GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

> **Paper 0457/01**
> **Individual Research**

Key messages

- Candidates should produce two Individual Research reports. Each report should have a question as its title. These reports should be word processed in an essay format with a reference list at the end.

- Sub-headings, linked to the assessment criteria, can be used to help candidates to structure their work.

- Each Individual Research report should have a full reference list at the end and accurate citations in the body of the work. Reports should be a maximum of 2000 words in length.

- Comments, linked to the assessment criteria, should be added to the Individual Candidate Record Cards (ICRCs). These should correspond to the correct band in the assessment criteria.

- The Individual Research reports and completed ICRCs need to be submitted for each candidate in the sample. A Coursework Assessment Summary Form (CASF) also needs to be submitted showing the marks for all candidates entered. A report showing the marks submitted to Cambridge also must be included in your coursework submission. This may be either a copy of your CIE Direct internal marks report or a copy of your Internal Assessment Mark Sheet (MS1). Teachers should ensure that all documentation shows the same mark for each candidate.

General comments

Most Centres demonstrated a good understanding of the requirements for the assessment of this component. However, a small number of Centres are confusing the requirements for this component with those for the Group Project (Component 02). Teachers should make use of the documentation available to support this component including the guidance in the syllabus document and the 'Submitting Cambridge Global Perspectives work' administrative guide (both available from www.cie.org.uk).

Most candidates used questions to focus their research and their reports. Where candidates did not, the reports were often less focussed. Centres should advise candidates that they need one question as the title of their report, which they should then answer in their report through considering different perspectives. Their conclusion should directly answer their question and also offer a personal response. Teachers can help candidates formulate their questions and give general verbal feedback once first drafts have been reviewed.

This series, some Centres covered a range of topics, suggesting that candidates had been given freedom to choose the topics for their Individual Research reports. Sometimes this worked well, but at other times candidates struggled to give a personal response to the topic. For example, the topic of poverty and inequality would not allow for the consideration of a personal perspective if the candidate has no personal experience of issues related to the topic. Candidates are advised to choose global topics which have personal relevance to their lives.

Candidates should produce their work as word processed documents so that word counts can be verified. Candidates should also only include pictures and diagrams if they refer to them in the body of their work. Candidates should be advised to submit this component in essay format. Candidates who submit work as MS Power Point presentations are rarely able analyse issues in enough depth to achieve a high mark.

Administration proved to be a particular challenge for some Centres this session. In Centres with more than one Teacher, it is good practice for internal moderation to take place. However, this should not be a re-marking exercise and reasons for any changes should be noted on the ICRC. The totals given on the MS1,

CASF and ICRC should all be the same. If marks are different for any of these, the Centre will be contacted to provide further information. If internal moderation takes place, this should be for all candidates and not just for those in the sample.

Comments on specific criteria

Teacher assessment

On the whole, the internal assessment of this component was appropriate, with most Centres marking in accordance with the assessment criteria. Teachers should include a comment on the ICRC to justify the mark given, and this should relate directly to the assessment criteria. It is very rare for candidates to be awarded marks in Band 1 if they have attempted to produce a research report as there is usually something of credit if candidates have been given the assessment criteria. If teachers suspect that any work has been plagiarised they should follow the guidance in the Cambridge Handbook, available at www.cie.org.uk

Where an Individual Research report meets the assessment criteria in a band fully, marks at the top of that band should be awarded. To fully achieve the criteria for Band 4, there should be thorough analysis of the issues and the possible scenarios identified should stem from this analysis. The issues should also be explored from different perspectives (global, local/national and personal) and these perspectives should be evaluated before courses of action are proposed. Courses of action also need to be developed and not simply identified in order to fully meet the criteria for Band 4. For the personal response mark, it is not enough that candidates give their opinion, they should explain their response with reference to the research they have conducted and the different perspectives they have explored. Assessors should decide on the most appropriate band for each criterion and then decide whether the work meets the band fully, in which case the top mark in the band should be awarded, or whether there is something missing and the work only meets the band partially, in which case lower marks within that band should be awarded.

