



BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

1997 HSC

**EXAMINATION
REPORT**

**Society and
Culture**

Acknowledgements

Extract: 'Dad it's a rock concert ...', Good Weekend,
Sydney Morning Herald, 15 February 1997.

Extract: 'Almost everyone shows the club colours',
Plugger and the Mighty Swans, Jim Main,
Wilkinson Books, 1996.

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1997 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION REPORT
SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The number of candidates presenting for the examination in 1997 was 2727, of whom 568 presented for 3 Unit (Additional) paper.

General Comments

In 1997, 2727 Personal Interest Projects were marked according to the criteria outlined in the Syllabus. This means that students need to deal with all components of the Syllabus requirements. The development of each student's PIP should be in accordance with the Syllabus requirements and the advice contained within it.

Marking of the reports is conducted in a corporate marking operation that establishes standards through a rigorous pilot marking process. Markers rank the PIPs on the qualities of the work presented. The marking process draws upon the Syllabus to determine the criteria.

The main features include the following.

- Compulsory elements — these must all be completed and within the limits indicated in the Syllabus as regards length.
 - The introduction should indicate the nature of the report, inclusions and rejections, methodologies and increased understanding of both society and culture.
 - The log must indicate the sequential development of the report and must be genuine.
 - Resources must be accurate, adequately referenced and annotated, including internet addresses and material downloaded from search engines.
 - The conclusion should be the synthesis of the report, indicating what the student has learnt and its relevance to Society and Culture.
- The central material must not exceed 4000 words and should indicate clarity of purpose, effective communication of ideas, development of social literacy and sound analytical social research methodologies. A cross-cultural component showing knowledge and understanding of viewpoints other than those of the student should be both balanced and unbiased. Evidence of concepts based on Society and Culture in an integrated and relevant way should indicate that the student has developed a greater understanding of his/her research project and its relevance to the course.

- Questions have been raised regarding the ethical nature of the methodologies used by some students as well as their critical judgment and decision-making in their choice of resource material included in the project, especially when the topic and materials researched are able to stand without the aid of such material. Some materials submitted raised ethical concerns, while others bordered on the offensive or contained material that was irrelevant.
- Although a personal research topic is important, it is essential that the topic chosen can be adequately researched and is based within the Society and Culture course. Many students attempt topics that are too broad and, consequently, have difficulty in indicating their relevance to the conceptual understandings of Society and Culture.
- Integration of concepts, cross-cultural understandings and analysed findings are fundamental to the development of an effective Personal Interest Project.
- Research methodologies used by students should be clearly understood and should be demonstrated throughout the PIP. Primary and/or secondary research may both be used to achieve this aim effectively.
- Findings from research should be analysed and incorporated in the body of the PIP, not just reported. This indicates that the student has critically evaluated and applied his/her research to the chosen topic.
- The Syllabus clearly states that there are five components to the PIP. These are the Log, the Introduction, the Conclusion, the Annotated Resources and the Central Material. Additional inclusions such as methodology pages, concept pages, statement of intent, etc, should be integrated into the word limit of the five components of the PIP.
- The appendices, if included, should contain only relevant material that is directly referred to within the central material.
- The submitted project must be the original copy, **not** photocopies.
- Where secondary research is used, it should be fully acknowledged, with adequate referencing.

The following are observations regarding the best PIPs submitted by this year's cohort.

- Demonstrated qualities of well integrated research that was applied and understood, as well as critical analysis of the methodologies used and findings.
- Had a clear focus that allowed conceptual, cross-cultural and socially literate understandings to be demonstrated throughout the project.
- All components were completed within the word limit and communication of ideas was both sophisticated and clear.
- The sociological analysis and the links with the Society and Culture course were also clearly shown.
- Initiative was shown in the way in which the students showed their understanding of the requirements of their topic and succeeded in eliminating unnecessary or irrelevant material.
- Consistent and logical progression was clearly maintained throughout.

Weaker PIPs did not follow the guidelines of the Syllabus in the required five areas, nor did they show links with the Society and Culture course concepts. They were often basic, with little analysis, questionable methodologies, lacked integration of research and did not keep to the compulsory components. Plagiarism, either accidental or deliberate, was evident and was often the result of a limited resource base.

