

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/11
Written Examination

Key messages

Candidates should read the questions carefully, looking at the key words, and answer the question set. This was particularly relevant in **Question 2** where there were some responses that gave an evaluation of the argument rather than the evidence as required in the question.

Candidates should make sure they leave enough time to answer all the questions properly. A good guide is the number of marks allocated to each question; this should help candidates to work out how long they should spend on each question.

One of the key skills for this paper is that of comparative evaluation, supported by precise reference to the passage and in relation to the question set.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content in order to evaluate the provenance, perspectives and argument to reach an overall judgment.

Brief and relevant quotations from the documents should be used to support evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised containing no more than a series of assertions or claims. This is crucial in **Questions 2 and 3**.

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents.

The strongest responses reached a supported judgment about the issue under consideration.

General comments

The overall standard of the responses was encouraging. There was no evidence in responses of misunderstandings of the passages and most responses demonstrated a good understanding of the demands of the questions. Candidates should be reminded to pay close attention to the command words used in each question.

It is encouraging to see some candidates applying a higher level skill by comparing the argument put forward in the passages in **Question 3**. Some of the weaker responses simply compared content or repeated, without evaluation, the argument of the authors. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

In **Question 2** several responses gave an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument rather than the evidence used. It is important to carefully read, and understand, the question.

Time did not seem to be an issue for this paper, though sometimes responses to the later questions, which are worth more marks, seemed to be a little rushed.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Only **brief** statements were required and could be copied directly from the text.

Typically, candidates could achieve full credit by stating: "They might help end national conflicts and provide a model for a new form of living". There were four possible benefits to choose from and no need to write extensively.

- (b) The question required the candidates to identify and explain two reasons. The best responses combined the identification and explanation of each reason into one or two sentences in a concise paragraph. While identification allows candidates to copy the author's words from the text, the explanation requires use of their own words or relevant paraphrasing of those of the author.

For example: *"Eco-cities could create a "frightening future that resembles apartheid (segregation)" as eco-cities allow the wealthier classes to move into expensive, gated communities that would not improve urban growth but rather create an escape for the wealthy and keep the poor in the slums.*

There has not been the creation of a "fully operational community" as these eco-cities are still in the planning stages and are "more grand vision than reality". Even Songdo does not have enough tenants for its commercial buildings.

Question 2

It was pleasing that the majority of responses included an assessment of strengths and weaknesses. However, several responses did not address the evidence used and instead evaluated the strength and weakness of the argument. Although these responses included some evidence, frequently the emphasis of was towards argument so credit could not be given.

For strengths of the evidence the best responses used examples like: *"In paragraph 3, the author uses quotes from a reporter from Wired Magazine to support his reasoning that eco-cities are not fully operational but more of a dream. The reporter from Wired is credible as he works for a reputable magazine that specialises in technological innovation. The reporter also visited the eco-city of Masdar, so he has the ability to see and experience it personally."* This clearly and concisely reviews the evidence used and relates it directly to the question posed.

For weaknesses of the evidence the best responses used examples like: *"The evidence used to support the author's second claim that eco-cities could lead to segregation does not have a source. The author uses "others" and "they" as a source so it makes the evidence weak. The author also provides informational evidence from a Songdo advert, which is relevant, yet also could be biased as it comes from a Songdo advertising agency that has a vested interest."* This shows a good understanding of the limitations of the sources of the evidence and the consequent lack of reliability.

Explanation of such aspects as the credibility of the author, the range of arguments and the use of language, were erroneously used in this context. Many responses did identify that much of the evidence was not clearly cited.

Question 3

There were two main approaches used to answer this question.

The first was to discuss the argument of the author of Document 1 separately from that of Document 2 and then attempt to synthesise the arguments to come to an overall judgment. This approach was only partially successful as the more difficult evaluation came at the end of the answer and was often limited in its scope. This approach also encouraged candidates to give much narrative description, in particular extensively quoting from what the authors **stated** rather than undertaking evaluation of the convincing nature of the argument. This limited credit awarded.

An example of stating and simply comparing information from the document without development is:

“Document 2 lays out solutions to the problems with eco-cities, while Document 1 only gives the problems. The author of Document 2 explains that the government should back off and workers’ wages should be increased to give them the opportunity to reside in an eco-city, while the author of Document 1 just states why the eco-cities would not work.”

This does not show evaluation of the arguments; it just shows the differences between the two Documents.

The second approach was to directly compare the two documents throughout the answer. The best responses did this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each approach. There was no correct answer and responses could argue that Document 1 or Document 2 were more credible or that both were equally so. Weaker responses tended to directly compare the content of the passages without evaluating relative strengths. Many responses included the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility of the authors and the amount of supporting evidence provided. The best responses gave clear examples from the documents while weaker responses simply relied on a formulaic approach of what should constitute a strong argument without referencing examples. Other answers were frequently superficial and relied on undeveloped quotes from the text.

