

Version



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2013**

Anthropology

ANTH1

(Specification 2110)

Unit 1: Being Human: Unity and Diversity

Report on the Examination

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General

This examination series saw a continued improvement in the quality of the answers. Students are being more anthropological in their approach, using both detailed ethnographic studies and concepts and theories.

Positive features

- Use of detailed ethnographic studies to show knowledge of the key issues.
- Use of some theoretical and analytical concepts, eg use of Foucault for the question on the body.
- Embedding of theory and concepts in the analysis of the ethnography.
- Knowledge of specific anthropologists, including the date and title of the ethnography.
- A wide range of material was present both between and within centres, indicating that students were discouraged from memorising 'model' answers. Anthropology is such a wide subject that examiners should expect to see considerable variation in the actual ethnographic material presented.

Key Issues

- Students are often trying to gain AO2 marks by 'adding on' a point without firmly embedding the analysis or evaluation in the ethnography. The lists of bullet points in the mark schemes are suggestions of things that might be useful in the right context but they are not worth many marks if they are just mentioned without clearly relating the point to the question. For example, just saying that an anthropologist may be biased, unrelated to the ethnographic material being considered, is not using AO2 skills.
- Students should try to identify exactly who did a study and where it was carried out. Examples must be contextualised. By not contextualising, students are giving the impression that anthropology is a 'collection of facts' about world cultures rather than a 'producer of facts'.
- There was not enough explicit cross-cultural comparison; too often, there was simply the juxtaposition of two cultures.
- Though it is pleasing to see the use of more concepts and theories, they were often used in a very simplistic way. The different theoretical perspectives need to be much more nuanced when analysing and interpreting anthropological data. For example, rather than simply refer to feminists in general, students should refer to specific anthropologists who may be analysing the data from a feminist perspective eg the comparison of Malinowski and Weiner in their studies of the Trobriand Islanders. The term 'postmodern' was frequently used as if this is an unproblematic characterisation of the current period that we are living in.
- Many answers were just long lists of examples related to the issue in the question.
- In some cases, students used the Item when they were told not to or else simply recycled what the Item said.
- In some cases, centres seemed to have taught model answers, with all students giving very similar responses.

Question 01

This was largely well answered, with most students knowing what a hierarchy is. The main problem was that students did not clearly illustrate this with an example that showed the idea of a ranking or structure of levels.

Question 02

This was largely well answered and students had clearly learned about the Azande and why they believe in witchcraft. Some, however, did not recognise that witchcraft explanations are an **addition** to a scientific explanation for the Azande. This made it seem as if the Azande were essentially lacking in logic. Some students confused witchcraft with magic.

Question 03

Some students did not focus on the issue of classification and instead tried to answer it as a 'biocentric versus anthropocentric' question. However, this question showed the ability of stronger students to draw from a wide range of ethnographic as well as conceptual material such as Leach and Sapir-Whorf.

Question 04

Some students used the Item when they were instructed not to. There was a range of different social relations given to illustrate similarities but some students did not focus on social relations.

Question 05

The vast majority of students had a reasonable knowledge of this area of the specification and knew a number of ethnographic studies and relevant concepts. However, the answers often did not focus specifically on the *role* of gift exchange and instead just gave lists of examples. In these answers, there was often no grouping of the examples to find similarities and differences or draw any conclusions. There were often inaccuracies in the ethnographic examples. Relevant concepts were mentioned, such as different forms of reciprocity, but not always used to answer the question.

Question 06

There were many good answers to this question with students clearly having studied this topic in some depth. The best answers made a clear argument that included a discussion of the relative importance of the biological body as opposed to the cultural body. Some students also used some appropriate theories such as Mauss. The main problem was that students sometimes wrote very long answers with example after example of how culture creates the body, without actually making an argument. Students need to use such material to develop their analysis and evaluation. Just listing examples of the body as cultural creation is not an argument in itself.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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