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Contents

1.	Aspects of Culture (6451)	3
2.	Scientific Horizons (6452)	8
3.	Social Perspectives (6453_01)	14
4.	Social Perspectives 6453_02 (coursework)	18
5.	Cultural Expressions (6454)	20
6.	Modern Society (6455)	24
7.	The Contemporary World (6456)	29
8.	Key Statistics	33

Aspects of Culture (6451)

Introduction

The paper followed the same structure as in previous series and appeared to be accessible to the majority of candidates. Section A was designed so that there were questions on all six major areas of the specification. The majority of candidates appeared to have been prepared to meet the demands of the paper, but work is still required in teaching Section B (Thinking and Analytical skills).

There were few rubric infringements. However a number of short questions were not attempted by some candidates. This is unfortunate as it means marks cannot be gained. If a question, especially multiple choice, is attempted there is always the possibility of gaining a mark. This is not possible if a candidate does not provide an answer.

A major problem that appears to be becoming more serious is a noticeable decline in the standard of handwriting. Work that is illegible is difficult to mark. If it is impossible to read then marks cannot be awarded for what might be, if it could be read, a sound answer. There also appears to be an increase in poor expression generally.

Although there some excellent examples of candidates who have a broad knowledge and understanding of the specification, most appear to have at best a patchy and too often a superficial knowledge. This can seriously affect marks for Section A dealing with AO1 and can restrict the marks achieved in Section C (dealing with AO3) because candidates do not appear to have sufficient evidence to marshal in order to support their arguments. Some sections of the specification (Religion and Media) are considerably better known and understood than others (especially aesthetic evaluation and creativity and innovation).

A problem that is becoming increasingly evident is that candidates do not read questions with sufficient care. This can result in missing key words or ideas, misinterpreting what has been asked for and writing in too great detail about material that is clearly not required. In particular candidates need to take note of qualifying words, especially in essay titles.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Q1(a) was fairly straightforward and most candidates were able to identify the correct answer. Q1(b) was quite accessible. The majority of more able candidates were able to offer two different reasons but weaker candidates often experienced some difficulties. The usual problem was that they gave two explanations that were far too similar to warrant both marks. Answers sometimes appeared confused or lacked clarity. However about two-thirds of candidates scored both marks. Better answers showing good understanding were those linked to specific examples of symbols.

Q2 proved to be disappointing, with relatively few gaining all three marks. Most were able to give a simple explanation of national culture, but too often associated 'nation' with 'country'. However a significant number did feel that the term referred to something on a global scale. Those candidates who tried to define western culture often failed to give a specific location. It is not enough to simply relate it to 'the west'. Explanations of difference were often very simplistic and implicit rather than explicit. About two-thirds of candidates were able to score at least one mark. This topic does not appear to be well understood by many candidates. Some misread the question and compared western culture with eastern culture, rather than national culture.

Q3(a) produced some interesting answers. Better answers recognised that the instruction to 'explain' requires more than a simple statement. Some candidates mistakenly thought that a series of disconnected points was sufficient. Better answers showed a sound understanding of ideas of competition, market share and commercial pressures. Most candidates were able to gain at least one mark, using commonsense. Q3(b) was rather less well done. Here two or more simple reasons were just as acceptable as a single reason explained. Candidates should note the difference in wording between the two parts of Q3. Weaker candidates were sometimes confused by the idea of 'public interest' and some attacked the (imaginary) national media group for alleged unscrupulous tactics. Better answers were able to focus on the importance of local as opposed to national interests. Some misread the question and thought it referred specifically to News International. This question illustrated quite clearly the importance of reading carefully the task that is set. Better answers showed a very sound understanding of the issues involved.

Many candidates were able, in answering Q4(a) to define moral values but many had difficulties with moral reasoning. Too often definitions of moral values were simplistic, general and unspecific. The terms used could often be confused with simple values or beliefs. The key feature looked for was an indication of the concept of right and wrong. Moral reasoning was often mistaken for moral reasons. The explanation looked for involved either the process by which moral values are determined or the process of applying general moral values to determine the morality of a particular action or event. Most candidates simply provided two different explanations of the terms rather than explicitly explaining differences between them. Too often, candidates who attempted to compare the two terms related them to the morals of a group and personal morals. Answers to Q4(b) were often disappointing. Too often candidates gave examples of moral issues or dilemmas rather than with moral reasoning. Some took the word reasoning to mean arguments about moral issues rather than the process of reaching a decision. The question was

really looking for the identification of different types of moral reasoning (like Utilitarianism, or Social Contract) rather than descriptions of how moral decisions are reached. This was the poorest scoring question on the paper with 75% of candidates failing to achieve a single mark in part (b) and almost 50% failing to score in part (a). A significant number of candidates did not attempt to answer part b.

Better candidates were able to correctly identify style and artist/artwork in Q5(a) but about 30% of candidates failed to give both parts of the answer and so failed to score. There was evidence that candidates did not read the question carefully and so provided inaccurate answers. As always modern music was the most frequent source of information for this question on style. It is pleasing to see that an increasing number of candidates are prepared to use literature. A number of candidates failed to score because they used general terms (like Art or Literature or Music) rather than specific stylistic groups (like baroque, romantic, hip hop or garage). To an extent answer to Q5(b) was dependant on correctly identifying a style in part (a). Candidates generally are not able to correctly identify the different characteristics of style. Those candidates who scored all three marks were those who clearly expected this type of question and had carefully prepared their answer. It is essential that candidates are acquainted with at least one artistic style and can identify key characteristics and give examples of both works and artists associated with it.

Section B

Candidates should recognise that all questions in this section relate to AO4 and that 'commonsense' answers are not likely to gain marks.

Q6(a) was generally answered well. Candidates seemed able to distinguish between fact and opinion. Too often candidates attempted to use common sense to answer Q6(b), although about a quarter of candidates were able to score both marks. The key issues that candidates should have identified were the greater reliability of fact compared to opinion and the importance of relevance since statement (i) taken out of context was not obviously related to the content of the question. Relatively few candidates made a real effort to compare the two statements.

Q6(c)(i) proved to be very difficult for the majority of candidates. Too often explanations simply talked about comparison of different items rather than the similarities between them which might allow conclusions or lessons to be drawn and applied. A significant number of candidates associated analogy with analysis and so wrote about the wrong things. The term is clearly not well understood. Over 80% of candidates failed to score any marks. Relatively few saw the purpose of reasoning based on analogy as being to reach a conclusion. In contrast two-thirds of candidates were able to select an accurate example of an analogy in answer to Q6(c)(ii).

Answers to Q6(d) showed that many centres have attempted to teach the skills needed for this question. Once again a problem was that candidates did not carefully read what they were asked to do. Answers were often better suited to the comparable question on justification of argument in 2005. many candidates seemed unfamiliar with the skills required to analyse a passage and so experienced difficulty in locating 'hooks' in the passage on which to hang the points they wanted to make. Weaker candidates are still describing the content of the passage rather than analysing the style of argument and evidence used. Candidates should remember that thinking and analytical skills should not be described in the abstract but should be applied critically to the passage. To gain the higher marks there must be specific

reference to the passage. Most candidates are able to discuss opinion and fact and some are able to identify deficiency. Some stronger answers made good use of analogy at the start of the passage. Too often argument was described as deductive or argument from authority when there was no justification for this. Many candidates wrote at great length but only made a single clear point. Often candidates scored well by writing briefly and making a number of different points about the passage. Occasionally candidates ignore the question and take issue with the content of the passage despite the clear instructions that are given in the rubric.

Generally communication was sound. There were relatively few (about 10%) answers that were poorly expressed. Major weaknesses continue to be illegible or poor handwriting and the misspelling of common words or words copied from the passage.