Gather information representing different perspectives

The majority of candidates were able to gather and present some information linked to the topic area in order to answer their research question. This usually came from a range of sources, and in the most successful reports, these sources were well-referenced. The most successful reports also clearly explored different perspectives on the issue(s), outlining evidence of different views and opinions on the issue(s), broadly related to a place, country, organisation or institution. Less successful reports often simply gave information relating to the issue (though not specifically views or opinions on the issue) from different countries. Only the very best candidates were able to successfully explore global perspectives on an issue. A global perspective may come from a specific country, organisation, institution, or even an individual, but it will have influence that spreads beyond any one country. The very best reports not only explain and give evidence for global perspectives, but also some justification for why they are global.

All work must be in the candidate's own words. If quotations are included they should be shown as quotations with the source directly cited. Teachers should advise candidates to use quotes sparingly and only to support points that have been made in the candidates own words. Candidates need help to write a complete reference list, including the author, date and title of the publication on the website and the date the candidate accessed it, rather than just giving the web link URL. For marks in Band 4, a broad range of relevant information should be presented and a range of highly appropriate sources used. Websites such as Wikipedia are not considered highly appropriate so please advise candidates against using these, although they can be a useful starting point to find other, more credible sources.

Analyse issues within the report

This session saw a wide range of levels of analysis, from simply listing causes, effects and current situations, to exploring these in more depth. The most successful reports tend to cover fewer issues but explore them in more depth. Less successful reports tend to outline lots of unrelated issues. The key to this criterion is that candidates formulate a focused question (with guidance from their Teacher) which leads the candidate to explore one or two issues in depth; the reasons for them/causes of them, consequences/effects of them and the possible scenarios if the issue(s) should continue and whether these scenarios are likely or not and why. Explanation will always attract more marks than identification and candidates need to be aware of this and use words like 'because', 'due to', 'as such', 'therefore' to develop their points.

Identify and evaluate possible scenarios and formulate possible courses of action

Many candidates found this criterion challenging and possible scenarios were on the whole fairly simple with candidates unsure about how they should be generated. This may be because candidates are being asked to think beyond the research they have conducted and they are less confident of their own ability to create/develop possible scenarios and courses of action. The scenarios presented generally already existed and there remains an overall lack of creative thinking about possible scenarios. Even among those who were able to develop possible future scenarios, only the very best reports considered how likely the scenarios were and why. Courses of action generally need to be further developed, including how they might work to solve/prevent or reduce the chances of the possible scenario presented.

In order to identify possible scenarios, candidates should ask themselves 'what might happen in the future if this situation continues?' Candidates can then evaluate how likely this is to happen and what the consequences might be if it does happen. This will allow candidates to demonstrate a real grasp of the issues relating to their research question.

Develop evidence-based personal response demonstrating self-awareness

Often this was left until the end and lacked evidence from the rest of the report. Candidates can make reference to their life at home, in school or where they live in relation to the question posed. They should identify and explain, referring directly to the evidence in the report, how their thinking on the topic has changed or developed as a result of conducting the research and things they will be doing differently as a result of their research. Some reports very successfully provided a personal response throughout the report, offering a considered personal response directly after presenting the evidence. Less successful reports were more likely to add a paragraph at the end which often offered a simple statement of opinion.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 0457/02
Group Project

