



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2011**

General Studies B

GENB1

(Specification 2765)

Unit 1: Conflict

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2011 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

GENB1 Conflict

General Comments

The paper was accessible to candidates. Most answers contained a good range of appropriate examples, although weaker responses tended to be over-reliant on examples from the question stem.

The majority of candidates used the cues provided to structure their answer. This paper tests all four of the assessment objectives (AOs), although not with equal weighting. As in previous papers, 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 continues to prevent some from accessing the higher assessment levels.

Question 1

Most candidates made a reasonable attempt at this question. They followed the three cues closely. Most, therefore, began with a definition of the news and were able to illustrate that news means different things to different people.

There was a general consensus that broadsheets contain more factual information, broadly related to current affairs, than the tabloids that tend to focus on celebrity news and gossip. Examples of both types of “news” were offered such as the Japanese tsunami and the life and loves of Katie Price or various footballers. The best answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the political persuasion of various newspapers such as *The Telegraph* and the *Daily Mirror*, and showed how that position influences their selection of relevant news as well as the way in which it is covered. Many candidates were critical of the style of reporting in *The Sun* and its choice of news.

Some candidates drifted from the focus of the question and made lengthy comparisons of newspapers with magazines. Whilst this could be relevant to the question, descriptions of the layout, colour and contents of magazines were too detailed.

Many candidates were aware that the role of newspapers is changing as news becomes more readily and instantly available via other media such as the internet, television and *Twitter*. Some went on to evaluate that position, explaining that newspapers have had to adapt to a changing market, to sell newspapers to a younger generation that demands a different style of newspaper, if they are to stay in business.

Cue 3 was less well-addressed than the other cues. Most candidates addressed this cue at the level of journalists’ opinions leading to exaggerated and biased accounts of events. Weaker responses showed little awareness of the opinions of journalists and editors that is prevalent in many newspapers. The best answers discussed the influence of newspaper ownership, such as Rupert Murdoch’s, and editorial opinion, often on political issues. These candidates usually gave specific examples such as *The Sun* newspaper changing its political allegiance, after twelve years of supporting the Labour party, just before the last general election.

Question 2

Most candidates answered this question reasonably well. The majority covered all three cues to some degree.

The least successful answers were too generic; a one-sided tirade of problems facing young people today. In some cases these answers were inaccurate, assuming, for example, that young people today start their working lives earlier than in the past. They often lacked structure and made little or no reference to specific responsibilities of young people or, conversely, listed many responsibilities with little or no reference to opportunities.

The majority of candidates focused at least on educational opportunities, an area where candidates clearly have first-hand experience. There was much valid discussion of the benefits of free education and opportunities in further and higher education, juxtaposed with the pressures to achieve high A Level grades and follow a university course, with its inherent financial burden. Some candidates broadened their answers to include changes in technology, such as the internet and mobile phones giving opportunities for better communication and information, counter-balanced with the responsibility to use the internet safely and the problems of peer pressure to own the latest hi-tech gadget. Other areas covered successfully were employment, the role of women, material possessions and leisure.

In terms of the second cue, what society expects of young people, candidates mainly focused on the poor image of young people portrayed in the media. Many referred to the stereotype of young people as abusers of drugs and alcohol or wearing “hoodies” as if to appear threatening. There was an understanding that older people want young people to be the same as they once were, indicative, perhaps, of the generation gap. The most astute answers were aware that young people have the responsibility for future society; to address the problems caused by global warming as well as the world economy.

Question 3

Although the question stem refers to Nativity plays in primary schools, the question itself gave candidates the opportunity to discuss any developments that might encourage tolerance of the beliefs of others. Many candidates, however, restricted their answers to the example given. This often limited their answers in terms of examples and depth of discussion. Many did not progress beyond their disbelief that Nativity plays have been replaced with multi-faith performances.

Those who did progress beyond the stem gave a variety of relevant examples to illustrate the ways in which schools encourage tolerance. The most common examples were Religious Studies lessons, celebration days, school visits to places of worship, assemblies, mixed-religion groupings and anti-bullying policies and procedures. Weaker answers simply listed these examples but did not develop them.

