

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

Paper 9239/02
Essay

Key messages

- Success relies on teachers and learners having a secure understanding of the assessment criteria and furthermore that Centres recognise that the seven different marking criteria at each level have equal weighting when determining learners' final marks.
- The selection of appropriate sources is essential in enabling learners to succeed in this component. Relevant, credible and globally contrasting sources of evidence are the foundation of a successful essay.
- Reflection is a vital element of this component. Learners are required to reflect upon how their personal viewpoint has been impacted through researching and understanding contrasting perspectives.
- When critically evaluating source material learners must recognise that they themselves have selected the source. Therefore learners should not approach this aspect of assessment as they might in the examination Component 1, where the source material is previously unseen.

General comments

The November 2016 entry for the 9239/02 component demonstrated that a significant majority of Centres are developing a clear grasp of the assessment criteria and many learners were able to successfully meet the demands of all seven criteria giving each one equal emphasis. To reach the higher attainment levels learners must be thoughtful in their approach and ensure that effective planning enables their essay to meet all aspects of the syllabus requirements.

Some Centres could help improve their submissions by familiarising learners with the multifaceted requirements of this skills-based syllabus. The skills-based approach is at the heart of the assessment criteria and may often prove initially challenging to teachers who might be more familiar with knowledge-based assessment. Cambridge have developed support and training materials and access to these, as well as further information, is available on page 8 of the syllabus.

A key aspect of learner planning is the choosing of an area of interest which is conducive to developing a global topic and then shaping a title that encourages the research of globally contrasting perspectives. The best titles are written in the form of a question. For example the title 'Should there be restrictions on international adoption?' clearly has a global topic at its core and sets up a debate between contrasting perspectives that are global in their dimension. In contrast the title 'Is it feasible, financially and ethically, to host major sporting events in third world countries?', though clearly a global topic, lacks focus and is likely to lead to a descriptive response which won't necessarily develop contrasting perspectives. Some examples of good titles may be found at the end of this report.

Learners, many of whom constructed good titles, were then in a better position to begin the research process. The proficiency of research is fundamental to a successful essay and is a core skill that the syllabus aims to cultivate and improve. Many learners were able to access and utilise a wide-range of source material and were astute in then narrowing down their initial research; selecting appropriate sources of evidence. The quality of the source material selected is far more important than the quantity. There was some really strong understanding, analysis and evaluation of argument and evidence that was demonstrable in much of the work submitted. Where learners employed a vast range of source material, inevitably they were unable to analyse, evaluate and demonstrate understanding within the confines of a strict 2000 word limit. It is perfectly possible to produce a high achieving essay with four globally contrasting, relevant and credible sources.

Increasingly Centres have recognised the reflective element in the assessment criteria and many learners were able to reflect upon how the research process and the alternative perspectives encountered impacted upon their own personal viewpoint. The reflection process is part of the skills-based assessment criteria and some learners completely omitted this aspect from their essays. Though not always, in general learners will address the reflective element in their conclusions and this is a perfectly sensible approach. Consideration of possible further research in learners' conclusions is also an important part of the reflective process. Those learners that offered no reflective comments were unable to get beyond the lower levels of attainment in this assessment criterion. Further information about reflection can be found on page 17 of the syllabus. An example of a learner's reflective style may be found under the heading 'Conclusion and Reflection'.

Though there was some very insightful critical evaluation of the sources selected from some learners there is a need for Centres to fully understand the approach required for success in this component. Some learners took their selected sources entirely at face value and offered no critical evaluation at all and consequently didn't achieve well in this aspect of assessment. Other learners took an approach similar to that required in the examination paper Component 1; this did not result in high achievement levels. The examination paper requires learners to evaluate argument and evidence presented in a previously unseen article. The important thing to note in Component 2 is that the learners have selected the source material for the essay themselves and therefore the quality of the evaluation required is different. To elucidate further, in the examination component a learner may justifiably say that the source is from a populist newspaper and therefore the arguments presented may be exaggerated to appeal to a wider audience. Yet such evaluation in this component would be regarded as limited because the learner selected the source material themselves and therefore any such evaluation would beg the question; why select this source in the first place? Learners may evaluate the weaknesses in argument, evidence and reasoning but this should be balanced against justification for selecting the source in the first place. If all critical evaluation of the source is negative then the learner has not selected a credible source of evidence.

Once again planning a structure is important here and Centres need to ensure learners are addressing all assessment criteria within the word limit. Too many learners spend too much time critically evaluating their sources and this detracts from demonstrating an understanding of the material and the perspective being put forward.

Comments on assessment criteria

Communication skills

The vast majority of learners were able to offer an engaging and informative introduction which defined key terms. The best introductions outline an issue of global significance and present the competing perspectives to be analysed and evaluated. In this context engaging means that the essay should be written for a reasonably literate audience though not one that necessarily has expert subject knowledge. Some learners choose to outline their initial viewpoint of the issue in the introduction and this is both perfectly acceptable and may be conducive to developing reflection later on in the essay.