Key messages

- Project plans should provide evidence of planning and should not be a retrospective log of events. They should include a clear aim and the intended project outcome, as well as details of all planned activities, time frames and all the group members' responsibilities, including the reasoning behind allocation of roles and responsibilities.
- Representation of different perspectives should focus on cross-cultural collaboration in the project and not on exploring global, national/local and personal perspectives. This collaboration can take place with people of another culture overseas, or with people from a different culture within the home country. The cross-cultural collaboration that has taken place should be used to inform or support the project outcome and should be represented in the outcome and/or in any accompanying write-up.
- Research reports or case studies, however informative, are not appropriate outcomes for the group project. Outcomes must be produced or carried out and should not simply be planned or hypothetical.
- Candidates must adhere to the word limits given in the syllabus. Teachers must provide guidance to candidates on how to write concisely yet still cover all the elements identified in the performance descriptors for each of the assessment criteria.
- Individual evaluations need to be critically evaluative, rather than descriptive.
- Teachers are reminded that they need to include brief supporting comments for each of the assessment criteria on the Individual Candidate Record Card to explain the basis on which they have awarded their marks.

General comments

Topic choices in this session have dealt with some of the following issues: attitudes to animal welfare; discrimination against migrants; cultural erosion; the impact of western ideals on the perception of female beauty in eastern communities, as well as domestic abuse and the street harassment of women. There were some highly creative and effective outcomes intended to achieve project aims. These included videos and online forums to raise awareness; volunteer work with non-governmental organisations to address community problems; school presentations and lessons to younger students to raise awareness and change attitudes, as well as fundraising events to help particular community groups. Generally, the most successful projects demonstrated commitment to and enthusiasm for the work they were doing. They had a sound rational for their choice; a single clear aim and a well-considered outcome which provided a rich source for their later individual evaluations. They had also given clear consideration at the outset as to how they might judge how successful or otherwise their outcome was in achieving their project aim.

Comments on candidate response to assessment criteria

Production of a project plan
(Group assessment)

Many candidate groups were able to access marks in the top band for their project plans. Such plans were strong because they had been developed at the outset of the project and provided full details of the project aim; the intended outcome; all planned activities and allocation of roles and responsibilities. Candidates who achieved the maximum mark of ten for their plan did so because they were also able to provide a sound rationale as to the allocation of group members' roles and responsibilities. Retrospective logs of activities are not an appropriate substitute for a plan. It is acceptable to amend the plan as the project progresses, should this be necessary and this might be something that individual candidates might choose to comment on in their evaluation of the plan, if amendment has been necessary.

Representation of different viewpoints and perspectives (including cross-cultural)
(Group assessment)

In this component, the different perspectives should be drawn from, and provide clear evidence of, cross-cultural collaboration. It is not necessary to explore personal, local/national and global perspectives that are not related to the cross-cultural collaboration. The cross-cultural collaboration should be purposeful. It should be carried out with the aim of helping to develop and support the project outcome and it should form an integral part of the project. Candidate groups which scored well on this criterion generally showed that they had thought carefully about what they intended to discover from their collaboration at the outset of the project and had a clear idea of how this research might be used to inform their outcome. The project outcome and any accompanying write-up should reflect the cross-cultural collaboration that has taken place. Candidates should be reminded that the current word limit for the project write-up is 2000 words and candidates should not exceed this.

Constructive participation in group work/activities
(Individual assessment)

Assessment of performance in this criterion should be based on evidence gathered during teacher observations of group work in progress. Brief supporting comments may be included on the Individual Candidate Record Card.

Evaluation of project plan and process
(Individual assessment)

Candidates who scored well in their evaluation of the project plan and process often used subheadings aligned to the assessment criteria to structure their response in order to ensure that their evaluations were well-focused on the assessment criteria and covered all the elements identified in the performance descriptor. This meant that they considered, in detail, both the strengths and the weaknesses of both the plan itself and the processes involved in carrying out the project. They were also able to provide well-considered suggestions for improvement to both. Candidates whose plan consisted of a retrospective log, rather than a pre-determined plan, often struggled to make a meaningful evaluation of this element. Some candidates also seemed rather confused about what constitutes the process of the project. The process refers to those activities involved in carrying out the project, e.g. individual research and other activities; time management; group dynamics etc.

