

Report on the Components

June 2006

1939/MS/R/06

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All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

The reports on the Examinations provide 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 syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Mark schemes and Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers.

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Humanities (1939)

REPORTSON THE COMPONENTS

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Humanities

Paper 1

General Comments

The paper was accessible to candidates of all levels of ability. There was more evidence that centres had addressed some of the concerns expressed in previous reports with regard to performance in the Religious and Moral Issues question. However, although many candidates were conversant with the basic tenets of Christianity, most were not well prepared for one other major world religion. It is essential that centres thoroughly prepare their students for two religions as many of the questions require candidates to compare them.

One pleasing aspect was the improvement in many centres' preparation of candidates for the assessment requirements of the optional questions in Section B. The quality of answers showed an encouraging upward trend. However, many candidates still do not quote directly from the sources and therefore limit the marks they can gain.

There was still evidence that some candidates are relying on general knowledge rather than thorough preparation to address the paper. Issues of Citizenship produced below average marks as did the question on Environmental Issues. Many candidates did not seem to realise that it was a question about the environment.

There are still too many rubric infringements where candidates answer both optional questions in Section B. It is helpful if attention is drawn to the Instructions to Candidates on the front page of the examination paper.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

1. There was a clear distinction between candidates who knew the difference between civil and criminal law, and those who were trying to work out the difference by suggesting civil law related to civilians and criminal law related to criminals in part (a). Centres need to be aware that the specification requires all the key concepts in a particular section to be examined over time. The type of answer needed can be extrapolated from the mark scheme.

Many candidates successfully extracted some of the required information from the document in part (b). Candidates should be encouraged to answer this section briefly rather than writing extended prose.

In part (c) many candidates knew no more about the policies of the major political parties than was indicated in the question. The inability to bring in their own knowledge meant that candidates' ability to score was limited.

2. This question produced better responses than in the previous year. There was clear evidence that many candidates had knowledge of the two key concepts in part (a). A significant proportion of candidates saw profit as solely the money

gained beyond what an item has been bought for. Consumer rights were rarely clearly specified.

Despite prompts within the document, many candidates failed to identify the correct types of insurance in part (b).

In part (c) many candidates wrote thoughtfully and consequently scored quite well.

3. As with Question 1, many candidates had little understanding of the key concepts. In part (a), quality of life was seen solely as related to the amount of wealth an individual had; sustainable development was a complete mystery to many.

In part (b) candidates generally scored well, though a significant number failed to identify that loss of ancient woodland was less environmentally friendly than the loss of gardens.

The quality of answers about cross-border pollution in part (c) was surprisingly disappointing. Few candidates identified the causes of pollution and rarely gave case studies such as the sulphur dioxide generated by British power stations causing acid rain in Scandinavia, or the problems of the River Rhine. Some candidates tried to tie in the Kyoto agreement but seemed to concentrate more on the political difficulties rather than the rationale behind it

4. The improvement in average scores on this question was maintained, possibly a consequence of candidates scoring almost full marks in part (b).

Part (a) also gave all candidates an opportunity to gain marks and many did so.

Unfortunately, part (c) suffered from the recurring problem of many candidates appearing to lack even basic knowledge of two world religions. There were many encouraging descriptions of practice in Christianity, but this was rarely developed by accurate references to any other religion. Often candidates simply stated that their second chosen religion did the same.

Section B

5. This was by far the most popular question in Section B, and was also generally answered more successfully. More candidates appeared to understand the assessment demands of the mark scheme; therefore they were able to score higher marks. The quality of argument has continued to improve. Most candidates are now referring to the documents and the evidence they provide implicitly in their answers. They now need to understand the need to quote from the sources to achieve the highest marks. More candidates are now accessing the highest levels because they offer a counter view.
6. This question was much less popular, and in general terms, less successfully answered than Question (5). The lack of reference to the sources was more marked in this question, possibly because the documents were less wordy.

Humanities

Paper 2

General Comments

The paper was accessible to candidates of all levels of ability and the incidence of large gaps in the number of questions attempted was reduced. There is pleasing evidence that more candidates are better prepared with the research skills needed in some questions. Each section is designed to test certain skills and this is clearly indicated by the title at the start of each section. Problems in Section A were reduced this year, the main problem now centring on encouraging candidates to look at both sides of the question in Question 5. The answers to how to develop a research strategy in Section B were much improved. Section C still generated problems for many candidates in reaching reasoned conclusions.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Analyse and Interpret Different Types of Evidence

1. The vast majority of candidates answered this correctly.
2. The vast majority of candidates answered this correctly.
3. Few candidates gave a full account. Most struggled to explain the term *random*. Very few mentioned the difficulty of extrapolating from a random sample.
4. This question discriminated well. More able candidates wrote detailed and accurate answers. Other candidates indicated more rudimentary understanding of the documents. Many candidates used quotations appropriately. A common confusion was to suggest that the Home Secretary was against the ban because he would not fund it and he asked the police to be sensitive.
5. This was often well answered especially by candidates who had been drilled in using quotes from the documents to support their answer. The major weakness was the small number of candidates who produced a balanced answer by challenging the evidence and putting forward a contrary view. The “to what extent” prompt was usually ignored. Very little reference to any documents other than A. Many candidates concentrated on foxes and workers were very peripheral.