Section C

It is disappointing that the vast majority of candidates chose to answer Q9. Too often candidates show that they have some interesting ideas but are not able to support them with appropriate evidence. Conclusions are too often seen almost as 'bolt-ons' to finish the essay, rather than as a drawing together of opposing arguments in order to reach a justified decision about the issue under consideration. Many candidates would benefit from structured work on the creation of appropriate conclusions.

Q7 (religion) was answered by about a quarter of all candidates. It was generally well done by stronger candidates and a greater proportion of answers reached Level 4 than on the other two essays. Better answers were able to distinguish between religious teachings and the science-religion conflict on matters of 'fact'. Most answers either discussed general in very broad terms or focused on Christianity. A few candidates were able to distinguish between different religions. There were some very one-sided answers but generally candidates were able to adopt a balanced approach. The majority of conclusions seemed to be that religion does still have much to offer on a moral and social level, even if some aspects of religion are generally accepted as having been disproved. Some very sound answers recognised that just because one individual or group rejects religion does not mean that everybody should reject it. Religion, like politics is an issue that can generate strong emotions. Over-reliance on emotional commitment can work against an attempt to establish a balanced approach.

Q8 (artistic style) was, as is usually the case, the least popular and generally least well done of the essays. However those candidates who had studied the topic were able to give well argued and well supported answers. This type of question must be supported with evidence. Failure to do this can result in very bland and unconvincing accounts. Although questions on creativity and innovation appear regularly most candidates do not appear to be sufficiently well prepared to handle them in a convincing manner. Those who chose music were generally better informed with subject matter than those who concentrated on one of the other artistic areas. Better informed answers were able to recognise that even the most original artist will be influenced by earlier traditions and practices.

Q9 (the influence of the media) was easily the most popular question but surprisingly poorly done on many occasions. A major weakness was failure to read the statement and take note of key ideas. Candidates were not simply required to discuss the influence of the media but needed to examine whether this influence made it harmful to ordinary people. Few attempted to identify 'ordinary people' and many

almost completely ignored the issue of dangerous. The most popular illustrations tended to be celebrity life style, anorexia, violence and intrusiveness. Inevitably Rupert Murdoch appeared regularly and was usually depicted as a media villain. Too often the media were dealt with in broad terms (such as 'newspapers' or 'television'). The better answers were those which distinguished between specifics (eg tabloids compared to quality newspapers). The Jamie Bulger case is still used as an example of media influence, often with a complete disregard to the true facts of the case. Many candidates were able to show that the media could be both influential and beneficial.

Scientific Horizons (6452)

Introduction

The paper was very much more accessible than that sat in summer 2005. Most candidates attempted all parts of the paper, and there were no questions where a majority of candidates appeared to have little or no knowledge.

The type of question in Section B was much more straightforward and this apparently suited candidates.

Of the Section C questions Q9 was easily the most popular.

The quality of handwriting and general presentation still gives cause for concern.

Section A

Q1(a) Lower scoring candidates often chose options containing "relativity", but higher scorers mostly selected the correct option. The commonest incorrect response was C.

Q1(b) The great majority could gain a mark for linking motion or movement with Newtonian mechanics, higher scoring candidates referred to atomic theory and the basis it provided for chemical reactions and the nature of materials. A minority incorrectly connected thermodynamics to aerodynamics. The explanation often failed to gain 2 marks, often because the candidate wrote something like this: *'I know Newton's Laws of Motion and the Law of Thermodynamics need to definitely be known and though I am not sure if Dalton's Atomic Theory is necessary, B is the only option that accommodates both (i) and (v)'*

Many students stated that these 'laws' needed to be known, rather than saying why they needed to be understood.

Some candidates showed that they had heard of the important revolutions but could not recall them well: *'I will not give Newton because his theory was disproved/supplanted by Einstein'*. Strangely - 'without knowing Newton's laws nothing would move'. Newton was clearly in this context the best-known originator of a scientific revolution.

Q2 Responses to this question showed much more awareness than in previous years of ethical issues and how they might affect medical decisions. Some candidates confused 'ethical' and 'emotional' issues.

Q2(a) Most candidates gained one mark for saying that an assessment of the quality of life, or the amount of pain experienced by the baby, was something that had to be faced by the medical team. Some mentioned 'natural' or 'God's' laws and many spoke about whether it was 'fair' to keep the baby alive. Stronger candidates recognised that these were different issues, gaining 2 marks. A large minority recognised that the staff may have to consider competing demands for fixed resources, that is, was this baby using resources that would give others better

chances of recovery? Some candidates became bogged down in discussing euthanasia, which was not particularly relevant.

'Should they keep restarting the heart or allow the baby to die' was common for marking point 3, although many referred to euthanasia.

'Was the baby in too much pain', 'what would be its quality of life?' and 'could resources be better utilised?' were the points which gained most marks for this question.

Very few candidates gave consideration to what advice the doctors might give to the parents of the baby, hence not recognising the ethical nature of this decision.

Q2(b) Most candidates gained one mark for showing that the parents had similar ethical issues over the future quality of life or the pain experienced by the baby.

Some thoughtful answers, obviously the baby's pain was important, but many thinking pragmatically stated *'Will parents be able to cope with such a disabled child and will it affect other/future siblings?'*

'Did the mother cause damage to child's lungs smoking while she was having the child?' perhaps is an indication of the lack of knowledge or poor use of the information provided by some weaker candidates.

Only one mark was awarded if they mentioned both quality of life and pain issues, bearing in mind that these could be credited for two marks in Q2(a). A much smaller number considered whether the practical problems to be experienced by the family in the future could affect a decision to allow the medical staff to cease to provide life support. Some tried to attribute 'blame' for the condition of the baby.

Q3 This was generally well answered. Some of the responses to this question were speculative, and those candidates did not seem to have any idea about the answer. However, in general most of the responses were good. The common answers were *'the price of petrol is of great interest to all drivers', 'world resources are of wide interest', 'environmental issues are important',* or words to that effect. A minority of answers gave *'stories sell newspapers'* or an equivalent. This response was not credited because it is not specific to the issue in the question.

Q4 In general, most of the responses were fairly good, and most candidates understood the question and therefore gave reasonable responses. A common failing was not to make it explicit that one needed to know the rate of production of carbon dioxide for all instances of the three categories. Many candidates gained an easy two marks, but found the third trickier. A few candidates did not understand this question and gave answers that they were not asked for. Many got sidetracked and wrote about the greenhouse effect or the ozone layer.

Q5 The commonest correct answers dealt with the confusion that this suggestion would cause and the subjective statement about attitude to work in the afternoon, and many candidates gained one or two marks. Many candidates wrote at length on one particular point, and so missed out on other scoring opportunities.

'Time on the clock is just there to define a particular point in the past or plan for a future event, we live our lives doing what ever is needed at that moment.' - was

one example of some interesting comments. Other interesting answers included reference to the body clock and the circadian system

It was surprising how many candidates did not realise that no time was either gained or lost in reality. About half understood that the day would still consist of 24 hours but some seemed to think that the day would reduce to 23 or even 22 hours somehow. Other candidates thought that the day length would keep on increasing over the year. Many candidates seemed to think we could change time by altering the clocks, and so would upset animals and plants as well as ourselves. Very few said that the 'real' day length remained unchanged. There was no obvious pattern for incorrect responses, the marks gained depended more on the candidates ability to disentangle the author's views.

The idea was universally ridiculed.

Section B

This question was straightforward to mark and the scheme was easy to apply. In that sense it provided a better test of AO4 than this section in the past, but there are still serious weaknesses in the candidates' use of a limited range of terminology.