2/3 UNIT (COMMON)

Section 1 Concepts and Methodologies of the Syllabus

Question 1

- (a) Students were shown a diagram of the course logo and asked to respond to the following questions.

What do you understand by the concept of ‘environment’ as shown in the above logo of the Society and Culture course?

Choose ONE of the other concepts from the logo and discuss the interrelationship between that concept and the concept of environment.

The better responses gave a clear definition of *environment* and were able to demonstrate its relationship with another selected concept. These responses were clear and multifaceted, with some emphasising the social climate or setting for human interaction/communication. They also showed that the candidates understood the concepts, were articulate and socially literate.

In weaker responses students offered geography–style explanations of *environment* which were somewhat basic and brief. In some instances candidates took the logo literally, describing what it showed without reference to concrete examples.

- (b) ***Both continuity and change are essential features of any society and its culture.***

What do you understand by the concepts *continuity* and *change*?

Briefly discuss ONE continuity and ONE change in Australian society.

The better candidates showed a clear understanding of the concepts and were able to relate these to Australia, referring, for example, to family migration and political change. Some referred to *continuity* as being the stable nature of society and related it to its groups, institutions and networks. *Change* was presented as being shifts in attitudes, values and ideals that form the basis of structures such as religion, education and technology.

Weaker responses failed to discuss appropriate continuity and change and offered few, if any, examples.

- (c) ***The mayor of a local council is in favour of a proposal to build a new shopping centre.***

Other councillors want to know more information on public reaction to the need for this development.

Select and justify ONE research method that you would use to gather data on the public reaction to the proposal for a new shopping centre in the community.

The better candidates referred to an appropriate sampling method such as representative sampling and random samples, and also examined the construction of the research method, the way in which the questionnaire was to be issued and the data collection and collation. These responses also justified the choice of the specific method.

Weaker responses offered no justification and made little or no reference to the *shopping centre* as being central to the research.

(d)

Percentage distribution of Australia's population by birthplace and by year.

Students were shown three pie charts depicting the percentage distribution of Australia's population by birthplace and by year.

Look carefully at the information in the pie charts.

- (i) **Identify and comment on TWO trends in the distribution of Australia's population by birthplace between 1947 and 1991.**
- (ii) **What trends are indicated for Australia's population between 1991 and 2035?**
- (iii) **Briefly discuss TWO possible impacts on Australian society of the trends you have identified between 1991 and 2035. In your answer, refer to *both* persons *and* culture.**

The better responses showed a clear understanding of the pie charts, commenting on the trends and not merely identifying them. These responses referred to a physical change in Australia's population and a changing workplace, with a growing competitive spirit and increasing diversity in Australian culture. Some of the better responses commented on the European Migration mode, the post-World War II migration policy and the Asian migration mode corresponding to the end of the Vietnam War and the end of specific Australian migration policies. These answers did not get too caught up in the percentages given on the pie charts but focused on trends and reasons, pointing out a change in Australia's identity and the emergence of a *world* economy and globalisation.

Weaker responses failed to comment by using Society and Culture concepts and identified only one or two trends. These answers did not consider the question in respect of both people and cultures and offered only one example of each, with no integration. These candidates failed both to indicate the change in cultural identity that may take place or to make the connection between the percentage increase in Australians through to 2135 AD and the change in cultural identity.

Section II Depth Studies

Question 2 Intercultural Communication

Approximately 26% of candidature answered this depth study.

EITHER

(a) *Language is a cornerstone of culture*

Critically discuss the importance of language for intercultural communication.

In your answer, consider THREE of the following:

- **stereotype**
- **mores**
- **identity**
- **values**
- **tradition**
- **non-verbal communication**

In answering, many of the good responses used the question structure, defining the terms used and covering all THREE areas listed by the question. The statement was considered *critically* and these responses related back to both the statement and the question, showing an understanding of directives such as *critically discuss* rather than simply being descriptive. All prerequisites to the question were discussed in a competent and well balanced manner. Many students showed a clear understanding of what was being asked, illustrating their responses with appropriate examples, showing independent thought and genuine engagement with the issues raised. Good responses showed knowledge of the Depth Study, *Intercultural Communication* and the essential concepts studied in the area as well as in the subject *Society and Culture*. Social literacy was clearly evident.