Section B: Knowledge and Understanding of Different Research Methodologies

6. Answers about research methodology tended to be generic rather than specific, with few candidates linking them to the issue of fox hunting as indicated in the question. Many candidates appeared to have been well drilled in producing a well developed “questionnaire” answer. Some suggestions for collecting data remain impractical. Most candidates

produced solid responses to the problems of research often listing the predictable standard points.

Section C: Assess the Reliability and Utility of Evidence and Reach Reasoned Conclusion

7. The vast majority of candidates answered this correctly.
8. The vast majority of candidates answered this correctly.
9. Fewer candidates answered this correctly. There were rather laboured attempts to explain instead of simply identifying the two relevant actions. Many candidates produced an answer more appropriate for Question 10.
10. A large number of candidates who had successfully identified the actions in Question 9 went on to describe the reasons for the actions and explain how they would contribute to protecting fish stocks.
11. Fewer candidates answered by saying “this shows” and then describing the contents of the document. More candidates went deeper by indicating what is missing from the source and what else a researcher might need to know. Very few questioned the fact that it was a single source or considered the issue of its reliability
12. Many candidates attempted to challenge the statement and used the documents implicitly to support their argument. Some candidates found the fact that the question was phrased as a negative difficult. There was a pleasing increase in the number of candidates who took the “I agree/I disagree” route. They now need to develop direct quoting of the evidence to reach the higher levels.

Humanities

Coursework

This year, as in the past, the larger schools tended to produce the most efficient moderation procedures. This is mainly because several individuals are involved in the process. Some small entry centres are excellent and deserve praise, others need to adhere more strictly to the criteria.

Successful centres have a tight, well defined and detailed coursework task. This tends to be framed around a statement or hypothesis that can be interpreted in a range of ways. The main thrust of this report is to reinforce the mantra that the methodology of the investigation is the investigation and it does not play second fiddle to the actual content of the coursework.

This course is unashamedly more about the how than the what. From an examining point of view, it is important to point out that being extremely flexible on content means the process has to, by definition, be very tight, otherwise it would be impossible to manage. Sloppy, woolly or uncritical application of methodology is the main cause of poor coursework marks. Conclusions in particular should be linked directly to the evidence collected by the candidate, or even better attributed to the results of the investigation. Linked but unsubstantiated opinions held before, during or after the investigation cannot gain more than a level 1 in AO2(c); unlinked conclusions, however well expressed, do not score marks at all for this criterion.

Centres who insist any secondary information is correctly referenced, submitted in quotes or annotated, explaining their inclusion, tend to do better than those who allow, for want of a better description, modified cut and paste. This structure removes the feeling from the candidate that 'someone somewhere has written something better than me and I need to find it'. This must waste hours of candidates' time, searching the internet in particular. The recognition that what they have to say is not only worthy but is in fact necessary is a very liberating idea for many.

In terms of coursework construction, particularly the source led ones, it is important to use contrasting or conflicting material. This can then be explored for potential bias in terms of opinion, vested interest or omission. Any coherent work of this nature moves rapidly up the levels of the AO3(b) criterion. It is important that candidates write specifically to the marking criteria.

Again new centres have produced a refreshing variation in their approach to the coursework, producing more options not seen before. Also, the recently arrived centres have taken note of the comments made and improved their performance without exception. Any centres experiencing problems have been provided with a detailed analysis of the areas needing attention in the Moderator's Report. Please use these and feel free to contact the Principal Moderator with any concerns. These are now cross referenced and form an important part of the moderation process. It is very important to create a dialogue between moderator and centre prior to moderation, in order to iron out any lingering problems.

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

As always, the main area of differentiation revolves around distinguishing between reaching conclusions and evaluating methodology. This is an issue which is still, and probably always will be, conceptually difficult for candidates to grasp and this can make marking complex and difficult to award in the right place. Conclusions are basically what can be said about the results gathered. Evaluations are about the way the research was handled by the candidate and how this could be improved. In terms of the application of appropriate research methodology, please be aware that axiomatic statements like "I asked 5 questionnaires, I could have had a bigger sample" are not going to score very well. It is quite simply should not could. This can be doubly problematic as it affects scoring on both AO3(a) and AO3(d). Candidates need to show they are familiar with the process of investigation and are able to express their understanding in some detail.

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**General Certificate of Secondary Education
Humanities 1939
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Component Thresholds (raw marks)

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
01	100	63	54	45	36	28	20	12
02	50	36	31	26	22	17	12	8
03	50	42	34	26	20	14	8	2

Option Thresholds (weighted marks)

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	200	153	136	116	97	78	59	40	21
Percentage in Grade		2.1	7.9	14.5	19.5	21.5	17.8	10.7	3.8
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		2.1	9.9	24.5	44.0	65.5	83.2	94.0	97.8

The total entry for the examination was 2037.

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