The essay should be clearly written and well-structured. In terms of structure once again successful planning is important. Regardless of the learners' point of view they must be balanced in their treatment of each perspective and a well-planned essay with a sound structure is more likely to facilitate this. Virtually all learners were able to utilise the full word length and as stated in the syllabus, essays should be between 1750 and 2000 words long. Those learners unable to reach 1750 words are unlikely to meet all the requirements of the assessment criteria and it is worth reiterating that the 2000 word limit is a strict one. Examiners will not read or credit anything that goes beyond 2000 words. Further clarification of the word count limits can be found on page 22 of the syllabus.

Referencing of sources is assessed as part of the communication skills and nearly all Centres had ensured their learners adhered to a conventional form of citation and referencing. To score highly in this criterion learners are required to have full referencing and with this in mind it is important that the citation and the bibliography correspond.

Source selection

As outlined in the General Comments, the judicious selection of sources is vital for a successful essay and most learners were able to select appropriate sources. It is important that learners are balanced in their source selection and should ensure that the quality and quantity of source material is reasonably even in terms of supporting contrasting perspectives. When applying the assessment criteria here the examiner is looking for two things; firstly are the sources credible and relevant and secondly are the sources contrasting. Contrast in this context refers to sources with contrasting perspectives and in order to achieve more highly in this criterion the sources are required to be globally contrasting. To this end learners will be more successful if they select sources that not only offer different perspectives but have a global contrast. That contrast could be in terms of origin for example a source from a less economically developed country against a source from a more economically developed country. In order to reach the highest level the selected sources must support effective judgements.

Analysis of sources

Initially the learner is required to demonstrate understanding of the argument put forward by the source's author(s); to what extent is the learner in control of the source material. Learners demonstrated some very good understanding of their chosen material and were able to analyse arguments to understand how they are structured and on what evidence or reasoning they are based. While most learners were able to exhibit analysis skills, others did not always move beyond a simplistic descriptive approach and were sometimes reliant upon lengthy quotations.

The other aspect of this assessment criterion is the critical evaluation of source material. As mentioned in the general comments it is important that learners approach this in a planned and considered way and that they do not focus too much of their word count on critical evaluation. Whilst some learners evaluated methodology and reasoning, striking a balance between positive and negative judgements, other learners didn't progress beyond assertive statements about author provenance.

Example of good critical evaluation of sources from the November series.

'While Murray and Brownback do state a valid point about the welfare system needing to be reformed, much of their argument lacks data and evidence to support it. Also much of their argument is spent attacking those in poverty by calling them lazy or drug addicts rather than forming real solutions. Brownback's regulations in Kansas has caused an influx of people going to shelters for food because they receive no help from the government. Murray does consider children and says that education is important and helps get them out of poverty and recognizes part of the reason so many children who grow up in poverty remain that way is they are mimicking the behaviour (*sic*) and ethics they saw growing up. While their argument has flaws, it does present a reasonable claim that many people agree with.

Charles Murray is a social/political scientist and a New York Times best-selling author. He attended Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology and studied social sciences. Many of the books he has written, including one of his most popular, *Losing Ground*, are about the economy and lower classes. This gives him reliability due to his reputation as well as expertise because of his knowledge on the subject. Charles Murray is somewhat biased, he is affluent and tends to speak of those with low income in a derogatory way, especially those who do not follow his ideology of not having children before getting married. The fact that Charles Murray and Sam Brownback agree that Poverty alleviation is in the hands of the individual adds strength to the argument. Sam Brownback is currently governor of Kansas and identifies with the Republican Party. He attended both Kansas State University and University of Kansas, additionally he also held a seat in the House of Representatives in 1996. Brownback has a strong ability to see the situation, as he enforced some of the ideas he presented in Kansas, where he is the governor. Brownback may have vested interest in gaining voters, which decreases his reliability.'

Empathy for Perspectives

Demonstrating empathy is a difficult skill and it was very encouraging to see that the vast majority of learners were able to treat two contrasting perspectives with balance and sensitivity. There are some Centres that still need to focus their learners' attention to the importance of being able to put forward a perspective, even one they profoundly disagree with in an empathetic and balanced way.

The selection of appropriate sources and effective planning is once again of paramount importance for success in this aspect of assessment. If the sources selected are globally contrasting and of equal relevance and credibility for both perspectives this will increase the chances of success in this assessment criterion. In terms of planning and essay structure it is important to allow both perspectives a broadly similar measure of the available word count. In short, examiners will be looking for balance and empathy in terms of sources selected, the tone in which arguments and reasoning are developed and the space given over to each perspective.

