



General Certificate of Education

General Studies 5761

Specification A

GA3C Society, Politics and the Economy (Coursework)

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2008 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

GA3C Society, Politics and the Economy (Coursework)

The number of candidates entered for the June 2008 series was largely unchanged from last year, comprising 620 candidates from 13 centres. As with last year the quality of work seen by the moderation team was generally good with clear evidence that centres had acted upon the advice offered in the centre specific feedback forms, previous Principal Moderator's Reports and at teachers' meetings. It was, however, disappointing that a few centres did not appropriately brief their candidates about the nature of the coursework task resulting in assignments that did not reflect the level of performance that candidates were capable of. Candidates continue to explore topics of personal interest to them and the moderation team saw a wide range of titles, demonstrating awareness on the part of centres of the scope of this component to motivate and inspire their candidates.

The nature of the coursework task

Most, but not all, centres seem to be aware of the nature of the coursework task. However it was of some concern to the moderation team that one centre advised its candidates to only explore two sources. The source analysis nature of the assignment requires candidates to choose four or five sources, reflecting differing views of the issue that they are studying. Clearly only a narrow range of views can be explored if just two sources are selected. In another centre all candidates had been provided with the same sources to analyse. This is not 'in the spirit' of the AS General Studies Coursework – candidates are expected to select and analyse their own sources. The Specification states that candidates should 'be encouraged to make judgements about the relative validity of *their* sources' (page 33), and this therefore precludes the provision of sources by their teachers.

Candidates are well supported where their teachers encourage them to adopt a structured approach to their assignment planning. It is again worth reproducing the following form devised by a Centre to help its candidates to analyse and use their chosen sources. It was included in this report last summer as an example of good practise.

Framework for Source Analysis

Source number Title Author	
Can anything be inferred from the source?	
Is it opinion or fact? How much is objective/subjective?	
How reliable/unreliable is the source?	
Examples of supporting quotations, including exaggerated language.	
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the source?	
How does this source compare with the other sources examined?	

The last question in the form above serves to remind candidates of the need to compare and contrast their chosen sources. Too often the moderation team saw work that was no more than a summary of different sources without any attempt to use the sources to answer the question posed in their title.

The type of questions which candidates should be asking about their sources are

- Who is the author?
- What is/was the purpose of the source?
- Who is its intended audience?
- What issues are raised by the source?
- What is the context of the source?
- What issues are raised by the language of the source?
- What contradictions may be evident in the source?

Ideally, there should be a variety of sources and not a reliance solely on the Internet. It is accepted that given the topicality of many of the issues with which students engage, that this may not be practical. If all sources are drawn from the Internet then they should not be chosen from the same type of site, e.g. four or five articles all from BBC news pages, as this makes any meaningful analysis difficult.

Centres could usefully address issues of this type in test pieces, before candidates start work on their own assignments.

It is good practice for candidates to submit both copies of their chosen sources and a plan with their assignments. Such appended documents and plan are **not** included in the word count.

Assessment of candidates' work.

The moderating team continue to be grateful to the large number of centres where assignments are clearly annotated and supporting comments are provided on the Candidate Record Forms. In the main the allocation and justification of marks awarded to candidates by centres was clear to the moderator but in a few cases no supporting comments were provided to justify the award of marks, and this made the moderator's task harder.

It is pleasing to report that all work seen was clearly of a 'source analysis' nature, and issues encountered in previous years regarding the assessment of 'essay type' submissions did not arise.

Centres must offer on-going support and advice to their candidates about the nature of the assessment objectives, and how they should be met. There seemed to be little evidence that candidates were 'left to get on with' their coursework after an initial meeting with their teacher. The moderation team continue to be impressed with the obvious quality of support that centres offer to their candidates and it was clear that this had enabled candidates to fulfil their potential.

It continues to be of concern that, in a few cases, centres allowed candidates to submit work that was considerably in excess of the word limit. It is a requirement that the word count is stated on the Candidate Record Form, and this should serve as a reminder that the assignment should be no longer than 1,500 words.

Centres are reminded that they can approach their coursework adviser at any time if they are unsure of any aspect of the coursework task.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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