GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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Paper 8987/11

Written Paper

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Key Messages

- A 'perspective' can be political, economic or social or global versus local, it is not simply the view of a Document.
- Brief and relevant quotations from the Documents should be used to illustrate a point and to support arguments otherwise the answer is generalised or no more than a series of assertions.
- There is no requirement for candidates to bring in any of their own knowledge to answer the questions; it will not gain credit.
- The strongest responses reached a supported judgement about the issue under consideration.
- Candidates must number their questions. There were a significant number who either gave no indication of where one question ended and another began, or who wrote their answer as one continuous piece of prose.

General Comments

The Documents were accessible to the candidates shown by their engagement with the issues, arguments and views being put forward; however, some candidates do need to read the Document attribution with greater precision as a significant number wrote that Document 2 was from the Financial Times. Most candidates were able to reach judgements about the strengths or weaknesses of the Document/s under consideration. There were very few candidates who ran out of time, although once again the allocation of time is an important issue. The amount of time spent answering each question should be allocated according to the number of available marks. For example, Questions 1 (a) and (b) were worth a total of six marks and could be answered in less than one page of the answer booklet. Questions 2 and 3 required longer responses to enable engagement with the relevant skills. A characteristic of stronger responses was in being able to select relevant, concise and appropriate quotations from the Documents which demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being considered.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1 (a)

Virtually all candidates were able to score full marks on this question, but a significant number spent time developing their ideas, despite the question simply requiring 'identification'. Many candidates went on to explain the issues although this was not required by the question. The full two marks were awarded where candidates referred to 'demography' and 'much derided democracy' as:

- *The first reason is demography. The second reason is India's much derided democracy*

Candidates could achieve both marks by using different wording in expressing each reason.

Question 1 (b)

A significant number of candidates scored very highly on this question, but as with Question 1a, there were a large number who wrote too much given that the question was worth four marks. Candidates either scored four marks by explaining the two factors they had identified in Question 1a or briefly outlined four pieces of evidence. The question asked candidates to *summarise* the evidence and this required candidates to explain the evidence in their own words. Responses which copied out large parts of the Document were not demonstrating the skill of summarising. The following response would gain four marks:

- *China's workforce is ageing which means that it will start shrinking in a few years. This is due to the one child policy. In India this isn't the case. They have a young and strong workforce with a very good dependency ratio. India's economy will benefit from this. In addition India has some very strong private companies. They are capitalist and can make their own decisions rather than being state controlled. In China, businesses are more dependent on their government than in India. This makes knowledge-based industries more attracted to locating to India.*

Where candidates mentioned the statistics in Document 1 they needed to explain their significance to be awarded full marks. There were some candidates who made mention of the statistics in Document 1, but did not explain their significance and therefore did gain full marks.

Question 2

Candidates need to answer the question set and focus on the key words in the question. Question 2 required an evaluation of the reasoning not of the evidence. The key skill needed to score high marks is that of evaluation, supported by precise reference to the passage.

Most candidates answered this question reasonably well and had a clear understanding of the requirements of this type of question, although there were some who did not appear to understand the concept of 'reasoning' and instead simply evaluated the evidence or the style and language, which did not allow them to access the higher levels. However, a large number of candidates were able to evaluate the strengths *and* weakness of the reasoning and therefore access at least Level 2. Candidates at the lowest level needed to move beyond providing a description of the content of the passages. A characteristic of the strongest responses was in using short and appropriate quotations from the Document to support their claims and this is the ideal model. Candidates should avoid the use of sweeping generalisations with no specific support and the use of over-long quotations which detract from the argument being pursued.

Many candidates worked through the strengths and then the weaknesses, which sometime meant that the issue under consideration appeared in both parts and the Examiner was unsure about the overall conclusion. Another characteristic of the strong responses was in discussing the strengths and weaknesses of an issue before reaching a conclusion about its overall merit. Centres should encourage their candidates to pursue this latter approach. A common reason for stating that the reasoning was weak was to say that the figures were unclear, rounded up or that their source was not clearly stated, which was not always the case, but without really explaining why this made the reasoning weak. Candidates should look to go beyond the assertion that the reasoning was weak and support it with evidence from the Document and clear explanation.

