

Citizenship Studies

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE J269**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE J029**

Reports on the Units

June 2010

J269/J029/R/10

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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Citizenship (J269)**

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Chief Examiner's Report

This was the first award for the short course in Citizenship. There were many candidates who submitted excellent controlled assessments and there were also some very good responses in the examination. Some centres had prepared candidates well for their assessments. However, the examiners anticipate that candidates' work for the controlled assessment and examination will improve once teachers are more familiar with this new specification.

For the controlled assessment, examiners recommend that candidates are encouraged to choose campaign themes that are manageable and likely to produce positive outcomes. One of the best examples in 2010 was a campaign by a group to clean up a local underpass. Their campaign was well-focused, realistic and successful. They lobbied their local authority and made sure that their campaign received very positive coverage in the local media. Through their actions, the pupils clearly learnt much about the workings of local government and the influence of the media in a democracy. There were many other similar campaigns. Those that were most successful focused on relatively narrow themes drawn from a neighbourhood or school context.

Many centres submitted concise and relevant evidence to illustrate the actions taken by candidates. Candidates often kept logbooks recording and evaluating their actions regularly. These were helpful in keeping candidates focused and invaluable for assessment purposes. Witness statements and photographs were also especially useful as evidence of action.

The examination revealed very significant differences between candidates from centres where specific concepts, terminology and examples had been taught and candidates from centres where teaching and learning had been much less focused. Candidates perform better in examinations when they know about and understand the specification content for unit A342.

Candidates were able to respond to the more demanding essay questions more effectively when they used the prompts indicated by bullet points with the questions. Candidates from some centres had been shown how to use the bullet points to help them organise their responses. Inevitably they gained more marks than candidates from centres where such support was not available.

The most significant difference between candidates related to their understanding of the command words, "describe" and "explain". In four relatively high tariff questions (11, 14, 15 and 16) candidates were asked to offer explanations. Most failed to do so and produced descriptions. Even the best of these did not give them access to the highest levels of the mark scheme. Model answers to typical examination questions in Citizenship are widely available and these will be worth teachers studying before the next exam in January 2011.

A341 Rights and Responsibilities – Getting Started as an Active Citizen

General Comments

This was the first time that candidates have been able to submit work for this unit. It was pleasing to see the commitment that most candidates had to their work and there was real evidence that they are becoming active citizens.

Centres are allowed to submit work for postal moderation or via the OCR repository where work is uploaded to OCR and then downloaded by the moderator. It should be noted that only one method can be used each year. The administration of the moderation process for both methods uses a more automated system known as Moderation Manager. Initial and any additional sample requests are now automatically generated by this system and emailed to a designated email address within each Centre. It is vital that OCR has the most relevant email address as some teachers were telling their moderator that they had not received sample requests etc. The Centre Authentication Form is still required and needs to be sent with the sample of controlled assessment to the moderator. Failure to do this could mean that results are delayed.

Each piece of work needs to have the Citizenship coversheet (CCS/A341) on it where the breakdown of marks is recorded. The candidate proposal form also needs to be completed and sent with the work to the moderator.

This unit is a campaign to try to get something changed. It is not an awareness raising or a money raising exercise. The campaign needs to address one of the themes of this unit on human rights. The campaign needs to be targeted at key decision makers for example, the senior leadership team in the school, board of governors, local community leaders, business people, councillors or the local MP. Year 7 pupils are not key decision makers. Their names could be added to a petition that is presented to a member of the board of governors but they should not be the main focus of the campaign. Students sitting on the school council, however, are key decision makers and a campaign can be targeted towards them.

Comments on Individual Questions

The work for this unit is broken down into three parts. The first part is an evaluation of issues and evidence. Candidates have 10 hours (in groups) to research the issue they are going to be campaigning about. Research is to be shared amongst all group members. The work has to be completed in a group. Candidates then have three hours under controlled conditions to write-up their evaluation on their own. This is a requirement of the specification. Some centres were awarding marks for these assessment objectives when there was no evidence of the work - just evidence of some research. It is not necessary to send copies of all the research completed by candidates. If a questionnaire has been sent out, one copy of it with a tally chart of results or graphs showing the results is sufficient evidence.