Q6(a) Most candidates gained on or two marks for the first two marking points, that is the factual evidence about smoking decreasing and the space in pubs being given to non-smokers, Better candidates gained the extra mark for the motivational reasons for opposition - we don't want to be over-regulated.

Q6(b) Many candidates could extract three items out of the many provided to support legislation, but too often either missed the requirement to state whether each piece was fact or opinion, or, more commonly, misidentified the nature of the evidence.

Q6(c) Many candidates commented that '*Letter A is subjective and Letter B more objective and perhaps more valid as it uses more facts.*' Stronger candidates added a sentence usually referring to their opinion but this was rare. A significant majority of candidates scored three for AO3, easily identifying a conflict and the specific evidence. However there were several who described the use of various kinds of evidence in generic terms, eg subjective, from authority, etc, but gave no examples. A great number of responses were good; in fact some were very good. However, some students again gave some generic answers using words like *subjective, objective, deductive, inductive* etc and their answers that followed these words quite often contrasted with the meaning of those words. It seem that candidates are being coached to include terminology - what type of argument is being used, or the nature of evidence, but are not yet very successful in using this to validate arguments or even use the adjectives meaningfully. A significant number did not state which letter they were referring to. Many candidates concentrated on either the 'smoking space' or the 'by law' differences and so missed out on third mark.

The candidates' abilities in terms of the quality of communication marks given for this part of the section varied greatly, in a number of cases it was necessary to look very carefully indeed to determine what candidates were trying to say. There was a noticeable use of inappropriate colloquialism.

Q6d Low scoring candidates failed to identify the form of argument here, but the item discriminated well as higher scoring candidates identified analogy, or words to that effect, correctly.

Section C

The quality of written communication still gives cause for concern. Many candidates present their work in a casual and very disorganised way. In general the most noticeable thing is the lack of paragraphs, or, as bad, single sentence paragraphs.

Q7 This topic was chosen by very few. Most only discussed Darwinism and gave no further examples of revolutions. However some very good essays appeared here.

The candidates who chose this question generally scored well and some were clearly studying biology. Most discussed the effect of Darwin's work on religious beliefs and on the authority of religions successfully and lucidly. High scoring candidates extended the piece to include other scientific revolutions - the heliocentric view of the solar system and the discovery of the structure of DNA were popular, the very best linking these to their effects on human understanding. A number brought in the issue of cloning as a modern revolution.

Nearly all were aware of the powerful nature of evolutionary theory at the time. Those who mentioned other examples often used Copernicus' heliocentric view (however this often translated as '*we now know the Sun is the centre of the Universe*'). Many used technological developments as examples of scientific revolutions.

Some candidates divided scientific revolutions into two groups - '*If a revolution touches on subjects that conflict with current thinking usually religious, but not always, then they ensure debate and may or may not be accepted eg Darwin, Copernicus and Hawkins.*' '*Very complicated ones such as Structure of DNA, or Relativity will have little effect until technological development brings new conflicts or great advancements that touch on everyday life - human insulin by modified bacteria or the nuclear bomb.*'

Q8 Candidates frequently found difficulty in getting to grips with what the question was really asking, and instead concentrated their responses almost solely on the advantages of these examples of technology. This was almost certainly because they had very little depth of knowledge about the disadvantages.

There were many answers here that were factually incorrect or confused particularly in terms of the adverse effects of X-rays. Whilst a number spoke of the fact that x-rays have been used for many years and therefore the associated problems are well documented, a considerable number gave the impression that x-rays were a recent discovery. Only the very best candidates wrote effectively about the inherent risks associated with the use of x-rays and the steps taken to minimise the risks. No mention was made of the long-standing ban on the use of x-ray machines in shoe shops, where they had once been common. Neither was the possible danger of using x-ray machines in airports mentioned, the fogging of camera film could have been brought up. The need to minimise risk to NHS staff of X rays was often discussed.

'X rays are dangerous, this time it has been proven there is a real risk.'

'The risk is acceptable with the various uses of x-rays as a diagnostic tool'

Balance of risk was well discussed in relation to *'the small risk of cell damage ie cancer and the high risk, of serious complications of medical conditions developing, if they were not diagnosed by having the x-ray.'*

In the example of mobile phones some gave the impression that they could ignore writing about possible risks to health to a large extent. The possible link between large usage of a mobile phone and the development of brain tumours was often mentioned, if incoherently, and certainly without any scientific base to the comments and no mention of possible methods for determining whether there is a causal effect. It was nearly always; *'We all have a mobile phone, it's great because it does everything and it's stylish, I must have it because it will help me in an emergency. It can cause brain tumours if it is used a lot.'* It was as if little argument needed to be made about gaining more information about possible health risks. The usefulness of mobiles in an emergency was often stated.

'Mobile phones are possibly dangerous but the risk has not yet been proved'

'Masts may be more of a problem'

'They are used because they are so much a part of life that the risk is acceptable'

'Life is full of risks'

Very few candidates looked at any form of other modern technology. The vast majority included a satisfactory, but rarely better, conclusion. When is a small risk more difficult to balance? A few good candidates mentioned Chernobyl and the generation of nuclear power.

Some candidates mentioned drugs, for example *'a high risk is acceptable if you are taking an experimental drug and you are aware of this and it is your only chance of a better life'*, probably with reference to a recent drug trial that went disastrously wrong. *'If you take a drug for a minor complaint and there is a risk that is ok, it is your life, but if you are pregnant is it still acceptable? eg thalidomide'*

Most candidates stated the pros and cons of the statement and so reached Level 3. However few discussed matters with enough careful consideration, particularly in relation to risks, to be considered for Level 4, but on the positive side there were few very low scores.

Q9 This was generally answered satisfactorily and in a balanced way. The major problem was the significant number of superficial answers which whilst containing nothing that was untrue read like a list from a brochure followed by a list from a warning leaflet with little linking of the points and no interpretative comment. However there were many answers that showed that the candidate appreciated the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet and commented sensibly about them.

Many answers consisted of a long list of plus and minus points but some did consider broader, more society-based aspects, such as lack of social skills, RSI, even obesity and dependence. Clearly the first hand experience of candidates played a large part in the popularity of this question and most answers were based on a reasonable amount of objective evidence about particular benefits of the www. Nearly all were morally outraged at children being able to view inappropriate sites but didn't extend this outrage to either their own age group or older people. Grooming and 'adult material' were well rehearsed. 'Freedom of speech' and 'uncensored opinions' were well assessed by the better candidates, who came to the conclusion that - *'The*

internet is a great invention, it is how we choose to use it that is the problem.'
'Why should the majority suffer just because a few have criminal intentions? but this is true in all aspect of life'

The really big issues of the Internet - who controls it, who has access to information passed through it, can this information be used politically and commercially - were hardly ever referred to, with the exception of its role in terrorism. While this was not necessary to reach higher levels, it emphasises the point that idealism and understanding by young people may only be limited to matters that are very near to home.

Most tended to list benefits and then problems (or vice versa) sometimes referring back to what they had said previously about a particular aspect, but often not. Assessment would then appear in a conclusion or in an implied way through the essay.

Nearly all candidates included a sensible conclusion.

Social Perspectives (6453_01)

Introduction

The paper followed the same format as previous papers.

In Section A the multiple choice questions proved to be excellent discriminators. A significant number of candidates appeared ill-equipped to deal with relatively simple numerical calculations. In Q1(c) and Q1(d) many candidates had difficulty in understanding and calculating measures of central tendency, such as the mean and median.

In Section B, however, there was evidence of an improved ability to identify and explain different kinds of argument and evidence and in a relevant and succinct fashion, assess the strength of conclusions reached in the source material. Most candidates were able to gain marks over all parts of this section, with fewer leaving Q4(f) incomplete.

