

## **Reports on the Units**

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**June 2010**

**J445/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.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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## General Certificate of Secondary Education

### Humanities J445

#### REPORTS ON THE UNITS

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## Chief Examiner's Report

This specification became available for teaching in September 2009. The first entry was small for all three units:

Unit B031 2 centres (both new)  
Unit B032 5 Centres (3 existing, 2 new)  
Unit B031 5 Centres (1 existing, 4 new)

Centres entering candidates were a mix of new centres with no previous experience of GCSE Humanities with OCR and existing centres with experience of the Legacy Specification GCSE Humanities 1939.

This mix is significant as the new specification has many similarities to the old in terms of content, paper structure, individual question structure and assessment objectives. The controlled assessment also mirrors in methodology the practise of 1939 coursework. As a result it could be anticipated that centres with experience of 1939 might be better placed in preparing candidates for the new specification.

The demands of the three units vary considerably. B031 carries the highest weighting in the assessment structure and requires the acquisition of a large body of knowledge. B032 and B033 are weighted similarly and B032 applies the research skills developed in B033 to unseen content drawn from B031.

Given the short time frame - September 2009 to June 2010 - it is reasonable to presume that candidates entered for B031 would find the task facing them somewhat more challenging than that facing those entered for B032 or B033. There is some evidence to support this in the analysis of the performance of candidates in the different units.

It is too soon to draw decisive conclusions but it seems likely that centres wishing to enter candidates at the end of the first year of their two year course would probably see candidates achieving more success if entered for B032 or B033 (or possibly both because of the close relationship of the skills being assessed) rather than B031. It is also probable that centres without direct experience of the legacy specification would benefit greatly from attendance at OCR subject specific training.

Centres are advised to consider their entry policies very carefully. The terminal rules for entries are set out in the specification (available on the OCR website) in section 6.2 page 33. Centres should be aware of the following extract from the OCR document *New GCSEs: Terminal rules, re-sits and certification* (also available on the OCR website):

- *At least 40% of the assessment must be taken in the examination series in which the qualification is certificated.*
- *The final grade will include the unit results which satisfy this terminal requirement. If there is more than one way of satisfying the terminal requirement we will generate the best grade.*

*This means that the results for the units that satisfy this terminal requirement will count (ie they will be used to calculate the grade) **even if there is a better score for an earlier attempt at one or more of these units.** (Section 2: Terminal rules)*

Centres with queries on the application of the terminal rules should contact the Qualifications Manager at OCR.

## Unit B031

### General Comments

There was a very small entry for this unit. As this was the first examination of a specification which became available for teaching in September 2009 there are a number of factors which may have impacted on the performance of candidates.

Centres with little, or no, experience of the legacy specification may have found it problematic to prepare candidates for the format of answers which have been largely carried over into the new specification. It is hoped that this report and the subject specific training available from OCR to support implementation of the new specification will be of particular help. Two training sessions are planned for 2010/11 in November in Birmingham and in March in London.

The new specification was available for teaching from September 2009. Cross Curricular Themes is a Unit which requires candidates to know a considerable number of topics from a range of subject areas if they are to achieve their potential. The logistical problems of coming to terms with the demands of a brand new specification and the volume of information candidates need to learn and internalise over a relatively short period of time is challenging.

It is likely that some candidates took this Unit in the first year of Key Stage 4. The maturity of candidates' approaches to examinations are expected to develop throughout the course. It is anticipated that candidates' responses to the demands of this Unit should become more sophisticated as they progress through the course. There are further comments on the issues centres need to consider when deciding entry policies in the Chief Examiner's report.

### Detailed Comments on Questions

#### Section A

##### Question 1 Issues of Citizenship

(a)(i) Responses to Criminal Law were limited. Some focused on people becoming criminals rather than the process of crime/police/courts/punishment.

(a)(ii) Few candidates knew what Civil Law was. Some candidates linked it with civil rights. The mark scheme was looking for disputes between people/businesses/damages/settle out of court.

(b) Candidates were more successful in extracting civil and economic rights though a significant number allocated them to the wrong section.

(c) Most candidates attempted to use the scaffolding in the question to structure their answer. Their success in doing this largely depended on the depth of their knowledge. It was clear that many candidates knew little about human rights beyond UK references.