The best responses used the second method as they were able to methodically evaluate the relative strengths of the argument, using appropriate examples, before coming to a reasoned judgment at the end.

“Document 1 is written in a reputable construction magazine, which is relevant to building eco-cities, although the background and experience of the author is not clearly stated. The credibility of the author in Document 2 is higher as she was the Managing Director of the World Bank Group and led the Indonesian National Development Planning Agency. Therefore, she has a good reputation in the field and a lot of experience on (sic) the topic.”

This gives a developed evaluation of the relative strengths of the authors.

“In Document 1 the author provides a lot of international evidence such as that of Tianjin and Songdo to provide a global analysis of the topic. Document 2 focuses on China, on the other hand, but provides a very thorough analysis of Chinese urban growth conditions as a case study. Both sources provide statistical evidence to support their conclusions and reasoning....Although both documents have their weaknesses, Documents 1 and 2 are equally convincing about the future of urbanisation.”

This gives a clear evaluation of the difference in global consideration and comes to a balanced conclusion.

Overall, some responses included assumptions based on preconceived ideas about what makes a good argument, rather than reading and evaluating the passages clearly. There was some evidence in responses of critical thinking terminology in this context which if applied and explained well enhanced the evaluation. However, several responses used critical thinking statements that were not related to the documents in this paper.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/12
Written Examination

Key messages

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One of the key skills for this paper is that of comparative evaluation, supported by precise reference to the passage and in relation to the question set.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content in order to evaluate the provenance, perspectives and argument to reach an overall judgment.

Brief and relevant quotations from the documents should be used to support evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised containing no more than a series of assertions or claims. This is crucial in **Questions 2 and 3**.

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents.

The strongest responses reached a supported judgment about the issue under consideration.

General comments

The overall standard of the responses was encouraging. There was no evidence in responses of misunderstandings of the passages and most responses demonstrated good understanding of the demands of the questions. It is encouraging to see some responses which apply the higher level skill of comparing the argument put forward in the passages in **Question 3**. The weaker responses compared content or repeated, without evaluation, the argument of the authors. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

There were few candidates who ran out of time. There were several extensive responses on **Question 1a and 1b** whereas a few lines would have been sufficient.

Stronger responses to questions 2 and 3 selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents demonstrating that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being considered. These responses included a supported judgment about the relative strengths and weaknesses in **Question 2** and how well Document 2 challenged Document 1 in **Question 3**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Only **brief** statements were required and could be copied directly from the text.

Correct responses included: *“We are likely to have two billion more mouths to feed by mid-century. There is a spread of prosperity across the world”*. There were three possible reasons to choose from and no need to write extensively.

- (b) The question required candidates to explain two ways the author thinks that we can reduce the environmental impact of agriculture. The best responses identified a way and then explained it in one or two sentences in a concise paragraph. While identification allows candidates to copy the author’s words from the text, the explanation requires use of their own words or relevant paraphrasing of those of the author. Simply copying large sections of the author’s words as explanation would be unlikely to gain credit.

For example: *“The author thinks we can reduce the environmental impact of agriculture by avoiding further deforestation. Deforestation does not help the hunger in the world and destroys the habitat of animals. Simply using the agricultural land we already have more efficiently would reduce the impact of agriculture on the environment.”*

“Another way is to reduce waste. The author quoted that “up to 50% of total food weight is lost or wasted before it is consumed”. The ways that society can help to reduce waste include serving smaller portions and eating leftovers.”

There were a number of different ways that could have been chosen, those responses that gave consideration to the development of the explanation gained most credit.

Question 2

Document 1 contained a number of accessible lines of reasoning and argument that candidates were able to identify. There were also clear distinctions between the strengths and weaknesses of the argument. Responses used the provenance of the document well with several expanding the credibility of the author in relation to the University’s reputation. Some recognised the weakness that this also gave him a potential vested interest. Responses were generally better around the weaknesses than the strengths with such issues as: recognising assumptions such as, organic and conventional farming could co-exist; lack of sources and other perspectives than environmental. For strengths, there was some reference to a counter-argument as well as clear examples relating to computerised tractors.

Strong responses kept to the point and focused on the argument rather than the detail of the content of the text. Weaker responses tended to give a narrative description of what the author had said without any specific evaluation of the meaning. For example, starting a paragraph with *“The author states....”* and then quoting extensively from the text without further development or explanation.