In Section C the majority of candidates presented balanced and relevant essays with explicit conclusions. Many candidates are recognising the importance of linking evidence to argument in order to earn marks for interpretation. It is still a minority of candidates, however, who seize the opportunity to make some evaluative comment on the strengths of the arguments presented. Candidates are reminded that evaluation need not be left until the conclusion of an essay. Critical or judgemental comments relating to the strength or otherwise of factors and arguments can be made as an essay progresses and develops. Such evaluation that is integrated rather than added on is more likely to be highly rewarded.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Q1(a) Some three quarters of candidates correctly identified that a parliamentary constituency is an area that elects an MP.

Q1(b) A similar number of candidates correctly calculated that 32.8% of nominated candidates from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties became MPs.

Q1(c) However, only half of candidates were able to divide the total number of candidates by 659 to correctly calculate a mean number of 4.92 candidates per constituency in the 2001 general election.

Q1(d) A significant number of candidates were not able to identify Plaid Cymru (Party of Wales) as the party where the median number of candidates was located in the table.

Q1(e) The most common wrong answer to this question was Greenpeace (a pressure group, not a political party). The most common correct answers given were the BNP, the Green Party and the Monster Raving Loony Party. A significant number of candidates were unable to differentiate between political parties and pressure groups.

Q1(f) Very few candidates had any idea how to calculate a percentage change and did all sorts of complicated calculations with the numbers from the table. An increase of 4 candidates ÷ the number of candidates in 1955 (3) leading to an acceptable answer of 133% or 133.3% should have proved more accessible to many more candidates.

Q1(g) Very few candidates obtained both marks for this question and a significant number failed to identify a bar chart as being a better way to represent the data given in the table. A bar chart would represent the data for each party more appropriately, allowing for clear comparisons to be made. Only a small minority of candidates followed the instruction in the question to indicate why a line graph would be unsuitable for representing this particular set of data. The second mark was awarded either if a candidate made explicit the advantages that a bar chart has that a line graph does not, or if there was an explanation of what line graphs are more appropriate for, such as illustrating trends and continuity in data.

Q2(a) Very few candidates were able to give an acceptable definition of the term 'deviance' - a definition that essentially assumes 'behaviour at odds with the norms of society'. Some candidates read ahead to 2(b) and simply gave an example of criminal behaviour, rather than an explicit definition of deviance. This type of response was not awarded a mark.

Q2(b) Most candidates were able to identify one example of behaviour that is both criminal and at odds with the values of society. In the sense that most criminal behaviour is a minority and abnormal activity in the UK, there were many opportunities for candidates to gain a mark in this question.

Q2(c) This was a more demanding question for most candidates and required some creative thinking. Acceptable answers included dressing differently from what is considered to be 'normal', and truancy (the parent(s) of truants rather than the truants being susceptible to criminal charges).

Q2(d) Although many candidates were aware of the differences between criminal offences and punishments in the UK and abroad, many forfeited marks by simply writing '*the death penalty*' or '*corporal punishment*'. Some contextual reference to the location (in general terms) or the law or custom was required in order to make it explicit how the criminal offence or punishment was different from those in the UK. Some indication was required with regard to the examples given as to whether they were legal or illegal in the UK. A simple statement such as '*unlike the UK some countries still use the death penalty*' would have been sufficient for the award of a mark.

Q3(a) Some two-thirds of candidates correctly identified a household as '*a person living alone or a group of persons sharing a home or living space who may aggregate and share their incomes*' and were thus well placed to answer 3(b).

Q3(b) There were some very good answers where candidates referred to significant changes in the social composition of and rules within households since the 1960s. Some candidates, however, drifted from the question and wrote about housing, not households, and discussed non-relevant issues such as rent, mortgages and housing location.

Section B

Q4(a) Around 50% of candidates correctly identified the type of argument being used in Source 1 as authoritative.

Q4(b) A similar percentage of candidates correctly identified inductive argument as the argument used in Source 2.

Q4(c) A majority of candidates were able to identify and write out one correct fact from Source 1. However, some candidates selected statements from the first two sentences of Source 1. Such

statements were not awarded marks unless the candidate prefaced such statements with phrases such as '*John Major said so*' or '*John Major publicly told us so*'.

Q4(d) Most candidates were able to identify one opinion from Source 2.

Q4(e) Strong candidates 'unpacked' this question and in the process, defined the three concepts and discussed the relationship between facts and beliefs and then between opinions and beliefs and commented on any difference or similarity of impact. For some candidates, however, this question proved more problematic and only one mark was awarded for a definitional discussion or a more generalised attempt to link the three concepts. Some candidates perhaps spent too long on this question, presenting very long answers to a question with just two marks.

Q4(f) Candidates seemed more confident and better prepared for this question than in previous series. Most responded to the instruction to use thinking and analytical skills and not to give own opinions. The result was a focus on specific sections of the passage to identify evidence mentioned in paragraph one relating to the excessive expenditure on 'experts'. Most candidates were able to secure two marks for establishing a link between evidence and argument and the conclusion. Fewer candidates were able to explicitly demonstrate or comment on the strength of evidence or argument in support of the conclusion reached. Candidates were rewarded for recognising the inductive nature of the arguments in the passage and the relative value of the reference to Tessa Jowell in contributing to an authoritative argument.

Most candidates secured 2 marks for quality of communication. The work of those who secured 0 or 1 mark was usually difficult for examiners to read or understand. The general quality of handwriting is certainly not improving.

Section C

Q5 This essay question provided an opportunity to review the motives for engaging with or in a protest movement. There were some strong answers given, with excellent recent examples of protest movements such as Fathers for Justice and protests against the war in Iraq. A number of perceptive candidates recognised that motives are often mixed and while differentiating between self interest and socially principled examples of protest movements, concluded that at times, these differences were not always as clear as often claimed. Some weaker candidates did not fully understand the term 'self interest' and drifted into a discussion of violence or irresponsibility.

Q6 The specification refers to 'the organisation and functions of the European Community' and an understanding and appreciation of the EU was critical for a competent response to this question. Indeed, although this was not a popular essay topic, it did produce some of the most detailed and authoritative comment and discussion. While some candidates re-interpreted the question to review the advantages and disadvantages of belonging to the EU (producing more generalised and less rewardable essays), most remained focused and addressed directly the potential impact of leaving the EU. There was a mixture of economic, political and cultural reasons advanced, with a particular focus on implications for trading, movement of people and legislation.

Some of the most impressive responses to this question took issue with the phrase 'a serious mistake' and in so doing, engaged in evaluative comment throughout the essay, rather than just at the conclusion. Weaker candidates often got involved in tangential issues, such as immigration and some confused the EU with the Euro.

Q7 This question was significantly the most popular of the three essay questions and attracted a wide range of responses. This essay related to the specific area that focuses on 'the role and purpose of law... law in different societies, the nature and purpose of punishment'. A number of weaker students produced more of a polemic essay rather than one that identified and discussed concepts, such as deterrence, retribution and rehabilitation. Weaker answers also tended to present prescriptive proposals and solutions rather than persuasive assessments and contained passionate, heart on sleeve, condemnatory elements rather than rational, coherent analysis.

Strong answers reflected a breadth of knowledge and reasoning and recognised that the alternatives presented in the question were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Insofar as this essay topic attracted twice as many responses as the other two essays together, there were far more examples of incoherent and/or superficial answers to the question. Too many candidates simply based their answers on assertion, with very limited supporting evidence or argument. Such essays were located in the Level 2 mark range.

