

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE

GCSE Citizenship Studies (3280)

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3280/01: Written Paper

Introduction

The comments on individual questions should be read in conjunction with the published mark scheme. As in previous years, it is intended that both the mark scheme and this report will serve as a helpful guide to centres in preparing candidates for future examinations.

As has been written in previous reports, some handwriting is a pleasure to read, but an increasing minority is bordering on the illegible. Centres are asked to emphasise to candidates the importance of writing answers that are not only legible but also coherent. Centres might wish to consider the use of scribes or word processors in more cases, especially for those candidates with known handwriting difficulties. Accurate reading of questions and the requirements of the answers are essential in order to achieve the available marks.

Section A

Q1a-e

As in previous years most candidates were able to reflect accurately and clearly on their coursework activity. However, there was a tendency in some cases not to read the questions accurately, e.g. 1(a) asked about the aim of the activity, not whether it was a success or not. If the aim was fundraising then it is expected that the name of the charity be clearly stated. In a few cases it was unclear throughout all of a candidate's answers what the activity actually was that had been engaged in. 1(b) and 1(c) generally caused little difficulty. 1(d) asked about a responsibility not a restatement of what was involved in the activity. 1ei and 1eii asked about other team members not the team as a whole and candidates who had engaged in a lone activity were often at a disadvantage unless they could include an accurate reference to another adult, e.g. on a work experience placement.

Q1f

It proved difficult for many candidates to address the question 'Do you agree with this view?' Although many centres will have taught candidates about the use of the bullet points they are not five separate questions but merely points to act as guidance. Candidates who wrote up to five paragraphs or 'mini essays' on whether or not they agreed with the bullet points could not possibly answer the question that was set. Very obviously, as with some of 1a-e, candidates who had been allowed to substitute work experience for a Citizenship activity were at a disadvantage. Candidates who had undertaken an activity to help others, or who were aware that many activities do help other people, should have been able to respond to the requirements of the question. Unfortunately a significant minority of candidates became entangled in such issues as whether or not governments or other agencies should be engaged in Citizenship activities. Very few candidates referred directly to the activity that they had been involved in.

Section B

The focus this year was on source material linked to the theme of human rights.

Q2a

Most candidates were able to name or describe a feature of identity.

Q2b

Most candidates gained 1 mark, with only a few being awarded 2 marks. Very obviously, many understood the importance of ID in terms of minimum age requirements or at an airport when going on holiday, but only a minority were able to explain identity in terms of its importance for Citizenship.

Q2c

The key to this question was in the source material. Less than half of the candidates understood that dual heritage meant mixed race or similar, and was nothing to do with culture or religion.

Q2d

This question gave an opportunity for good candidates to write about non-white immigration, why London is more likely than other cities to attract non-white immigrants and the increase of dual heritage births in cities such as London. Unfortunately, most candidates just wrote briefly about immigration without reference to any country of origin.

Q2e

Given the answers that were written to 2(a), it was disappointing that barely half of the answers to 2(ei) and 2(eii) were sufficiently correct with two correct identities for each person from a considerable number of possible answers.

Q3a and Q3b

Most candidates answered 3(a) correctly, but a slightly lower proportion answered 3(b) correctly. The correct answers were clearly available directly from the source material, 3(a) perhaps being slightly clearer than 3(b).

Q3c

Some candidates did not distinguish their two reasons sufficiently clearly. There was no suggestion in the source material that mothers were tampering with the food or making money as suggested by some candidates. Such questions often enable good candidates both to distinguish clearly between two different reasons and to show how well they can interpret and use source material to gain the second mark on questions worth 2 marks.

Q4a, Q4b and Q4c

These were answered correctly by the vast majority of candidates. However, less than half answered 4(d) correctly, suggesting that they were confusing the words or actions of those against whom the protestors were directing their banners with what the protestors themselves were advocating by their banners.

Q4e

Answers to this question were disappointing. Only the most able candidates explained a difference between a human and a legal right. Stating a correct example of each does not explain a difference and marks could only be awarded if each right were clearly explained. The limited nature of answers to this question suggests the need for a clearer knowledge and understanding of rights both human and legal.