An example of strong identification of weakness is: *“The phrase “from our scientific research” shows the abuse of authority of expertise expected from the author. It is not enough to simply state, “scientific research” without properly sourcing it and proving its reliability.”*

For strengths: *“The author is an expert on this subject as he is the Director of the University of Minnesota’s Institute of the Environment. This indicates that he has advanced knowledge but could mean he might be biased as he wants the best for the environment. However, he shows with the use of counter-argument in relation to organic and non-organic farmers that he is giving a balanced view.”*

Question 3

The question asked how successfully Document 2 challenged Document 1. As Document 2 was a response to the argument of Document 1, candidates were able to evaluate how well each achieved their aims.

There were two main approaches used to answer this question. The first was to evaluate the argument of the author of Document 2 separately from that of Document 1 by analysing its strengths and weaknesses, then to attempt to compare the arguments in order to come to an overall judgment. This approach was only partially successful as the more difficult evaluation came at the end of the answer and was often limited in its

scope. Weaker responses contained much narrative description, in particular extensively quoting from what the authors stated rather than undertaking evaluation of the convincing nature of the argument. This limited credit gained.

The better responses stated the weakness of Document 2 in terms of the less academic tone and the vested interest of an organisation focusing on issues related to hunger rather than the bigger picture. Many identified that Gimenez was much more emotive than Foley and, indeed, attacked Foley's work without fully supporting his viewpoint.

The second approach was to directly compare the two documents throughout the answer. The best responses did this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each document at each stage. There was no correct answer and responses argued both that Document 2 did, and did not successfully challenge Document 1. Weaker responses tended to directly compare the content of the passages without evaluating relative strengths. Many responses picked out the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility of the authors and the amount of supporting evidence. However, very frequently this was not expanded to evaluate why one author was seen to be more credible. Answers were frequently superficial and relied on undeveloped quotes from the text. The best responses used the second method, methodically evaluating the relative strengths of the argument before coming to an appropriate judgment at the end.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/13
Written Examination

Key messages

Candidates should read the questions carefully, looking at the key words, and answer the question set. This was particularly relevant in **Question 2** where there were some responses that gave an evaluation of the argument rather than the evidence as required in the question.

Candidates should make sure they leave enough time to answer all the questions properly. A good guide is the number of marks allocated to each question; this should help candidates to work out how long they should spend on each question.

One of the key skills for this paper is that of comparative evaluation, supported by precise reference to the passage and in relation to the question set.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content in order to evaluate the provenance, perspectives and argument to reach an overall judgment.

Brief and relevant quotations from the documents should be used to support evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised containing no more than a series of assertions or claims. This is crucial in **Questions 2** and **3**.

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents.

The strongest responses reached a supported judgment about the issue under consideration.

General comments

The overall standard of the responses was encouraging. There was no evidence in responses of misunderstandings of the passages and most demonstrated good understanding of the demands of the questions. It is encouraging to see responses which apply the higher level skill of comparing the argument put forward in the passages in **Question 3**. Weaker responses simply compared content or repeated, without evaluation, the argument of the authors. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

There were few candidates who ran out of time. There were several extensive responses given on **Question 1a** and **1b** where a few lines would have been sufficient.

As a result, some answers to **Question 2** and **3** were not fully developed or supported by precise reference to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents demonstrating a secure grasp of the arguments being considered. Those responses that reached a supported judgment about the relative strengths and weaknesses in **Question 2** and the relative strengths of Documents 1 and 2 in **Question 3** gained most credit.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Only **brief** statements were required and could be copied directly from the text.

Correct responses included: *“Language extinction becoming more rapid today is due to population pressures and the spread of industrialisation.”*

- (b) The question required candidates to identify and explain two reasons. The best responses frequently combined the identification and explanation of each reason into one or two sentences in a concise paragraph. While identification allows the author’s words to be copied directly from the text, the explanation requires relevant paraphrasing of the author.

For example: *“Routinely repressing minority languages is a way of repressing the minorities themselves. Those that speak them are likely to lose a sense of belonging and their culture and become even more repressed.”*

“Research shows that some medical cures depend on the knowledge of traditional languages. When the languages go, the knowledge stored within them may also go.”

Question 2

Document 1 contained a number of accessible lines of reasoning and argument that were identified. There were also clear distinctions between the strengths and weaknesses of the argument. Responses generally dealt better with weaknesses than the strengths with such issues as: recognising assumptions such as knowledge being lost without finding a way to archive it; lack of sources of evidence (use of uncited statistics) and a vague analogy with extinction in the natural world. Strengths show that the author used reliable sources for some of the evidence e.g. Stephen Wurm and relevant global examples where languages are under threat.

Strong responses were focused on the argument rather than the detail of the content of the text. Weaker responses tended to give a narrative description of what the author had said without any specific evaluation of the meaning. For example, starting a paragraph with *“The author states....”* and then quoting extensively from the text without further development or explanation.

