



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Level Examination

General Studies (Specification B)

GENB4

Unit 4 Change

Specimen paper for examinations in June 2010 onwards
The question paper for this unit uses the [new numbering system](#)

Insert

STIMULUS MATERIAL

These texts are to be read in conjunction with unit GENB4.

The questions arise from the texts, but they should **not** be answered by reference to these texts alone.

Text A

The English Castle

Castles are an essentially paradoxical form of architecture. At the most basic level they seek to fulfil the diametrically opposed functions of secure fortress and comfortable home, but high levels of security are incompatible with spacious, airy buildings, and vice versa.

The essentially contradictory nature of the castle, with all its complexities, allows no room for absolutes. Take, for example, the notion of impregnability. There can be no such thing as an impregnable castle since its strength depends on the numbers and morale of the opposed forces, on the weapons and food at their disposal, and on the length of time each side is able to continue the struggle. The best that can be said is that a castle, if stoutly defended, would be extremely difficult and costly to take by assault; in the end, though, every fortress must fall when its supplies have been exhausted.

The basic home/fortress dichotomy* is only the principal of a host of greater and lesser factors which influenced castle design. The status of the builder, his financial resources, the availability of different building materials and skilled craftsmen to work them, the choice of site, the security of the region, the power of the king, the time available for construction and the experience of the designer: all these and other factors had their part to play in shaping the final creation.

Different reasons, equally complex, have dictated which castles have survived, and consequently how we view them. Since their construction, most, including all those built of timber, have disappeared, leaving only bumps on the ground. The survival of one rather than another (Windsor, say, instead of a ruin such as Tintagel) is the merest accident of history.

Buildings reveal attitudes and the castles we have built and not built since the end of the Middle Ages reflect the highly charged and contradictory nature of the symbol. Writers and historians, painters and politicians have, as they will, taken the past and twisted it into some sort of order, some attempt at meaning. All that they have felt and given us, all the mixed-up ideas of pageantry and imprisonment, nobility and torture, fuse into a double image, which, given the dual nature of the building, is rather appropriate. The castle is a symbol of oppression and dominance, a storehouse of evil, and at the same time a place of refuge and safety, a protection against enemies: it depends so much on whether we are inside or outside the walls. Today the ivy which smothered ruins a century ago is being cleared; walls are excavated, lawns laid and knowledge extended; we know more about castles than did Byron or Wordsworth, though probably less than we think we do.

Source: FRANÇOIS MATARASSO, The English Castle (Cassell), 1993

* dichotomy – combination of two contrasting functions

† pele tower – look-out tower

Text A continued

MEDIEVAL CASTLES IN ENGLAND

	On private land	Maintained by English Heritage	In private hands but open to the public	
South East	19	23	30	+ earthworks in Beds, Bucks, Essex, Kent, etc.
South West	12	17	10	+ fortified houses in Devon.
Midlands	12	8	18	+ earthworks in Leics, Notts, Warwicks.
North West	4	9	9	+ pele towers in Cumbria and Lancs.
North East	12	21	5	+ pele towers in Northumbria.
Total: England	59	78	72	

Note: There are some 1500-2000 castle sites in England. Of these, the medieval castles above have surviving masonry.

Text B

The Internet, or the Net as it's more often called, is a real bag of tricks. You can send documents worldwide in a flash, find an answer to any question, shop the globe, hear new music, dabble in the stock market, visit art galleries, read books, play games, chat, catch up on your latest hometown news, make new friends with similar interests, grab free software, manage your bank account or just fritter away your spare time surfing the Web.

That's not to say the Internet is merely something to play on when you get home from work. Far from it. It's firmly entrenched in the workplace. Millions of companies already use it to promote their products, take orders and support their customers. More communication is done by email than the phone, fax and printed letter combined.

A passable knowledge of the Internet in 1997 was enough to land you a job. Today it is becoming a prerequisite in many fields – a case of get online or get left behind. But the most worrisome aspect is not the difficulty in getting online, but the time involved in keeping up-to-date, and its stress on our physical, mental and social well being.

Still, like it or not, the Net is the closest thing yet to an all-encompassing snapshot of the human race. Never before have our words and actions been so immediately accountable in front of such a far-reaching audience. If we're scammed, we can instantly warn others. If we believe there's a government cover-up, we can expose it through the Net. If we want to be heard, no matter what it is we have to say, we can tell it to the Net.

Source: ANGUS J KENNEDY, The Rough Guide to the Internet (8th Edn.), London: Rough Guides Ltd., 2002

Text C

This country is already integrated

I have the full findings of an NOP (National Opinion Polls) survey commissioned by a recent Channel 4 programme, which set out to 'prove' Muslim alienation. What the numbers actually reveal is convergence between the general population and the Muslim sample. Both groups were asked whether the July bombings were justified because of British support for the US war on terror. Almost the same proportion of respondents in each sample agreed with the statement: 22 and 20 per cent. This shared view never appeared in the programme.

