

A-LEVEL

ANTHROPOLOGY

ANTH1 Being Human: Unity and Diversity
Report on the Examination

2110
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ANTH1

General

The quality of answers continues to improve, however like last year, there is considerable variation between schools and colleges. Students are managing to complete all the questions and in most cases are dividing their time appropriately. However, in general students seemed to find this paper harder than previous years, mainly as a result of certain questions that they found more challenging.

Positive features

- Use of detailed ethnographic studies, with knowledge shown of the context and specifics of the society/culture chosen.
- Reference to specific ethnographies, showing evidence of wider reading and knowledge of specific anthropologists.
- A wide range of different ethnographic examples used to answer the questions. Students were able to use interpretive skills to apply what they knew to the questions in a variety of ways.
- Understanding of biological anthropology.
- Some use of theoretical and analytical concepts; the best answers were ones that combined ethnographic detail with analysis.
- Explicit cross-cultural comparison.
- A wide range of material was present both between and within schools and colleges, 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

- Some students had very little knowledge of any anthropological material and tended to rely on illustrative examples that would be known without any study of anthropology, such as examples from history or current affairs. There is a place for applying anthropological concepts to everyday issues but the main support for a point should come from an anthropological source.
- There was evidence of lack of knowledge in some cases about the key terms that are explicitly mentioned in the specification.
- Students' knowledge of ethnographic studies was sometimes incomplete or confused. There was a tendency to get the details wrong or mix up studies.
- Tendency to include a range of ethnographic sources that are appropriate but not use them effectively to answer the question was observed.

- There was overuse of theories without applying them to ethnographic examples. Some answers had no ethnography at all and were largely sociological. It is preferable to begin with the ethnographic data and then see what theories are useful in understanding or interpreting the data and point out that depending on which theoretical perspective is used, different interpretations will arise.
- Items were often just repeated and not actually developed as part of the answer.
- There was the tendency for students to generalise rather than point out the complexity in cultural differences.
- Students need to make sure they focus on the exact wording of the question.

Question 01

Some students did not know the term 'biocentric' despite it is explicitly mentioned on the specification. There was a tendency among some students to just repeat the item as a way of illustrating the concept or the example given to illustrate was just a repeat of the definition but mentioning a group of people who have a biocentric ethic.

Question 02

This question was very well-answered but sometimes the answer was a little too short or a little too long.

Question 03

This question was largely well-answered with a good knowledge of ethnographic examples. Weaker answers did not focus clearly on effects. It was necessary to 'hunt' for the effects in the answer. Some students did not have a completely accurate understanding of the ethnographic examples such as the Kula Ring and Potlach.

Question 04

Students did not on the whole know the difference between witchcraft, as illustrated by the Azande, and magic. Marks were awarded for using Azande witchcraft but the stronger answers focused specifically on magic. Evans-Pritchard distinguishes between witchcraft, oracles and magic in his ethnography. Pagan witchcraft, illustrated by Greenwood, is a form of magic because it is conscious.

Question 05

Students had considerable knowledge of the differences and similarities of the great apes and humans but there was a tendency not to focus on the question. The question asked for the uses of studies in order to understand what it means to be human. Knowledge of similarities and differences is an important part of the answer but there needed to be conclusions drawn from the data. Stronger answers used the studies to discuss whether humans are biologically determined by their evolutionary past or whether studies of the great apes tell us nothing because we have culture.

Question 06

Students answered this in a variety of ways with a range of appropriate ethnographic studies. In this way students were able to show their ability to select material and apply it to the question without producing a 'model' answer. A number of students relied too much on sociological and philosophical theories in their answers. These are certainly appropriate but these need to be used explicitly to interpret anthropological evidence.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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