Evaluation of project outcome
(Individual assessment)

The strongest evaluations of project outcomes generally came from groups which had identified a single, clear aim, such as raising awareness of an issue, or solving a problem, and then produced or carried out an active outcome, such as designing and making an item, producing a video, organising and hosting a fundraising event or making a school presentation, in order to achieve that aim. Individually, candidates were then able to critically evaluate the success or otherwise of the outcome in achieving the project aim. Where the aim was vague (e.g. increasing the group's knowledge of an issue), and the outcome was an information report, or a case study, candidates found it very difficult to make any meaningful evaluation of how far the outcome had achieved the project aim. Candidates should be advised to consider at the outset of the project how they might critically measure the success of their outcome. Candidates should also be advised that an in-depth and critical evaluation is required in order to score well. Candidates who simply say that their outcome was successful in achieving the project aim because, for instance, many people found their presentation interesting or that it was unsuccessful because not many people attended are unlikely to score marks above the lower bands.

Evaluation of individual contribution (including what was learnt from cross-cultural collaboration)
(Individual assessment)

Candidates who scored well on this criterion generally did so because they paid close attention to **all** the elements identified in the descriptors for the assessment criterion. They gave careful consideration to both the strengths and weaknesses of their own contributions to the project; both the benefits and challenges of working as a group rather than individually and what they had learned from the group's cross-cultural collaboration. Those candidates who scored marks at the top of Band 4 often gave additional consideration to what they had learned about themselves in the course of carrying out the project and also how their cross-cultural collaboration had changed their perspective on the issue, or their perception of the world

around them. Comments like this help ensure that evaluation is not only detailed and well-formulated but also insightful.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

| **Paper 0457/31** |
| **Written Paper** |

Key messages

The key messages from this series of examination papers are that candidates:

- demonstrated high levels of ability in interpretation and analysis skills
- need to develop skills of evaluation of argument and evidence more fully
- should use evidence from sources to justify their opinions more frequently.

General comments

The Written Paper consists of compulsory questions based on a range of sources. The sources present global issues from different perspectives. In November 2016, the paper was based upon source material related to transport systems.

Overall, the quality of work and levels of achievement were good. Many candidates clearly have an excellent understanding of globalisation, related issues and an ability to marshal reasoning and evidence to support an opinion or claim. They are able to interpret evidence in a variety of different forms. However, candidates need to develop evaluative skills to higher levels.

Candidates responded very well to the source material, especially in the extended response questions. Candidates were able to explore different perspectives on the issues raised, particularly in relation to the need for improvements to transport systems internationally.

Examination technique was generally very good. Candidates had sufficient time for the tasks. The vast majority completed all of the questions within the time allocated. There were hardly any rubric errors.

To improve performance further, candidates should be encouraged to:

- justify their opinions with reasons and evidence drawn from the sources
- provide explanation rather than simple assertion or description, where appropriate
- consider counter arguments
- evaluate sources and arguments using key concepts in critical thinking.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)   Virtually all candidates identified two positive consequences of improving transport systems from the source material, and therefore gained the maximum marks for this question. Candidates were only awarded marks for identifying ways that were contained within Source 1.

(b)   Most candidates were able to identify and explain which negative consequence of improving transport systems, in their opinion, was the most significant. Most candidates chose to discuss the impact of environmental damage or the spread of disease. Many candidates showed awareness of the link between cause and effect in this context, as well as the 'snowball' effect of one consequence leading to another. Some discussed a possible 'vicious circle'. Some candidates offered some evidence to support their judgements.

        The strongest answers provided several clear reasons to explain why one effect was more important than others; this occasionally involved comparing the significance of different consequences. Weaker responses often simply stated the consequence without explanation and tended to rely upon assertion without evidence or careful reasoning.

(c)   Candidates found this question quite challenging. Most explained why improving transport by making it cheaper and faster was of benefit to individuals or the country, often in economic terms. A significant number of candidates did not explicitly address the local dimension to the question. Most candidates explored the benefits of improved transport for access to amenities and services, like education and hospitals, as well as access to work and in supporting economic development generally.

