



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **General Studies 5761** *Specification A*

**GSA1      Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities**

# **Report on the Examination** *2007 examination - June series*

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## **Unit 1 Question 1 (GSA1/1 Culture, Morality, Arts & Humanities)**

*This component is an objective test for which the following list indicates the correct answers used in marking the candidates' responses*

<b>1.1</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>1.16</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>1.4</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>1.5</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>1.6</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>1.19</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>1.7</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>1.8</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>1.9</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>1.22</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>1.10</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>1.11</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>1.12</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>1.13</b>	<b>C</b>		

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## **GSA1 Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities**

### **General comments**

The examiners felt that this was a successful test overall which touched on several key themes in the specification relating to newspapers and other media, their coverage of cultural topics and issues in particular to do with 'high art' and popular culture. Candidates appeared to understand and engage with the passage and questions reasonably successfully, although some had difficulty with the terms and references which they were required to explore for structured writing in Question 2. Performance on the multiple choice questions was virtually identical to last summer, and slightly higher than in January. In contrast the marks scored on Question 2 were lower than last summer, although candidates appeared to have sufficient time to attempt all parts of the test and there were few shorter answers to the last written question that appeared to be time-related. Good answers to 2.2 and 2.3 required more specific knowledge than the equivalent questions last year and many candidates lacked this. Discrimination improved on this question overall however. The general quality of written communication was not good and at the lower end of performance the standard was very disappointing. Many candidates appear to have a very careless attitude to spelling, particularly of words which appear in the questions themselves, as well as in the passage. Typically these included: criticise/criticism, government, opinion, politician and Britney! Other words which candidates constantly spell incorrectly are: a lot, affect/effect, argument, article, available, definite(ly), interest, its/it's, moral/morale, relevant, their/there, undoubtedly, and plurals of nouns ending in -y, e.g. celebrities, stories.

### **Question 1**

The selection of multiple choice questions worked well as usual with an almost identical overall mean facility of 61%, mean mark of 15.2 and standard deviation of 4.3 compared with last summer. 90% of candidates scored 10 marks or more and 19% scored 20 or more. Questions which candidates found relatively 'easy' with scores over 70% were 1.1, 1.4, 1.7, 1.9, 1.11, 1.21 and 1.24. Two questions stood out as difficult for the majority of candidates. These were 1.2 on the implied meaning of the biblical reference 'tablet of stone' (a third of candidates choosing C 'intellectual' over an equal number choosing the correct answer A 'authoritative'); and 1.5 on the significance of 'manifestations' (where again a third of candidates incorrectly linked this with C 'opinion' instead of B 'evidence'). However, both these questions discriminated well, as did all the items in this part of the test, and it was clear that the stronger candidates had chosen the correct option.

### **Question 2.1**

The marks scored on this question were quite high and for those who read the question carefully it was a good discriminator. The very precise wording of the question should have made it clear that the three authorities targeted for special criticism towards the end of the article were the BBC, the British government and the American army/military authorities/war planners. Imprecise answers such as the 'media' or the 'big entertainment corporations' (not targeted for 'special criticism') or those not drawn from the end of the article were not given credit. Most candidates had little difficulty in identifying the BBC and the government and providing a reasonably accurate reason in both cases, but the third target proved more problematic, particularly when it came to explaining coherently the nature of the criticism or the event which sparked it. A few candidates attempted to provide a critical analysis of the text (or parts of it), and this is a growing phenomenon, but not what was asked for here.

**Question 2.2**

The answers to this question were disappointing considering how central the topic is to General Studies. Although examiners were prepared to accept some blurring of the distinction between 'duty' and 'role' of newspapers, higher level answers needed to be able to focus more on 'duty' than simply providing a descriptive account of what newspapers do. Even then the range of points and references to individual newspapers were often quite narrow. Some candidates limited their discussion to the focus of the passage (culture) and failed to take the arguments beyond the narrowness of the text into broader realms of, e.g. information, debate, entertainment, commerce, politics. There were appropriate references to issues concerning honesty, integrity, bias, sensationalism, celebrity, and distinctions were commonly made between 'tabloid' and 'broadsheet' approaches (although these were often bedevilled with worrying and out-of-date stereotypes about different audiences, age and social class). Better answers covered a wide range of these points, including those mentioned above, supported by references to a range of newspapers, as well as pointing out, as the passage does, that newspapers are also businesses with responsibilities to owners and shareholders, as well as their readers.

**Question 2.3**

This question also was not particularly well answered. Many candidates seemed to be uncertain about the meaning of 'classical music' and the need to define it for the sake of a clear answer; similarly with the term 'superior' and 'the kind of music represented by Britney Spears'. A candidate who recognised the potential for discussion and illustration of what each of these might mean would be well on the way to meeting the requirements of Assessment Objective 4 inherent in the question and to producing a good answer.

Also inherent in the question were the more general ones of differences between 'high art' and popular culture and what is 'good' and 'bad' music – other very common themes in General Studies. A few candidates could answer this question very well, but it seemed as if the knowledge and experience to do so was limited to subject specialists. Surely understanding of aspects of performance, technique and composition are not restricted to those studying A level music? Even though candidates were familiar enough with the music (and other activities) of Britney Spears, it was a pity that they limited their responses to examples of her music when there is so much variety around in both classical and popular music which they could draw on.

Another common weakness was to indulge in yet more stereotypes and define taste in terms of age, social class and education, although there were valid points to be made about the role of education in the evaluation of music of good quality.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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