



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Humanities 4070

40701

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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GCSE Humanities Paper 1

General

The first year of the new specification went very smoothly. There were no complaints from centres and the administration of the mark scheme was very effective. From start to finish there appeared to be remarkably few problems which bodes well for next year. The new paper continued to embrace the ethos of Humanities, maintained standards, and experienced awarding across the entire ability range in one, un-tiered paper.

Candidates' responses were generally well written and QWC was accessed effectively. Very few responses were difficult to decipher. However, many candidates found it difficult to integrate sources into their mini-essays and some made only passing reference to them. Centres may decide that this aspect of exam technique could be given more attention. The most successful candidates used sources alongside a wide, and often very impressive, knowledge that reflected very good teaching.

There was evidence that some candidates disadvantaged themselves by not reading the questions sufficiently carefully. For example, in 2(f) there were a large number of candidates who did not focus on the crucial words **individuals** and **families**. Although clearly not lacking in knowledge, these candidates concentrated their answers on the idea of mass or governmental action.

Most candidates seemed to complete the exam paper in the allocated time. There were a substantial number of blank answers but this seemed to reflect a lack of knowledge rather than a lack of time to complete as they were scattered throughout the paper rather than in the final questions. Good teaching was clearly reflected in the way that some candidates' answers made an attempt to address the structure of the mark scheme. These candidates had a clear understanding of how top levels could be accessed, ie by using language that indicated an understanding of the importance of evaluating with alternative viewpoints ('on the other hand', 'but of course', 'alternatively', 'however', etc).

Section A – Culture and Beliefs

Question 1 (a)

This question was well answered with most candidates scoring full marks.

Question 1 (b)

Some candidates wrote about two religions rather than the one asked for in the question but answered the question so well that they gained 4 marks. However, it is important for teachers to emphasise in this sort of question that maximum marks are accessed by developing two points rather than making four individual points which can only score 2 marks.

Question 1 (c)

A number of candidates wrote solely about religion and ignored the sources, changing the question into 'how can religion influence an individual's life?' and largely applied their personal experience to the question. It was also interesting to note how many candidates structured their answer to indicate its place as an agent of secondary socialisation. Few students seemed to consider peer group or media as positive influences. The question gave candidates the ability to demonstrate their overall understanding of the course. Amish, wolf girls, even Yanomami, were all commented upon relevantly and addressed the question clearly. It was a pleasure to read some of the responses.

Question 1 (d)

This question was surprisingly poorly answered given the meaning of culture is such a key term for the core unit. Unfortunately, few candidates appeared to have learnt the term.

Question 1 (e)

This question elicited some controversial responses. This was partly because it seemed to have been quite tentatively taught because of its nature. There were many stereotypical portraits, sensationalist reports or inaccurate myths. Few candidates could quote legitimate statistics. As this issue is an obvious area of investigation for the specification, centres should consider allocating more time to teaching this topic. However, many candidates did find relevant material to gain maximum marks, largely reflecting comments about immigration history.

Question 1 (f)

Many candidates tackled nature and nurture, religious beliefs, immigration or coral reefs, etc, for this question. When they failed to turn the topic into an issue referring to different viewpoints they prevented themselves from accessing all the marks available.

Section B – Environmental Issues

Question 2 (a)

This question was well answered and the majority of candidates gained full marks.

Question 2 (b)

This question was easily accessible but some candidates failed to utilise the source to trigger their answer, instead they used their own knowledge and confused ‘method’ with ‘campaign’ or ‘issues’.

Question 2 (c)

Often candidates alluded to the fact that Greenpeace had been quite successful but had a long way to go. They needed evidence or an example of this to get a level 4 mark. Candidates showed a surprising degree of hostility to what they considered illegal or controversial direct action. They were also quite negative about Greenpeace’s lack of success in some areas.

Question 2 (d)

This question was well answered with most candidates scoring full marks.

Question 2 (e)

Candidates generally scored poorly on this question. The processes of ‘Urbanisation’ and ‘Industrialisation’ have led to significant cultural and environmental changes and the new specification seeks to give them more attention than previously. Many candidates scored half marks by managing to talk about ‘towns’ and ‘factories’ respectively.

Question 2 (f)

This question elicited a very large range of responses. The commonest failing was to ignore the question’s focus on individuals and families. Other candidates went off-topic and talked about rainforests and the ozone layer in generalised terms. Other candidates considered that having a domestic wind turbine or starting a pressure group would solve environmental problems. In reality, this was straightforward question which focused on basic issues of good environmental management within the family. Many candidates performed well, displaying a good understanding of ‘carbon footprint’ with realistic suggestions that managed to achieve higher levels of response.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.