Social Perspectives 6453_02 (coursework)

Introduction

It is of cause for concern that centres are:

- still not showing evidence of internal moderation or adequate annotation of coursework;
- not ensuring that all candidates sign the front cover authentication sheet;
- not asking candidates to give an accurate word count (not including appendices);
- checking that only one copy of questionnaires used is included - what is important is the analysis;
- not taking care to transfer marks accurately from folders to mark sheets and have them checked independently;
- not using the updated front cover sheets;
- not including the highest and lowest scoring candidates' work in their sample - moderators must have these, and it delays the moderating process when the work has to be requested.

In the main marking is found to be generous, especially on AO4 and in places for AO1 and AO3. As stated above, some centres showed little or no annotation and no internal moderation. Although not essential, where annotation is clear and shows evidence of internal assessment, this is extremely helpful in the external moderation procedure as it can show how the marks have been allocated, which in turn allows moderators to feedback where discrepancies occur and adjustments are made.

Selection of Coursework Title

In the majority of cases candidates and teachers are using the opportunities offered by the specification to full advantage, with a wide range of topics being studied. These ranged through aspects of family life such as divorce, adoption, single parent families to issues such as binge drinking and the current licensing laws, crime and punishment and aspects of law relating to issues such as euthanasia, abortion and driving offences. However the problem with the selection of essay titles continues to disadvantage some candidates and despite guidance in previous moderators' reports, candidates are selecting titles and topics which do not lend themselves easily to an argument and tend to concentrate on descriptive/narrative work. Centres should ensure that the wording of the task invites some sort of argument as a very narrow closed, question, does not enable candidates to draw a strong conclusion from their evidence - higher marks could be achieved if students had been guided into choosing a title that allowed them to present an argument which provided differing viewpoints as well as offering the opportunity to evaluate and conclude their work.

Several centres offered generic topics where differentiation was by outcome and it was refreshing to see that, while frameworks had been given, candidates had to find their own data which meant that there was little sense that these topics had been 'taught' all from the same set of handouts.

Word Count

Many candidates appeared to pay no heed to the word count and produced work of either excessive or insufficient length. It must be noted that where candidates submit tasks that are less than the required length, they penalize themselves as there is an insufficient range of evidence. Low word counts also do not allow for discussion or interpretation of any data used, from the research. It should also be noted that where candidates exceeded the word count by more than 500 words, they lost track of their topic in long and digressive narratives and were unable to enter into Band 4 of AO3 as the idea of 'selection' is questionable - this was often not picked up by the teacher assessing their work.

Assessment Objectives

Most centres seem to have a good grasp of AO1 and many candidates did appropriate primary research. However some did not do justice to this in their analysis, or fully evaluate it in the context of their question. A number did take the opportunity to include graphs/charts or some numerical data - which provided evidence of understanding/ knowledge from other disciplines and had an impact on their AO1 assessment. It was however evident that many candidates did not include sufficient application of number.

It should also be noted that it is insufficient to submit work that is mainly knowledge, relies heavily on secondary research, is not referenced and is not used in any discussion or in context of the essay. Conversely it does not fully meet the assessment criteria should the candidate not be selective enough and use too much evidence. Some results would be better used as an appendix rather than in the body of the essay.

Some candidates failed to include a bibliography, which is a required element of AO1.

AO2 was generally well marked although a matter for concern, raised by one of the moderators, is the large number of typed scripts that contained simple spelling errors. Students need to proof read their work and not rely on spell checks which will find the nearest likely word: statistical wand instead of statistical band, scared for sacred etc. With some scripts the question must be whether spell checking facility is used at all.

Descriptive/fact filled responses were often over-rewarded at AO3. Some centres did not seem to appreciate the need to develop a critical/evaluative approach here.

Marking continued, on the whole, to be generous on AO4 - candidates continue to be credited too generously for either implicit understanding of this Assessment Objective or the identification of types of knowledge rather than the demonstration of an understanding together with an awareness of the relationship between them. Good candidates identified different types of knowledge and evaluated their evidence, considering how valuable and reliable different sources are, prior to the completion of their conclusion, this therefore gave access to AO4 - it should be noted that the essay would read even better if this was made reference to in the discussion.

Cultural Expressions (6454)

Introduction

The paper followed a similar structure to previous series, although there was a slight increase in the number of single mark questions in Section B. The paper was not quite as accessible to weaker candidates as had been hoped. This was particularly true in Section A. One of the essays proved much more popular than the other three. A greater proportion of candidates appeared to have left some questions unanswered.

There were two major issues causing concern to examiners. Firstly the legibility of handwriting appears to have deteriorated noticeably. This can mean that candidates who have provided accurate answers cannot be awarded the marks they would otherwise deserve because their work is impossible to read. Secondly candidates appear to be very careless in reading questions. At times this led to misunderstanding and the production of inaccurate answers.

There were very few rubric infringements and most candidates appeared to have sufficient time to complete their answers. Some candidates had clearly been well prepared but others demonstrated very patchy understanding of the specification content.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Most candidates were able to select the correct answer to Q1 and as such it did not prove to be a good discriminator on the grounds of ability.

Q2 appeared to be fairly straightforward, but many definitions of religious belief were over-simplistic. Too many answers simply recycled the words in the question without attempting to give clear explanation of either religion or belief. Some answers offered an adequate explanation of personal belief but failed to include the religious context. Better answers were those that were able to show that the term described either doctrinal beliefs or practices of specific religious organisations and that belief involved a personal conviction in the truth of an idea. A good range of illustrations, most often taken from Christianity were used. Simply naming a religion was not sufficient on its own to justify a mark. Stronger answers demonstrated an understanding of the term, but many were simply the naming of a belief or practice without any real understanding.

Q3(a) proved to be rather more demanding for many candidates than had been intended. This was largely because many candidates ignored the requirement in the question to link their answer to the moral dimension. A considerable number of responses could better be described as scientific (the process is not fully understood or proven) social (the process helps to create a desired look) or economic (the process will benefit those who can afford to pay for it). When two reasons were given they often overlapped and could only be credited once. In Q3(b) most candidates were able to offer a reasonable suggestion but too often failed to show explicitly how

it morally justified the action. Candidates must recognise that questions on genetic modification can only be raised if they have a moral dimension.

There were some very good answers to Q4, but too often answers showed a lack of clear understanding of government funding of the arts. Candidates would have helped themselves if they had referred to specific funding decisions rather than answer in broad generalities. Too often candidates assumed that the main criterion for government funding was the popularity of the art form in question. Many answers identified art forms that would be beneficial to the nation, preserve heritage or which could not survive financial without subsidy. Some showed that certain art forms, like popular music, were generally able to generate sufficient funds from audiences and so did not require government support. The best answers were those that showed why some art forms received funding and why others did not. Many of the weaker answers attempted to deal with the question in a commonsense way and consequently gave answers that sounded good but bore little relationship to reality.

Q5 was a new way of addressing issues of aesthetic evaluation. If the question was read accurately candidates were given a clear clue with the idea of a great work of art. Too many answers ignored the question and answered in terms of popularity, attracting large audiences or fitting in with what the museum already possessed. Candidates who scored well were able to identify two of the generally accepted aesthetic criteria in part (a). There was no need for detailed or developed answers. Part (b) depended on a correct answer in part (a). Those candidates who knew and understood the criteria were able to give accurate and detailed explanations of why their chosen criteria might be helpful. Most candidates only gained one mark for a description of their chosen criterion but were rarely able to develop their answer sufficiently to justify the second mark. Some answers were simply a reworking of work that had already been credited in part (a).