Some weaknesses are: *“Some assertions given are not supported or cited with evidence, so there may be questions of credibility. For her first assertion that 6,000 or so languages will be dead by 2050, no evidence or research backs up this statement.”*

Some strengths are: *“The writer gives examples (of) how languages are disappearing by providing real cases in European countries and East Africa. These relevant examples increase credibility and help to understand how languages are disappearing.”*

“It has a strong conclusion which prompts people that they should take action now to save the rich diversity of languages. It contains large numbers of quotations from people with expertise in the language field. For example, Stephen Wurm in his book ‘Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger of Disappearing’”

Question 3

There were two main approaches used to answer this question.

The first was to discuss the argument of the author of Document 1 separately from that of Document 2 and then attempt to synthesise the arguments to come to an overall judgment. This approach was only partially successful as the more difficult evaluation came at the end of the answer and was often limited in its scope. This approach also encouraged candidates to give much narrative description, in particular extensively quoting from what the authors **stated** rather than undertaking evaluation of the convincing nature of the argument. This limited credit that could be awarded.

The second approach was to directly compare the two documents throughout the answer. The best responses did this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each approach. There was no correct answer and candidates could, and did, argue that Document 1 or Document 2 were more credible or that both were equally so. Weaker responses tended to directly compare the content of the

passages without evaluating relative strengths. Many responses included the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility of the authors and the amount of supporting evidence provided. The best responses included clear examples from the documents while weaker responses simply relied on a formulaic approach of what should constitute a strong argument without referencing examples. Other answers were frequently superficial and relied on undeveloped quotes from the text.

The best responses used the second method as they were able to methodically evaluate the relative strengths of the argument, using appropriate examples, before coming to a reasoned judgment at the end.

Overall, some responses made assumptions based on preconceived ideas about what makes a good argument, rather than reading and evaluating the passages clearly.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/02
Essay

Key messages

- It is essential that both teachers and candidates are familiar with and fully understand the assessment criteria.
- The choice of essay question must provide opportunities to develop globally contrasting perspectives.
- Sources selected should offer firmly supported judgements or conclusions based on some combination of evidence, reason, argument, experience, authority and opinion.

General comments

The vast majority of the work seen by examiners was of good quality. Nevertheless, there are indications that some Centres have not fully embraced a skills-based approach; specialist subject knowledge is elevated at the expense of deconstruction and reconstruction. Support and training materials are available to assist with the development of this approach which, to some, may be quite new.

As with any academic essay, planning is key to success and only a small minority of submissions displayed deficiencies in this respect. Nearly all candidates utilised the permissible maximum word length very well with only a handful of over-length or substantially brief essays submitted. Essays were, generally, very well-structured and followed accepted conventions making them easy to read and follow.

The demands of the assessment criteria, seven in total and each carrying equal weight, are quite rigorous and, perhaps, many candidates do not fully appreciate the requirement to address all criteria. On the whole, illuminating introductions were followed by the presentation of evidence and arguments from multiple sources. These were generally understood to a high degree and analysed and evaluated with mixed results, often at great length. Whilst much of this work was strong, all too often little room was left for synthesis into coherent arguments which should then have been subjected to analysis and evaluation. Many essays concluded with substantial and appropriate discussions but, equally, many failed to do justice to the arguments presented and concluded with a brief paragraph which, often, resulted from reaching the word length permitted. In summation, an additional level of planning is required if candidates are to fully address all assessment criteria.

The strongest essays proceeded from a well-considered introduction and clearly many candidates comprehended the importance of engaging the reader from the outset. The syllabus requires candidates to communicate in non-specialist language and candidates were careful to define key terms and simplify concepts. Preliminary discussion regularly, and correctly, led to the emergence and delineation of globally contrasting perspectives. A rather smaller number also offered their personal standpoint on the question which can be used to good effect when reflecting in the conclusion as there is a clear starting point for reference, particularly if the standpoint has been justified in some way.

Comments on assessment criteria

The first criterion focuses on communication skills. As previously stated, there was near-universal appreciation of coherent essay structure, utilising appropriate, clear and fluent use of language. Accurate

citation of sources, whether in-text or footnoted, was generally achieved as was the provision of a bibliography. It should be noted that candidates who provide a lengthy bibliography with only some references cited are not meeting the requirement for effective citation. Candidates comfortably achieved level 3, with many reaching level 4 and, level 5 where the writing was particularly engaging.