##### Question 2 Issues of Economic Wellbeing and Financial Capability

(a)(i) Employment produced a mixed response with some candidates gaining full marks but others making limited comments about a job.

(a)(ii) Many candidates made reasonable attempts to provide three facts about Voluntary work.

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(b) Candidates generally managed to extract one correct answer to each part of question b. They should not expect to be rewarded for using the same piece of information in both parts.

(c) Most candidates made a more successful attempt on Trade Unions. This indicated more awareness of the issues, possibly as a result of recent union actions. Candidates should be encouraged to use up-to-date references in their answers.

#### Question 3 Environmental Issues

(a)(i) Sustainability was a key concept not well understood by many candidates.

(a)(ii) Climate Change produced some better responses but some of the information indicated a lack of certainty in some candidates minds as to what was actually involved in the process.

(b) Candidates generally managed to extract one correct answer to each part of question b. They should be encouraged to use care in extracting information and make sure they know precisely what they are being asked for.

(c) Probably the highest scoring of the c questions. Candidates had knowledge which they deployed around the scaffolding to produce competent responses which scored better at all ability levels.

#### Question 4 Religious and Moral Issues

(a)(i) Very few candidates were able to offer three facts about the key concept of Tolerance. Some candidates indicated they knew the word but were unable address issues such as acceptance of differing views/fairness to others/respect for diversity.

(a)(ii) Prejudice was slightly better known, but only slightly. The ability to describe preconceived views/opinion based on no facts/irrational ideas about others was largely absent.

(b) Probably the highest scoring of the b questions. Candidates of all abilities were successful.

(c) Most candidates were able to give limited reasons for God allowing suffering. Few had the depth of knowledge of religious beliefs on the subject to score highly.

#### Question 5 Issues of Health and Welfare

(a)(i)to(iv) Most candidates scored quite well on these questions.

(b) A major problem for many candidates with this question is the way the marks are allocated between the Assessment Objectives. Many candidates wrote reasonable narrative answers but failed to utilise the information from the documents on the paper to support their answers. The mark scheme does recognise implicit use of the sources but rewards candidates who clearly cite from the documents at appropriate points in their answer more highly.

Centres are encouraged to use the mark scheme for this question, and the other questions on the paper, to familiarise candidates with what they need to do to achieve the top marks.

## Unit B032

### General comments

There was a small entry for this unit. As for Unit B031, the logistical problems of coming to terms with the demands of a new specification over a relatively short period of time are challenging. The performance of many candidates in these circumstances was very creditable.

Centres with little, or no, experience of the legacy specification may have found it problematic to prepare candidates for the format of answers which have been largely carried over into the new specification. It is hoped that this report and the subject specific training available from OCR to support implementation of the new specification, will be of particular help. Two training sessions are planned for 2010/11 in November in Birmingham and in March in London.

Application of Knowledge is a unit which requires candidates to know, understand and demonstrate a range of research methodologies and skills if they are to achieve success. Where centres teach these skills alongside developing controlled assessment, there is the potential to reinforce performance in both units of the specification.

It is likely that some candidates took this Unit in the first year of Key Stage 4. As for Unit B031, the maturity of candidates' approaches to examinations are expected to develop throughout the course. It is anticipated that candidates' responses to the demands of this Unit should become more sophisticated as they progress through the course.

### Detailed comments on Questions

#### Section A

1 and 2. A number of candidates had difficulty selecting the right information, especially in 1.

3. There was little evidence that candidates knew what a representative sample was or how to go about creating one.

4. A surprising number of candidates thought, at least initially, that the two documents had an element of agreement. Many candidates produced a sound analysis of the ways in which Document C disagreed. Few candidates used the provenance of Document C to raise the issue of bias or to contrast the nature of the two documents.

5. Many candidates attempted to assess the evidence provided by the documents and make statements for and against the question. Some candidates showed in their answers that they did not clearly understand the nature of a referendum, quite frequently referring to it as quantitative research, or some sort of national questionnaire.

#### Section B

6(a) Most candidates were able to identify at least some strengths and weaknesses of using questionnaires. Some candidates achieved maximum marks for the quality of their explanations.