Weaker responses were not balanced and tended to be descriptive, totally avoiding the *critically discuss* component. Examples used were very general, with sweeping generalisations and superficial treatment of concepts being included.

OR

(b) *Individuals and groups within a culture are shaped by socialisation*

Critically discuss the importance of the socialisation process in intercultural communication.

In your answer refer to THREE of the following:

- **customs**
- **identity**
- **conflict and cooperation**
- **stereotype**
- **communication**

The better responses were balanced and showed an understanding of what the question was asking. These responses reflected not only knowledge and understanding of concepts but also ability to integrate appropriate examples.

In weaker responses it was obvious that candidates did not fully understand the nature of the subject or question. Concepts were either reviewed superficially or not at all. If examples were used, they were very general, comprising sweeping generalisations that tended to stereotype a group or culture. The balance that needed to be considered in the treatment of the concepts was lost. Often one concept, eg body language or stereotyping, became the whole focus of the question, with candidates writing all they knew of the topic rather than tying that knowledge to the question; many went into long and descriptive essays rather than critical analysis as required.

Question 3 Religion and Belief

Approximately 35% of candidature attempted this depth study.

EITHER

- (b) *Religions respond differently to important events in the human life cycle*

Identify ONE religion (tribal or world) that you have studied.

Discuss how this religion responds to TWO human life cycle events. Critically discuss how this religion's response to these human life cycle events influences individuals in their society and culture.

In your answer, refer to THREE of the following:

- symbols
- spiritual leaders
- ritual
- mystery
- belief
- institutional structure

In the better responses candidates competently discussed all aspects of the question. These answers showed a clear focus as well as a good understanding of the issues involved. They also incorporated appropriate examples related to cultural/contemporary issues and events, presenting a balanced essay that included a clear and concise analysis of the question as well as social literacy.

The better candidates not only presented a descriptive essay on human life cycles, examining the effects of and responses to the religion chosen, but also identified reasons for their introduction or significance and showed how these affected or influenced the individual.

OR

- (b) Critically discuss the effects of tradition and change in ONE religion (tribal or world) that you have studied.

In your answer refer to THREE of the following:

- new religions
- institutional structure

- **spiritual leaders**
- **role of women**
- **celebration and observances**
- **worship**

The better candidates *critically discussed* not only the effects of tradition and change, as indicated in the question, but also expanded on this to show the past, present and, possibly, future ramifications of such changes.

Weaker candidates either tended to produce a descriptive essay on one specific religion without answering the question or answered only ONE part of the question and, in most cases, mentioned ONE concept, without giving any details or examples. Some students simply repeated the question without offering any discussion at all.

Many answers lacked structure, critical analysis and examples, while others showed a lack of social literacy, with some confusing religions, spiritual leaders of those religions, rituals and celebrations and observances.

Question 4 Social Inequality, Prejudice and Discrimination

This depth study attracted approximately 71% of the candidature.

General Comments

In 1997 there was some improvement in the understanding of the concepts of prejudice and discrimination. This was not universal, however, and it was limited by an emphasis on *attitude* rather than *action* as the key terms, with little in-depth understanding of the positive approach to these terms. A similar improvement was not evident in the understanding of the terms *equality* and *inequality*, which were used in a descriptive and generally non-analytical manner. There was a concentration on women and Aborigines as case studies and the treatment was largely chronological and historical rather than referring specifically to the question. There was, therefore, in such cases, a lack of integration of the student's knowledge about both content and concepts in actually answering the question asked.

EITHER

- (a) **You are the chairperson of a committee which has been instructed to research the nature and extent of prejudice and discrimination as experienced by ONE group in Australia.**

The time has come for you to present your committee's report.