The next two criteria consider the sources used. Criterion 2 examines the quality of source selection. Essays reliant on fact-based sources and devoid of argument are descriptive. Sources arguing the pros and cons of, for instance women in combat roles in the USA are contrasting but do not necessarily facilitate the development of a global dimension. Western academics providing argument and counterargument on the impact of deforestation on climate change constitute contrasting sources achieving level 3. However, the argument of a specific source arguing for deforestation in order to accelerate development provides globally contrasting sources. Candidates, generally, find it difficult to step outside familiar territory and research and locate sources of this globally contrasting character.

Criterion 3 concerns the treatment of sources both in terms of analysis and evaluation and, as such, should be considered as containing two distinct elements both of which require fulfilment for high achievement. Firstly, the degree to which candidates move beyond simply articulating and quoting source arguments and provide their own analysis demonstrating understanding determines the appropriate level of achievement. Achievement at level 3 was commonplace and the best candidates were able to provide a critical and questioning level of understanding. Treatment of the second half of the descriptors was highly mixed and, in many cases, clearly guided, or not, by Centres. Whatever the level of understanding, many candidates received lower grades as sources were either accepted at face value or given minimal evaluation. At the other extreme, candidates went to inordinate lengths to explain provenance and the credibility of authors. A balance needs to be struck between this and deconstructing arguments in order to determine their qualities.

The next three criteria assess the perspectives. Criterion 4 examines a candidate's capacity to accept or understand an opposing view, particularly one with which they do not agree. This does not necessarily need to be overtly stated. An essay which gives equal room and treatment to contrasting perspectives is indicative of empathy. However, this balance coupled with a clear appreciation of opposing views will raise the level of achievement. For instance, "whilst the negative impact of deforestation on the climate is proven by much scientific research, it is not difficult to understand those who argue for development regardless in the absence of funding from the developed world to compensate for preservation".

Criterion 5 relates to the use of globally contrasting perspectives. The determination of achievement at higher levels is dependent upon candidates striking the correct balance between evidence and analysis and providing sufficient of the former. Nevertheless, few candidates achieved higher levels precisely because contrasting sources are all too often assumed to equate to contrasting perspectives. Candidates should ensure that sources do not simply reinforce the same or similar argument.

The issues detailed above necessarily impact upon the sixth criterion. Commonly, candidates achieved level 3 as an understanding of source material. Strong candidates showed a consideration of perspectives which had been clearly cohered and delineated. Candidates occasionally submitted essays of high quality but which argued from a single perspective.

Criterion 7 assesses the quality of the conclusion. Whilst a supported and balanced conclusion is required, candidates are also assessed on their capacity for reflection. This underlines the importance of stating the personal standpoint as a point of reference for this reflection. Strong answers gave substantial or insightful reflection. The final element requiring candidates to make suggestions for further research was commonly overlooked altogether, reducing candidates' marks. Successful candidates accept that their research is incomplete, consider how they may further their own understanding and indicate what research would increase this.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/03
Team Project

Key messages

Successful learners took the opportunity to define and explain their issue at the outset.

Effective submissions clearly differentiated the learner's own perspective from those of others in the presentation.

A variety of techniques are available to successful presentations for signposting their structure and content within the 8 minute limit.

The best solutions were given substantial space for development within the presentation as a whole.

There was a good range of presentational techniques, ranging from intonation and gesture to physical objects and audiovisual materials designed to precisely support the argument being made.

The purpose of the Reflective Paper is to evaluate, not just describe, the learner's experiences.

General comments

There is evidence that most Centres have adapted well to the requirements and have accepted the educational invitation of the Team Project to produce work which shows strong qualities of collaboration, reflection and communication alongside the core skills of analysis and evaluation. The vast majority of learners recognise that an individual presentation is required, which makes their own argument for their own solutions arising from the group's research. The reflective paper, on the other hand, is an individual evaluation of the collaborative work which has taken place. As the Syllabus makes clear, group presentations cannot be accepted, a rule to which learners have largely adhered.

It is also very important to remember that presentation criteria can only be assessed if they are there in the presentation. For example, many learners used the reflective paper to produce strong differentiated evaluations of their own perspective in comparison to that of other team members and research they had done, but did not make this clear at all in the presentation. This meant that they could be given very little credit for differentiation of their own perspective, as this is assessed in the presentation only.

In the same way, the invitation to come to a final team solution should not interfere with the requirement for learners to previously come to a distinctive solution of their own, and argue for it in the presentation. The presentation is assessed on their ability to use it to outline and support their own solution.