Globality of perspectives

It should come as no surprise that a syllabus entitled Global Perspectives & Research seeks to develop in learners an interdisciplinary approach to global issues. Nearly all learners managed to focus their essays on a global issue; where scope for improvement is evident is in recognising that choosing a global issue does not necessarily mean that the perspectives will be globally contrasting. Some Centres' students are locating the whole of their essay within their own specific geographic location. To exemplify, by taking the title 'Should regulations on the further development of GM Crops be more stringent?' it is immediately apparent that regulating genetically modified crops is a global issue and the title offers the prospect of developing globally contrasting perspectives. Yet if the learner, for example, selects only sources from the US and then only develops perspectives with a US focus, though the issue is global the perspectives won't be globally contrasting. For learners to reach the higher attainment levels in three of the assessment criteria; Source Selection, Empathy for Perspectives and Globality of Perspectives they must ensure that their perspectives have a global contrast.

Analysis of perspectives

This assessment criterion builds upon the skills assessed in the Analysis of Sources criterion. There remains a need for Centres to recognise the importance of synthesising source material into a coherent perspective. Many students approach the analysis of their source material in a discrete manner, analysing and evaluating each source in sequence. Whilst this approach doesn't prevent learners from high achievement in the Analysis of Sources assessment criterion it won't necessarily enable learners to succeed here. The skill required here is for learners to synthesise their source material into a coherent perspective. One way to achieve this is through corroboration of source A's argument with reference to source B's argument and thus learners may develop a unified and coherent perspective which then needs to be evaluated in terms of strengths, weaknesses, implications and reasoning.

This example from the November series demonstrates the skill of using corroboration to develop a perspective from different sources and the learner also begins to evaluate that perspective.

"The non-governmental organisation Greenpeace also has an opinion on the matter. As GE [Genetic Engineering] is not a natural process, they believe that GMO [genetically modified organisms] will "spread through nature via cross-pollination... making it impossible to truly control how GE modified crops spread." Plus, that will deprive people of their right to avoid them if they want to. They also think there is not enough "scientific understanding of their impact on the environment and human health."

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization also alluded to this problem. Greenpeace is known to be an environmentalist organisation, so they could have selected the best information to suit their purposes but the UN organisation which is very credible claims the same; therefore, that must be reliable. Other arguments referred by the UN are that "genes can mutate with harmful effect," that there are "potential risks to non-target species" and "active genes could become silent..." Yet, I want to give prominence to the words used above: "can," "potential" and "could." All of them emphasise possibility. Most of these arguments against GMO are possibilities. So, although these are trustworthy sources, we cannot truly assume these are facts."

Conclusion and reflection

While it was evident that many learners were able to offer a supported conclusion this is an assessment area that several Centres' might improve upon. Reflection has been highlighted already in this report as both a Key Message and through discussion in the General Comments. Learners are generally more than able to reach a conclusion and the conclusions are usually supported by the arguments outlined in the essay. Less prevalent was the core skill of reflection. Though frowned upon in some other disciplines, it may help the learner to reflect if they shift their prose style to the first person in their conclusion. This can be exemplified by the beginning of a conclusion from this November series.

'My personal perspective on this issue has changed throughout my research. In the beginning I was against the idea of restrictions on international adoption. I believed that children and families should have the right to unite together if both are looking for the opportunity. However after my research I have come to the realization that these restrictions aren't necessarily bad. By reading papers such as UNICEF's, I understand that some restrictions need to be enforced and issued for the safety and well-being of the child.'

It is evident here that the learner is not only reaching a conclusion that is supported by research but also that they are reflecting upon the impact of alternative perspectives upon their personal standpoint.

Another element of reflection that was often omitted is the need to recognise that the research is not complete. Learners must, if they are to succeed in this assessment criterion, identify the need for further research. Conclusions that lack reflection and that do not identify the need for further research cannot get beyond the lower levels for this aspect of assessment.

Examples of good titles from the November series:

'To what extent does the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) help Malaysia – developing country -and US – a developed country – reap the benefits of free trade?'

'Should globalisation always be regarded as positive for our World?'

'Should hunting be used as a tool for environmental protection?'

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 9239/03
Paper 3

Key Messages

- Candidates should formulate their tasks as statements of issues rather than interrogative questions.
- It is important for candidates to make clear how their perspective differs from others in their team.
- Solutions should be explained and linked to the evidence that has been presented.
- Effective presentational methods help to convey the argument that is being made.
- The reflective paper needs to evaluate both collaboration and the candidate's own learning from the process.

General Comments

It was pleasing to see a good range of candidate work being submitted for this session, with the vast majority having a good understanding of the requirements of this component. Where this was the case, presentations and reflective papers were often effective and thoughtful, and individuals and teams had clearly benefitted from their engagement with their projects. As with previous reports, this is organised according to the criteria assessed in the presentation and reflective paper, but also contains some guidance on the formulation of questions and the nature of the assessed task.