Section B

Q6(a)(i) was generally done quite badly. Very few candidates seemed able to identify inductive reasoning. Q6(a)(ii) was sometimes answered quite well but far too many candidates associated it with people in positions of authority rather than those who had authority as a result of expertise in a particular area. Very few candidates seemed to understand causal argument in Q6(a)(iii). A considerable number misread the term as casual argument. Each of the items in question 6(a) is named in the specification. All candidates should be aware of the meaning of these terms and able to give or identify examples that illustrate them. The key to answering part (b) was to be able to apply the chosen criterion to a specific work of art and to show how it helped justify the description 'great'. Too many answers were general and abstract rather than clearly applied.

Answers to Q6(b) were variable. Again there was too much evidence that candidates are careless in reading questions. A large number gave historical or commonsense answers that did not refer directly to the text, in spite of the clear direction to make use of paragraph 3. Those who did read the question correctly were generally able to identify that Statement 2 was supported in the text with evidence. Better answers were able to distinguish between the statements as one being factual and the other opinion.

Question 6(c) was generally answered accurately by about two-thirds of candidates as also were Q6(d) and 6(e). Of the three questions part (d) was perhaps the least well understood.

The passage used for Q6(f) appeared to be accessible to the majority of candidates. Most were able to identify that most evidence used actually contradicted the authors claim and that there was little that supported it. Very few actually made positive use of the statement that Sainsbury and Rothschild were exceptions to the norm and so could be used to support the authors claim. There was too much repetition of similar points, producing lengthy but not very high scoring answers. Better answers discussed deficiencies in evidence. There is evidence that candidates are being taught some of the skills needed to address this type of question, although the majority are still content just to identify fact and opinion.

Communication (AO2) was generally satisfactory. There were relatively few answers that were so poorly expressed as to deserve only a single mark. One of the main barriers to effective communication was illegible handwriting. Another barrier was careless and inaccurate spelling of simple words and of words copied from the text.

Section C Essays

Four essay titles means that there is good coverage of the specification. The majority of candidates answered Q8. Generally essays were quite well structured, presented two points of view and reached a conclusion. Conclusions are often weak and are treated simply as a way to finish writing, rather than something that is developed strongly from evaluation of different points of argument. Too many candidates still rely on assertion rather than on supported statements. The range of evidence used is often limited.

Q7 (Family Structure) was disappointing. Many answers were sociologically based and could have fitted well into 6453 (Social Perspectives) or 6455 (Modern Society). Many candidates were able to describe in great detail the strengths and weaknesses of different types of family structure, but relatively few acknowledged or attempted to deal with the issue of moral justification or social evil. Some candidates concentrated on the nature and cause of social evils at the expense of the role of family. Consequently their answers tended to be largely one sided and could not reach the higher marks. A number of candidates drew on their own experience of belonging to non-traditional families. This often led them into a narrow defensive position which worked against the development of a balanced approach to the question.

Question 8 (Religion) was easily the most popular essay question and did generate some well balanced and well informed answers. However this type of question always allows candidates with prejudices to voice them. Too often this leads to an unbalanced answer that cannot reach beyond mid Level 3. Many candidates did show an awareness of potential benefits of religion from a social and moral viewpoint but equally saw religion as a source of conflict. Religion was seen as the cause of the problems in the Middle East, in Ireland and the recent upsurge of terrorism. Relatively few candidates identified it as an excuse rather than a cause. Inevitably a number of candidates considered scientific discoveries and theories as discrediting all religion. Few candidates distinguished between different world religions or religious movements. Some saw the rise of new religious movements as evidence that religion

still had a part to play even though the traditional religions seemed to have been discredited.

Answers to Q9 (the Development of Artistic Styles) ranged from the desperate to the well argued and well informed. Some better argued answers lacked sufficient supporting evidence to take them into the higher mark range. The main source of evidence was music. Weaker candidates (of which there was a high proportion) often simply wrote about their favourite groups with little reference to the terms of the question. Few candidates seemed to understand the nature and meaning of 'commercial' pressure and even fewer attempted to distinguish between creativity and innovation/originality. The general consensus seemed to be that all styles owe something to earlier movements. Generally few answers showed a good understanding of the different influences that help to bring new styles into existence. The work of Emin and Hirst were often described but there was rarely any critical argument about what made it innovative.

Q10 (Media) was often misinterpreted and answers were often disappointing. Many candidates seemed to be unaware that the majority of media is privately owned. Many seemed to think that private ownership related to ownership by a single individual. Too often answers were expressed in general terms rather than using specific examples to illustrate points being made. Too many candidates seemed to have an idealised view of state or government control of the media, although there were some good uses of the role of media under totalitarian regimes. Very few candidates dealt with the key idea of technology. Almost inevitably Murdoch came in for considerable criticism.

The comments made in Section B about communication apply also in Section C answers.

Modern Society (6455)

Introduction

The paper was very similar to that set in summer 2005. In Section A, where knowledge is tested, candidates are about the same standard as before. In Section B, the passages were accessible, and candidates were able to extract appropriate facts and opinions and compare two sources. They have more knowledge of the specific terms needed for AO4, but have yet to deploy this knowledge to best effect. In Section C, more candidates are writing plans at the start of their essays, and this is helping them to achieve more structure to their arguments - as a consequence the quality of essays may have improved slightly. They do not need to waste time by writing out the question, however. The only good thing to be said about such a practice is that it may focus attention on the actual wording of the question. Candidates, to a large degree, fall down when it comes to evaluating their own arguments. Although they may provide a comprehensive array of evidence for and against a point of view, it is expected that at A2 they can assess the comparative merits of different forms of evidence, and the consequent strengths of the arguments they have developed. Handwriting continues to be poor overall, and presentation by some candidates who are aspiring to higher education leaves much to be desired. There is no evidence to suggest that this low quality is brought about by pressure of time to complete the paper.

Section A

Q1(a) Many generally sensible answers were provided. The main source of error was for giving an answer that could apply equally to girls and boys. Other mistakes concerned recent trends rather than considering the date of the data the students were asked to discuss. The view that males had a bigger degree of dependence than females was particularly common, but it is not possible to ascribe this view more to girls rather than boys. Sometime the reasoning was expressed in an immature way - for example - *'boys like to be looked after, hence they stay longer at home'*, or *'because parents have Sky TV'*.

Q1(b) Generally well answered, most candidates were able to calculate the figures required successfully, or at least partially.

Q1(c) Although candidates could suggest several explanations, they often repeated one explanation in two slightly different ways - for example, two closely related economic reasons. Most popular answers covered going to university and high prices in the housing market. However, many answers relating to university were without any financial amplification, simply seeing 'studying' as an adequate reason for a longer home stay period.

Q2(a) Just under half the candidates made the correct selection.

Q2(b) Answers which simply stated that there was too much choice were not credited unless they gave some reason or reasons explaining why excessive choice

was undesirable. The commonest correct response was that too many candidates would lead to confusion, or at least making the voters' choices more difficult.

Q2(c) As with Q2(a), responses stating that there would be more choice were not credited unless a reason why this was desirable. Many candidates did so, commonly for saying that voters were more able to select a candidate whose views were close to their own.

Q2(d) and Q2(e) are questions that demand a vocabulary and understanding of the electoral process that a large number of candidates appear never to have come across.

Q2(d) This proved to be a difficult question for most candidates. Their responses showed that some candidates were uncertain of the meaning of the word 'discrepancies' - many seemed to think it meant 'disagreement' - and also confused a constituency with a constituent. Another problem was that they concentrated on the size of the parties rather than of the constituencies. Both these examples highlight the need for a good understanding of vocabulary and careful reading of the questions. Some candidates were able to distinguish between 'first past the post' and proportional representation and that elections won by a minority of votes could give majority rule, but many others had little understanding of our political system with answers such as 'too many opinions cause conflict'.