Question 3

Question 3 required candidates to consider both Documents and go beyond a simple comparison of the content. They needed to evaluate the provenance, content and perspectives to reach an overall judgement. This question brings together the skills tested individually in the previous questions.

This question continues to be the question that causes the most difficulties for candidates. Although there were some encouraging signs of candidates attempting to evaluate the Documents, there are still a significant number who do not go beyond a simple comparison of the content. Most are able to show an understanding of the views offered by both Documents, but become distracted by this and offer little more than a comparison of the content or views offered in the Documents. There is also a tendency for many to forget the evaluative skills they have applied to the previous questions and this restricts the level that can be achieved. The Key Message bullet points have drawn attention to what is meant by a perspective rather than a view. Those candidates who were able to focus on the differing perspectives, such as social, political or economic were able to score reasonably well.

When evaluation of the Documents did occur the strongest responses were able to link their evaluation to the actual question set. The better responses often re-capped on the strengths and weaknesses of Document 1, compared them point by point with Document 2, made interim judgements about the issue in the question and then formed an overall judgement in a well developed conclusion. Strong answers included comments on the authors' agendas, political stance and the type of evidence they chose to use in the Documents. They also highlighted the type of language used within the Documents, suggesting that the author of Document 2, for example, wanted to emphasise the message more clearly by making it clear that he had seen the evidence in India for himself. In order to score highly, candidates needed to sustain their evaluation and make a judgement. These responses often considered issues such as exaggeration, particularly when referring to the style of language or to the use of the Commonwealth games and poverty as examples.

Where candidates could improve is in developing their judgements in the conclusion as this can often help raise the quality of the response. Once again, candidates would be well advised to support their arguments by precise reference to the Documents, but need to avoid lengthy quotations that detract from the overall argument. It might help some candidates if they decided the line of argument they were going to take in the first paragraph and pursued that throughout their answer, explaining why the other view is less valid as this will also help to ensure that the argument developed is consistent and that there is an answer to the actual question set.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 8987/12
Written Paper

Key Messages

- A 'perspective' can be political, economic or social or global versus local, it is not simply the view of a Document.
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- The strongest responses reached a supported judgement about the issue under consideration.
- Candidates must number their questions. There were a significant number who either gave no indication of where one question ended and another began, or who wrote their answer as one continuous piece of prose.

General Comments

The Documents were accessible to the candidates shown by their engagement with the issues, arguments and views being put forward. Most candidates were able to reach judgements about the strengths or weaknesses of the Document/s under consideration. There were very few candidates who ran out of time, although the allocation of time is an important issue. The amount of time spent answering each question should be allocated according to the number of available marks. For example, Questions 1 (a) and (b) were worth a total of six marks and could be answered in less than one page of the answer booklet. Questions 2 and 3 required longer responses to enable engagement with the relevant skills. A characteristic of the strongest responses was in being able to select relevant, concise and appropriate quotations from the Documents which demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being considered.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1a

Many candidates were able to score full marks on this question, but there were a significant number who spent time developing their ideas, despite the question simply requiring 'identification'. Two marks were awarded where candidates referred to 'gene escape could get into the weeds' and 'there could be gene mutation'. Candidates could achieve both marks by using different wording in expressing each reason.
Candidates did not need to explain these issues, some wrote up to one page, and gained no extra credit for so doing. This had detrimental impact on the time available for the later questions which carried a greater number of marks.