Q5a

A majority of candidates answered this question correctly. However, even those candidates who did not know what an employment tribunal was should have been able to find the answer reasonably easily in the source material.

Q5b

Answers were disappointing even from the more able candidates. There was a strong tendency for even the able candidates to read the source material as if Asda were guilty of making their employees work long hours in poor conditions and giving them low pay. A minority of weaker candidates clearly confused trade with trade union.

Q5c

Answers to this question were marginally better than those given to 5b, but many candidates showed a disappointingly low level of knowledge and understanding of why employees might want to belong to a trade union and what benefits can be derived from such membership.

Q6a

Although a majority of candidates answered this correctly, it is of concern that more were not able to correctly interpret some simple data and make a simple calculation.

Q6b

This was answered correctly by a smaller majority than 6a, and thus it is of concern that a significant minority of candidates are not able to identify the correct answer to such a fundamental concept of Citizenship as 'community'.

Q6c

The vast majority of candidates gained at least one mark for this question. Centres should remind candidates that where multiple choice questions seek two answers there is no point in candidates offering only one answer, and thus denying themselves a possible second mark.

Q6d

Answers to this question were disappointing. The question asked for reasons why life expectancy might be higher, not lower, in some places than in others, so no marks could be awarded if the question were answered for lower rather than higher life expectancy. Too many candidates thought that life expectancy will be lower in areas with a high murder rate. There was a widespread lack of understanding about the links to life expectancy of such factors as levels of affluence, health (and access to health care), quality of environment and aspects of lifestyle.

Q6e

The question asked for a policy, not a personal decision, that realistically might increase life expectancy. A significant minority of candidates did not seem to realise that in a free society people cannot be forced to do certain things, such as take compulsory exercise, eat a particular type of diet or not be allowed to smoke tobacco or drink alcohol. Whilst it may be encouraging to read that many young people want to suggest a ban on smoking and/or alcohol to enable greater life expectancy, such policies are likely to be unrealistic.

Q7a, Q7b and Q7c

Questions such as these have appeared in similar forms in previous years. Although it is recognised that many young people do not read newspapers, the specification for Citizenship Studies does require a knowledge and understanding of the nature of the mass media in a free society and how news, views, opinions and values are formulated and communicated. Answers to 7(a) and 7(b) were answered correctly by a small majority, and to 7(c) by a larger majority, of candidates.

Q7d

It is of concern that only a small majority were able to identify the correct answer to explain censorship.

Q7e

Libel means something more specific than just not telling the truth, since it must also concern a person. A small minority answered the question correctly.

Q7f

Even though only a small minority answered 7(e) correctly, a very large majority realised that if journalists (or any other persons, perhaps) were guilty of breaking the law then the courts might fine or punish them in an appropriate way, or the newspaper might have to pay compensation to the injured person concerned.

Q7g

Given that similar questions have been asked in previous years it remains a concern that a large majority of candidates have little or no awareness of the nature of bias in the mass media or why newspapers might be biased but the broadcast media cannot be because it is regulated by such means as a Charter or Ofcom. Many candidates have some worryingly inaccurate perceptions about the mass media. Some think that political parties own newspapers and that therefore the views presented will always be of the parties that own them. Others think that newspapers are biased because fewer people read them than watch TV, or because a news item is written by only one journalist or that TV is not biased because political discussions are live.

Q8a, Q8b and Q8c

Answers to these questions show a disappointingly inaccurate knowledge of the European Union. 8(a) was answered correctly by only a small minority of candidates and 8(b) and 8(c) by only a very small majority.

Q8di and Q8dii

Were correctly understood by the majority of candidates. Weaker candidates did not appreciate that in 8(dii) the young people being referred to were the immigrants, not young people in general.

Section C

Extended writing

In previous years question 9 has always proven to be the most popular, but this year an overwhelming majority (over 72%) answered question 10, perhaps being attracted by the *Big Brother* or *X-Factor* theme.