In spite of obscurantists* and racists, Britain is one of the most integrated countries in the Western world, and, yes, I do include Muslims in that sweeping, happy generalisation.

In that same NOP survey, there were other illuminating findings: 94 per cent of the Muslims surveyed disagreed that Muslims should keep themselves separate from the rest of society; 61 per cent agreed that British children had too many freedoms; the figure for the general population was higher – 72 per cent. So much for 'our' values versus 'theirs'.

We have higher rates of intermarriage than anywhere in the Western world and they are growing. Almost all my professional female Muslim friends have married out – some husbands converted, other didn't. The families have reacted with disappointment, pragmatism, or joy, but no excessive fury.

In most of our inner cities, previous racial and ethnic homogeneity gets broken down by new arrivals from abroad or people buying their first properties, the young mostly who cannot afford more affluent localities. In cities, workplaces are getting more, not less, mixed.

Source: adapted from YASMIN ALIBHAI-BROWN, *The Independent*, 28 August 2006

* obscurantists - opponents

Text D

Religion and Postmodernity

Globalisation has ensured that religions originating outside the West have now come to exert an impact on Western societies. Religion becomes a 'cultural site' since any society, including those in the West, can be influenced by various forms of religiosity across the world, which can then generate their own localised expressions of faith.

The so-called 'new religious movements' (NRMs) which have arrived on Western shores are by no means a new development: they have spread over the last 40 years or so. The inspiration for NRMs comes from various sources, but many are inspired by ancient mystical religions from the East, principally expressed in Hindu and Buddhist thought, which includes belief in the unity of humankind and nature. Holistic views of mind, body and the spirit stress the limits of science and rationality and challenge some of the core values of Western society, as in Hare Krishna and the Bhagwan Rajneesh movement.

With the decline of traditional religious beliefs, religious activity in the postmodern world is enhanced in a culture of 'pick'n'mix'. Practically anything can be transformed into an expression of religion or grafted on to more traditional forms. New beliefs may merge with old ones. The New Age movement weaves together ancient faiths with contemporary cultural themes.

There has been an increase in the popularity of occultist practices. Today, over half the British population believes in fortune telling, and approximately one quarter believes in horoscopes. A sizeable percentage also believes in spiritualism and lucky charms.

% of British population	1970s	1980s	1990s
Belief in:			
Horoscopes	24	26	26
Fortune telling	48	54	53
Lucky charms	17	19	47
Spiritualism	11	14	14
Ghosts	19	28	31

Source: STEPHEN HUNT, *Sociology Review*, September 2003

Text E

The truth is relative

It was a striking claim. If the group of scientists who asserted that light has slowed down were right, it would have been a blow to one of the cornerstones of modern science. Ever since Einstein devised his special theory of relativity, scientists have held that the speed of light in a vacuum is an absolute constant. Now it seems his most famous equation, $E=mc^2$, may no longer hold true.

The fact that the constancy of the speed of light is now being challenged, and by astronomy, should come as no surprise. As ever, astronomy is at the frontier of science. Like the wild west, this frontier is a lawless place; its inhabitants hold no respect for rules – even ones laid down by Einstein. Armed with improved telescopes, they are now able to see further into the cosmos, and with greater detail, than ever before. It has given them a new confidence. In the past, when their observations didn't fit the theory, they were inclined to disbelieve their results. Now they are more likely to accept what they see, and challenge the theory. As early as 1999 some physicists realised that they could solve several of the outstanding problems in cosmology if they accepted that the speed of light has changed. If the new evidence proves correct, and light really has slowed down, it won't be a disaster; it may actually solve more problems than it raises.

On the other hand, if the varying speed of light remains unexplained, it will be in good company. There is much about the world that we still don't understand. Despite centuries of endeavour, science is still a long way from finding all the answers. Newton's laws describe how gravity behaves, but how it works is still a mystery. Darwin's theory of natural selection tells us how species evolved, but we have no idea how life itself started. When Crick and Watson unravelled DNA they revealed the genetic building-blocks of our brain, but the source of our free will is still an enigma. And, although physicists have traced back the history of the universe to a millisecond after the big bang, that is not the question on everyone's lips. "Who cares about the half second after the big bang?" asked Fay Weldon. "What about the half second before?"

Where we came from, who we are and where we are going are the fundamental questions that people want answered. They have been around for thousands of years. Science may eventually find the answers, but expect a lot more mistakes along the way.

Source: MARTIN GORST, *The Guardian*, 17 August 2002

END OF STIMULUS MATERIAL

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