This piece of work was generally completed well by most candidates and assessed with reasonable accuracy. Candidates are allowed up to three hours to complete their written work. Not allowing them this amount of time will limit the amount of marks they are able to achieve.

Throughout the work the candidate needs to complete a log/diary of what they have done or are doing. The second part of this unit assesses their skills at taking action rather than their ability to write about it after the event. Supporting evidence for taking action would be the working documents used in the campaign. Photographs, posters, powerpoint slides, DVDs are all good examples of evidence. A witness statement/ observation sheet completed by the decision

Reports on the Units taken in June 2010

maker is a very good way of evidencing part of the taking action section. A teacher summary sheet has been produced and is available on the OCR website. There needs to be sufficient evidence to justify the marks awarded. In some cases only the teacher mark and a simple comment were included and 16 marks were awarded. This is clearly not enough evidence.

The final part of this unit is a written evaluation of the success of the campaign. This is completed individually under controlled conditions lasting for one hour. This was completed correctly by most Centres and on the whole assessed accurately.

The main issues which arose with the work submitted this session were:

- The work was not a campaign to try to bring about a change; it was to raise awareness or to raise money.
- The campaign was not targeted at key decision makers, fellow pupils were the audience.
- The evaluation of issues and evidence was not completed. Marks were awarded for evidence of some research.
- There was insufficient evidence to justify the marks awarded for taking action.

The specification has a detailed section on this unit and OCR has also produced a guide to controlled assessment which can be found on the website. Both of these documents need to be read when planning the work for this unit.

In conclusion, some excellent work has been seen this session. There have been a wide range of issues used, these include:

Votes for 16 year olds.

Fair trade.

Can we have a school council?

How can we get pupils to take school council seriously?

Campaign to local shopkeepers to stop using plastic bags.

We want speed bumps outside our school.

Campaign to change various aspects of school rules.

Can Year 11 have better study facilities in school?

How can the school reduce its energy bill?

Stop smoking in cars with child passengers.

Reduce cost of gym membership for under 18s.

Improving safety on local walkway.

How can we get the school to apply for wind turbine funding?

The proposed issue does not have to be submitted to OCR for approval in advance, however it must link to an OCR approved theme.

A342 Identity, Democracy and Justice – Understanding our Role as Citizens

General Comments

This was the second sitting of the new A342 Citizenship paper. This paper constitutes 40% of the marks for the short course and 20% of the marks for the full course. It is available for both January and June sessions with one option of a resit for candidates. Parts of the paper are similar in style and appearance to the legacy specification paper 1048/01 but different content is being assessed as this unit concentrates on identity, democracy and justice.

Marks awarded to candidates ranged from 39 to 0 with some very good work seen at the top level. There was evidence that candidates in many centres had been prepared well for the examination but there were other centres in which teaching and learning was much less strong and where significant parts of the specification content seemed not to have been covered.

Comments on Individual Questions

Questions 1-5

The multiple choice questions are differentiated and therefore some are harder than others. Some candidates used a process of elimination in which they crossed off alternatives that were definitely wrong so as to narrow down their choice. This worked well as long as they then made it clear to the examiner which alternative they were selecting.

Q1 75% of candidates realised that the United Nations is "an international organisation of member states".

Q2 Only 55% of candidates selected the correct alternative to describe a Crown Court as "a court with a judge and jury". Many candidates thought that all criminal cases pass through a Crown Court, forgetting that magistrates deal with most minor criminal matters.

Q3 56% of candidates correctly matched "pressure group" to the description "people with similar views who form an organisation to get decision-makers to change policies". Many of the remainder incorrectly matched "political party" with the description.

Q4 "Community cohesion" is a key concept in the specification content and 72% of candidates were able to correctly identify its meaning as, "when people in a community mix and get on well with each other". Other candidates were equally divided amongst the other incorrect definitions of community cohesion available for selection.