In your report, name the group your committee has researched and then:

- explain what your committee means by *prejudice* and *discrimination*;**
- justify the method used by the committee to gather its information about the prejudice and discrimination experienced by this group;**
- describe the nature and extent of prejudice and discrimination as experienced by this group;**
- suggest possible ways in which the prejudice and discrimination currently experienced by this group may be reduced.**

The better responses contained definitions which were generally well understood, and, therefore accurate. By following the structure of the question, students were able to organise their thoughts and provide a coherent response. Generalisations were avoided and focusing on one group and one methodology enabled many students to show a broad depth of knowledge and understanding. They justified methodologies used and fully discussed ways of reducing prejudice and discrimination. This was well supported by evidence, factual data and examples.

In weaker responses, students often defined terms inadequately and also failed to deal with all parts of the question. These often appeared to be prepared responses which failed to answer the question or were a *stream of consciousness* of anecdotal outpouring by the student. Understanding of methodology use was poor, while discussion of ways by which to reduce prejudice and discrimination was limited.

OR

(b) *Equality is an ideal in Australian society but the reality exists in many forms.*

What do you understand by the concepts of *equality* and *inequality*?

To what extent is social inequality an institutionalised part of Australian society?

In your answer refer to TWO of the following:

- gender
- social class
- age
- health
- location factors.

The better students clearly showed their understanding of both equality and inequality, illustrating this with reference to the examples they chose. Such students understood the concept of institutionalised inequality and were able to discuss and incorporate this into their responses. A good balance of treatment of the various parts of the question was shown, with statistics and quotations as well as well presented arguments and related course concepts, eg power, conflict and consensus, being used. A key element of these responses was analysis rather than description of the subject.

Question 5 Work, Leisure and Sport

This depth study attracted approximately 39% of the candidates.

EITHER

(a) *Work and employment are closely linked to formal education in society*

What do you understand by the concepts of *work* and *employment*? Explain how education, work and employment are interrelated.

In your answer refer to TWO of the following:

- continuity and change
- identity

- **alienation**
- **conflict and cooperation**
- **technology**

The better candidates dealt with all parts of the question equally in a way that showed a clear understanding of the topic area as well as of the specific concepts involved. Such answers showed a good degree of insight and social literacy. The links between education and work or employment were clear, as was the distinction between work and employment. The relationship of these with *technology* and *change over time* was most popular, with *identity* and *alienation* being a close second. Conflict and cooperation were often discussed: another distinguishing feature of good answers was the degree of analysis evident as well as a good depth of knowledge, appropriate examples and supporting evidence. Such answers were well written and expressed and showed *ownership* of knowledge.

Weaker responses were poor, being mainly anecdotal, with most tending to be structured by the question and discussing only some of the issues open for examination. Answers tended to be composed largely in isolation and many simply repeated the essence of the question about the interrelation of the concepts. The better answers in this category showed a moderate understanding of the issues and concepts.

OR

(b)

*'Dad it's a rock concert, ten hours of deafening punk, grunge and heavy metal'.
'Oh good', I said, 'I like music with a strong beat'.
'You'll hate it', warned the kids. 'You'll be shocked and outraged!'
'Don't be silly', I laughed, 'I'm a 1990's parent. I'm hip, I'm funky'.*

Almost everyone shows the club colours in one way or another — scarves, beanies, badges, banners and placards.

No-one takes offence. It is tribal war chanting and without real animosity. Arrogant, but far from vicious'.

The above statements express different viewpoints of sport OR leisure.

Discuss the role of sport OR leisure in society.

In your answer, refer to TWO of the following:

- **continuity and change**
- **identity**
- **customs, norms and values**
- **social class**
- **gender.**

Many aspects of scholarship that applied to question 5(a) also applied here. The better candidates showed a good depth of knowledge, used appropriate examples and evidence, wrote well, incorporating comments, criticism and analysis in their answers. Good responses clearly discussed the role of sport or leisure in society rather than providing a description of the characteristics of the concept. The concepts of identity, social class and gender were used to illustrate these answers, while some also analysed the challenge presented by differing customs, norms and values. The roles of sport or leisure in society were examined and many answers discussed the links between the two.