There was a greater tendency this year for more candidates to write a paragraph or 'mini essay' in response to each of the bullet points, as was the case with 1f, and thus not address the question 'Do you agree with this view?' As stated in previous reports, answering *yes* or *no* to each of the bullet points in turn does not necessarily address the question being asked. As a result, many candidates did not succeed in reaching a mark above level 2.

Q9

This was attempted by nearly 20% of candidates and proved difficult to answer. Many candidates clearly did not know what was meant by consumer rights, wrote about human rights, or presented vague generalities in response to the bullet points. A few wrote about direct experiences, but often in a limited way, or about a local consumer help scheme that they had studied. Young people are usually very aware of their rights, whether as consumers or future citizens and it is a concern that the candidates who selected this question were unable to articulate these rights effectively.

Q10

Many candidates wrote in generalities about voting, but there were a few excellent answers which addressed the focus of the question that was not about whether more people vote for *Big Brother* than in a general election but about the relative and different importance of such voting. *Big Brother* and the *X-Factor* are harmless fun, but a general election is obviously a key element in representative democracy and it was very disappointing that very few candidates appreciated this.

Q11

This was attempted by less than 8% of candidates and proved to be difficult. The question was about globalisation, not about global warming.

3280/02: Coursework

Centre Administration

For the fourth successive year there was a significant increase in entry for Citizenship Studies. However, it was pleasing to see that overall coursework standards were maintained and that most centres performed administrative tasks efficiently. The following characteristics of good practice were identified:

- Early May deadlines for the despatch of coursework were adhered to;
- Work submitted by candidates and their teachers was properly authenticated to meet Edexcel and QCA requirements;
- candidates provided a brief introductory description of both their activity and their own role in the activity;
- the OPTEMS were completed correctly, matching the scores awarded to the work of individual candidates on their response form grids;
- centres sent sufficient samples (substituting candidates with an identical/very close mark for candidates who might have withdrawn);
- the work of both the highest and the lowest scoring candidates was included in samples;
- use of the latest (revised 2006) response sheet which contained a grid to record the mark for each of the four assessment areas (Planning, Activity Log, Communication and Evaluation) together with the total mark.
- use of annotation commenting on the work of individual students (although this is not a requirement it is extremely useful).
- inclusion of clear evidence of internal standardisation where this was appropriate because several different teachers were involved in the internal assessment.

Unfortunately, a minority of centres did not meet administrative requirements which, though something of a chore for busy teachers, are there to make the assessment system consistent and transparent.

- Optems sheets were not always accurately completed;
- a few centres gave 'O' to an absent candidate or one who had handed in no work instead of using an 'X' symbol;
- marks for the four individual assessment areas were not always included on the frontsheet grid or, in a tiny number of cases, broken down for each assessment area;
- response sheets were unsigned by teachers, or candidates, or both, and had to be returned;
- deadlines were not adhered to, sometimes by a number of weeks;
- the work of the highest and lowest scoring candidates was not always included;
- internal standardising did not always take place leading to inconsistencies in internal assessment and, in a very few cases, to work being returned to centres for re-assessment;
- responses to requests made by moderators were slow;

Centre Assessment

More centres are becoming familiar with the assessment process and most use the 5 level descriptors in each of the four assessment categories effectively. There is no doubt that, as Citizenship Studies becomes more established in the curriculum, some excellent departments are emerging which provide high quality leadership, guidance and a genuine sense of enthusiasm, involvement and commitment. They are truly inspirational.

Such departments are extremely well run and operate in a manner which offers both support and genuine leadership to students. Such centres show clearly how internal standardisation has taken place and frequently annotate the work of their students to show how a particular mark was determined. This is immensely helpful to external moderators in the way that it helps to provide a context for the work of individual candidates to be judged.

By way of contrast, assessment in some centres leaves a great deal to be desired. How marks are arrived at, when they appear to be at variance with the level descriptors by a significant margin, remains a matter for speculation. This is most commonly, but certainly not exclusively, the case when the coursework activity is based on either work experience or, less frequently, a sporting activity although both of these examples were less common in 2008.