        Candidates achieving at higher levels provided a clearly reasoned, credible and structured explanation. Candidates achieving at the lower levels tended to provide some weak explanation or asserted opinion about the importance of transport in general without reference to 'cheaper and faster'. Candidates should be advised to answer the question directly and explicitly.

Question 2

(a)   Most candidates were able to discuss at least one positive or negative aspect of using questionnaires within the airport to research public opinion on the issue. Responses tended to focus on the potential for bias of the sample, particularly size and being taken from within the airport, as well as the general strengths and weaknesses of questionnaires. Some candidates suggested improvements to the methodology.

        Responses at the higher levels provided full explanations of the strengths and weakness of the method for the purpose of the research. Responses at the lower levels tended to be generalised or lack clarity.

        A small number of candidates simply described their own opinion about extending the airport and therefore did not answer the question.

        Overall, candidates found this quite a challenging question. Candidates would benefit from some explicit consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods during the Global Perspectives course.

(b)   Many candidates presented a clearly reasoned, credible and structured explanation of ways to persuade people about the need to improve transport systems. This included consideration of who needed to be persuaded, the justification for improvement, often in terms of benefits, and the methods to be used, for example via advertising, social media and television.

        Less successful responses tended to list a few suggestions without explaining or linking to the specific perspective on the issue.

Question 3

(a)   Most candidates suggested that the statement was an example of a fact as it could be verified and was potentially true. Others suggested that it was not a fact as it was based on an estimate that could be inaccurate.

Most candidates were able to justify and explain their judgement convincingly.

(b)   Most candidates answered this question well, explaining why the statement was both a prediction and an opinion, relating the explanation to claims about the future that could not be verified.

(c)   Responses at the highest levels contained well supported judgements about the arguments with a clear assessment of the value of each statement; this included coherent, structured evaluation of how well the argument worked with a focus on reasons and evidence, with a range of points about knowledge claims, consequences and values for both statements. These responses were usually balanced with a clear conclusion. The statements were also explicitly quoted and used directly in the response.

At the lower levels of response, the discussion was unlikely to be supported and tended to be mainly asserted with little clarity of argument. These answers tended to focus on issues rather than reasons, knowledge claims, evidence, consequences or values. There was very little or no overt evaluation at the lowest levels of response.

Centres are encouraged to give candidates frequent opportunity to evaluate sources during their courses. This should involve a consideration of the reasons and evidence used to support the argument or perspective in the source.

Question 4

In this question, candidates were expected to consider the priority that should be given to the improvement of transport systems in all countries. Most candidates focussed upon the role of governments.

The arguments used by candidates mainly related to economic, environmental and transportation issues. Many discussed alternative priorities, for example the alleviation of poverty and reduction of conflict.

Responses at the highest levels tended to have well supported, logical reasoning and make clear judgements about priorities. A clear, balanced assessment or conclusion was also reached.

Responses at the lower level tended to be generalised, lack relevance to the issue and describe personal opinion. Arguments tended to be unsupported and asserted.

In preparation for this type of question, centres are encouraged to give candidates regular opportunity to write extended essays in which they contrast and compare different perspectives or potential actions in response to an issue. In so doing candidates need to analyse and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the reasons and evidence for the perspective or action. Candidates also need to be able to describe and explain the reasons and evidence that have helped to shape their own points of view on global issues.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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Paper 0457/32
Written Paper

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Key messages

The key messages from this series of examination papers are that candidates:

- demonstrated high levels of ability in interpretation and analysis skills
- need to develop skills of evaluation of argument and evidence more fully
- should use evidence from sources more frequently to justify their opinions.

General comments

The Written Paper consists of compulsory questions based on a range of sources. The sources present global issues from different perspectives. In November 2016, the paper was based upon source material related to quality of life and happiness.