Question 1b

A significant number of candidates scored very highly on this question, but as with Question 1a, there were a large number who wrote too much and this had a considerable impact, particularly on the last question. Candidates scored four marks by explaining the main arguments. Most candidates identified these as the potential negative effects on human health and the potential socio-economic effects. Candidates did not have to use this exact terminology to access the marks, but these 'headings' were readily identifiable in the Document. The question asked candidates to summarise the evidence and this required candidates to explain the evidence in their own words, where candidates copied out large parts of the Document they were not given credit as they had not followed the command word in the question. There were some candidates who did not understand the word summarise and evaluated the evidence; this was not necessary and was not credited. The following response would gain four marks:

- *The main arguments in the last two paragraphs are that GM foods could have a negative effect on human health as genes could accidentally be transferred to other species causing dangerous reactions on people with allergies. Also, the socio-economic threat could be an issue, because there are concerns about market dominance of the powerful companies, which could have a negative impact on small-scale farmers.*

Question 2

Most candidates answered this question reasonably well and had a clear understanding of the requirements of this type of question, although there were some who did not appear to understand the concept of 'reasoning' and instead evaluated the evidence or the style and language, which did not allow them to access the higher levels. However, a large number of candidates were able to evaluate the strengths *and* weakness of the reasoning and therefore access at least Level 2. Candidates at the lowest level needed to move beyond providing a description of the content of the passages. The stronger responses used short and appropriate quotations from the Document to support their claims and this is the ideal model. Candidates should avoid the use of sweeping generalisations with no specific support and the use of over-long quotations which detract from the argument being pursued.

Many candidates worked through the strengths and then the weaknesses, which sometimes meant that the issue under consideration appeared in both parts and the Examiner was unsure about the overall conclusion. Strong responses were characterised by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of a particular part of the reasoning before reaching a conclusion about its overall merit. Centres should encourage their candidates to pursue this latter approach.

Candidates often considered the structure of the argument and noted that the author avoided the use of emotional appeals. Many commented on the balanced nature of the Document and stated that the author acknowledged the limitations of the argument against GM crops. Some drew attention to the specific examples used by the author, which it was suggested further strengthened the reasoning. When considering the weaknesses, a significant number mentioned the speculation that underpinned much of the argument and therefore suggested that there was little evidence to show that GM crops were dangerous.

One area in which candidates could improve their performance is in avoiding the assertion that the reasoning was weak; it must be supported with evidence from the Document and clear explanation as to why.

Question 3

Although many candidates were able to compare the content of the two Documents there were few who moved beyond this to evaluate them and reach a balanced conclusion. Most were able to show an understanding of the views offered by both Documents, but some became distracted by this and offered no more than a comparison of the content or views offered in the Documents. Many candidates had shown the evaluative skills needed to tackle this question when they answered Question 2, but a significant number did not apply those same skills in question 3 which restricted the level they could achieve.

When evaluation of the Documents did occur the strongest responses were able to link their evaluation to the actual question set. The better responses often considered each of the arguments put forward by Document 1 and then considered whether, by evaluating Document 2, it undermined or supported the argument. At the very highest level candidates should look to make interim judgements and then an overall judgement in a well developed conclusion. Strong answers included comments on the authors' agendas, their political stance and the type of evidence they chose to use in the Documents. They also highlighted the type of language used within the Documents, suggesting that the author of Document 2's appeal to emotion weakened the argument it put forward through phrases such as 'Pigs might fly' or Frankenstein Foods'.

The Key Message bullet points have drawn attention to what is meant by a perspective, rather than a view and those candidates who were able to focus on the differing perspectives were able to score reasonably well. Candidates who used the bullet points in the question to help structure their answer often avoided the purely content based approach and were therefore able to reach the higher levels.

Where candidates could improve is in developing their judgements in the conclusion as this can often help raise the quality of the response. Once again, candidates would be well advised to support their arguments by precise reference to the Documents, but need to avoid lengthy quotations that detract from the overall argument. It might help some candidates if they decided the line of argument they were going to take in the first paragraph and pursued that throughout their answer, explaining why the other view is less valid as this

will also help to ensure that the argument developed is consistent and that there is an answer to the actual question set.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

> **Paper 8987/13**
>
> **Written Paper**

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Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1 (a)

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- *The first reason is demography. The second reason is India's much derided democracy*

Candidates could achieve both marks by using different wording in expressing each reason.

