Ferguson, who received a balanced discussion of their actions and treatment. A lot of answers dealt with the importance of freedom of speech for both the media and individuals and the importance of the right to privacy for everyone. Good essays covered both “deceive” and “offend” and came to a conclusion that took a clear position on the issue of whether this should be allowed.

Some candidates did not cover both “deceive” and “offend” and produced narrow responses on just the media or politics as a result. There were some who discussed celebrity and media behaviour at length, asking if it could be fair to stalk and pry into the lives of the famous, and how would we like it? In the process, the focus on the task was lost and essays became a personal view on the merits, or otherwise, of the tabloid press.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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