Many answers dealt only with the positive outcomes of schools’ attempts to develop tolerance. These included the promotion of equality, understanding, lower levels of bullying and discrimination, and societal harmony. More thorough answers also considered the possible negative outcomes, such as possible offence to Christians and a loss of tradition in a country that is still predominantly Christian.

As with other questions, Cue 3 was less well addressed than the other cues because candidates did not relate it to the question. A small number of candidates noted that in an increasingly secular society, religion could be said to be misplaced on the school curriculum,

although, without the input of schools, it was felt that religion would become even less important. Some gave some valid examples of developments that encourage tolerance outside the school environment, such as the Kick-racism-out-of sport campaign, the secular education system in France, and local examples such as the celebration of Divali in Leicester.

Question 4

Many answers were focused on weapons technology only. There was a superficial interpretation of “communications technology” with candidates often referring to world leaders using mobile phones to avert war. A few were aware of communications technology such as drones and spy planes, and argued convincingly that their use had depersonalised war and so made it more likely, but generally candidates showed a lack of knowledge in this area.

The majority of candidates presented a balanced argument recognising that weapons can be used defensively as well as aggressively. The core argument that the possession of weapons results in greater power and the temptation to solve disputes by using weapons was well rehearsed. Similarly, most candidates recognised that weapons can act as a deterrent to war due to the fear factor. Better answers incorporated the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction and many explained the Cold War to illustrate the point. Even where candidates did not have this level of knowledge, many referred to nuclear weapons giving the specific example of devastation at Hiroshima. A few confused the issue of nuclear weapons with Chernobyl and Fukushima.

Examples of wars such as Afghanistan and Vietnam, rather than the technology used, were common. Iraq was frequently quoted as an example of war caused by the search for weapons, which clearly increased the likelihood of war.

Candidates should take care to read the question properly. Not all responses related to modern weapons and communications technology. There were many examples of older technology, such as weapons used during the First World War, which might have been relevant had they been used as a comparison with modern weapons. Also, some candidates discussed weapons in general, such as the increase in knife and gun crimes on the streets. This was a misinterpretation of the question, which clearly refers to war.

As with the other questions, Cue 3 was the least well-addressed. Good responses showed understanding that it is people that cause wars, not weapons and that people will always find a reason for war. These responses also discussed the danger of weapons being in the wrong hands, exemplified by terrorist activity such as 9/11 and the current situation in Libya.

Question 5

The question was generally understood by most candidates. Some, however, focused more on the benefits of competition to companies rather than to the consumer, particularly in relation to advertising and companies making a profit. Both these aspects can be related to the consumer highlighting the importance of candidates taking care to answer the question set.

Many candidates focused on electronic goods only, restricting their answer to the example given in the stem. This was sometimes developed and exemplified, with a discussion of the pros and cons of competition for customers. The key areas of choice, quality, customer

service and price were covered to some degree by the majority. Better answers also referred to research and development to improve products for the customer.

Relevant examples were generally included. *Apple* and its various products featured heavily, as an example of a benefit in terms of good quality, but also as a negative for customers in terms of must-have products, such as the iPhone and iPad that customers will purchase regardless of price. Those candidates who went beyond electronics gave good examples such as *John Lewis* for good quality and price (“Never Knowingly Undersold”), *Primark* for poor quality, price and sweat-shop labour, supermarkets such as *Tesco* for promotions and discount deals, and *Toyota* for product development.

In response to Cue 2, candidates were aware of the impact of competition on smaller companies, who might not be able to survive the battle to out-price competitors, thereby reducing customer choice. There was some good understanding of the formation of potential monopolies, especially in large supermarket chains, which would also reduce choice and low prices for customers in the long-run.

Some candidates picked up on the reference to internet sales and specialist shops in the stem and how these can be beneficial to consumers in terms of convenience and product-knowledge, but they also recognised that customers are unable to see the product and might pay dearly for a brand name.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion