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1998 HSC

**EXAMINATION
REPORT**

Society and Culture

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1998 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION REPORT

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

In 1998, 2668 candidates presented for the examination in Society and Culture, of whom 513 sat for the 3 unit (Additional) examination paper. The 2 Unit paper is worth 70 marks, with the additional 30 marks being derived from the Personal Interest Project (PIP).

2/3 UNIT (COMMON)

The examination is divided into two sections. Section I comprising four compulsory questions, was worth 30 marks. In Section II students are required to answer two questions, each from a different depth study. Each question is worth 20 marks.

For each question, marking criteria were established to distinguish the quality of candidate responses. Conceptual understanding and application and clear evidence of social literacy are key components of the marking criteria in Society and Culture.

Section I: Concepts and Methodologies of the Syllabus

Question 1(a)

Candidates were presented with a diagram illustrating the interrelationship of the person and some aspects of society. They were asked to explain the interrelationship of the person and two aspects of society presented in the diagram.

In the better responses candidates showed that they clearly understood the question and stated or briefly described which two aspects they had chosen to explain the interrelationship. They clearly showed their understanding of the term 'interrelationship' as being a two way process. They developed their answers logically. Candidates used strong conceptual language and showed a competent level of social literacy and social understanding. They provided evidence to support their answers and could illustrate both negative and positive influences that might have affected the interrelationship between a person and society. In average responses candidates mainly defined terms and showed either a one way relationship between society and the chosen aspect, or, if they showed a two way response, it was unbalanced. Some candidates chose two components but gave only a brief response.

In weaker responses candidates showed little or no use of Society and Culture concepts. Many drew heavily from other disciplines and areas of study and applied them inappropriately to answering the question. The interrelationship asked for was often ignored and these candidates simply repeated the term without showing any understanding.

Question 1(b)

What do you understand by the concept of cultural heritage?

Explain how cultural heritage has influenced ONE continuity and ONE change in Australian society.

In the better responses, cultural heritage was well defined and adequately understood. Candidates were able to convey their understanding by expressing clear ideas on continuity and change. The examples selected were appropriate for each of the dimensions of continuity and change and their answers were based on their notions of 'traditions', 'customs', 'socialisation' and other relevant Society and Culture concepts.

Average responses often defined culture and heritage separately and made little connection between the two concepts. Examples of continuity and change tended to be barely relevant and were thus not well chosen. Many candidates did not fully develop their answers.

Weaker responses showed limited understanding of the term 'cultural heritage' and showed a similar limited understanding of change or continuity; examples used were often vague or incorrect.

Question 1(c)

You are a member of a group conducting research to determine the extent of any changes in attitude towards authority in your community.

Select and justify ONE research methodology that your group could use to determine the extent of any changes in attitude towards authority.

The better responses acknowledged that they represented a 'community study' undertaken by a 'group' and reflected the ramifications that this might have had in the selection of a methodology. The chosen methodology was well understood and could be integrated into the answer not only in the form of traditional advantages and disadvantages. They were able to relate it to changes in attitude and to explain why this was the most suitable methodology for this type of issue.

In average responses candidates tended to choose a methodology and explain its advantages and disadvantages without reference to the issue being studied. Candidates usually chose questionnaires/surveys and discussed some strengths and weaknesses but did not link the answer to authority at all. They often failed to comment on 'change' in attitude but tried to discover simply what 'attitudes' were held. Many answers asserted that attitudes held by different ages or genders were examples of change rather than simply of differences.

Weaker responses often chose a survey but did not justify why a survey was the most appropriate research methodology. The reasons proposed to support a survey were often inadequate given the context of 'attitudes towards authority' in the question. Responses using vague generalisations which did not refer to the topic in the question were not rewarded and those who tried to present a prepared answer did not score well.

Question 1(d)

Candidates were presented with a graph depicting population projections in Australia, 1998 to 2018, for 12 to 25 year olds.

They were asked to construct a scenario for Australian society up to 2018 using ONE of the population projections in the graph.

In the better responses all aspects of the question were answered well. Each section was handled well and provided appropriate examples in differentiating between trends in the graph and implications for society. These candidates clearly understood the difference between ‘reasons’ and ‘implications.’ The reliance on the age groupings and the reference to ‘birth rates’ or ‘migration’ was adequately addressed. Candidates were able to devise an appropriate scenario that was consistent with their interpretation of the graph, which dealt with ‘change’ and were not only descriptive but also, at times, very creative.

Average responses answered all aspects of the question but responses to parts (iii) and (iv) were often very basic generalisations. Such generalisations might have been reasonable but no indication was given of why they could/would occur. Often there was some confusion and repetition in these responses. Candidates gave one or two implications of their chosen population projections for two aspects of Australian society but did not examine these implications at any great depth.

Few candidates understood the requirements of, or attempted, a scenario. Those who did so wrote exotic, far-fetched tales rather than extrapolating their chosen trend from contemporary society. Almost all candidates had not read, or understood, the statement under the graph, ie that the trends were based on assumptions about birth rates and overseas migration.

Although candidates were able to approach (i) (the naming of a population projection line chosen) many of the weaker responses in (ii), described another line altogether.

Weaker responses had little to say in parts (iii) and (iv). Most found the stimulus incomprehensible and read into it things that were not there eg each line equated to – an Australian City.

Weaker responses in general showed little understanding of Society and Culture or of use of concepts in and knowledge of the subject. Generally weaker candidates allocated their time poorly in question (1) and wrote short answers, especially in (d), a 12 mark question.

Section II: Depth Studies

Question 2 Intercultural Communication

Approximately 22% of candidates answered this depth study.

Question 2(a)

Identify and discuss factors that could reduce effective intercultural communication. How can people deal with intercultural misunderstanding?

In your answer, refer to THREE of the following:

- **identity**
- **stereotype**
- **customs**
- **values**
- **language**
- **conflict and cooperation.**

In the better answers to this question candidates could clearly identify and fully discuss a range of factors that could reduce effective intercultural communication. The better candidates integrated into their answers three of the concepts listed in the question, displaying a thorough comprehension of the depth study. The better responses also dealt effectively with how others deal with intercultural misunderstandings and ways in which they can be reduced in the future.

Average responses were written in general terms and displayed a lack of depth and understanding. Although all parts of the question were attempted, the concepts were more likely to be simply listed, with limited discussion and no integration.

Weaker responses did not deal with the question and often failed to attempt all parts of it. Such answers displayed a lack of understanding, while some included patronising and stereotyped statements. Conceptual understanding was limited.

Question 2(b)

Using a case study of a culture you have researched:

(i) describe what we need to know about that culture and ourselves to assist intercultural communication;

(ii) identify some possible misunderstandings and conflict between that culture and ourselves;

(iii) suggest and discuss ways in which the intercultural misunderstandings and conflict you have identified may be reduced.

In the better responses candidates answered all parts of the question in detail, commonly illustrating their answers with supporting examples and case study material. These responses displayed a clear level of analysis and an understanding of the values which underpin effective intercultural communication. There was also clear understanding and appropriate use of concepts

and terms to illustrate social literacy. The responses were well structured, with a sophisticated style that showed a depth of understanding of the students' own culture and those of others.

Average responses tended to be descriptive, lacked analysis and did not answer all parts of the question. Supporting evidence from a case study was often superficial and showed a lack of depth of understanding of another culture. The conceptual links were limited and there was little development of a clear, coherent answer.

Weaker responses were often brief and descriptive and showed little understanding of the concepts of the depth study and the question asked while an almost complete lack of social literacy was displayed by the student. Case study material was often irrelevant.

Question 3 Religion and Belief

Approximately 31% of candidates answered this depth study.

Question 3(a)

'Shrines, symbols, and sacred places are significant to religion because they have more than material value. They have spiritual value.'

Critically discuss this statement with reference to TWO religions (tribal or world) that you have studied.

In your answer, refer to TWO of the following:

- **worship**
- **narrative and myth**
- **spiritual leaders**
- **life cycle**
- **mystery, magic and miracle.**

The better responses focused on critically discussing the statement, while referring to the two chosen concepts. These responses linked both material and spiritual values, analysing and explaining their spiritual significance. Candidates showed a high level of social literacy and thorough understanding of two religions - often they described 'shrines, symbols and sacred places' in detail and did so with constant referral to the question.

Most average responses tended to describe the listed concepts (worship, spiritual leaders, etc.) rather than focusing on the statement. When they did focus on the statement, the concepts were often presented as isolated information. Many candidates compartmentalised the terms and sections of the question and there was a tendency to focus on one religion rather than to give a balanced response.

Weaker responses were brief and made little or no reference to the statement. References to listed concepts were often stereotyped or lacked factual understanding. They usually failed to demonstrate any conceptual understanding and did not relate to the question.

Question 3(b)

‘When studying a religion (tribal or world) it is important to analyse the ideology and beliefs underpinning religious activities.’

Consider this statement with reference to TWO religions (tribal or world) that you have studied by:

- (i) describing the types of activities that are commonly called religious;**
- (ii) explaining what values and ideology underpin these activities;**
- (iii) critically discussing how these values and beliefs interact with other aspects of society and culture.**

In their responses candidates used the structure provided by the question and dealt clearly with all three parts of the question, particularly part (iii). The better responses discussed the interaction of religion and society. Religious values and beliefs were shown to be linked with moral/ethical issues within the social arena, e.g. codified laws for Muslims, the Ten Commandments for Christians. Good responses showed a sound understanding of society and culture and were noteworthy for both critical analysis and social literacy.

Average responses tended to be descriptive rather than analytical and lacked depth and understanding. Most of these answers emphasised description of religious activities, had trouble in defining ideologies and often simply mentioned the interactions of these with other aspects of society and culture. There was a lack of balance between question parts. Similarly, one religion was often done well, but dominated the response.

Weaker responses tended to refer to only part (i) of the question, showing little or no understanding of ideologies or values. They tended to be stereotyped, or provided irrelevant information.

Question 4 Social Inequality, Prejudice and Discrimination.

Approximately 72% of candidates answered this depth study.

Many candidates confused social inequality with prejudice and discrimination and used these concepts as interchangeable terms. It was obvious that these fundamental depth study concepts require further clarification for many students.

Question 4(a)

To what extent is the ideal of social equality shared by all Australians in the 1990s? Analyse the nature, extent and possible causes of social inequality in Australia. In your answer, refer to THREE of the following:

- **location factors**
- **gender**
- **age**
- **ethnic differences**
- **sexuality**
- **differences in political and religious viewpoints and beliefs.**

In the better responses candidates confidently dealt with concepts with meaning and understanding rather than laboriously defining terms. They discussed all aspects of the question as a whole – the nature, extent and causes of social inequality in Australia. Appropriate statistical evidence was given and analysed in support of these responses. Candidates included concepts other than those listed, eg power, socialisation, ethnocentrism, stereotypes, classes and stratification. These were used as further support for their answers and were often dealt with throughout the response. In these responses candidates understood and discussed the relationship between power and equality.

In average responses candidates cited statistics and facts without analysing their relevance to the question. eg they discussed the poverty cycle without relating it to the point being made. Many candidates used ‘disadvantage’ (social inequality) as if it were interchangeable with ‘discrimination’, thus illustrating a lack of understanding. Some candidates omitted parts of the question, eg by being vague in discussing the nature of social inequality and often ignoring the causes. Many gave an historical account without explicitly relating it as a possible cause of social inequality in Australia, and used racial/ethnic differences as if they were interchangeable. Responses were not specific, nor descriptive and contained little analysis.

Weaker responses often perpetuated stereotypes against which they claimed to argue and lacked social literacy. These responses were often anecdotal, very basic, subjective, lacking in evidence, facts, or statistics to support their views. They often appeared to be a prepared answer with little relevance to the question and showed limited knowledge.

Question 4(b)

‘Prejudice and discrimination are widespread, and take many forms ranging from the subtle to the extreme.’

Critically discuss this statement in relation to TWO groups that experience prejudice and discrimination.

How can the prejudice and discrimination experienced by the two groups be reduced?

In your answer refer to TWO of the following:

- **community**
- **conflict and cooperation**
- **justice and law**
- **social differentiation.**

In the better answers candidates critically discussed and analysed the statement and linked it to their answer, which was lucid and examined ‘subtle to extreme’ prejudice and discrimination in both a thoughtful and sophisticated manner. Candidates confidently used concepts rather than just defining them, and clearly examined institutionalised discrimination. Good answers also examined the concepts listed in a relevant and accurate analysis of how prejudice and discrimination can be reduced, giving appropriate examples to support the points made in their responses.

Average answers defined terms adequately but tended not to discuss them further. They referred to two groups but did not analyse them to any depth. These responses often used prepared material on the history of certain groups such as Aborigines, women and migrants. These answers were descriptive rather than related to the question.

In terms of reducing prejudice and discrimination, average answers tended to consider one concept in greater depth than another, often without actually explaining how it helped reduce discrimination. Many did not differentiate between reducing discrimination and reducing prejudice, or explain how laws can limit actions, but not change attitudes.

In poorer responses, candidates could not clearly explain the difference between prejudice and discrimination. Little attempt was made to discuss how reducing prejudice and discrimination could be achieved. Little or incorrect use of concepts or examples and the use of personal opinions with little indication of social literacy were common in these responses.

Question 5 Work, Leisure and Sport

Approximately 44% of candidates answered this depth study.

Question 5(a)

What is work and how are patterns of work changing?

How are changing patterns of work affecting society and individuals?

In your answer, refer to TWO of the following:

- **class, status and gender**
- **conflict and cooperation**
- **technology**
- **alienation**
- **continuity.**

The better responses dealt with all parts of the question in a way that showed a clear understanding of the topic area and the concept involved. They avoided generalisations, showed social literacy by avoiding stereotypes and clichés, showed a clear understanding of change over a period of time and were able to support their ideas with evidence of current trends, as well as drawing upon relevant social theories to provide a framework for discussion. In these answers candidates linked macro elements (society) with micro elements (individuals) to provide a comprehensive view of the changing patterns of work.

Candidates were also able to explore various issues raised by the question.

Average answers tended to be descriptive rather than analytical. Although able to discuss the concept of work, candidates were generally able to discuss only the effect of changing patterns on either society or individuals, rather than both.

Weaker answers tended to be anecdotal, included little discussion of current trends and were, in many cases, rather disjointed. The latter, however, may be related to the broadness of the question and the inability of weaker candidates to develop a coherent focus for their answers.

Question 5(b)

‘Patterns of leisure and patterns of sport are changing society.’

How has EITHER sport OR leisure impacted on society across time?

Outline how changing patterns of EITHER sport OR leisure are influencing society today.

How are these changing patterns of EITHER sport OR leisure affecting individuals and culture today?

In your answer, refer to TWO of the following:

- **identity**
- **technology**
- **customs, norms and values**
- **continuity**
- **class, status and gender.**

The better answers outlined the changing patterns of sport or leisure across an appropriate period while emphasising contemporary issues. Again, the breadth of the question, requiring candidates to outline influences on society, culture and individuals and to incorporate a number of concepts, meant that they were generally unable to answer in great detail. Some issues, such as the commercialisation of sport or leisure, media influence, officialdom and power and the relationship between spectators and technology were discussed. Candidates incorporated a variety of relevant examples without going into long descriptive passages. The most popular concepts discussed were ‘technology’ and ‘class, status and gender.’

In average responses candidates showed a reasonable understanding of the concepts and were able to define them but had trouble in discussing the linkages between them. They discussed the question and used some adequate examples to illustrate their answers, although in generalised terms. These answers frequently had difficulty in showing how changing patterns of sport or leisure affected individuals and culture.

Weaker responses were rather superficial, with students tending to write all they knew about sport or leisure rather than attempting to answer the question. These answers were, therefore, repetitive and featured either a poor choice of examples or no examples.

Question 6 Popular Culture

Approximately 33% of candidates answered this depth study.

Question 6(a)

‘Ideas of what constitutes a popular culture are continually changing.’

Critically discuss this statement with reference to your case study of a popular culture. Account for the acceptance or rejection of aspects of this popular culture in society.

In your answer, consider this popular culture in terms of its significance:

- **locally**
- **nationally**
- **globally.**

Better responses reflected a high level of social literacy and effectively analysed popular culture. The successful integration of acceptance and rejection of a popular culture at the local, national and global level were the feature of a successful analysis of a case study. They fully examined all aspects of the question and used appropriate concepts to support both the case study and their complete answer.

Average responses generally lacked depth and provided limited evidence from a case study to support their answer. Concepts were usually mentioned but they were neither well understood, nor applied to the question. There was often quite superficial consideration of the local, national and global dimensions of the specific popular culture. Although there was mention of the acceptance or rejection of aspects of the popular culture, this was usually quite short and lacked depth.

Poorer responses missed one of the key elements of the question, in particular failing to differentiate between acceptance or rejection. The section of the case study covered by students seems to have been quite crucial to the appropriateness of responses. The case study selected should be relevant to each section of the syllabus.

Question 6(b)

‘The interaction between a popular culture, the individual, and social change occurs on a local, national and global scale.’

Discuss this statement by:

- (i) outlining your case study of a form of popular culture;**
- (ii) explaining what has contributed to this form of popular culture’s growth in society;**
- (iii) describing how your case study contributes to an understanding of how individuals interact with popular culture;**
- (iv) analysing the contribution social change has made to the form of popular culture you have studied.**

The better responses to this question synthesised and analysed the interaction of the key elements of the individual, and social change on local, national and global scales. These answers reflected a level of social literacy which had an integrated theme running across the local, national and global themes. Candidates utilised and demonstrated a genuine interest in their case study. It was apparent that they had read widely in order to develop their understanding of the study area.

Average responses covered each part of the question and were able to answer (i) and (ii) quite adequately. Sections (iii) and (iv), however, were not answered in depth and were often very broad and descriptive. Concepts were mentioned but not discussed or integrated into their answers. These tended to cover the local, national and global aspects of popular culture only in a very superficial way.

Poorer responses were usually weak in part (iii) and in dealing with the way(s) in which social change can be linked to popular culture. There were also a considerable number of prepared answers which dealt with the depth study but did not focus on the question. These answers ignored the local, national and global scale of popular culture.

3 UNIT

The 513 candidates who sat for the 3 Unit examination represent approximately 19.5% of the 2 Unit candidates.

Question 1(a)

What do you understand by the term basic human issues?

Explain why it is important to consider basic human issues when reflecting on:

- **continuity**
- **change**
- **the future.**

A key feature of a good response was the candidate's ability to use the concept of 'basic human issues' and to answer the question. Understanding entailed more than paraphrasing definitions as a means of examining the term, its correct application as shown by examples used and its application to continuity, change and the future. Such an answer was critical of the process of change and clearly showed how 'basic human issues' were not only problematic in their universal application but also how they were open to critical and creative analysis and reflection. Good responses used a wide range of examples to illustrate their point rather than depending on their one country of study. Such answers were logically developed and demonstrated both a depth of understanding and the application of social literacy.

Average answers reflected an apparent lack of familiarity with both the syllabus definition and use of the term 'basic human issues.' Often the term was explained in a very generalised way, 'issue' being interchangeable with 'rights' or 'problems'. Alternatively a list of examples of basic human issues as outlined in the syllabus were given, but with little explanation and limited understanding. This degree of understanding then showed in its lack of direct focus or applicability to the question. Continuity, change and the future were seen as presenting an invitation to talk in very general and often tautological terms about the inevitable interrelationship of these terms.

Weaker responses failed to freely use terms that are included and available in the syllabus and that are central to the course or they were unable to develop understanding beyond a few lines. Others showed the limit of their knowledge by giving poor or wrong examples that were very basic in their application to continuity, change and the future. Some students answered only one part of (a), (b), and (c) rather than each of them.

Question 1(b)

‘Acculturation changes the way of life of some people, and tensions may arise as a result of such changes.’

What do you understand by the concept of acculturation?

Critically discuss how acculturation might change the way of life of some people.

In the better responses the concept of acculturation was generally well understood. It was used correctly as cultural diffusion and was supported by a wide range of examples from colonialism to American and Western media. Excellent answers were able to discuss critically the process of winners and losers, of dominant and subservient cultures. In this way they could more readily discuss the problem of tensions caused by the acculturation process. Those who could discuss the role of the global media in the transmission of culture showed a sophisticated understanding of the nuances of this question as well as the fact that they ‘owned’ the knowledge and were not just repeating it.

Average answers also showed a reasonable grasp of culture, acculturation and tension. These responses, however, tended to be descriptive: ‘culture is thrust upon people and people change.’ The key element missing is the reaction to ‘critically discuss.’ The answer was often conveyed directly through examples only, while the concept of acculturation was not discussed and the acquisition of culture as an unequal process was not examined.

Weaker responses showed some knowledge of ‘culture’ and of the process of continuity and change as expressed in the course generally. Examples tended to be very basic or inappropriate to the process of acculturation, being, rather, an example of change in their chosen depth study.

Question 1(c)

You are asked to investigate the following question:

‘What directions and strategies for future change or conservation are most desirable?’

Describe ONE methodology you would use to investigate this question.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of your chosen methodology?

The better answers showed an understanding of the process of research while the suitability and justification of a particular research methodology characterised the best responses. Knowledge and understanding of the methodology chosen were clarified in terms of the desired outcomes or objectives. Candidates could critically evaluate and discuss their chosen methodology as well as demonstrate a socially literate approach to futures research. Trend analysis and Delphi techniques were preferred methods of supporting scenario writing and the process of valuing and reflecting – one method could rarely stand alone – while surveys were popular in indicating a future that people may choose. All could discuss the advantages and disadvantages of their chosen method.

A feature of average responses was the candidate’s launching into a description of a chosen methodology followed by a paragraph of points for and against, with little or no attempt to apply or direct the methodology to the question asked. Rather than a discussion of the advantages and difficulties of understanding the future, these students tended simply to state that understanding the past helped understand the future and that this is a good thing. Such answers did, however, show an understanding of the course.

Weaker candidates did not understand what research methodology was. As a consequence, they could not discuss any particular methodology in any meaningful way. Such answers revealed a poor grasp of this element of the course. They were generally very brief, vague, full of generalisations and assertions and revealed low level skills and knowledge as well as inadequate social literacy.

Question 2

Generally, the candidates' selection of alternatives in this question was evenly spread. Question 2(b) allowed candidates to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of theories of social change. Many candidates, however, struggled with the intricacies of question 2(c). In particular, their inability to evaluate the statement critically often led to responses which were descriptive rather than analytical.

Candidates should be aware of the danger of prepared responses. It is important that all components of a given question should be clearly addressed. They should discuss the stimulus material and define key terms included in the question. They should, however, be wary of merely describing concepts without applying them to the given question.

The better candidates tended to produce responses which were characterised by:

- a high degree of social literacy
- detailed knowledge and understanding of the relevant material
- the ability to infuse social theory into discussion of their chosen country.

Question 2(a)

'The past is in your head... but the future is in our hands.'

To what extent is this statement useful for understanding and explaining continuity and change, and the future for the country you have studied?

In your answer, refer to THREE of the following:

- **conflict and cooperation**
- **power/empowerment**
- **industrialisation/westernisation**
- **rights and responsibilities**
- **community**
- **bureaucratisation/democratisation.**

The better answers revealed a high order of social literacy. They made an excellent analysis of the stimulus material and clearly defined key concepts, using valid examples from their chosen country, e.g. the empowerment of women in Japanese society. These answers showed a deep understanding of both elements of the question – 'the past is in your head' offered interpretation that goes beyond tradition and looks creatively at different social constructions of the past.

Weaker responses tended to be brief, descriptive and contained historical references. Statements made were often vague, generalised and/or inaccurate. They lacked critical analysis of the stimulus material and made inadequate use of course concepts.

Question 2(b)

In relation to the country you have studied, outline and analyse the explanations, theories and interpretations of continuity and change that best allowed you to understand:

- (i) social and cultural change;**
- (ii) resistance to change.**

Better candidates revealed a thorough understanding of social theories, as well as an ability to apply, analyse and explain these theories in the context of the question. In their responses these candidates chose to utilise the most appropriate social theories to highlight continuity and change in the country they had studied.

Weaker candidates made very little or no reference to social theories. Their answers showed little understanding of the processes of continuity and change; they were descriptive, with an over-reliance on vague/generalised statements, rather than specifics.

Question 2(c)

‘Modernisation is seen as a social process and modernity as a cultural value. This distinction between modernisation and modernity raises the question whether technological and administrative developments in society (modernisation) are linked to changes in values, beliefs, and attitudes about the world and our capacity to control our own future (modernity).’

Critically evaluate this statement in relation to continuity and change, AND the process of modernisation in the country you have studied.

Better responses critically evaluated the statement, showing an understanding of the distinction between modernisation and modernity and integrating the stimulus material into a discussion of the process of continuity and change in the selected country.

Weaker answers ignored the stimulus material, and relied heavily on historical data rather than sociological process. These responses tended to lack analysis, were merely descriptive, and did not attempt to evaluate the statement critically.

Question 2(d)

In relation to the country you have studied:

- (i) identify and explain the importance of significant aspects of its past that influence the present society and its culture;**
- (ii) identify and analyse how trends in the present society might be significant in the future of the country;**
- (iii) use the significant aspects of its past AND the trends you have identified in the present society to suggest possible and preferable futures for the country.**

Better candidates identified significant aspects and then integrated their account into their explanation of contemporary trends which could be projected into the future. In the better responses candidates incorporated social theory and made excellent use of concepts. Their chosen aspect (part iii) was investigated in depth and in such a manner as to show wider social and cultural characteristics of the chosen country.

Weaker candidates failed to identify significant aspects of the past. These responses were unbalanced in their approach, ie they might discuss the past adequately but were weaker in the discussion of trends and futures. They showed poor or little understanding of the concepts involved. Too much emphasis was often placed on the historical. These answers showed no link between past and present and gave little or no explanation of the processes of change and continuity. They failed to predict possible and/or preferable futures for the specific country (part iii), were often brief and contained inaccurate details.

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SOCIETY AND CULTURE

PERSONAL INTEREST PROJECT

General comments

In 1998, 2668 Personal Interest Projects were marked according to the criteria outlined in the syllabus. The development of each student's PIP should be in accordance with the syllabus requirements and the advice contained within it. The components outlined in the syllabus should not be confused with the Procedures section of the syllabus. The dot points under the Procedures heading are designed to assist in the formulation of the PIP topic, and are not meant to be sections presented in the PIP.

Marking of the PIPs 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 marking scheme description sheet used in the 1998 marking operation is included in this report.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Personal Interest Project

HSC Marking Scheme

GRADE	MARK	DESCRIPTORS
A	30 29 28 27 26	Clear focus. Highly literate student. Well integrated research - understood and applied, with critical analysis of findings, research and methodologies used. Conceptual understanding applied and integrated throughout PIP. Clear cross cultural understanding and application to topic. High level communication and integration skills evident.
B	25 24 23 22 21 20	Topic well done, clearly related to Society and Culture. Socially literate student. Well integrated Society and Culture concepts. Sound methodology used - comprehensive social research and sound analysis of findings. Good level of communication and integration skills evident. Some limiting components.
C	19 18 17 16 [Mean] 15 14 13 12	Topic clear, related to Society and Culture. Topic not fully developed and extended. Own genuine PIP. All components completed. Evidence of social literacy. Basic methodologies - somewhat integrated, limited analysis of findings. Attempts made at inclusion of Society and Culture concepts - evident not fully understood. Limited resources. Cross cultural component 'tacked on', not integral to PIP. Reasonable communication and integration skills.
D	11 10 9 8 7 6	Unsophisticated PIP, lacks direction and focus. Limited relationship to Society and Culture. Simplistic methodologies with little or no analysis of findings - reporting of findings only. Naïve plagiarism/heavy plagiarism. Poor communication and integration skills.
E	5 4 3 2 1	Compulsory elements not done/poorly done. PIP very limited in scope. Simplistic communication skills.

The main features required for each PIP, and considered in the marking process, include the following:

- Compulsory elements - these must all be completed and within the limits indicated in the syllabus in respect of 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.
- Should indicate development of social literacy.
- Include a cross cultural component showing knowledge and understanding of viewpoints other than those of the candidate.
- Ethics in social research need to be given careful consideration by teachers and candidates, as well as choice of non-offensive resource material.
- 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 candidates attempt topics that are too broad and, consequently, have difficulty in indicating their relevance to the conceptual understandings of Society and Culture. PIPs that allow candidates to develop a clear focus and address the topic in depth rather than giving a shallow analysis tend to be an advantage to the candidate.
- Integration of concepts, cross-cultural understandings and analysed findings are fundamental to the development of an effective PIP.
- Research methodologies used by candidates should be clearly understood and should be demonstrated throughout the PIP. Primary and/or secondary research may be used to achieve this aim effectively. It is the candidates' use of, and analysis of, the methodologies that distinguishes one PIP from another in a qualitative sense.
- 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. A key feature of Society and Culture is the development of effective research skills – these should be clearly demonstrated via the PIP.
- The appendices, if included, should contain only relevant material that is directly referred to within the central material. Once again, some PIPs included too much unnecessary material in their appendices.
- Where secondary research is used, it should be fully acknowledged, with adequate referencing. This referencing includes the use of appropriate footnotes.

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