Overall, the quality of work and levels of achievement were generally very good. Many candidates clearly have an excellent understanding of globalisation, related issues and an ability to marshal reasoning and evidence to support an opinion or claim. They can interpret evidence in a variety of different forms. However, candidates need to develop evaluative skills to higher levels.

Candidates responded very well to the source material, especially in the extended response questions. Candidates were able to explore different perspectives on the issues raised, particularly relating to issues surrounding quality of life and happiness.

Examination technique was generally very good. Candidates had sufficient time for the tasks. Almost all candidates completed all of the questions within the time allocated. There were hardly any rubric errors.

To improve performance further, candidates should be encouraged to:

- justify their opinions with reasons and evidence drawn from the sources
- provide explanation rather than simple assertion or description, where appropriate
- show awareness of and discuss possible counter arguments
- evaluate sources and arguments using key concepts in critical thinking.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)

  (i)   Nearly all candidates correctly identified the aspect of life with which teenagers were most happy as 'friends'.

  (ii)   Virtually all candidates correctly identified the aspect of life with which teenagers were least happy as 'where they live.'

(b)   Most candidates were able to identify and explain which cause of stress from **Source 2**, in their opinion, has the most impact on teenagers' lives. Most candidates chose to discuss family relationships, school pressures or lack of friends.

Many candidates showed awareness of the link between cause and effect in this context, as well as the 'snowball' effect of one consequence leading to another. Some discussed a possible 'vicious circle'. Some candidates offered evidence to support their judgements.

The strongest answers provided several clear reasons to explain why one cause was more important than others; this occasionally involved comparing the significance of different causes. Weaker responses often simply stated the cause of stress without explanation and tended to rely upon assertion without evidence or careful reasoning.

(c)   This question assessed candidates' ability to justify a point of view. Most candidates explored the issue from a personal point of view, discussing the impact of money on quality of life/lifestyle and access to goods and services. The role of family and friendship, unrelated to money or wealth, was often discussed as well. The sources in the Paper were used appropriately to support the responses in many cases.

Candidates achieving at higher levels provided a clearly reasoned, credible and structured explanation of their point of view, often looking at several points of view and counter arguments. Candidates achieving at the lower levels tended to provide some weak explanation or asserted opinion about happiness in general. Candidates should be advised to answer the question directly and explicitly.

Question 2

(a)   Most candidates were able to evaluate the argument in the source reasonably well. Responses tended to focus on the quality of language, persuasiveness of the language and rhetoric, and the use of evidence from other sources, including citation issues. Some candidates suggested improvements to the evidence.

Responses at the higher levels provided full explanations of the strengths and weakness of the argument. Responses at the lower levels tended to be generalised or lack clarity.

A very few candidates simply described their own opinion about the issue and did not answer the question directly.

(b)   Many candidates presented a clearly reasoned, credible and structured explanation of ways to persuade people about the need for an International Day of Happiness. This included consideration of who needed to be persuaded, the justification for improvement, often in terms of benefits, and the methods to be used, for example via advertising, social media and television.

Less successful responses tended to list a few suggestions without explaining or linking to the specific perspective on the issue.

Question 3

(a) Most candidates correctly identified a prediction and explained the selection clearly as a statement or claim about what might happen in the future.

Most candidates were able to justify and explain their judgement convincingly.

(b) The vast majority of candidates identified an appropriate factual statement and explained their selection as information that could be verified as accurate or true.

(c) Most candidates suggested that Maia's statement was the most convincing, arguing that it contained reasoning that worked better. Candidates focused on knowledge claims, experience, tone and use of language, and the argument itself.

Responses at the highest levels contained well supported judgements about the arguments with a clear assessment of the value of each statement; this included coherent, structured evaluation of how well the argument worked with a focus on reasons and evidence, with a range of points about knowledge claims, consequences and values for both statements. These responses were usually balanced with a clear conclusion. The statements were also explicitly quoted and used directly in the response.