Q5 Only 31% of candidates were able to identify "an economic and political alliance of member states" as the most accurate description of the European Union. Many candidates claimed that the European Union is "a meeting of European trade unions".

Questions 6 to 10

These questions enable candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the specification content. As for questions 1 - 5, these questions are differentiated. All questions were worth one mark and had the command word "state". Candidates are required only to give short answers rather than write full sentences. For example, the phrase "for employment" would be an adequate response to question 6.

Q6 The majority of candidates (93%) gave a correct reason why people have moved from other countries to live in the UK. Some candidates stated a valid reason why people may have left their home country while others stated why the UK was an attractive alternative.

Q7 71% of candidates answered this question correctly. Most of the correct responses stated that judges have a responsibility for sentencing. A significant minority of candidates stated incorrectly that judges decide the guilty or not guilty verdict.

Q8 Surprisingly, 17% of candidates were unable to state one right a person is likely to have in a democracy but not in a dictatorship. The majority of candidates making a response gave a correct answer. Many mentioned voting while others tended to go for "free speech".

Q9 71% of candidates were able to state one way in which the media might try to influence decision making. Many answers mentioned the use of bias. Relatively few gave more specific examples of supporting a campaign or exposing wrong doing.

Q10 Most of the 66% of candidates who answered this question correctly mentioned the responsibility of voting. Other correct answers included obeying the law and respecting the rights of other citizens.

Question 11

Candidates did well on this question as long as they used the bullet points to help them structure their answer. This helped them to focus on the need to describe one check on government action in a democracy and so gain at least one mark. Only 4% of candidates failed to answer the question at all. A minority of candidates gained more than two marks. Those that scored well noticed the command word "explain" and were able to give reasons why governments cannot act as they want. Most good answers showed understanding of the role of the electorate in a democracy. Poorer answers described the process of parliamentary decision making without explaining why it exists and some candidates believed that the Queen actually exercises a power of veto over legislation.

The use of PEE - point, evidence, explanation helped candidates to reach higher levels in this type of question. Evidence or an example to back up a point made is extremely important to score higher marks. Very few candidates gave specific valid examples in answer to this question. Those that did so were among the few who gained full marks.

Questions 12 and 13

Most candidates were able to interpret data in the table correctly to answer at least one of these questions accurately. Candidates were less successful with question 13 than with question 12 and would have benefitted from more practice on this more demanding type of question.

Question 14

Much of the advice given above for question 11 also applies to this question. Again, most candidates were limited to one or two marks because they failed to explain the possible links between specific human rights and children's chances of living longer. Good answers selected a valid human right in this context such as education and went on to explain why, for example, educating parents about nutrition and hygiene can reduce rates of infant mortality. Some candidates referred usefully to the previous data on child health to support their answer.

Questions 15 and 16

Almost all candidates attempted these questions and most had a clear understanding of aspects of the law as it related to the cases described. Candidates were marginally more successful at answering question 16 but few understood the significance of the command word "explain" in addressing the rights or responsibilities of either Matt or AJ. Good answers to question 15 pointed out that Matt had the right to have his parents with him at an interview with the police because of his age and explained the availability of legal advice as a right in terms of the need to protect Matt's interests.

The majority of candidates scored one or two marks on these questions but many could have done far better if they had given reasons why Matt or AJ had the rights or responsibilities that had been described.

Question 17

93% of candidates attempted this question and most were prepared to write detailed answers. Candidates who used the bullet points to help them structure their answer were able to produce more worthwhile responses than those who did not. Most candidates were unclear about how equality of opportunity might conflict with personal freedom but many were on safer ground when describing how the rule of law might do so. Many of these candidates described how anti-terrorism laws restricted personal freedom and were able to gain between four and six marks on the question.

To move above six marks, candidates needed to evaluate the importance of personal freedom in relation to at least one other value. Only a minority of candidates were able to do this convincingly while also being clear about their own point of view. Those that did so had a clear understanding of the values that feature in the specification content and were able to use good examples from their studies.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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