Definition of Issue and Detail of Research

The first assessment criterion focuses on the success with which the candidate has defined their issue in the presentation and supported this with detailed research. When defining the issue, the most successful candidates were able to do this as statements: 'Deforestation in the Amazon', for example. Tasks formulated as questions such as 'To what extent is traffic congestion a problem?' tended to be less helpful as these are more likely to produce a debate weighing up each side before coming to a conclusion. The purpose of the oral presentation, however, is to begin with an issue defined as a problematic situation, then explore it from a specific perspective in order to argue for and justify a solution. From this point of view, a statement is a more effective starting point for defining the issue.

Research, although assessed separately from the definition of the issue, in the best presentations was closely linked to it. A range of evidence gathered by the candidate is effective in underpinning the description and explanation of their issue. In the strongest presentations, evidence was not only detailed but also varied. For example, a presentation on employing foreign workers used evidence from both legal and economic sources, as well as measurements of popular views from opinion polls to support its explanation of the issue. Although there may well be a common research base which emerges from the team's research, it is expected that individual candidates would also locate and select their own findings, and link these to their own approach and conclusions in their individual presentation.

Differentiation of Perspectives

There is a clear contrast in the approach of candidates to this criterion. The vast majority recognise that they need to adopt their own approach to the common issue identified by the group and explain that in their presentation. This is as simple as listing the approaches taken by other team members and identifying their own in contrast to this. The following example comes from a presentation on 'Deforestation in the Amazon':

Friends in my group have already talked about the Environmental, Economic and Social perspectives and the solutions from these perspectives to solve the problem; and I'm going to focus in the Political view which I believe is a key aspect to tackling this issue since really the governments are the ones who have the power to control what's going on inside their territory and with deforestation.

The degree to which the candidate then explains the difference between their approach and that of the others, and its significance for the argument being made then determines their achievement in the higher levels. Some candidates however did not recognise in their presentations that this was a requirement and made no reference at all to the perspectives of the other team members (and occasionally not even to their own) and this inevitably limited achievement here.

Structure of argument and conclusion

Candidates continue to be rewarded for making well-supported, coherent arguments in support of their case. Although it is appropriate to take account of counter-arguments, the nature of an oral presentation means that the majority of the presentation should be arguing for a specific case. It is also more effective when the conclusion consists of two parts. The candidate needs to draw conclusions from the evidence they have presented about the issue, but then use this to propose concrete solutions. For example, having selected the team problem of cyber-bullying, one candidate identified a smartphone app which encouraged users to rethink their messages as an innovative solution, explained why this was, and also linked its effectiveness to the evidence they had explored about their chosen issue.

The extent to which the solution is shown to be effective and even innovative then determines achievement in the higher levels. As with the differentiation of perspectives, it is for the candidate to explicitly demonstrate this in their presentation, rather than assuming that this is understood.

Presentational Methods

A larger number of candidates demonstrated creativity in their presentational methods. This was increasingly achieved by effectively combining the imagistic and design elements of their visual aids with fluent delivery, effective intonation and clear audience engagement through posture and gesture. Presentations were most effective when they were constructed to convey the argument being made effectively.

Reflective Paper

The majority of candidates now understand the separate and specific purposes of the reflective paper, and value this as an opportunity to explore and demonstrate what they have achieved in the process of participating in the team project. It is, however, worth bearing in mind that the reflective paper has two criteria. Candidates are asked both to evaluate their collaboration with the other members of their team, and to reflect on the ways in which their own views have been changed by their research and learning from those team members. Successful reflective papers recognised this by addressing each in separate sections, and also allocating them an equal amount of space.

The best reflective papers were clear about the specific strengths and weaknesses of the contribution made by other team members and the candidate's work with them:

I found working with Candidate A was good but also had its challenges. We were able to come together well and decide on a good topic and question. We were also able to connect on an intellectual level both of us being well educated students. I struggled a little bit at the start to form some points and find good information for my argument but Candidate A was able to suggest some idea as well as a few sources that could assist me. The only challenges I had with Candidate A were our ability to clearly communicate with each other and the fact that he or I were away from class frequently. Sometimes I found that he was a bit unclear with his arguments and so I was unable to form strong counter arguments. I also found it difficult for us to understand each other's standpoints as we were away quite a few times and so could not explain our perspectives and reasoning.

They also reflected thoughtfully on what they had learned, both from their reading and their conversations, and how that had changed the views they had at the start of the project:

I believe that nations should be charitable and offer to accept more refugees by increasing their quotas. However, from research that I have done I have learnt that there are such a large number of refugees and so little of them receive any help. Although I still believe that nations should increase their refugee quotas, unless it is increased dramatically then it will not make much change to the number of refugees. This has led me to explore other solutions such as the one we proposed, and I have come to the realisation the refugee crisis is so severe that in order to help all the refugees a combination of all solutions is required.