At the lower levels of response, the discussion was unlikely to be supported and tended to be mainly asserted with little clarity of argument. These answers tended to focus on issues rather than reasons, knowledge claims, evidence, consequences or values. There was very little or no overt evaluation at the lowest levels of response.

Candidates found this question quite challenging. Centres are encouraged to give candidates frequent opportunity to evaluate sources during their courses. This should involve a consideration of the reasons and evidence used to support the argument or perspective in the source.

Question 4

In this question, candidates were expected to consider the responsibility of governments for people's happiness and justify their opinion using the sources and their own ideas.

The arguments used by candidates mainly related to individual and collective causes of happiness and the government's ability to influence these in practice, as well as economic perspectives.

Responses at the highest levels tended to have well supported, logical reasoning and make clear judgements about the role of governments. A clear, balanced assessment or conclusion was also reached.

Responses at the lower level tended to be generalised, lack relevance to the issue and simply describe personal opinion, often anecdotally. Arguments tended to be unsupported and asserted.

In preparation for this type of question, centres are encouraged to give candidates regular opportunity to write extended essays in which they contrast and compare different perspectives or potential actions in response to an issue. In so doing candidates need to analyse and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the reasons and evidence for the perspectives or actions. Candidates also need to be able to describe and explain the reasons and evidence that have helped to shape their own points of view on global issues.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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Paper 0457/33
Written Paper

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Key messages

The key messages from this series of examination papers are that candidates:

- demonstrated high levels of ability in interpretation and analysis skills
- need to develop skills of evaluation of argument and evidence more fully
- should use evidence from sources to justify their opinions
- need to understand and use key concepts in critical thinking, including value judgement, fact, opinion and prediction.

General comments

The Written Paper consists of compulsory questions based on a range of sources. The sources present global issues from different perspectives. In November 2016, the paper was based upon source material related to the growth of digital technology and inequality.

Overall, the quality of work and levels of achievement were generally good. Many candidates clearly have an excellent understanding of global issues and an ability to analyse and interpret different perspectives. Candidates are also able to interpret evidence in a variety of different forms. However, candidates need to develop evaluative skills to higher levels.

Candidates responded very well to the source material, especially in the extended response questions. Candidates explored different perspectives on the 'digital divide', particularly in relation to the need to improve access to new technology in different countries and for different social groups.

Examination technique was generally very good. Candidates had sufficient time for the tasks. Virtually all candidates completed all questions within the time allocated. There were hardly any rubric errors.

To improve performance further, candidates should be encouraged to:

- justify their opinions with reasons and evidence drawn from the sources
- provide explanation rather than simple assertion or description, where appropriate
- consider counter arguments
- evaluate sources and arguments using key concepts in critical thinking.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)

  (i)   Nearly all candidates correctly identified the trend in the use of mobile telephones as increasing.

  (ii)   Nearly all candidates correctly identified a reason for the increase in the use of mobile telephones. Candidates usually identified increased competition or digital technologies becoming cheaper.

(b)   Most candidates could identify and explain which advantage of mobile technology was the most important, in their view. Most candidates chose to discuss connecting with others or accessing information. Many candidates showed awareness of the link between cause and effect in this context, as well as the 'snowball' effect of one benefit leading to another. Some discussed a possible 'virtuous circle'. Some candidates offered some evidence to support their judgements.

The strongest answers provided several clear reasons to explain why one advantage was more important than others; this occasionally involved comparing the importance of different advantages. Weaker responses often simply stated the advantage without explanation and tended to rely upon assertion without evidence or careful reasoning.

(c)   Most explained why the widespread use of mobile technology was of benefit to individuals or their country, often in economic or social terms. However, a significant number of candidates did not explicitly address the global dimension to the question.

Most candidates explored the benefits of widespread use of mobile technology for communication with others socially or in economic activity. Educational and cultural benefits were also explored.

