



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **General Studies 6761** *Specification A*

**GSA4      Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities**

# **Report on the Examination** *2008 examination - June series*

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## **Unit 4 Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities**

### **Unit 4 Question 1**

#### **(GA4F French)**

*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>C</b> | <b>1.11</b> | <b>C</b> |
| <b>1.2</b>  | <b>D</b> | <b>1.12</b> | <b>B</b> |
| <b>1.3</b>  | <b>B</b> | <b>1.13</b> | <b>A</b> |
| <b>1.4</b>  | <b>A</b> | <b>1.14</b> | <b>C</b> |
| <b>1.5</b>  | <b>B</b> | <b>1.15</b> | <b>D</b> |
| <b>1.6</b>  | <b>A</b> | <b>1.16</b> | <b>C</b> |
| <b>1.7</b>  | <b>C</b> | <b>1.17</b> | <b>A</b> |
| <b>1.8</b>  | <b>D</b> | <b>1.18</b> | <b>D</b> |
| <b>1.9</b>  | <b>A</b> | <b>1.19</b> | <b>B</b> |
| <b>1.10</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>1.20</b> | <b>D</b> |

## Unit 4 Question 1

### (GA4G German)

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

|      |   |      |   |
|------|---|------|---|
| 1.1  | A | 1.11 | D |
| 1.2  | B | 1.12 | C |
| 1.3  | D | 1.13 | C |
| 1.4  | B | 1.14 | A |
| 1.5  | D | 1.15 | D |
| 1.6  | B | 1.16 | C |
| 1.7  | A | 1.17 | A |
| 1.8  | D | 1.18 | B |
| 1.9  | C | 1.19 | C |
| 1.10 | B | 1.20 | A |

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## Unit 4 Question 1

### (GA4S Spanish)

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

|      |   |      |   |
|------|---|------|---|
| 1.1  | D | 1.11 | A |
| 1.2  | C | 1.12 | B |
| 1.3  | B | 1.13 | D |
| 1.4  | A | 1.14 | D |
| 1.5  | C | 1.15 | C |
| 1.6  | D | 1.16 | A |
| 1.7  | A | 1.17 | B |
| 1.8  | B | 1.18 | A |
| 1.9  | B | 1.19 | C |
| 1.10 | C | 1.20 | D |

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## Unit 4 Question 1

### (GA4E European Culture)

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

|      |   |      |   |
|------|---|------|---|
| 1.1  | D | 1.16 | D |
| 1.2  | C | 1.17 | C |
| 1.3  | D | 1.18 | B |
| 1.4  | A | 1.19 | A |
| 1.5  | C | 1.20 | D |
| 1.6  | A | 1.21 | A |
| 1.7  | A | 1.22 | C |
| 1.8  | B | 1.23 | C |
| 1.9  | D | 1.24 | A |
| 1.10 | A | 1.25 | B |
| 1.11 | B | 1.26 | C |
| 1.12 | C | 1.27 | A |
| 1.13 | A | 1.28 | D |
| 1.14 | B | 1.29 | B |
| 1.15 | B | 1.30 | D |

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## Question 1 – Objective Test Questions

### Modern Foreign Languages

Once again the number of candidates attempting the foreign language component decreased, following the trend established since the introduction of Themes in European Culture. In comparison with June 2007, reductions were approximately another 20% in French, 25% in German and 15% in Spanish. French has now fallen from almost 14 000 candidates in June 2006 to just over 5 000 in this series, German from 5 800 to some 1 950 and Spanish from 2 300 to just under 1 300 over the same time period

Performance in all three languages, however, improved from last June, with French showing the greatest increase, and all three showed an improvement from January 2008. Candidates opting for the language component now appear to show a greater ability to handle the passages and questions. This component may have become the domain of the specialist A Level student, which was not the original intention of the inclusion of foreign language comprehension in General Studies A. All three languages retain a comparable level of demand, however, and continue to produce pleasing outcomes in performance.

The statistics support the contention that the foreign language competence of entrants is higher this summer and once again the papers presented few serious difficulties even though demands were broadly similar to previous series. Although the number of easy questions (identified with a facility over 65% and answered correctly by a large proportion of the candidates) is increasing, the discrimination factor remains high, and Spanish remains the most successful in this.

Once again there was an improvement upon scores at pre-test.

The figures for this summer:

Mean facility (with June 2007 scores in brackets for comparison):

French 70% (68%), German 65% (62%), Spanish 63% (61%)

The mean mark for this series (with the standard deviation in brackets):

French 13.9 (3.9), German 13.0 (3.9), Spanish 12.5 (4.5)

Improvements on pre-test:

French +10%, German 11%, Spanish +9%

As in June 2007, notable is the frequency of easy questions, and especially in French and German. No paper contained notable distractors and in no paper were any questions rejected.

#### French

Easy questions were 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 20. There were no difficult questions (with a facility of below 35%).

#### German

Easy questions were 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19.

Question 20 was difficult and only 33% of candidates reached key A. It was, however, chosen by the vast majority of the most able candidates and discriminated very well, and the incorrect answers were evenly spread across the three distractors. The answer is to be found in the

penultimate paragraph – ...*die kleine Pension am FuÙe des Passes aufsuchen... bis alles trocken ist* – but its location here may itself have served as a distractor.

### Spanish

The easy questions were 1, 2, 6, 12, 15, 16, 17 and 19.

Question 9 proved difficult with almost equal numbers of candidates opting for A and (the correct) B. Most of the most able, however, selected B and the question discriminated well. Line 1 of paragraph 4 – *Laporta no ha escondido nunca sus convicciones nacionalistas* – provides the final evidence of his nationalist leanings following *imponer...la obligación expresa de aprender catalán* in paragraph 1, *una coartada para encubrir un nacionalismo latente* in paragraph 2, and *el deber de hablar catalán* in paragraph 3.