Definition of the Issue and Quality of Research

There were several interesting issues explored by teams of learners during this session and it did seem that Centres had taken the advice to look carefully at the local and global significance of possible topics before allowing candidates to embark on a project that did not lend itself to in-depth examination. Common choices involved the environment and its resources such as the scarcity of fossil fuels, or water shortage and its effect on a country's population. There were some revealing examinations of major social issues such as gender inequality, gun control, and many other examples of social injustice. When it comes to defining the issue, this extends significantly beyond a dictionary-style definition of terms. The most successful learners demonstrate 'clearly defined' by maintaining a focus on the issue throughout their presentation, and by not

introducing extraneous or irrelevant material. The framing of the issue is also very important to how well it can be defined in presentations: 'How does global warming affect our environment if it exists and how do we fix it' made it very challenging for the learner to attempt to define what their issue was.

Learners' research is most clearly evidenced by clear citation in a way that is appropriate to a presentation, making plain what is being used and where it is from as it is used. A few presentations were able to offer evidence of 'varied' research – there were some instances of the candidate conducting their own survey, or carrying out an interview, but variation is also possible through a range of types of evidence, or geographical, social or historical contexts, used appropriately.

Differentiation of Perspective

The ability of learners to differentiate their own perspective from those of others in their team, or from other perspectives they have encountered in their research, is a key focus for assessment. By doing this they can show the distinctiveness of the approach they are presenting and demonstrate their understanding of how it differs from alternatives. A significant number of presentations did at least mention their own perspective. From here, a relatively straightforward way of advancing further is to identify the approaches taken by other team members at the same time, making the contrast with the learner's own obvious. The strongest presentations in this aspect spent a little time explaining how their perspective differed from others and even offering reasons why it was the best approach to take.

Learners also benefit from a clear understanding of what a perspective is. Global Perspectives understands a perspective as a coherent world view which responds to an issue, made up of a combination of arguments, evidence and assumptions. If the issue is combating drug abuse, for example, then the perspectives might be treatment and education, legal control or decriminalisation, for example, not 'heroin', 'cocaine' and 'hallucinogenic drugs'.

Structure of Argument

Successful presentations showed an appreciation of the importance of structuring their performance by doing things such as providing an overview in their introduction, summarising the main points at the end, referring forwards and backwards in the course of their presentation ('Now you remember I said I was going to...'), and using discourse markers ('firstly', 'lastly') to indicate links between different sections or arguments. In such cases, there is a sense of progression, an accumulation of arguments and evidence in support of them, and an overall coherence. These techniques produced higher levels of achievement than simply reading out the heading of each slide, or the minimal structure given by contrasting 'local' and 'global' examples.

It is very important that presentations are structured to fit within the 8 minute limit. This is the point up to which the presentation is marked, so if a presentation is 9 minutes long and the conclusion occurs in the final minute, then it will be marked as if no conclusion exists. Conversely, a very short presentation, of 2 or 3 minutes, does not allow for the opportunity to develop the issue or the learner's own argument.

Conclusions and Solutions

Where learners make the solution central to their presentation, they stand a much better chance of achieving success overall. In practical terms, this means introducing the solution sooner rather than later in the presentation. What then follows is exemplification (locally, globally) or perhaps evaluation of the solution, which provides progression and coherence to the presentation, and leads to a conclusion which is evidence-based and has reasoning behind it. A conclusion which is only a sentence or two long, which was often the case, is not going to allow the scope to come to an ending, outline a solution and support it with evidence from the preceding presentation.

Presentational Methods

Learners' scores for presentational methods could be improved by something as simple as maintaining eye contact with the audience. It is very hard for those presenting to demonstrate effective presentational methods if they are looking down at the script from which they are reading for the entire duration of the presentation. In the same way, learners who had developed skills of gesture and intonation performed more successfully, especially when there had clearly been a process of rehearsal and the development of presentational performance skills leading up to their final presentation.

One effective innovation is the use of 'realia' and everyday objects to model concepts for the audience. One candidate, for example, demonstrated their solution, a water purification device called the 'life straw', at the

end of their presentation, while another used everyday objects to model a concept (lining up and moving around beakers filled with marbles as an analogy for the cellular damage caused by ageing).

More learners appeared to be embedding video clips in their PowerPoints, although this had variable results. Used judiciously, video can be a powerful tool. One presentation utilised short excerpts – visible and audible in the recording – from a TED talk to advance their argument effectively. However, many learners were tempted to let a video clip do much of the work when the effect of this was to occupy time within the eight minutes when they could have been gaining credit for themselves.

Lastly, PowerPoint is primarily a visual tool, and using exclusively text-based slides neither helps the candidate to communicate more effectively nor assists the audience to understand the information more fully. Learners benefitted from thoughtfully considering what information is appropriate for a slide and how the slides would enhance their presentation; they also engaged with the slides so that they became another layer of communication, rather than simply the text of the presentation reproduced on a screen.