Weaker answers were descriptive and anecdotal, and were based on little depth of knowledge or understanding. Many of these answers examined the role and characteristics of sport rather than leisure and almost all assumed that, because sport was important to them, it must be equally important to all Australians. Identity was identified with hero worship and discussion of both social class and gender tended to consist of stereotypes and stories. Students must be advised not to enthuse about their favourite sport, but instead, to demonstrate wider understanding of the role of sport and leisure in Australian society.

Question 6 Popular Culture

This depth study attracted approximately 29% of candidates.

EITHER

- (a) Critically discuss how the popular culture you have studied has contributed to changes in society.

In your answer consider **THREE** of the following:

- access
- socialisation
- conflict
- consumption
- power and influence
- globalisation.

Good responses used an examination of a specific case study to show changes in society. The concepts to be considered were combined into a complete response and theories and/or models were used to illustrate the points made. In these responses candidates used consistent and systematic arguments and showed an understanding of the question's focus on social change.

Weaker responses failed to come to terms with changes in society and were diverted from discussion of them by the concepts listed. Such responses merely recounted changes in the chosen case study, making no reference to broader society. Some of these responses were brief and undeveloped and used irrelevant or poor case study material.

OR

- (b)

<i>'Who owns popular culture?'</i> <i>'Most popular culture is under the control of a small number of individuals or groups in society'.</i>

Critically examine the above statement in relation to the case study you have investigated.

In your answer, consider **THREE** of the following:

- class
- age
- gender
- location
- sexuality
- ethnicity.

The better candidates were able to present arguments which were consistent, well developed and focused on the question asked. In discussing their case study, candidates also referred to relevant theories and theorists and gave examples that clearly illustrated understanding of relevant concepts and terminology.

Weaker answers were descriptive rather than analytical and, although a popular culture was named, there was little or no reference to the concept of the ownership of this culture. Such responses tended to be obviously prepared answers, lacking a curriculum base and being, therefore, unrelated to the question.

3 UNIT

The 568 candidates who sat for the 3 Unit paper represented approximately 21% of the candidature. The responses to Question 1 tended to be detailed and of good quality, especially in regard to parts (a) and (c). Those to part (b), however, were shorter and the majority of candidates had difficulty with the concepts they were asked to analyse critically. Students appeared to find it more difficult to write responses to statements as opposed to answering specific questions.

In Question 1 the amount of material required from candidates posed time-management problems for many, who often used the same data to answer Questions 1 (a) and (c).

Question 1

- (a)

<i>For all the good they bring, the forces of modernisation — like a bulldozer — can clear a path in society, resulting in damage to the social and physical environment.</i>

Critically discuss this statement.

In your answer refer to TWO of the following:

- **tradition**
- **secularisation**
- **ethnocentrism**
- **acculturation**
- **colonialism**
- **the ecosystem.**

The better candidates tackled the statement by applying relevant and complementary concepts in critical analysis, whereas weaker candidates often interpreted the statement literally.

The better candidates could provide quality evidence to support their understanding of the effects of modernisation, whereas weaker candidates chose trivial or inappropriate evidence in support of their statements. The better answers were unified and offered a comprehensive perspective as opposed to weaker ones in which the response was segmented and often anecdotal.

- (b) ***To enable people to imagine their future and to plan for possible personal, social and global futures, it is necessary to use specific methodologies.***

Identify and critically analyse ONE methodology you have studied which would assist people to imagine and to plan for their future.

The better candidates were selective in their choice of methodology and clearly discussed its capacity and effectiveness in predicting and producing a plan for the future.

Discriminating candidates were helped by the diagram provided in Question 2 (a) and the wording of Question 2 (d); the information given there confirmed the correctness of their responses. Weaker candidates neither made this beneficial connection nor utilised this data, choosing inappropriate methodologies (eg 2 Unit survey, interview etc, often discussing more than one) and writing descriptions with little or no analysis, preferring to tell a hypothetical story about the country of their choice. Such candidates had great difficulty in preparing a worthwhile answer to this question.

The better candidates could integrate and distinguish between personal and societal futures and expressed good understanding of future directions, whereas the weaker candidates offered a superficial, often stereotypical, discussion of possible, plausible and preferred futures as mentioned in the 2 Unit Syllabus, Closing Section.