Comments on Specific Questions

There are no specific questions set for this component as teams of candidates determine their own issue. However, the guidance given above on the formulation of this issue as a statement rather than a question should help candidates to define their issue in an appropriate way. Teachers are encouraged to assist teams with their initial formulation of their issue.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/04

Paper 4

Key messages

- Ensure that relevant evidence is at the heart of the report.
- Consider how understanding of critical evaluation can be applied to assess evidence in the Report.
- Consider how methodology and use of evidence can inform the reflection.

General comments

The second session of the Cambridge Research Report continued to produce work which showed commitment and a high level of interest on the part of candidates. The research logs revealed the challenge offered by the process of research and writing and also a strong sense of achievement and satisfaction. The demands of the report in terms of evidence and establishing different perspectives were not always fully understood but it is hoped that, with more on line training available and with the feedback from moderators to individual centres, there will be a steady development and deepening of the work and a greater use of higher level thinking skills. There is a good basis on which to build as demonstrated in much of the work this session.

AO1 Research

In general, the questions offered the chance for sustained discussion, but it is important for candidates and their teachers to be sure where the research materials can be accessed rather than hoping that suitable sources can be found once research starts. The OPFs do call for a bibliography for that reason. The report needs to be evidence-based and the higher the quality of the evidence and the more contrasting sources have been found, the better the chance of a strong response. It is not strong evaluation to say that a source is too outdated to be useful when it is the candidate's own choice to use that source. If the reflection has pointed out that it was hard to find relevant sources, then this raises the issue of how suitable the choice of question and topic was. The preparation and planning are key to actual performance. Where reports found appropriate sources and used them well, the results were obviously stronger than in cases where the sources were limited or not very varied and appropriate.

In general, there was helpful feedback from centres on the degree of independence the candidates showed, but it is important that the overall mark is consistent with the levels shown on the feedback form. The centres do have to assess the quality of the logs. These are vital documents which should record the research, the materials used and the way that additional research builds or modifies the candidate's view of the issue. Logs which are a personal diary without including much on the sources or the results of tutorials and seminars, are of limited value. So are logs which are not much more than bibliographies with some dates. The best logs showed the interaction of candidates with the material and how their understanding developed and ideas were modified in the light of the evidence. There is going to be more guidance on this but the quality of the log – whether it has been maintained throughout and how far it shows reflection on the process of research – is an important element in the assessment of AO1 Research. The log should be seen as a very positive way of taking the report forward by candidates.

AO1 Analysis

The level of evidence chosen and used varied quite a bit but few reports made little or no attempt to use evidence. Stronger responses chose evidence to support broad perspectives and made the evidence the focal point, basing their argument on an analysis of the sources chosen. This resulted in some convincing and evidence-based arguments. Less successful answers were more intent on giving their own views and explanations of issues but not making it consistently clear where they had derived their information or approaches from. There was a tendency to use sources to illustrate arguments rather than driving arguments through evidence. It is helpful when centre marking shows this distinction. The main purpose of the report is not to offer an answer on a content-based curriculum area but to demonstrate key skills within the context of an issue chosen by the candidate. The continuity with the other three components in Global Perspectives and Research is the analysis of evidence, so sources should be at the heart of the report. There were many examples of source-driven responses but more reports need to use more sources and offer clear analysis in relation to the issue. Long descriptions and explanations illustrated by sources do not really demonstrate critical skills and are not appropriate. Also arguments which rely on the candidate's own views rather than on attributed evidence are less appropriate as the work is not an 'essay' or a piece which might appear in a magazine, but a report. The word report indicates that findings are going to be firmly based on the use of evidence – as in a scientific report, or a government report, or a business report.

AO1 Evaluation

The levels of evaluation varied more than any other element. In some cases there was no real evaluation either of evidence or of different views which were supported by evidence. The 'case for' a certain view of an issue was established and there was a 'case against' but neither was firmly judged, merely explained. It remained up to the reader to decide which was more convincing. These explanations did not display higher level thinking skills. It would be helpful if marginal comments by centres did show where there was merely explanation and where there was a sense of judgement.

Where there was a critical sense, there was some variation into how different views or contrasting evidence were assessed. The most limited response in relation to sources was merely to draw attention to their origins and to focus on reliability. Though this has been made clear in the previous report and in training materials, it is of little use when academic studies disagree merely to indicate their origins. Experts often disagree; and publishers offer books with views which are open to challenge. Thus, whether a well-known publisher such as Oxford University Press has published a book does not mean that its views cannot or should not be subject to criticism. Because an author of a view is an academic or an expert does not mean that his or her word cannot be doubted.

