

# CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT JUNE 2005

## Communication

### Level 3

#### General Comments

This paper performed appropriately as a means of testing candidates' ability to demonstrate the required skills at Level 3. The Joint Awarding Bodies decided on a pass mark of 28.

As a topic, celebrity culture was of general interest, and well within the experience of all candidates. However, this led some candidates to stray outside the source documents, particularly for topical examples of celebrity misbehaviour. The documents offered a variety of suitable material for the answer to Question 1, though many candidates did not use information from both Documents 1 and 2. Better candidates were able to identify relevant material concisely and accurately, without lengthy and time-consuming explanations. Many candidates identified the meaning of the cartoon as being the replacement of religion by celebrity worship, but weaker candidates tended to describe the storyline rather than interpreting the meaning. Some candidates did not relate the cartoon to both documents 1 and 2. Many missed the quote at the top of document 2 and struggled to relate to other more general ideas. Few were able to explain the relevance of the reference to the Pope, and some misunderstood the meaning of the term "audience" in this context. Most candidates found this a hard question to answer and so did not score highly. In response to Question 3, most candidates could identify positive aspects in the Kelly Holmes' article, although with too much emphasis on the same point of helping others rather than considering other aspects. However candidates generally did not pay sufficient attention to the second part of the question, which invited a comparison of this view of celebrity to those discussed in both Documents 1 and 2. A large proportion of candidates did not refer to precise information in these documents to support their arguments but tended to generalise. Several only compared to one document. Some candidates did not understand the term "pseudo-people" and therefore were unable, in Question 4, to draw clear comparisons between this view of celebrities and that which presented them as "just like us". Examples of the latter, although fewer, proved easier to find. Even with more able candidates, the comparison of these opinions was rather brief and not particularly analytical.

Although the majority of candidates attempted Question 5, and a variety of interesting responses were produced, too many candidates were clearly unprepared for writing a report. A significant number did not use a suitable report format including a heading and subheading and often produced more of an essay than a report, occasionally in an inappropriately informal tone. Some candidates had not correctly interpreted the nature of the task required and wrote as if addressing the students themselves through publicity material, often listing positive and negative points about celebrity culture without assessing the impact of increased knowledge for students. Relevant information was usually

presented in the candidate's own words, with only a few introducing quotes from the documents without using them to illustrate their own points. However, few candidates drew on all the documents, and some introduced information not included in the source material.

The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar was again generally poor for candidates at this level.

### **Recommendation to Centres**

Centres are reminded that at Level 3, mastery of the basic rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar is essential, and therefore some further tuition in these aspects of written English will be required by many candidates, even if they are studying at Level 3 in academic or vocational subjects. Ensure ALL candidates who are entered for the Communication Key Skill at this level have the appropriate skills and knowledge to allow them to be successful. It is apparent that some centres have not sufficiently prepared candidates in the conventions of writing letters, reports and articles, which are the formats commonly tested in the extended writing required in Part B.

Coaching in examination technique would also help to ensure that candidates perform to the best of their abilities. Poor time management sometimes prevents otherwise capable candidates from being successful. The art of synthesis needs to be taught as many candidates find it difficult to explain and discuss identified points. Questions in Part A do not require lengthy explanation, and in some cases only ask for points to be identified. Time spent on unnecessarily long answers here would be better spent on the extended response to the question in Part B, which, it should be emphasised, is worth 50% of the total marks for the paper. Candidates need to ensure they read the question carefully, and should be reminded that they are only credited with information which is contained within the source documents.

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