6(b) Some candidates produced maximum mark answers but most had limited responses regarding interviews.

**Section C**

7 and 8. Most candidates scored well.

9. Generally answered well but some candidates missed the emphasis on seasonal effects and selected inappropriate data.

10. The focus of this question was linking climate change to its impact on the environment and quality of life. Candidates who simply identified elements of climate change without referring to potential impacts did not score as well as those who did.

11. The core of this question is to invite candidates to challenge the document presented and point out the limitation of relying on one account. Many candidates failed to do this and simply reported what the document says and how that would/would not be useful.

12. Candidate scores in this question depend on their use of information in the documents to develop arguments for and against the question. Most candidates made some use of the documents though a proportion of candidates limit themselves by making an argument only for or against. A smaller group limited themselves more severely by ignoring the documents completely and writing their own opinions with little factual support.

## **Unit B033**

In its first incarnation Unit BO33 has had not surprisingly had a mixed start. Many of the comments in this report are the same as for the legacy specification as the same issues arise with the controlled assessment tasks as with the previous coursework. The long established centres tended to do better with few problems in the transition.

The main problem, as with the legacy specification, is not realising the importance of having sufficient clarity about the methodology. For example a candidate using a questionnaire cannot gain Level 4 for a section which points out that the sample was too small. This is not a critique of the methodology; it is a reflection of poor application of methodology and as such worth only Level 1 at best. In this Unit the candidate is likely to be doubly disadvantaged as it is very unlikely their application of appropriate methodology will gain much credit, if they have such little understanding of methodology.

The best centre guidance tends to deliberately encourage candidates to choose from a range of possible methods and then explain why they chose their particular methods, in preference to others which could have been used. This is a good illustration of how the controlled assessment can be adjusted to fit the criteria just by providing choice and encouraging the candidates to take ownership of it. With a choice of ten tasks which allows such a range in terms of the topics that can be researched, it is absolutely vital that the method of enquiry is tightly controlled otherwise assessment would become very difficult indeed.

As with the previous specification, the other main area of difficulty revolves around reaching conclusions and evaluating methodology. The main point here, as before, is that conclusions are basically what can be said from the results gathered. This needs to be very specific and traceable back to the evidence gathered. The sophistication of the conclusion only becomes important at Level 4 and Level 5. Please note once again that relatively simplistic conclusions which are extrapolated directly from the research score at Level 3, whilst complex statements which are really unsubstantiated opinions only score Level 1. There must be a clear link between evidence and conclusion.

Evaluations are about the way the research was handled by the candidate and how this could be improved. Please remember here it is the way the research was carried out and the strengths and weaknesses of the method itself which earn marks. It is vital therefore that the candidates know the limitations of the chosen method and also have an idea of other methods they could have chosen.

It also helps the candidates' organisation, and centres' marking and moderation, if the evaluation and conclusion are, where possible, at the end of the coursework assignment, not spread throughout it. My advice is to make the methodology central to which ever option the candidate chooses. To limit or not to limit candidate choice is obviously a matter for the individual centre. Widening the choice will get the teachers used to assessing a wider range of topics to the same standard. Several centres already assess in this way and it is not really a difficult issue. Detailed advice is available on the new J445 Humanities GCSE from the OCR website. Many of you will see elements of the methodology employed in your school, as the Controlled Assessment Guide is based on the best practice from a range of schools adapted to the new criteria.

It is very important at this stage, to create a dialogue between the Principal Moderator and any prospective or actual centres, prior to the moderation of work in June 2011. Please contact the Qualifications Manager at OCR with any queries. There will also be INSET with advice on controlled assessment in 2010-2011. Details are on the OCR website Humanities page.

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In essence in the best research tasks the candidates select their chosen methodologies from a range of options, but the choices offered are strictly controlled to ensure they are suitable as the methodologies for the particular investigation. The key factor, as in the previous coursework option, is the tight control of methodology and a critical appraisal of the actual investigations. Where centres are beginning to address the innate bias of the sources, the marks are highest. Some centres need to point out that primary sources do not automatically carry more validity, because they are not secondary and therefore biased. I hope this is of use and helps improve the marks in your centres.

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