Where work experience is used it is frequently the case that the submissions are based on either a diary or an account of the candidate's experiences during their work placement. Many of these placements have, at best, only the most tenuous link with Citizenship Studies and most are, inevitably, an individual activity which will not meet higher mark descriptors because there is little or no involvement of others.

Sports activities can be legitimate and there were good examples in 2008 of their use in fund raising, working with younger pupils or anti-racist activities - perhaps in connection with national campaigns focusing on removing racism from football. They are less successful if their primary purpose is not the assessment of an activity securely based in Citizenship Studies or if the focus is on personal fitness or a preoccupation with the particular sporting skills of those involved.

Particularly in the case of inappropriate work experience activities, which manifestly did not satisfy the level descriptors and the assessment objectives of Citizenship Studies the adjustments made to centre marks were often very significant. It must be emphasised that Citizenship Studies is a discrete subject in its own right and not an appendage of work experience. Centres and students are offered a very wide choice of activities but, in all cases, they must be firmly rooted in citizenship and the KS4 Programme of Study.

Candidate Performance

Even though numbers increased very significantly in 2008, the overall level of performance was very similar to that of previous years. Inevitably, with entry based on an untiered examination paper, moderators see work which covers the complete spectrum of ability and it is recognised that many young people go to great lengths to produce coursework which represents a high personal level of achievement even if the final grade is some way short of the highest available. This contrasts sharply with a small minority who submitted work which was really carelessly presented, hurried, slipshod and badly organised, often leaving the external moderator with the task of trying to find relevant assessment areas.

Choice of Activity

Although a handful of centres prescribe a coursework topic for all candidates, almost all offer at least some element of choice and this freedom and sense of ownership is usually greatly valued by candidates. Most choices are appropriate and typically involve raising money for charity, environmental work in both schools and the community, a whole range of mentoring schemes involving work with younger pupils and, increasingly, activities showing global awareness.

It was noted, in 2008, that the small majority of candidates who do not use the response forms provided by Edexcel usually tend not to score as highly as those who do. Use of these forms is not compulsory but they do provide guidance for candidates in each of the four sections. Use should be made of the most recently revised (2006) response forms. Unaccountably, some centres used a mixture of these and older, out-of-date forms.

Where work experience is successful there is a clear emphasis on an area which allows interaction of young people (perhaps also involving adults) and which achieves a clear focus on a citizenship activity. Occasionally, this might cover key aspects of health and safety at work but some of the best and most successful examples are those in which a small group of Year 10 or 11 pupils prepare work experience booklets and presentations for younger pupils.

Centres are also advised to consult the current Key stage 4 Programme of Study.. Direct links between this and individual choice of citizenship activity are not yet compulsory but are, nevertheless, very much advised and will become much more significant in the new specifications for both short, and full-course, GCSE qualifications in Citizenship Studies.

In addition, practically-based INSET for teachers of Citizenship Studies will again be delivered by senior examining personnel during the 2008-09 Autumn and Spring terms at venues in the north, the midlands and in London. If in doubt about the nature of an activity, centres are invited to contact Edexcel (Professional Development & Training Section) for further advice on venues, dates and registration.

Planning the Activity

Although some plans seem to be written very much after the event, most candidates give a clear and successful indication of plans involving both their own work and the contribution of others. In this sense, it must be emphasised that the contribution of others, and work with others in a group, is an essential part of this specification.

There are still some candidates who undertake their activity almost solely on an individual basis and this kind of approach cannot satisfy all the assessment criteria. Similarly, if choosing work experience, high marks will not be gained if most of the planning is done by members of the teaching staff or parents.

Activity Log

Completion of this part of the Response Form continues to improve. Diary entries now contain more detail and there is often much more analysis of the diary in terms of examining the progress of the activity. There is, more often, at least a recognisable attempts to make explicit links between the chosen activity and appropriate Citizenship characteristics although this still continues to be an area of relative weakness for most candidates.

Some are very clear about why their activity represents distinctive areas of citizenship. Others do this as something of an afterthought. In many cases the links are mainly implicit and, in a few cases, it is very difficult to make links at all because the chosen activity is difficult to recognise as one that reflects any form of citizenship.