Question 1 (b)

A significant number of candidates scored very highly on this question, but as with Question 1a, there were a large number who wrote too much given that the question was worth four marks. Candidates either scored four marks by explaining the two factors they had identified in Question 1a or briefly outlined four pieces of evidence. The question asked candidates to *summarise* the evidence and this required candidates to explain the evidence in their own words. Responses which copied out large parts of the Document were not demonstrating the skill of summarising. The following response would gain four marks:

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Where candidates mentioned the statistics in Document 1 they needed to explain their significance to be awarded full marks. There were some candidates who made mention of the statistics in Document 1, but did not explain their significance and therefore did gain full marks.

Question 2

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Question 3

Question 3 required candidates to consider both Documents and go beyond a simple comparison of the content. They needed to evaluate the provenance, content and perspectives to reach an overall judgement. This question brings together the skills tested individually in the previous questions.

This question continues to be the question that causes the most difficulties for candidates. Although there were some encouraging signs of candidates attempting to evaluate the Documents, there are still a significant number who do not go beyond a simple comparison of the content. Most are able to show an understanding of the views offered by both Documents, but become distracted by this and offer little more than a comparison of the content or views offered in the Documents. There is also a tendency for many to forget the evaluative skills they have applied to the previous questions and this restricts the level that can be achieved. The Key Message bullet points have drawn attention to what is meant by a perspective rather than a view. Those candidates who were able to focus on the differing perspectives, such as social, political or economic were able to score reasonably well.

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

<table>
<tr><td>Paper 8987/02
Essay</td></tr>
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Key Messages

- Candidates must ensure they choose a question which enables them to fulfil the criteria for assessment. Some candidates found question choice hard: they are reminded that they may submit Outline Proposal Forms for advice on their suitability. Many have been helped significantly by doing this.
- It is important not only to identify at least two perspectives, but to treat both of them with respect and empathy.
- It is important to choose sources which exemplify these perspectives so that their relationship with the broader context can be evaluated.
- Candidates' attention is drawn to the requirements for reflection, recognition of the limitations of their research and ideas for development or further study.

General Comments

There was a very good range of topics, and the great majority of candidates chose questions which enabled them to engage with differing perspectives.

Choice of question and perspectives

Candidates should remember that the choice of question for their essay is their first task. A successful question is one which will lead them to address the criteria required by the syllabus. The issue needs to be a global one. By this we mean an issue about which different people hold very different perspectives, based on their geographical, ethical, religious, racial background, to name just a few possibilities. The question needs to be one which enables the candidate to contrast and evaluate these positions. It is important to avoid questions which lead towards a descriptive answer. "To what extent…" is therefore not generally helpful. On the other hand, a question starting with "Should…" is likely to develop an appropriate response. Candidates' attention may be drawn to previous Principal Examiner Reports in which the issue of helpful and unhelpful questions has been developed at length.

Candidates achieved stronger results when they identified not only a clear question but also two or more sources, with differing perspectives, and set these clearly against each other for evaluation. An example of a response which identifies two contrasting perspectives would be:

- *While some believe that the use of stem cells is perfectly legitimate as long as it is for medical advancements benefiting the public, others are against the idea of research and experimentation involving embryos. Two perspectives on the issue of stem cell research are that stem cell research should be allowed and that stem cell research should be outlawed.*

Candidates were also able to access the higher levels by giving attention to all the requirements of the essay, notably reflecting on the perspectives in coming to their conclusion, and being aware of the limitations of their understanding. Some idea of the way forward, of further research and, in some cases of the developing interaction of the perspectives, was also creditworthy. Candidates regularly needed to introduce their topics and debates where some material might not be automatically known to the general reader. It tended to be a characteristic of successful essays that they did this concisely and without being led into lengthy description. In the following example, the candidate offered a useful context for their essay on stem cell research without being drawn into lengthy discussions on legal issues:

- *Currently, no national law has been established on stem cell research in the United States, although in March of 2009, President Obama issued an executive order to remove restrictions on federal funding for stem cell research. However, state laws vary immensely within the United States, with some states allowing stem cell research while others ban it. Similar heterogeneity occurs among the*

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nations of the European Union. Countries with liberal regulations include the United Kingdom and the Belgium, which allow the creation and use of embryonic stem cells. Countries with more conservative laws include Germany and Italy).

