



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2012**

General Studies B

GENB3

(Specification 2765)

Unit 3: Power

Report on the Examination

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GENB3 Power

General Comments

Most candidates now understand the requirements of the paper and answered the compulsory questions and chose one of the two essay questions as required. The paper makes a number of references to the need for candidates to provide examples of their own to support their arguments and these were evident, although sometimes they were offered without any development as to their significance or relevance. Candidates need to amplify their examples, showing how they relate to the question and this is as true of Questions 1 and 2 as of Questions 3 and 4.

Questions 1 and 2 overview

The need to provide a one-sided argument was not always appreciated in Questions 1 and 2. Candidates appear to struggle if they do not personally agree with the position that they have been asked to adopt, and this was more evident in Question 1 with a number of candidates arguing that our rights were far from protected.

This was the first time the instruction had been given to argue against a proposal and candidates seemed to be happy to do this; Question 2 was generally better done than Question 1.

Question 1

Weaker responses merely reiterated the texts, with frequent descriptions of the workings of the Family Intervention Programme, Acceptable Behaviour Contract and our Human Rights. Candidates relying wholly on the texts can not achieve above Level 3, a maximum of 12/20 marks, and to achieve even this they need to develop and analyse what they glean from the texts.

At a basic level, when referring to the Family Intervention Programme, for example, this often included explaining how this helped victims as well as offenders and was a benefit to taxpayers.

Examples usually came from the UK, with frequent, relevant, references to the *News of the World* and ‘phone hacking, although this example was also one which had a tendency to lead candidates into an unnecessary discussion of how our rights were also not protected. A number of candidates made good use of comparisons with other countries, with Libya, Egypt and Syria frequently mentioned.

When Text B on the Human Rights Law was well-used, candidates developed it with reference to various anti-discrimination laws, notably on gender and race, and some developed convincing arguments around the rights afforded to immigrants and EU residents.

Question 2

“Argue against” clearly appealed to a lot of candidates. Good use was made of text C and the line “critics have no power at all” was often quoted. Better candidates went on to explain this and there were good references to the works of Tracy Emin, Damien Hirst and Banksy. Good use was also made of the content of the “Chicken Out” text to point up the lack of influence of celebrities, with some developed arguments around the failures of Jamie Oliver’s various healthy-eating campaigns and the need to save money on food shopping, particularly in the current economic climate. Weaker responses were distracted by celebrities into arguing for their influence, in fashion in particular.

Better responses discussed other influences on our choices, ranging from philosophical discussions on free will, to the influence of parents and peers. A lot concluded that our choices may be influenced by celebrities, but that they are not determined by them.

Questions 3 and 4 Overview

Question 3 was rather more popular than Question 4, which some did not recognise as being about identity rather than globalisation. A lot of candidates did refer to the texts, some exclusively so. Text reference merits reward, but without further examples of the candidate's own, will not rise above Level 3.

The optional questions are worth 40 marks and one hour is available to complete the chosen one. Given this, essays are frequently briefer than expected, lack the balance of a two-sided argument and are poorly concluded. The lack of a plan for the majority of candidates seems to suggest that they are not using their time to think and organise an argument before beginning to write their essays.

Question 3

Although the question was on 'law and punishment', many chose to focus on one or other of these two areas, with punishment being preferred. There was some good discussion of prisons and their purpose with candidates able to deal well with deterrence, retribution and rehabilitation. The advantages of being able to afford better legal representation for the well-off and the fairness of a jury trial were often considered.

Some weaker responses lapsed into opinion and assertion, usually around the issues of capital punishment, the need for longer sentences and the perception that prisons are not tough enough on inmates. Centres and candidates might well make use of this question as a guide to the difference between fact and opinion, assertion and argument, which are key factors in the mark scheme for AO3.

Question 4

As previously mentioned, some candidates did not read the question carefully, ignored the issue of identity and wrote at length about globalisation. However, when done well, this question produced some very thoughtful responses. There was some good focus on the idea of Britishness, with references to food, industry and the monarchy, and how this has changed with the development of a multi-cultural society. The BNP and EDL were often mentioned and condemned for their attitudes. Sport was often well-used as a focus for national identity, as well as local identity, with football and the Olympics being used as specific examples.

The importance of the EU, with references to the pound and Euro, and extent of Americanisation were discussed and fashion was a frequent example, with better candidates recognising that style could remain individual because of the range of products available.

Weaker responses had too much focus on businesses rather than people as a whole and, although valid, were narrow in their interpretation of identity, concerning themselves with, for example, Cadburys being acquired by Kraft and how this was bad for Britain.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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