- (c) ***For many people, one of the basic human issues is the degree of choice open to individuals in society.***

Critically examine this statement.

In your answer refer to TWO of the following:

- **westernisation**
- **innovation**
- **community**
- **rights and responsibilities**
- **continuity and change**
- **democratisation.**

The better candidate was conscious of the allocation of his/her time and presented a comprehensive response to this statement, while the weaker candidate faced obvious time restrictions which contributed to the inadequacy of his/her response.

The better candidates possessed a good knowledge of the concepts and found little difficulty in incorporating them into their analysis of the statement. They were judicious in the selection of evidence when highlighting the importance of *choice*, whereas the weaker candidates tended to produce responses that were simply narrative, failing to deal with the key issues within the statement.

Weaker candidates relied on definition of concepts and had difficulty in applying them to the statement. They simply described the transition of the country from agrarian to industrial and, in doing so, inferred a response rather than presenting an argument or a critical examination of the statement.

Question 2

EITHER

- (c)

<p><i>The diagram below illustrates a series of interrelated methodologies that can be used to assist our understanding of a basic human issue.</i></p> <p>[A relevant diagram was inserted here]</p>

Identify ONE basic human issue in the country you have studied.

How can the above diagram be used to assist your understanding of the basic human issue you have identified in the country you have studied?

Discuss the importance and impact of the basic human issue you have identified in the country you have studied.

The better candidates clearly presented a basic human issue appropriate to the country of study and made the case study an integral part of their answer. These answers were analytical and used the diagram constructively, while concepts and examples were well integrated and perceptive.

Weaker responses made little or no reference to the diagram and lacked both clarity and the analysis required by the question. Some were descriptive and comprised regurgitation of historical fact with examples that were often vague and not well directed.

OR

- (b) **Critically analyse the degree to which modernisation and modernity are interrelated in the country you have studied.**

In your answer consider THREE of the following:

- **tradition**
- **westernisation**
- **colonialism**
- **industrialisation**
- **autonomy**
- **technology**
- **secularisation**

The better candidates were able to differentiate between the concepts of *modernisation* and *modernity* and presented a coherent argument. These responses were factually accurate, logically structured and clearly focused.

Weaker responses, whilst explaining the concepts, failed to discuss them in relation to the question asked: some appeared to be pre-prepared. These responses were often brief, lacking focus and relying on stereotypical images.

OR

(c) ***The nature of continuity and change is multidimensional and interactive***

Consider TWO of the following approaches to explain continuity and change in the country you have studied.

- personal factors
- economic factors
- political power
- environmental factors
- social, artistic, educational and religious ideologies and movements
- group dynamics
- technology
- cultural transmission
- conflict and cooperation

The better candidates showed an understanding of what was meant by the words *multidimensional* and *interactive* and incorporated such understanding into a discussion of continuity and change. Case study material was used effectively and some also applied relevant theories of social change. These responses integrated course themes and embraced the interactive element of the question.

Weaker responses tended to be descriptive and historical, with the material presented being frequently unrelated to the question. In many cases such responses were brief and very basic.

OR

- (d) (i) **Construct a scenario for the near future of the country you have studied on the basis of current information and trends.**
- (ii) **Critically analyse and justify your scenario.**

In constructing and analysing your scenario, refer to TWO of the following:

- ownership and distribution of resources
- international political and economic relationships
- social welfare and health
- literature, music, the arts and popular culture
- laws and the legal system
- education
- family life and population changes
- beliefs, values and lifestyles
- the roles and status of women
- work
- government
- the environment

The better candidates showed their understanding not only of what a scenario is but also of the range of methodologies that can be used to construct one. Such responses also showed an awareness of how to evaluate the scenarios as a tool for predicting the future. Their arguments were supported by a body of detailed and current information. Some candidates, however, referred to theory in support of their answers.

Weaker responses tended to be descriptive and made little or no attempt to construct a scenario. In some instances, information was not current and the scenario was somewhat improbable. Moreover, these responses included only limited reference to the relevant aspects of the country studied.