

# GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 8004/11

Paper 11

## Key Messages

- Introductions should be brief/succinct and focused on the key words in the question.
- Conclusions should be more than reiterations of the main points already discussed in the essay. An effective conclusion is an evaluation of the content of the arguments or points made in answer to the question.
- The two essays answered **must** be chosen from separate sections of the paper.
- Focus responses to answer the question as set. Identify the key words, for example 'priority' in **Question 6** or 'human spirit' in **Question 5**, rather than allow a word – e.g. 'technology' to trigger an answer to a rather different question.
- Emphasise the argumentative points in your essay, by making clear how EACH paragraph relates to the title.
- Use evidence to support your argument, rather than just tell a story or rely on anecdote.
- Save ten minutes at the end of the examination for careful checking of your work's grammatical accuracy.
- Carrying out a personal estimation of the number of words in an essay.
- Ensure that handwriting is sufficiently clear to be understood.
- Avoid lapses in tone; the overuse of chatty, informal language and expressions.
- Ensure that you respond to questions on topics where you can confidently display your knowledge and offer meaningful examples and illustrations.

## General Comments

In this examination session, there were a variety of strong responses. The importance of reading the question carefully and with attention to every word was generally appreciated. However, responses in a number of cases suggested that some candidates lacked the maturity of judgement and depth of contextual knowledge that are important skills in tackling this examination. In some cases candidates could have scored considerably higher marks had their essays included wider discussion and more variety of technique in the promotion and presentation of alternative arguments, views and perspectives.

There were several very effective and discerning responses, with well sustained and synthesised debate, supported by illuminating examples. These strong responses demonstrate a keen awareness that there are often two (or more) sides to a question. These candidates were not afraid to express an opinion, but they also critically evaluated other points of view. In these responses, candidates had dissected the question, planned their responses in paragraphs that might well have adopted differing viewpoints, and wrote conclusions that proposed their own answers to the questions. Candidates who adhered to this technique in their responses usually scored well.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### Question 1

This question provoked a range of divergent responses from candidates, with most appreciating the value of criticism in an imperfect world. Those who read the question carefully did well by concentrating on **their own** country and not on a variety of countries. Another **key phrase**, 'well-being', when taken into account, enabled candidates to structure well-focussed responses. Several answers to the question built an argument that criticism is part of democratic debate, while others associated the word with negative connotations, for example, lack of patriotism. Some of the best responses considered both points of view. Responses that approached the question as an invitation to criticise **other** countries for their alleged

deficiencies, or equated criticism only with insurrection or rebellion, did not gain as many marks as those that responded to the actual question.

### Question 2

Answers that identified relevant goods and services achieved higher marks than answers that accepted the statement as being obviously true, demonstrating an unquestioning belief in the power of 'hard work' in order to access these goods and services. Responses that discussed access to quality services, medical, legal, housing, education, displayed a sound understanding of the wider economic and social considerations.

In a number of responses, the word 'privileged' was frequently misspelt, though this was written in the question. Candidates should ensure that they check their work carefully to gain the highest possible marks for Use of English.

### Question 3

Answers to this question were a combination of nuanced responses and simpler responses that argued only one side of the possible discussion, such as denouncing some of those who don't work as work-shy people that live off the state and other people's taxes. More nuanced responses recognised the range of ways in which people might contribute beyond paying tax, such as volunteering. There were a few answers that used the opportunity to reflect upon what the real needs of 'society' really are, often scoring high marks. The best essays made the distinction between those who chose not to work in order to fulfil another important role such as that of carer or homemaker, or those whose disability prevented them from contributing to the workforce, and those who were choosing not to work. The examination of benefits or social-security type systems (where some responses argued some adults had less or no incentive to work as the benefits they received could be seen as lucrative) was a viable area of discussion, though when this became the foundation of the entire essay, the candidates effectively restricted their marks because only one major argument was addressed. More balanced answers also offered counter-arguments, such as suggesting that some of those who wish to work are not able to due to high unemployment or inappropriate training. A few answers mentioned the retired, congratulating them on the hard work they had contributed to society.

### Question 4

Many responses to this question discussed China's production of inexpensive goods and alleged fears surrounding the country's military strength and expansion of Chinese geopolitical and economic influence. Only a few responses included more nuanced examples, such as China's development work in Africa, or Chinese domestic concerns, such as pollution. Better answers considered human rights, global economics and culture, but where candidates did not have a secure understanding of China's role in such matters, answers tended to be poorly developed. The key words in this question 'extent' and 'the world' had to be at the forefront of candidates' minds.

### Question 5

This was a very popular question because of the word 'technology'. Responses demonstrated an awareness of the extent and power of technology in candidates' own lives, however, most candidates could have secured higher marks had they presented a more focussed response, particularly defining the phrase 'imprisons the human spirit'. Better answers looked into issues surrounding human contact, communication, learning, and the effects that technology has had on human relationships and family life. A key phrase, 'the human spirit', had to be defined and understood in order to write a focused answer.