Stronger answers used a range of critical thinking criteria, looking at the basis of studies, corroborating or cross referencing, looking at the actual arguments and did not rely simply on considering the origin of the evidence. Close annotation of how sources have been used were very helpful to centres who assessed this aspect accurately, while those who wrote little about the use of evidence or who misattributed judgement to mere explanation tended to overestimate marks. Considering the origin of a source is a useful starting point but evaluation should go further. The following example may help to illustrate this

(The author) is a legal scholar specialising in equal protection jurisprudence, feminist legal theory and Catholic social teaching. She founded a Catholic school ... Her ties with the Catholic faith might have influenced her (views on abortion) Though her reasoning is clear she relies on emotive language such as 'The miracle of Human Life and she also makes assumptions, for example that 'men can have sex and walk away, which they increasingly do' but there is no source for this generalisation. She also commits a logical fallacy in linking the Roe case in the USA with men having sex and walking away. This ignores other causes, such as more divorces.

This is clearly a more through and perceptive evaluation than

The source is relatively reliable. The author ... has been the state attorney of Cook County Illinois for 12 years and has 45 years of experience in criminal litigation. This shows he has a lot of knowledge about the topic. He says that one can't view retribution as an unjust punishment because all forms of punishment in their system of law are based on retribution.

AO2 Reflection

The primacy of evidence extends to this section. Where reflection was based on the candidate's research, the issues it raised and the possible limitations rather than just personal experience, then it became more worthwhile and useful. The quality of reflection did vary, and some candidates disadvantaged themselves by not offering specific reflection. Even when the reflection was based on the research itself, there was some lack of depth, as in the example below.

The research didn't have any restrictions since everything I could think of as online. The word limit prevented the use of more arguments. More research could have been done.

However, some work did focus on reflecting on the evidence used.

The findings depended a lot on official Chinese sources and economic data from key international organisations. However, there was some tendency to treat the country's economic performance as a whole and a deeper study would look at regional variations and also the distinction between economic growth in areas which started from a low base and areas which had already developed before the modernisation began. Also with a greater word length it might be possible to look at some alternative indicators of the results of economic growth such as political legitimacy which lay outside the scope of my title.

AO3 Communication

The care with which work was presented was impressive and the standards of written communication as such were high. Some reports were better organised than others but in general specialist terms relating to the subjects were used correctly. Centre comments on the oral communication element were more useful when they focused precisely on the criteria in the mark scheme rather than being too general.

As centres become more attuned to the demands of this report, it likely that 'teething troubles' will subside and that work will become more critical and developed and that marking will become more accurate.

However, that does depend on centres annotating more fully and referring more directly to the mark schemes and also undertaking, where appropriate, careful internal moderation to ensure that standards are being applied equally to all candidates. There has already been a lot of very worthwhile work which has taken candidates forward in terms of confidence and understanding research processes, ethics and issues. This is highly important in the context of twenty-first century education, work and, indeed life. So thanks are extended to centres which have encouraged this and it is to be hoped that the comments above will help in taking forward this valuable component.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 9239/11
Paper 11

Key Messages

Candidates should ensure they read the questions carefully and answer the actual question set.

The length of the answer should reflect the number of marks available. Some candidates spend too long on **Question 1** and **2** and leave insufficient time for the demands of **Question 3**.

The key skill needed to score high marks, particularly in **Question 3**, is that of comparative evaluation, supported by precise reference to the documents and in relation to the question set.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content in order to reach an overall judgment as to which, if any, had the stronger argument. Consideration of the relative strengths of the argument, evidence and reasoning supported by evaluation of the provenance and different perspectives should be used.

Brief and relevant quotations from the documents should be used to support arguments. Otherwise, the answer is generalised or no more than a series of assertions or claims that generally would not reach the highest level. This is crucial in **Questions 2** and **3**.

General Comments

The overall standard of the responses was encouraging. There was no evidence of candidates misunderstanding the passages and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. There were a number who did not pay careful enough attention to either the marks available or the command words in the questions and this limited the level achieved particularly in **Questions 2** and **3**. It is encouraging to see some candidates applying the higher-level skill of comparing the argument put forward in the passages in **Question 3**, although some simply compared content or repeated, without evaluation, the argument of the authors. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning for the higher mark questions and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

There were very few candidates who did not fully complete all the questions, although the allocation of time relative to the number of marks available is an important issue. Some candidates wrote extensively on **Question 1a** and **1b**, whereas a few lines would have been sufficient to cover the points in a concise manner.

Some answers to **Question 2** and **3** were not fully developed or supported by precise reference to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents demonstrating that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being considered. Less strong responses relied on describing the argument of the authors without any interpretation or analysis. Stronger candidates reached a supported judgment about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the argument in **Question 2** and the relative strengths of Document 2 relative to Document 1 in **Question 3**.

Comments on Specific Questions

- (a) Only brief statements to identify objections were required and there was no need to explain or evaluate them.