Candidates achieving at higher levels provided a clearly reasoned, credible and structured explanation. Candidates achieving at the lower levels tended to provide some weak explanation or asserted opinion about mobile technology in general without reference to 'cheaper and faster'. Candidates should be advised to answer the question directly and explicitly.

Unfortunately, some candidates simply copied or 'recycled' material from the sources without application to the question and therefore did not score highly.

Question 2

(a)   Candidates who performed well in this question described several methods, sources and types of evidence that could be used to test the claim that, 'people without access to digital technology have a lower standard of living'. These were carefully explained and related to the aim of the research. Candidates tended to describe surveys of standards/quality of living in areas or countries with different levels of access to digital technology, or finding relevant information from experts in the field, or by internet research.

The strongest responses provided clearly reasoned, credible and structured explanation for their suggestions; weaker responses often simply stated a method or source of evidence but did not explain it fully or make the link to the claim being tested.

A few candidates responded to the question by describing their personal opinion about the issue rather than describing how it could be researched. These responses gained very few, if any, marks.

(b)   Many candidates presented a clearly reasoned, credible and structured explanation of ways to persuade people to work towards closing the digital divide. This included consideration of who needed to be persuaded, the justification for closure or improved access, often in terms of benefits, and the methods to be used, for example via advertising, social media and TV.

Less successful responses tended to list a few suggestions without explaining or linking the specific perspective on the issue. Some candidates lost sight of the 'persuasion' dimension to the question and made suggestions that linked to the nature or cost of the technology itself, and therefore did not score highly.

Question 3

(a)   Many candidates clearly did not understand the concept of value judgement and were unable to identify a value judgement in the source.

However, candidates who correctly identified a value judgement were generally able to explain the selection clearly as a view or belief about what is important/ethical/moral/right or wrong.

Centres are encouraged to teach candidates about value judgements and provide experience of using the term in the analysis of sources, alongside other critical thinking concepts like fact, opinion and prediction.

(b)   Successful responses explained the reasons why the statement was both a prediction and opinion, relating the explanation to claims about the future that could not be verified.

(c)   Most candidates suggested that Marc's statement was the most convincing, arguing it contained reasoning that worked better. Candidates focussed on knowledge claims, evidence, tone and use of language, and the argument itself.

Responses at the highest levels contained well supported judgements about the arguments with a clear assessment of the value of each statement; this included coherent, structured evaluation of how well the argument worked with a focus on reasons and evidence, with a range of points about knowledge claims, consequences and values for both statements. These responses were usually balanced with a clear conclusion. The statements were also explicitly quoted and used directly in the response.

At the lower levels of response, the discussion was unlikely to be supported and tended to be mainly asserted with little clarity of argument. These answers tended to focus on issues rather than reasons, knowledge claims, evidence, consequences or values. There was very little or no overt evaluation at the lowest levels of response.

Centres are encouraged to give candidates frequent opportunity to evaluate sources during their courses. This should involve a consideration of the reasons and evidence used to support the argument or perspective in the source.

Question 4

In this question, candidates were expected to discuss whether closing the digital divide should be a priority for all governments and justify their opinion using the sources and their own ideas.

The arguments used by candidates mainly related to issues of social justice and inclusion, economic benefits for individuals, businesses and countries, and competing priorities, for example reducing poverty or preventing disease.

Responses at the highest levels tended to have well supported, logical reasoning and make clear judgements about the role of governments. A clear, balanced assessment or conclusion was also reached.

Responses at the lower level tended to be generalised, lack relevance to the issue and simply describe personal opinion, often anecdotally. Arguments tended to be unsupported and asserted.

In preparation for this type of question, centres are encouraged to give candidates regular opportunity to write extended essays in which they contrast and compare different perspectives or potential actions in response to an issue. In so doing candidates need to analyse and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the reasons and evidence for the perspectives or actions. Candidates also need to be able to describe and explain the reasons and evidence that have helped to shape their own points of view on global issues.