Q2(e) There were many blank answers. There seemed to be a real ignorance over the electoral process, even to the point of not understanding the 'first past the post' system used here in parliamentary elections. There were many candidates who believed that there were multiple candidates for each party as there may be for European Parliament elections. Nominating several Labour party candidates for one constituency is not a recipe for electoral success.

Others appeared to be answering the question 'why do you think it's a good idea to have a large number of candidates nominated?' without realising that they should have already answered it in 2(c).

Q3(a) Only a quarter of candidates correctly identified 'deductive argument'.

Q3(b) Many candidates incorrectly selected 'deductive', possibly because it is a more common word than 'inductive'. Of those who chose 'inductive', too many could not explain why the argument was of this form. These are terms that are critical to the operation of A04 in this specification, and should be well understood at A2 level.

Q3(c) Three quarters of candidates correctly identified 'argument from authority'.

Q3(d)(i) This proved to be very straightforward, and most candidates gained the mark.

Q3(d)(ii) This too proved to be very straightforward and most candidates gained the mark.

Q3(d)(iii) Many responses failed to achieve two marks only because they were referring to one or other of fact or opinion. Since the question was worded 'Explain...' candidates were expected to refer to both to give a complete answer.

Q3(e) Most candidates recognised that both sources were one-sided, and that Source 1 was the better justified, because it contained more facts, though few quoted the correct facts, instead using 'they were queuing for houses ...'. Many candidates who named an argument in Source 1 thought it was deductive.

As arguments from authority, candidates cited 'By August 2003 families were queuing for houses on the estate ...', 'A CD-ROM was funded ...' and Alan Robson's comments. Some candidates saw Source 1 as stronger and made no mention of Source 2.

Some candidates opted for Source 2 as the better justified, because the one fact it contained was strong. Most candidates correctly identified the argument from authority here.

A few candidates discussed the merits of ASBOs without much reference to the sources.

The standard of written communication was generally acceptable.

Section C

In general essays were well written and set out, so that grammar, spelling and punctuation were not a problem. The standard of handwriting varied enormously and some essays were very difficult to read. There were some very untidy essays, crossings out and arrows pointing elsewhere.

Most candidates fell in the Level 3 range of marks for two reasons. Either they didn't provide enough examples or range of opinions so the question was answered from too narrow a point of view or they provided lots of different opinions but didn't go on to develop their points or clearly explain why these points were relevant to the question.

The popularity of the questions was well distributed, with Question 6 the least popular.

Q04	30%
Q05	33%
Q06	10%
Q07	22%

Q4 This question was answered well on the whole with well-balanced answers drawing a valid conclusion from the data, as presented. Many candidates display a lack of breadth in their cultural knowledge, however. There seemed to be a huge ignorance over the cultures of much of the rest of the world except amongst candidates who were obviously from an ethnic minority. Those from Muslim, Sikh or Hindu backgrounds, for instance, had the knowledge to answer this question well.

Candidates referred to globalisation and technology, particularly McDonalds and the similarities of similar high street all over the world. They recognised that countries like India, Japan and China have moved from agricultural closed to technological societies. Increased travel, immigration and multicultural societies like

Britain were treated, and, despite this, the continuance of differences of values, religion, language and customs and costumes.

Most candidates disagreed with the statement and thought that societies were changing but not becoming identical.

Q5 Here candidates recognised that the undesirable habits listed have bad consequences for the addicts and the NHS, but also understood that their prohibitive taxation could eventually have national economic consequences, through loss of demand. All candidates spoke of the challenge to civil liberties and unfairness to the addicts, and the unfairness that higher taxation would cause moderate smokers, drinkers and gamblers. Taxation of obesity was generally tackled emotively and environmental pollution in a very shallow way. There were economics essays, with graphs, which did not always address the question.

It was difficult for candidates to achieve Level 4 on this question. The ideas were exclusively one-sided, although often well written. The main problem candidates seemed to have was to dissociate the tax rises from their own and their family's situation. Another problem was the ignorance of candidates in knowing what can be charged by hospitals rather than assuming that everything is free. The main points seemed to be that adults would continue doing what they always did and that the consequent reduction in family available income would affect the children.

Q6 Not many candidates knew what provisions were already available (except that a lawyer should be present when police interviewed a suspect) or that legal aid was means-tested. To varying degrees candidates agreed that universal legal aid was a good idea and recognised that high legal costs created the unfairness of thus being available to wealthier people only. On the other hand, they recognised the colossal cost of a national legal service for taxpayers, that most people never had recourse to law and that we might become litigation-mad like America.

There was real ignorance over the difference between criminal law and civil law, and who was eligible for legal aid and who wasn't. There was also confusion over the word 'Legal Aid' as being the financial help given by the Government OR having a legal representative like a solicitor or barrister to assist one in presenting a case. The essays were, on the whole, well written but suffered from errors of fact - probably caused by a greater awareness of American law through various TV programs than of British law. Many answers concentrated exclusively on criminal law and completely missed out such vital areas as divorce law from the discussion. There were valid arguments for and against, but very few where one could say that the comparison was critically completed. Most seemed to take the view that the country could not afford a free legal service so, it was the litigant's hard luck unless they could afford to 'go it alone'

Q7 The general answer was to get the people not in work, back to work, rather than entertain either of the options outlined in the question. Most candidates thought that the 50% not in work consisted of adults alone and therefore viewed the figures as much more shocking than one might imagine. There were, therefore, many answers filled with indignant outrage because 50% were not working, and were therefore layabouts and 'good for nothings'. Had they considered that children and people with mental handicap, for instance, were included in the figures, the attitude might have been more moderate.

Having said that, the answers did, in general, show that there was a modest awareness of the problems associated with the pensions gap, but few seemed to be aware of the current migration patterns into Britain. There were too many who concentrated on the supposed influx of 'black' people into Britain and few had any idea of the numbers of young Eastern Europeans who are making their way here.

Many candidates appear to be unaware of the migration of qualified young foreigners into Britain that is already taking place. Candidates confused the need to bring in 5 million young, skilled people with immigration problems, particularly illegal immigrants. Most recognised the increase in infrastructure needed to cope with such an influx.

Where candidates acknowledged the problem, it seemed that most had no idea that the age of retirement with a state pension was already on the way up. Mostly, they were concerned that as future workers, they did not want to have to work extra years before becoming pensioners. Candidates were ambivalent about raising the retirement age, recognising that a skilled workforce would be a temporary solution, but understanding the limitations of health and strength on the ability to work, together with a reluctance to do so after a lifetime's work.

Not many candidates addressed only the question of the the two options available to correct the imbalance in the working population. A constant theme was the claiming of benefit by the able-bodied. Almost all candidates wanted the government to train such people to become the skilled, educated part of the workforce we need.

The Contemporary World (6456)

Introduction

This paper was more challenging than that in 2005. As a result candidates showed much greater variety of response and it was easier to distinguish average candidates from lower ability candidates. Some candidates really struggled to get to grips with the questions in a meaningful way. As a result, many interpreted aspects of the questions narrowly or very literally while others grasped one or more key terms and then failed to address the overall concept. There was a marked lack of relevant AO4 comments and a distinct absence of evidence in a number of answers, many relying on assertion and generalisation, often without recognition that they were doing so.

All previous reports on this paper have commented on the reluctance of candidates to define the terms in the question, making the assumption, presumably, that everyone knows what they mean. When, as in all General Studies papers, arguments depend critically on the ground from which evidence is drawn, it matters a great deal that this ground is clearly marked out. Critical thinking demands that we lay out the nature of the issues we are debating, and if there is any ambiguity it is resolved as early in the debate as possible. This is such a common problem in all debates that it needs to be dealt with very explicitly when teaching the subject.