The Reflective Paper

Stronger learners appreciate the difference between evaluation and narration when it comes to writing about their practice in working with others. An account of what happened is not the same as an identification of working practices and a judgement on their strengths and weaknesses. In the following extract, the learner begins by identifying the benefits of the high level of agreement between team members:

This level of cooperation was a welcome experience, however, I feel that the lack of any dissenting opinions and an effective devil's advocate possibly weakened the collective brainpower used in selecting our issue. When a group is so readily agreeable then there is the possibility of a stagnation of perspectives, which also limits possible conversation about solutions and paths to take.

Strengths are weighed up against weaknesses in order to reflect on the wider implications for the effectiveness of collaboration and to make a judgement on it.

In the same way, for the second reflective paper criterion, listing the different aspects of the research or the solutions reached is not enough. What is required is a reflection on how they impacted on the learner's own work. The following reflective paper makes a clear transition between the two, demonstrating how the formulation of the team solution also developed their own understanding in specific ways:

After creating our group solution I felt that I had learned a lot about the economic, political and ethical themes within the subject of homelessness. Previously I only thought that people became homeless due to problems with drug addictions and a lack of money. However, now I am aware of the legal demands and other governmental requirements people have to go through before receiving a house.

Comments on specific questions

It remains a distinctive feature of this component that questions are not set by Cambridge but developed by learners themselves with the support of their teachers. It is worth, however, specifying a little more just how this process can be most effective. Teams are asked to select a local problem with global significance and then to undertake research so that each team member argues for a solution to the problem in their presentation from their own distinctive perspective. Therefore, problems were most effectively expressed as a word or short phrase, which produced a sharp focus on the definition of the problem itself. The relationship between problem and solution was sometimes best formulated in individual presentations as a question, but this was not always the case. Sometimes questions obscured the path which led to a precisely formulated solution from a specific perspective. The best presentations showed themselves to be engaged in a specialised activity, quite distinct from that of essay-writing, and the identification of a suitable problem for team research, and the argument for an individually justified solution reflected this.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/04
Cambridge Research Report

Key messages

- The wording of the question is very important and reports must be firmly based on the question which the learner has devised, refined and had accepted.
- Marking should note carefully irrelevant material when assessing analysis.
- The extent and quality of evaluation as expected by CIE should be shown in marginal annotation and be consistent with the mark awarded for this skill.
- Centres should ensure the interview is based on the requirements of the mark scheme.
- Logs should be working documents and not merely records of work read.

General comments

Centres are to be congratulated for supporting the qualification and getting to grips with the administrative requirements and using a new mark scheme. The range of topics studied was diverse and reflected a variety of different interests – and indeed passions – among the learners. There were relatively few reports, which did not make some use of a range of evidence, which reflected personal research and independent study. The educational value of this was obviously immense and the experience of researching often demanding topics with no clear ‘answer’ will stand these candidates in good stead for their future studies. In addition they have built on their earlier GP studies to develop some important life skills. The comments below are intended to help with understanding what is required and not as a criticism of Centres who have obviously devoted a great deal of time and care to supervising this work and, importantly, in encouraging their candidates to persevere and to exercise demanding skills.

AO1 Research

In general it was clear why Centres had awarded marks and it was correct to separate the standard of the work from the process of research and the degree of independence and the quality of the working relationship learners displayed. In some cases, it was not clear why the learner had disregarded the advice of the CIE consultant, especially when the results confirmed the anxieties expressed that the question would not yield an adequate level of discussion. In such cases the log did not reveal much about the process of digesting and considering advice. The quality and nature of logs did vary considerably. The log should be a working document and more than a list of sources found. The best research logs demonstrated how the report developed, how decisions and changes were made and provided evidence of development of independent learning skills. It is not helpful if logs are written in one go at the end of the project to satisfy a requirement. They are vital aids for the learners; they allow teachers to monitor progress and also to satisfy themselves that work is truly independent. They should also be used in the final interview. Rather than being a burden, the log should be seen as a vital aid. Very lengthy and detailed logs are much less helpful than concise logs but do give more thoughtful records of the research process. They also help the learners to ensure that the reflecting writing is actually research based.

AO1 Analysis

The majority of reports had citations and bibliographies set out accurately and consistently in accepted formats. There was clear evidence of candidates developing skills that will be of value in future studies. One of the strongest aspects was the ability of candidates to find research material, to relate the materials to the topic and to use the information and opinions gained in the report in a meaningful way. However, there are some issues which Centres need to address. First is the question of intellectual integrity with regards to listing sources. Many reports had extensive lists of sources, but there was often limited evidence of use of

the sources; the approach of some Centres seemed to be to list all sources found, whether they had been relevant or useful or not. Sometimes the impression was given that the bibliographies were lists of sources which the candidate might have used, rather than evidence which had actually been used.