It is vital that the second part of the Activity Log form is used to produce an analysis which demonstrates clearly how citizenship is reflected in the activity and that this is made fully explicit. Potentially good work may well not realise its full mark potential if these links are not made although, in 2008, some centres are clearly giving their candidates excellent support in this section. Once again, reference to the KS4 Programme of study helps to point the way towards key characteristics of citizenship.

Communication

The gathering, inclusion and description of evidence are now very good with digital photographic support and high-quality powerpoint presentations often increasingly common. Unfortunately, not all centres realise that their students need to go beyond a description of how the evidence was gathered and used and there are a few centres who allow their candidates to submit work without any supporting evidence even though a minimum of two pieces are strongly advisable.

Increasingly, too many centres are allowing their candidates to include vast amounts of evidence on an unselective basis and awarding very high marks for vast appendices. Even where some analysis of the significance of evidence is incorporated this is rarely sufficient to offer the sort of interpretation of evidence, and reasoned judgments based on its value and quality that will meet the requirements of Level Descriptors 4 and 5 in this section. Centres are advised to make sure that their candidates are familiar with the requirements set out in the Level 3-5 descriptors for the Communication Section as this is a common area of weakness.

Evaluation

Weaker candidates often re-write the planning section of their coursework or describe what they have done but most responses do give some indication of the ability of candidates to reflect on their participation in a citizenship activity. The main weakness continues to be excessive brevity and, in particular, this section should be used to demonstrate the ability of respondents both to work with others and to appreciate their viewpoints. (Here, again, candidates undertaking individual activities are at a considerable disadvantage.)

Many hint at the role of others but need to offer more detailed evidence of constructive critical awareness, not least to show how a range of group decisions (where several people make an input) might contribute to the activity's outcome or what happens when decisions have to be changed for whatever reason.

Similarly, this is the place to discuss and highlight unexpected outcomes. An important part of the learning process is that activities do not always go to plan - or necessarily work at all. This might be because of poor planning, bad weather, over-ambitious hopes, unexpected illness, the inability or unwillingness of some group members to contribute to the joint effort, disagreement within the group, failure of external agencies to respond or unforeseen health and safety issues.

Conclusion

It is rewarding to see just how many young people - many of whom are routinely criticised by sections of the media for their apathy, selfishness or anti-social activities - approach their coursework positively, enthusiastically and often selflessly. There is often great pride in reaching a successful outcome and this is demonstrated by pupils of all abilities, many surpassing their original goals and expectations.

Success also comes to young people of many different personalities. Extroverts may possess natural leadership qualities but it is not unusual for introverts, who gain in confidence, to emerge from the shadows - usually to the surprise of others in their teams. Much is learnt about how difficult it is to organise a successful activity and the highs and lows of success and failure. Many who do succeed are often exceedingly modest about their achievements and sometimes appear genuinely surprised by what they have achieved.

As in previous years, there remain administrative and internal assessment issues to be resolved but many citizenship departments achieve a great deal, sometimes on very limited resources and having to work in isolation and almost a sense of inferiority relative to some other subjects in the curriculum.

The subject continues to grow in both popularity and status and, as proposals are announced to change the nature and assessment weighting of coursework, and to introduce a system of 'controlled assessment' perhaps there are those who need to be made aware that coursework in Citizenship offers educational opportunities which extend far beyond the confines of the classroom.

So many of the experiences are of incalculable value to young people in the Key Stage 4 age group and they help to provide many successful opportunities for active participation in a variety of activities for young people.

They, their teachers and their many adult supporters in the community are to be congratulated on what has been achieved. Hopefully, this will be recognised as Citizenship Studies develops to occupy a more significant place in the 14-18 curriculum.

Statistics

Overall Subject Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	77	68	59	50	43	36	29	22	0

3280/01: Written Paper

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
3280/01 grade boundaries	80	61	53	45	37	33	29	25	21	0

3280/02: Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
3280/02 grade boundaries	40	37	32	27	23	18	14	10	6	0

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