Approaches to evaluation

Teachers and students are likely to find merit in considering different approaches to evaluation and discussing how some of these may be strengthened. Firstly, consider:

- *I have chosen my primary article from the Daily Telegraph, for some this may be considered a trustworthy source as it is a well known newspaper, for others the neutrality and integrity of this journalist can be questioned as they may have a biased interest in this argument. However the latter statement may be difficult to prove the journalist's underlying intentions as the article was written twelve years ago.*

This is a moderately successful approach to evaluation. The candidate has recognised the position of the newspaper and shown some understanding of the potential motivation of the author, but this could have been done under timed conditions. In the essay component, the candidate has the opportunity to investigate the author and use further research to come to an opinion on his or her authority and reliability. Such rigour would be characteristic of stronger responses, as illustrated by the following:

- *Also, the credibility of the hockey stick graph is heavily questioned, with one of the climatologists who developed it, Michael Mann, being accused of research misconduct. Even though Mann was cleared of all charges by Pennsylvania State University [9], sceptics remain unconvinced by the methodology employed and the accuracy of the results obtained.*

Two other examples, with commentary to consider:

- *He uses statistics to back up his argument, however they are not referenced. I found that some of the statistics were from test results of a device that his company developed. This strengthens his argument as it is a reliable source of data that backs up his reasoning.*

Here the candidate has realised that a source is not complete of itself and has done a little research. While this could be strengthened it does demonstrate an awareness of the need to evaluate the source in the broader context. One characteristic of strong responses is that they are convincing in their communication of an understanding of where the sources stand in relation to the perspective and the wider context.

Another candidate stated:

- *However, ethics is a subjective matter which is difficult to conclude (as in what is truly 'right' and 'wrong'), making it a relatively weak addition to the argument as opposed to scientific fact. This is particularly damaging to the argument, as the majority of the evidence base against vivisection is ethics-based, weakening it overall.*

This implies that no ethical judgement can have strength. That may of course be the candidate's view, but it is not the view of a great many, and the result is that to state it in this way leads to unconvincing argument.

Bias is a word that causes many candidates problems. Too often it is conflated with opinion or even conclusion, with the result that any source with a viewpoint is deemed biased. Too often, too, the charge of bias is levelled at an article with the sort of heading "why we should do x". The author is clearly stating part of an argument, but some candidates say we cannot believe it because it is biased in favour of its opinion. Again a spokesman giving the position of an organisation, such as the Pope, giving the official catholic opinion is deemed less believable because he is biased in favour of it. Reflection would lead the candidate to the realisation that this line of argument makes it almost impossible to state any position on an issue.

This is the great challenge of the essay component, and it is good to see an increasing proportion of the candidates really engaging with views other than their own and enriching, even on occasion, changing their own global perspective as a result.

Comments on Specific Questions

There are no specific questions set for this paper.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 8987/03
Presentation

Key Messages

- This paper assesses the ability of candidates to produce sustained, supported arguments.
- Evidence should only be analysed in order to support the arguments being made.
- The ability to formulate appropriately focused questions is a key skill.

General Comments

Paper 3 assesses the ability of candidates to produce sustained, considered and evidentially supported arguments of their own. The presentation format produces a structure and set of creative possibilities to make this task easier, and the resource booklet provides a framework of starting points for further enquiry with a similar purpose in mind. There was much excellent practice from candidates at a number of Centres this session, with presentations which were sharply focused and deeply researched, organising their material logically in a way that led to persuasive final judgements. This report is intended to exemplify how candidates demonstrated good achievement in their application of these skills this session.

Contrasting perspectives

Presentations should arise from a global issue based on the resource material. Candidates who established clear global contrasts (for example, between countries or global regions) found it much easier to discriminate contrasting perspectives, and those who were explicit about their starting point in the booklet tended to be much more clearly in control of their use of sources. Candidates who wrote presentations about an aspect of water when the basis in one of the source documents was only implicit, or focused on the situation in one country, or an even smaller locality, found it harder to demonstrate these things. Particularly effective debates were constructed around the contrasting solutions to water scarcity outlined by Document 1 and in response to Document 5's arguments against international development aid.

