



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

General Studies

47601

(Specification 4760)

Unit 1: Case Study

Report on the Examination

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GCSE General Studies

UNIT 1 Case Study

Question 1

This question required students to identify and explain two points from source 2.

The majority of students identified two points; answers then fell clearly into two halves. Some students stopped at merely identifying the two points and so scored 2 marks out of a possible 4 marks. Better students went on to explain the points that they had selected and achieved 3 or 4 marks. The majority of students (75%) scored 2 or 3 marks on this question.

The skill of explaining, in addition to the ability to identify, was being assessed through this question.

Question 2

This was a more complex question with a built in cross-referencing element.

Weaker students tended to list isolated points and make simple comments such as “we should all have rights”. Such answers stayed in band 1 of the mark scheme and were awarded 1 or 2 marks.

The majority of answers (56%) fell into the middle mark band (3 or 4 marks) and contained some development of points lifted directly from the sources. If conclusions were drawn they tended to be quite basic and often linked directly to a point found in the source documents.

Answers which demonstrated clear cross-referencing, well developed points and detailed conclusions were awarded marks in the top mark band (5 or 6 marks).

More than 50% of students scored 3 or 4 on this question. With a little extra organisation and some personal interpretation, some of those who scored 4 could have moved into the top mark band. (See general comments re skills at the end of this report.)

Question 3

This question invited an open ended piece of writing explaining why some people might want the rights of others to be restricted. Answers largely fell into the following mark scheme categories:

1 – 2 marks

Simple selection of material – some basic conclusions, though these were often in the sources too. There was no real evidence of clearly formed personal views at this level. Because the question allowed personal views, weaker students tended to lift directly from the sources and make simple unsupported assertions.

3 – 4 marks

Summary of the sources – usually in numerical order of source – interspersed with brief statements of personal views. There were often anecdotal references to general rights eg not being arrested without cause but answers generally took the form of a source point being lifted and then commented on briefly.

In this range there was very little evidence of any additional personal opinion. In order to progress beyond 4 marks students really need to begin to make connections between sources and demonstrate the ability to cross reference source points. A simple chronological approach (dealing with each source in turn) is usually less sophisticated than one which links points together and also draws contrasts between points.

5 – 6 marks

With detailed cross-references and clearly supported own views some students moved into this mark range. Very few students presented any factual information outside the sources. Given the amount of time available between the release of the source booklet and the examination this was disappointing.

There was often detailed opinion expressed and some students had clearly considered key issues but there was a general failure to support such opinion.

7 – 10 marks

A small number of answers (just over 8%) fell into this range. For marks in the highest range students need to:

- show clear analysis of sources – not merely their own opinion
- demonstrate the ability to develop detailed conclusions on complex issues

The strongest answers contained careful reflection on the nature of rights and responsibilities. Comments were supported by examples and writing was fluent.

Question 3 is in effect a short essay and more familiarity with essay writing skills would serve many students well. An answer consisting of a strong opening, clearly developed and well supported arguments and definite conclusions is likely to score more highly than a source by source summary.

Question 4

This was an essay question worth 20 marks. Students were asked to refer to all of the sources and to use their own knowledge.

Answers that reached level 1 and level 2 on the mark scheme were very similar to the corresponding Question 3 answers and relied on simple statements with occasional support from either the sources, personal experience or both. Just over 65% of answers fell into the two lower bands of the mark scheme (scoring between 1 and 8 marks).

29% of answers came in band 3 (9 –12 marks) with 9 marks being the most frequent mark awarded in this band.

Answers in band 3 tended to follow the sources in order and to include comments, in turn, about each source. There was usually a clear conclusion, though this was often relatively unsophisticated eg “You should wear what you like”.

The responses very often took the form of a commentary upon the sources, with personal views but little real analysis of the more complex points found in the sources.

13 – 16 marks

Answers in this mark range began to show increasing levels of detailed analysis and more sophisticated conclusions. In all, only 5% of marks were awarded in this Level 4 mark band.

Answers in this band demonstrated analytical skills and the ability to cross-reference and to select supporting material. There were still very few who had carried out any real independent research, relying on a discussion of their personal views on rights and responsibilities.

17 – 20 marks

Fewer than 1% of answers were awarded marks in this mark range. The few answers that were seen at this level were sophisticated, fluent and thorough, and dealt with the wider social consequences of online communication. The ability to take the particular issues found in the sources and relate them to the more general issues of rights and responsibilities in society was usual among students in this range.

General Comments – Skills for Paper 1

Paper 1 is based on a pre-release booklet which is made available to students approximately 3 months in advance of the examination. For this reason, basic comprehension skills will not score students many marks. Students who score below 10 marks tended to treat the questions as a comprehension test and simply addressed the sources in turn. It is expected that teachers will have worked on the sources with students and that additional research will have been carried out.

The mark scheme is structured so that questions make demands on different levels of response. These demands increase question by question as shown in the mark scheme grid. Question 1 requires only the basic skills of levels 1 to 2, whereas Question 4 allows students to respond across levels 1 to 5. If students treat the paper as a basic comprehension exercise then answers are likely to reach level 3 at best, meaning that a significant number of marks on Question 3 and Question 4 will never be accessed.

Teachers should consider the skills asked for on the longer questions and perhaps devote some time to helping students grasp what these skills are and how best to apply them to the material found in the source documents.

This preparation should include introducing students to terms found in the sources and how those terms are used.

The standard of writing was often very poor. A large number of students could not correctly use expressions involving key words: examples include

“they should not discriminate you”

“you should not wear something that discriminates others”

“in regards to”

“with regards from”

“I believe we should not rule or changes on what people where”

“the pairent may be procicuted”

“we have rights despite their gender”

“Rights on where they are allowed to smoke should be taken away”

“There is no point in trying to please everyone as you will just drain yourself out.”

“predjuice and descrimberlation”

“In Source 4 it is spoken about rights”

The construction of answers was also very poor in many cases.

It would be beneficial to students if teachers were to work through the sources with them and also to suggest likely areas for further research. Students should make it clear that a point they are introducing into their answers is from extra personal research and state where such information has come from.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **results statistics** page of the AQA Website - <http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>

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