The second issue that should be considered is a marking issue. Some annotations were helpful in showing where the candidate had not been considering relevant evidence or when the analysis of the issue itself suffered from significant irrelevance. The candidates choose their own question and are responsible for framing it. Analysis refers to their ability to link their report to that evidenced and to select and use evidence which is relevant to the question. Learners should remember that this is a report. Reports are produced on specific issues. For example the recent report on the War in Iraq would not have been at all well received if it had reported on the First World War or offered merely a long narrative account of the history of the Middle East. Also Reports do involve consideration of different perspectives and require judgement. That is, judgement about the specific issue in the question. Where that is not focused, then Centres must be demanding and not award higher-level marks simply for finding evidence regardless of its relevance to the specific wording of the title. This reinforces the need for candidates to consider the titles very carefully because the analysis must be assessed in terms of their response to the demands of their own question.

AO1 Evaluation

This was the area in which there was most scope for improvement in many cases. There was a tendency to accept uncritically what was argued or claimed by sources and little discussion of how two sources might corroborate or contradict each other. Many candidates did address credibility of sources, using critical thinking skills to, for example, describe how a source might be biased or have a vested interest, but often this did not involve considering what was being argued or claimed. Conclusions and judgements should be based on the substance of the report and its analysis of the issue. There was some very strong evaluation which used a variety of critical techniques and approaches. Not only individual evidence was assessed but views on the issue in question and broad interpretations. The report was permeated by a strong critical sense and the overall conclusion emerged directly from assessment of different perspectives. However, reports which simply explained evidence or were aware of different views but showed little sign of being able to develop the critical skills of GP to evaluate were often significantly over-rewarded. In some cases the annotation "EVAL" was given to comments which merely explained views. There must be a distinct judgement about a view, a perspective or evidence before 'EVAL' is used. Markers should look for distinct evaluative words or a clear intention to put a value on whatever is being considered. Without evidence of this and appropriate marginal comment then marks of Level 2 and above should not be awarded. Explaining views relevantly is analysis not evaluation. After it has been established that there is some critical sense, then markers must decide how developed it is. Too many higher marks were allocated to work which did not go much beyond trying to establish the credibility of a source. However this is not really higher-level assessment. It assumes that all newspaper articles will have the same value ('Newspapers are written to sell to the public and may be biased'); that all professors are equally credible ('He is an expert in his field so his view will be reliable') that all reports from those in any way involved in an issue are going to be untrustworthy ('She is the spokesman for an environmental group and therefore will have a biased view about...'). However, for higher-level marks a more developed and searching use of critical criteria which takes forward some of the critical thinking techniques from GP is required. Annotation should show the marker's appreciation of these – noting when there is corroboration or when the argument is analysed or when the methodology of research is considered.

It may be helpful to advise here on personal surveys. These are sometimes a good educational experience and sometimes the surveys were evaluated carefully and the approach taken was well considered. However, to ask a selection of one's school or college about a major international issue and then evaluate it by saying that the survey was too small and the people asked were not in a position to know is not really very strong. Sources of evidence must be appropriate and candidates should consider very carefully how useful surveys of classmates or even the wider college community really are. Long descriptions of the findings are of limited value and should not be encouraged or over-rewarded.

As guidance, any experiments conducted in school or college laboratories involving animals should not be undertaken without informing CIE, as there are strict UK guidelines which must be followed by all those taking Cambridge examinations. Any surveys involving sensitive issues which may impact on those taking part should also be included in the proposal forms.

AO2 Reflection

Some candidates included reflections in their research logs; to receive credit, reflection should be in the report itself. Only a minority of candidates were able to reflect on their project in a way that communicated effectively the learning process. Candidates should be encouraged to draw on their research log so that they can see the progress they have made, and can describe how their viewpoint may have changed. Reflection should not simply be based on personal learning experience. It should be based on looking at the conclusions reached and then assessing the whole research process to consider whether it had been sufficient. It also gives learners the chance to reflect on the nature of the evidence used and the process of research and how initial ideas were modified by the research. The common thread in all this is the actual research, the specific evidence consulted and the specific methodology adopted and how it might have been different.

AO3 Communication

Moderators rely on the Centre to provide evidence that there has been an interview in which the candidate has the opportunity to explain and justify their project. Please provide evidence, in some detail, to allow Moderators to support the mark awarded. The analysis of the interview was often not related closely enough to the demands of the mark scheme and the impression was often given that the candidate was not offered sufficient opportunity to defend the conclusions reached by some probing questions. There is no need to make this a frightening experience but there are quite specific requirements in the mark scheme and Centres should refer to these and conduct the interviews appropriately. There will be more guidance on this. In terms of communicating argument and organising material, there was generally a good standard with care taken about proof reading; answers often used language well and provided an interesting and varied reading experience.