Choice of question

One of the features of most of the components in this specification, including this one, is that candidates are required to set their own question in consultation with their teacher. Consequently, the formulation of an effective question which allows for a well-focused evaluation of contrasting perspectives within a specified topic is crucial. Questions are always better than statements, and questions which call for an explanation – for example, 'What effect would a global water shortage have on agriculture?' – are less productive than those which lead to a debate: 'Is water privatisation the answer to improved water provision in LEDCs?', or 'Is development aid the way to end poverty?' Debates between clear alternatives should be framed directly. For example, the phrase 'to what extent' would not be appropriate for the question 'Should we allow the privatisation of water?', whereas 'To what extent can scientific advancement mitigate the world's hydrological problems?' is appropriate because the debate here calls for a more nuanced judgement. Effective questions on issues relating to development aid included 'Is development aid needed by developing countries in order for them to grow?' and 'Does development aid do more harm than good to its recipient country?'

Structure of the presentation

It is important that the argument presented by the candidate is logically structured. The strongest presentations did this by clearly establishing an agenda at the outset, defining the debate and the perspectives which were at stake. This framework was then developed coherently through the evaluation of evidence before reaching a clear final judgement which was precisely related to the question posed and supported by the evidence which had been assembled. An excellent example of this is the candidate who, in response to the question, 'Is a "human right to water" incompatible with full private sector provision?', began by clarifying the concepts and perspectives which were at stake, before unfolding them in logical order:

- *Before we go on to talk about a 'human right to water', we need to highlight the political and moral justifications on which it is premised. …. This presentation will explore this question as well as the status of water, investigate the arguments underpinning both sides and aim to reach a well-rounded conclusion. The bulk of the argument presented will be from an economic perspective, but I am aware that other arguments exist from the ethical, political and environmental positions.*

Use of sources

The candidate's use of sources is another key question for consideration. More successful presentations did not limit themselves to the resource booklet, but ventured beyond it with their own enquiring and thoroughly synthesised research. It is, of course, important to select sources which are relevant and credible. Candidates should not, though, stop at demonstrating how credible a source is or – as some did – discuss whether Document 6 argues or informs, then analyse its paragraph structure. Sources should be considered in order to evaluate the strength of the perspective for which they are evidence: critical thinking analysis in itself is not rewarded. The following is a good example of a source being analysed in order to evaluate the case of which it forms a part:

- *Document 5 argues that "aid props up tyrannical governments who would otherwise collapse under the weight of their own imploding economies". Being written for the Adam Smith Institute, a libertarian think tank, there is going to be an unguarded hostility towards non-free-market economies, but the point made is a potent one – the government* has to be *on-board.*

Alternative perspectives

We are also interested in the degree to which the candidate's supported argument has taken into account the ideas, attitudes and evidence of alternative perspectives on the way to their own reasoned judgement. The best candidates sought out counter-arguments, took time to sympathetically establish their basis, and then showed why their own preferred perspective was stronger in terms of the evidence and assumptions which supported it. In doing so, it is important to engage with the genuine underpinnings of another point of view. Here, the candidate focuses immediately on the substantive basis of the opposing perspective:

- *My second perspective argues that allocating water through a free market mechanism is not more appropriate. The basis for this perspective is reliant on the assumption that the free market would not work in practice although it may do in theory.*

Conclusions

Finally, the conclusion reached by the candidate should be a supported answer to the question they have posed for themselves. A personal view should be developed which is supported by reasons and evidence and responds to the arguments and evidence of other perspectives. It is especially important that the conclusion is itself logically developed and evidentially supported, and is not simply a summary of their view, or even of how that view has changed. Within the confines of this report, it is difficult to give a flavour of successful conclusions through direct quotation, precisely because they were patiently developed in successive logical stages with precise reference to the sources and perspectives which had been evaluated.

Comments on Specific Questions

There are no specific questions set for this paper.