Typically, candidates could achieve the two available marks by stating: *“Large amounts of money were spent on the World Cup”* and, *“it increased government corruption.”* There were other possible answers and no need to write at length.

- (b) The question required candidates to explain two ways the author gave concerning the World Cup benefitting Brazil’s tourist industry. There were two marks available for each explanation. High scoring candidates gained the first simple explanation mark quickly and then continued to develop and fully explain their reasoning in their own words. Lower scoring candidates tended to give simple explanations but did not develop them further, or they just copied information directly from the text without attempting to paraphrase or use their own words.

For example:

“Brazilian business encouraged their workforce to learn new skills like international languages.”
(Basic – 1 mark). *“They would then be able to communicate better with the tourists and to understand their needs. Overall, they would provide a better service.”* (Developed – 2 marks)

“If foreign visitors were satisfied with their time in Brazil they would, no doubt, advertise the services they used when they returned home. (Basic – 1 mark) “This would encourage people to choose Brazil for their holiday and so increase the number of visitors and the money they spend on tourism”
(Developed – 2 marks)

If candidates rely heavily on the author’s words they are unlikely to be able to show more than a basic explanation.

Question 2

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For example: *“Document one was a reliable document as it was written by an economist, who is likely to have knowledge about the subject and would not want to lie as it would affect his reputation. However, it is just as likely that he may have a vested interest to show Brazil as a prosperous economy in order to attract investment from other countries.”*

Candidates found the strengths easier to identify than the weaknesses particularly through the accessible provenance of the document and that the counter-argument was positioned at the beginning of the passage. Candidates recognised that the author used some statistics (strength) but they were not developed or clearly referenced (weakness). Stronger candidates recognised the conclusion was logically based on the author’s reasoning (strength) but that it was not sufficiently supported by evidence or statistics. It was clearly a personal opinion (assertion).

Strong candidates kept to the point and looked at the argument rather than the detail of the content of the text. Lower scoring candidates tended to give a narrative description of what the author had said without any specific evaluation of the meaning. For example, starting a paragraph with *“The author states....”* and then quoting extensively from the text without further development or explanation. Some criticised the author’s view and put forward their own opinion. This is not appropriate as the question asks candidates to assess the author’s argument.

For example: *“Magale claims that upgrades to infrastructure in twelve cities were necessary. He doesn’t mention the costs of these nor does he say what will happen to the other cities who do not get investment. Tourism would be taken away from them and they would most likely suffer as a result.”*

Question 3

The question asked to what extent is the author's argument in Document 2 stronger than the author's argument in Document 1. The question allows for three possibilities:

Document 2 is stronger than Document 1

Document 1 is stronger than Document 2

They are equally strong.

To gain marks within the top level, there is an expectation that candidates would address more than one of these possibilities and support them fully with sustained reasoning. It would also be expected that candidates would critically evaluate key issues by explicitly referencing the content of the document. The strongest candidates would develop a cogent argument, with appropriate conclusions, that include a supported final judgment as to which of the three possibilities is the strongest.

For example: *"Document 2 is stronger than Document 1 as its author gives examples from around the World: Brazil, China and England, and refers to the Olympics as well as the World Cup. He strengthens his argument by addressing the issue at a global scale. In contrast the author of Document 1 only concentrates on the World Cup in Brazil and therefore has a more limited focus." "However, there are points where the arguments are equally weak with both being mainly one-sided with much assertion. Both do have minor references to a counter-argument." "Document 1 is stronger than Document 2 in terms of provenance as its author has expertise in the area as he is an economist with the largest investment bank in South America. The author of Document 2 is a building designer and television personality which suggests he has less credibility making Document 1 stronger in this case." "Despite this, Document 2 is stronger overall because of its detailed use of sources, statistics and global relevance that are missing in Document 1."*

Candidates that generally evaluate the two passages, using, say, provenance, evidence and perspectives, without reference to specific examples given in the text are unlikely to access the highest level.

For example: *"A problem with both the documents, but more so in Document 2, was the one-sided nature of the arguments presented. While Document 1 argued it economically benefitted all and encouraged tourism, Document 2 argued it only benefitted the top few and did not give credit to the benefits of a large sporting event to industries like tourism."*

Lower scoring candidates may not evaluate the arguments but just compare the two authors' words without any development. Others describe what the authors' have said, often starting a sentence with *"He stated..."* This often led to a lack of final judgment and simplistic, if any, evaluation.

For example: *"Firstly we can see that they are both one-sided. Document 1 only argues about the benefits of the World Cup and Document 2 only argues about aspects of hosting a major sports event." "They also present a weak and biased conclusion as both give their opinions leaving the reader in doubt."*

Candidates should come to a clear judgment based on their reasoning. Different candidates may come to a different judgment from the same information.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 9239/12
Paper 12

Key Messages

Candidates should ensure they read the questions carefully and answer the actual question set.