### Question 6

Responses to this question generally were able to engage with this question and produce developed arguments on either side, or sometimes both sides, of the debate. Many argued, with some success, that such cases deserved greater priority and there were some very thoughtful and sensitive discussions particularly on the subject of obesity and/or the nature of addiction. Answers that did not recognise nuances of the debates tended to be more limited, though there were a few well-planned and very forthright answers that defended the proposal. Many candidates discussed the strains facing the medical services and the difficulties in treating many people. Only a few candidates, however, engaged with the idea that doctors have a duty to treat everyone irrespective of their condition. The question invited a viewpoint, but to attain the highest marks a balanced consideration of ideas is required before proposing a preference.

The key word in this question is 'priority', required candidates to consider their viewpoint when responding. 'Priority over what?' could have been at the heart of the answer. Responses that talked only about the three dangers without engaging in the proposition were the weakest, but a significant proportion of the responses were sympathetic to the medical and psychological needs of the addicts.

### Question 7

There were a variety of responses to this question. Many responses engaged with the notion that travel by itself may not broaden the mind. These essays not only discussed how travel can broaden the mind, but how the mind can be broadened by, for example, staying at home and reading books. Responses that focussed on the word 'travel' but wrote travelogue, whereas responses need to engage with the proposition to gain higher marks. Responses that identified, defined and engaged with the key concepts of 'broadening', and the matter of 'mind', were often able to attain higher marks. How travel can be a factor in enriching a person's life by learning and experiencing new ideas was noted in the best essays. Moreover several candidates wrote about the difference between travel and tourism, which allowed for real analysis.

Those who offered a list of what can be seen in various holiday destinations did not score well on this question; responses need to engage in discussion and/or debate with the proposition to attain the highest marks.

### Question 8

In the best responses to this question, candidates explained what *statistics* actually are, and how they might be used. The strongest responses noted the importance of the term 'people's lives'. A few responses considered the uses statistics might be put to. In some responses candidates listed a large number of examples of statistical information. Whilst the use of examples to support responses is important, responses need to engage in discussion or debate with the question first and foremost to attain higher marks. Some candidates could have gained higher marks had they ensured that the example they had given were truly statistical in nature.

### Question 9

The better answers realised that 'language' is in the singular not the plural 'languages'. Those who wrote about 'foreign languages' received some credit but not as much as those who wrote about varieties of their own language or languages. Bilingual candidates wrote some very interesting responses. Successful responses discussed the changing ways people communicate in everyday life due to advent of new forms of communication, such as social media. In addition, many responses developed the idea that people's language skills were evolving (not necessarily for the better) because of newer forms of learning in school, such as increased use of computers and a reduction in the use of textbooks. It was stated by some that language has been constantly changing throughout history, giving examples such as Shakespeare to illustrate the point. Slang and Internet language featured prominently, though better answers engaged in wider discussion, such as how language is impacted by changing lifestyles, medicine, technology, and science in general.

### Question 10

Strong answers to this question were able to define 'beauty' and 'modern art', and to give specific examples of art and artists. Many candidates incorporated a diverse range of examples from different art forms, including music, films, painting, murals (Banksy), photography, and not only painting, which was acceptable. When a candidate made good use of a range of examples across the subject area, a very good answer was produced, offering knowledgeable debates about the nature of aesthetics often with interesting and thought-provoking examples.

### Question 11

Strong responses took into account the term 'health and happiness', and there was some interesting insight into issues such as anorexia or depression. Many responses to this question thoroughly engaged with and subscribed to the idea that many young people made sacrifices that might affect their health in order to keep up with contemporary fashion. Examples of celebrities who had paid a price due to this sacrifice were the strength of many essays. Links between diet and mental well-being were subtle inclusions (eat well to feel good and so on). An outline of financial and human costs that were endured in order to achieve health and relative happiness were common and welcome inclusions in good essays.

A number of candidates could have attained significantly higher marks had they addressed the 'fashion' aspect of the question; some candidates did not address this word and wrote more generalised responses based on discussion of image. Responses need to be focused on the question set to attain the highest marks.

### **Question 12**

Responses to this question did attempt to discuss the 'modern' aspect of the question, while recognising the importance of the term 'extent'. Many responses showed evidence that candidates had paid attention to the wording of the question. Consequently many responses demonstrated sufficient historical knowledge to produce a balanced answer rather than rather than writing predominately about modern celebrity itself. These answers discussed the nature of celebrity and fame and considered how long it had existed for and whether its nature had changed over the years and centuries. They made careful distinctions between concepts such as celebrity, fame and historical significance. A few candidates could have gained higher marks by writing about this approach rather than writing about their favourite celebrities without addressing the extent to which 'celebrity' is modern or not. Essays that took a historical perspective did well. Some responses discussed the need for celebrity, often making pertinent points and gaining high marks. Other strong responses explored the role of the modern media and entertainment industry in promoting the cult of celebrity but added that celebrities existed in the past, though in different forms, such as national heroes, changers of society, inventors, composers, playwrights, and even explorers.