Q1 On the face of it this was the most straightforward question because candidates were given two authoritative statements on science and religion, and they were expected to examine these statements closely. Many students answered this question from a set of their personal beliefs rather than tackling the question directly by examining the concepts - science, religion, doubt and certainty - in the first paragraph or so. Many candidates did not recognise or refer to the idea of a 'culture'.

Many candidates took the statements very literally. This led them to assert that science is certain because it uses or provides 'facts, objective knowledge, empirical knowledge or theories that have been conclusively 'proved'. How then could it show 'doubt'? If the candidate had considered what 'doubt' actually was, and more significantly a 'culture of doubt', then they might have been able to support Feynman's view more vigorously, arguing that science advances by constantly questioning nature. A few candidates confused science with mathematics or technology. As for religion - it is full of 'doubt' because it is 'only what people believe', and different religions have different beliefs and cannot agree. Many candidates, however, appreciated that a strong appeal of many religions is that it assures followers of certainty in a perplexing and worrying world.

All these responses gained credit and took candidates to upper Level 2, or bottom Level 3 for AO3, but the essays that reached the higher levels for all objectives were more perceptive and explicit in their examination of science and religion. There were some excellent essays displaying analysis and quality of thinking of a high order. Candidates are not expected to have reams of knowledge at their fingertips, and it is quite possible to achieve high levels by using a rather restricted range of information in thoughtful and critical ways. Many candidates showed a good knowledge of facts and opinions from the history of science.

Typical illustrations of scientific discoveries were gravity, the structure of the atom and the development of modern technology. Often Darwin's theory of evolution and the big bang theory were put up against the book of genesis in a science verses

religion debate. Arguments concerning abortion and contraception also featured heavily. Many answers contained some reference to *The Da Vinci Code* as an example of doubt in religion, and it is not certain that they appreciate that the book is a work of fiction. Most candidates focussed just on Christianity, with a few mentioning Islam, but often in relation to terrorism. Very good answers quoted psychological and sociological studies regarding the human need for a belief system.

A few candidates interpreted the question as science 'doubting' religion and the conflict between the two. Some candidates seized on the direct comparison of aspects of science and religion, often without reference to a particular religion, rather than the question of their relative nature or culture.

More candidates were able to make meaningful comments relating to AO4 here than in other questions, just by virtue of the subject matter, a few also picking out that the first part of the quote could be considered an argument from authority.

Q2 Responses to this question, which admittedly contained a somewhat enigmatic assertion, were handicapped by a lack of examination of the concept of 'progress'. The quotation is from Herbert Spencer, a Victorian thinker, who was a supporter of Darwin's evolutionary views and who laid the foundations of modern sociology by applying evolutionary concepts to human societies. It was not expected that candidates would have known that. However, a possible key to a good answer would have been to argue that progress is a term that only has a human connotation - change is a fact of nature, but progress is change, in human terms, for the better. Hence progress in technology is something which easy to recognise, since technology is a human activity which identifies and provides solutions to problems, using insights from science. Progression in art and politics is a therefore a highly debatable idea, because our judgements in these areas are subjective, and we cannot resolve them objectively.

Most students related progress in technology to the development of the internet, ICT, mobile phones, iPods and the like and managed to relate this to their personal usage of these developments. Most candidates identified this kind of progress to be positive and a necessity, and often related it to a Darwinian view. Naturally, they found it difficult to relate progress to art and very few examples of how art has progressed were mentioned. In terms of politics a lot of candidates commented on the fact that criminal laws or government policies were signs of progress in politics. Very few commented on the different 'isms', on the fall of communism and spread of democracy. There were very few responses in which a candidate confidently commented on progress with respect to all the three aspects mentioned in the question.

The question mentioned necessity and accident, and a few answers tried to invoke some significant 'chance' events - for example, the apocryphal idea that Newton discovered gravity accidentally when an apple fell on his head - a better example of accident in science was the discovery of penicillin. Not many candidates drew attention to the unwelcome results of technological progress - global warming, pollution and the like. The term 'necessity' was interpreted either as need (rather than luxury) or inevitability (rather than chance), although few stated this specifically.

The question stimulated many candidates to reflect on the form of argument they used, although they were much less forthcoming in identifying fact, opinion or belief in their evidence for this question.

Q3 Many arguments were developed by candidates in response to this question. It invited candidates to speculate on the views of those who believe that there is something about 'nature' or 'natural ways' that is better for humanity.

Some of these arguments were simple, even simplistic. For example:

- If we do away with modern medicines, the death rate will go up, but we will be a healthier population in the end through survival of the fittest;
- Millions of people will lose their jobs because the NHS will be decimated;
- Because there is no NHS, we will have much less tax to pay.

More perceptively:

- Anything humans do must be natural because we are part of nature (there were some good answers which developed this argument in greater depth).

Candidates who made an attempt at examining the ethical frameworks often boosted their AO3 and AO4 levels because they were able to refer to utilitarian arguments, natural law and the evidence for these. Many candidates mentioned cloning, abortion and euthanasia with respect to the ethics of medicine. Most of the students argued well in favour of modern medicine and also gave the religious argument to back up their claims. Many focussed on herbal remedies and Chinese medicine. Better answers discussed what was meant by 'natural', often pointing out that most drugs start from a natural precursor.

At the lower end candidates dismissed this view out of hand. Often candidates either just focussed on what would happen either if this view were adopted, or the relative merits of it - rather than both.

Some candidates produced very well thought out answers. The best candidates talked about survival of the fittest as being nature's way and gradual build up of natural immunity to diseases. They also mentioned how the human race as a whole had become weaker as we had altered nature in that those who in the past would not have survived had been saved by medicine and able to carry on their genes, even though this is contradicted by the improvement in survival and longevity in more economically developed countries. This then brought in many good ethical arguments. Many pointed to people needlessly dying of treatable 'minor' illnesses examples here included asthma and diabetes. Some talked about the ethics of animal testing and the recent human drug trial that went wrong. Some focussed too heavily on alternative therapy such as aromatherapy and reflexology.

Q4 This question too was presented rather enigmatically, in the hope that candidates would have greater freedom in interpreting the question in ways with which they would feel comfortable.

Surprisingly many students did not understand the role of the university or failed to highlight the purpose fulfilled by the university. This was especially surprising considering that most of the students undertaking this exam are prospective university students. Many candidates had issues with what 'a basic level' should be interpreted as meaning. Many just applied this to schools and their personal experiences, rather than applying the concept to universities.

Some good descriptions of modern ICT were given and many also discussed social implications involved in children not mixing through education.

Only the best answers appreciated the need for specialisation in universities. Many did not argue both sides of the statement. Some mentioned the difficulty in filtering suitable information from the vast amount available on the Internet. Many focussed on social and communication skills developed in the school environment. Some included an appreciation of different learning style being accommodated in school. Many included the difficulty in teaching practical subjects online with particular reference to art and P.E. Some candidates neglected to mention the areas of technology, art and society at all and just focussed on the progress and development of ICT. Many did however, suggest that there was no substitute for face-to-face teaching - humans can encourage, explain, repeat or tailor the learning to the student; currently, they believe, machines cannot.

Key Statistics

6451: Aspects of Culture

Grade	Max.Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	34	30	27	24	21
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

6452: Scientific Horizons

Grade	Max.Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	33	30	28	26	24
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6453_01: Social Perspectives (written paper)

Grade	Max.Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	36	33	30	28	26
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6453_02: Social Perspectives (coursework)

Grade	Max.Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	39	35	31	27	24
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6454: Cultural Expressions

Grade	Max.Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	31	28	26	24	22
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6455: Modern Society

Grade	Max.Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	35	32	29	26	23
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

6456: The Contemporary World

Grade	Max.Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	34	31	28	26	24
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

Notes:

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary Mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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