The length of the answer should reflect the number of marks available. Some candidates spend too long on **Question 1** and **2** and leave insufficient time for the demands of **Question 3**.

The key skill needed to score high marks, particularly in **Question 3**, is that of comparative evaluation, supported by precise reference to the documents and in relation to the question set.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content in order to reach an overall judgment as to which, if any, had the stronger argument. Consideration of the relative strengths of the argument, evidence and reasoning supported by evaluation of the provenance and different perspectives should be used.

Brief and relevant quotations from the documents should be used to support arguments. Otherwise, the answer is generalised or no more than a series of assertions or claims that generally would not reach the highest level. This is crucial in **Questions 2** and **3**.

General Comments

The overall standard of the responses was encouraging. There was no evidence of candidates misunderstanding the passages and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. There were a number who did not pay careful enough attention to either the marks available or the command words in the questions and this limited the level achieved particularly in **Questions 2** and **3**. It is encouraging to see some candidates applying the higher-level skill of comparing the argument put forward in the passages in **Question 3**, although some simply compared content or repeated, without evaluation, the argument of the authors. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning for the higher mark questions and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

There were very few candidates who did not fully complete all the questions, although the allocation of time relative to the number of marks available is an important issue. Some candidates wrote extensively on **Question 1a** and **1b**, whereas a few lines would have been sufficient to cover the points in a concise manner.

Some answers to **Question 2** and **3** were not fully developed or supported by precise reference to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents demonstrating that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being considered. Less strong responses relied on describing the argument of the authors without any interpretation or analysis. Stronger candidates reached a supported judgment about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the argument in **Question 2** and the relative strengths of Document 2 relative to Document 1 in **Question 3**.

Comments on Specific Questions

- (a) Only brief statements to identify objections were required and there was no need to explain or evaluate them.

Typically, candidates could achieve the two available marks by stating: *“Large amounts of money were spent on the World Cup”* and, *“it increased government corruption.”* There were other possible answers and no need to write at length.

- (b) The question required candidates to explain two ways the author gave concerning the World Cup benefitting Brazil’s tourist industry. There were two marks available for each explanation. High scoring candidates gained the first simple explanation mark quickly and then continued to develop and fully explain their reasoning in their own words. Lower scoring candidates tended to give simple explanations but did not develop them further, or they just copied information directly from the text without attempting to paraphrase or use their own words.

For example:

“Brazilian business encouraged their workforce to learn new skills like international languages.” (Basic – 1 mark). *“They would then be able to communicate better with the tourists and to understand their needs. Overall, they would provide a better service.”* (Developed – 2 marks)

“If foreign visitors were satisfied with their time in Brazil they would, no doubt, advertise the services they used when they returned home. (Basic – 1 mark) “This would encourage people to choose Brazil for their holiday and so increase the number of visitors and the money they spend on tourism” (Developed – 2 marks)

If candidates rely heavily on the author’s words they are unlikely to be able to show more than a basic explanation.

Question 2

Document 1 contained a number of accessible lines of reasoning and argument that candidates were able to identify. There were also clear distinctions between the strengths and weaknesses of the argument.

Candidates used the provenance of the document well with the best candidates recognising that the author’s position could be both a strength and a weakness. As a strength, candidates saw the author’s credibility as an economist because he was knowledgeable and, even better, that he was based in South America, so would understand the local economy. As a weakness, candidates considered he would have a vested interest as his bank would potentially benefit from an improved economy generated by the World Cup.

For example: *“Document one was a reliable document as it was written by an economist, who is likely to have knowledge about the subject and would not want to lie as it would affect his reputation. However, it is just as likely that he may have a vested interest to show Brazil as a prosperous economy in order to attract investment from other countries.”*

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For example: *“Magale claims that upgrades to infrastructure in twelve cities were necessary. He doesn’t mention the costs of these nor does he say what will happen to the other cities who do not get investment. Tourism would be taken away from them and they would most likely suffer as a result.”*

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To gain marks within the top level, there is an expectation that candidates would address more than one of these possibilities and support them fully with sustained reasoning. It would also be expected that candidates would critically evaluate key issues by explicitly referencing the content of the document. The strongest candidates would develop a cogent argument, with appropriate conclusions, that include a supported final judgment as to which of the three possibilities is the strongest.

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Candidates that generally evaluate the two passages, using, say, provenance, evidence and perspectives, without reference to specific examples given in the text are unlikely to access the highest level.

For example: *"A problem with both the documents, but more so in Document 2, was the one-sided nature of the arguments presented. While Document 1 argued it economically benefitted all and encouraged tourism, Document 2 argued it only benefitted the top few and did not give credit to the benefits of a large sporting event to industries like tourism."*

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 9239/13
Paper 13

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