Question 19 failed to discriminate as well as was hoped. This was an easy question attracting 88% of candidates who possibly spotted the pecuniary element in the text – *sanciones de hasta 600 euros* – which may explain the low discrimination figure (0.16 where 0.20 or above is normally the target).

### European Culture

The mean mark rose considerably from last June (17.8 to 20.2) and several questions proved to be easy. The pre-tests too had a higher facility, so perhaps that outcome was to be expected. Nevertheless, it was a good set of varied passages – *Rehabilitating European Cousins* looking at knowledge about the European Union in British citizenship teaching; *From Islam to Irving: a perfect moral storm* – a passage from Herald Tribune addressing issues of freedom of speech in Europe and the Middle East and *Pablo's Coming Home* – a Picasso exhibition in the Prado.

The mean facility of this paper was very similar to that of the three languages (70% French, 67% European Culture; 66% German and 63% Spanish).

### Question 2

#### General Comments

This session's essays were equivalent in standard to those of previous sessions. The best were extraordinary works – full of detailed knowledge, careful analysis, a real understanding of many sides and nuances of the question, well exemplified, thoroughly debated and reaching sound conclusions. Such essays, of course, reach the higher marks.

These reports have outlined before how the essay component might be tackled. As most of this examination is skills based, it is worth teaching the skill of essay writing for the 3 essays candidates have to tackle. Much of a clue to how the essays should be written is offered in the Assessment Objectives (AOs) in our specification and General Mark Scheme.

AO1 requires students to demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding. They should choose essays where they are able to show off their knowledge and should demonstrate that they understand what the question is about. AO2 requires them to plan an essay and communicate their knowledge and understanding. A set of paragraphs which offer opinions, facts and evidence leading towards an overall conclusion will score highly here, especially if they are presented legibly. AO3 needs them to marshal evidence and draw conclusions and to interpret and evaluate material. They should show that their opinions are valid by illustrating them with sound examples, drawn from personal or other experience. AO4 requires students to be aware that there are many different points of view concerning all the issues under discussion. They might, for instance, comment on the validity of one view as opposed to others or question the issues under discussion and examine how points of view are arrived at.

The set of 6 essays under offer in this paper covered a wide range of the specification. As usual, the more discretely artistic questions did not attract many takers and the majority of candidates opted for questions 2.1 and 2.6.

Question 2.1 asked them to consider the role of religion in lives in contemporary Britain. It attracted some weak candidates who preferred to write an essay about the decline of religion or the existence of God. There was a strong recognition that many British laws stem from the 10 commandments (though few referred to the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 commandments) and many candidates were aware of the position of the established church in our Government. Many, unsurprisingly, featured the effects of terrorism on what one faith may believe about another, with some perceptive points in evidence. Quite often, though, this led answers away from the central question of the role of religion. Some candidates wrote rather shocking and very one sided tirades which were not what we were looking for. There was some understanding of a variety of faiths and sects and the practice of those religions in every-day lives.

Question 2.2 was sometimes superbly answered. It asked for a discussion on moral and ethical problems that have arisen in recent armed conflicts. The examiners interpreted armed conflicts as those between two armed sides, so some of the conflicts, such as that in Burma and Tibet, where armed forces are facing largely unarmed protest, were not considered admissible. There were candidates who were able to put together really impressive lists of criteria for war, ranging from Greek philosophers to Kierkegaard. They argued the moral and ethical problems thrown up by a whole range of issues. There were a few very sharp diatribes against the UK and the US which were very heartfelt and personal but did not offer any understanding of the complexity of the issues. Some, not surprisingly, offered examples from wars long gone and their work was only judged on how far it was relevant to conflicts since World war II.

Question 2.3 asked them to consider ways in which artistic taste and judgement had changed since the 1960s. This was not often well done, despite a television play about Mary Whitehouse aired just before the examination. A few were able to point to some of the innovations in art in the 60s and some of the more contentious art movements since then, though explaining any underlying reasons for progression was not a skill much in evidence. Few were able to refer, for instance, to extending the boundaries of arts through such issues as the Lady Chatterley judgements. Nevertheless, there were some clever answers which related the changes to economic and social developments that have taken place in the last 50 years.

2.4 asked them to say whether watching live performances was the only way to experience the theatre. Wide exemplification was on offer from some strong candidates. Those who gave a few general observations about reading Shakespeare in class, without any close textual observations or an idea of the context within which an author was working, were not well rewarded. A few were able to contrast plays with films. The overall level of response was quite encouraging.

2.5 asked for the uses and effectiveness of propaganda within the framework of the arts. Many struggled with the concept of propaganda and many spent most of their time writing about television advertisements for household products. The quality of illustration was often weak. A few references to iconic posters such as World War I's recruitment posters didn't carry them very far. Much of the other reference came, unsurprisingly, from 1930s Germany and Russia and was not well used in the main. They are (blissfully?) not aware of what current propaganda may be around them and how images are used to present a particular political viewpoint.

2.6 The media question was often poorly done. Some candidates were unsure of what the media entails and many detailed descriptions of video games missed the point entirely. The celebrity world gained a lot of attention – Big Brother; celebrity magazines in particular – and so did the fashion model world with some essays based entirely on the concept of Size 0. Little was offered besides this, except a condemnation of Rupert Murdoch for owning so much of the

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media simply to propagate his views and the general reliability of the good old BBC. Certainly, examining critically was often missing from the answers. Very little was offered on the very fertile ground of radio and the newspapers, with a quite depressing lack of knowledge of the stance of various newspapers.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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