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# AS-LEVEL **ANTHROPOLOGY**

ANTH1 Being Human: Unity and Diversity  
Report on the Examination

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2110  
June 2015

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Version: 1.0

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## **ANTH1**

### **General**

There was a notable improvement in the quality of answers across centres. Students appeared to find the paper accessible and there were no questions that posed major difficulties. There were a variety of answers to questions, indicating the range of material used by teachers.

### **Positive features**

The positive features are largely the same as last year.

- 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 were 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. There were fewer tendencies to mention theories or analytical points that were unrelated to the main body of the answer.
- Explicit cross-cultural comparison.
- 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**

- The main issue this year was a tendency to include a range of ethnographic sources that are appropriate but not use them effectively to answer the question. Though it was good to see that students have a thorough knowledge of the studies, there was sometimes too much detail and this meant that there was a loss of focus on the question.
- Some students showed 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.
- Students' knowledge of ethnographic studies was sometimes incomplete or confused. There was a tendency to get the details wrong or mix up studies. Though there is some credit for selecting relevant examples, more marks would be gained if the details were correct.

- 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. Theories should not be used for the sake of it.
- Tendency to juxtapose description of different cultures/societies rather than explicitly comparing and finding specific similarities and differences, or arguing for one interpretation over another one.
- 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 should try and identify exactly where and who did a study. This will assist the examiners when they are consulting the mark scheme and they don't see a particular study mentioned.
- Students need to make sure they focus on the exact wording of the question and not on the question that they may have practiced or prepared for.

### **Specific Questions**

#### **Question One**

This question was on the whole answered very well. Students knew the definition and gave an appropriate illustration. Weaknesses were:

- not being specific enough in the definition, eg use of the word 'something'
- example in some cases was too short, eg mention of a behaviour with no detail at all about where the behaviour takes place
- some students used too much time by giving a too detailed example or several examples.

#### **Question Two**

This question confused some students who seemed to misread it by giving an answer that was based on the impact of culture on the natural environment. Those who did answer it correctly were able to provide a range of different types of response which were quite detailed in how an aspect of the natural environment impacted on the culture. Weaknesses include:

- not being specific enough about the identifier in the answer. There was a tendency to mix the initial identifier with the example. Students could still achieve full marks but it made it more difficult for examiners to find the answer
- sometimes the two ways were very similar, eg both examples of the natural environment impacting on material culture.

### Question Three

This question was very well answered. Students clearly had a good knowledge of the ways that the body has adapted to the environment. Often the student knew particular details of the fossil remains and the biological anthropologists who have come up with various theories as to why or how the adaptation took place. A few answered the question in terms of the social environment but these were credited. Weaknesses include:

- some did not explain how the process worked in terms of natural selection
- some did not focus enough on how the adaptation was a response to environmental factors and/or the implications of the adaptation, eg answers might say simply 'allowed humans to survive'.

### Question Four

This question posed the most difficulties for students. Many students had a very good understanding of the different theories/views on the origin of language. However, some students had to adapt what they did know, eg Levi-Strauss, Sapir-Whorf, to answer the question. Some did this very successfully. Some focused on the origin of language in babies/children or in particular situations. These were credited. Weaknesses include:

- not knowing about the theories of the origin of language, eg Dunbar's grooming hypothesis
- poor adaptation of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, giving the ways that language impacted on culture rather than explaining how language emerges in a culture in the first place
- not focusing on origins, but instead on the role of language.

### Question Five

Students had a wealth of knowledge in ways that humans classify. Many students were able to take specific ethnographic examples and focus on what the question was asking - the **role** of classification. Weaknesses include:

- not focusing on the role of classification but instead just giving example after example of ways people classify
- too narrow a focus, eg just focusing on the classification of people, answering it as 'race' question. It is fine to focus on this type of classification but often there were no specific ethnographic examples
- not making the material relevant to question, eg the debate about linguistic determination rather than on the role of language classification in society.

### Question Six

Students knew a lot about kinship and the key concepts. Many harnessed a range of ethnographic examples to support their point. There was largely a good focus on the question with students arguing, largely against the position as stated in the question. There were a range of focuses, eg descent, marriage and who is related to whom. Some of the better answers were able to use biological anthropology in order to make some case for kinship being basically the same in all societies. The Item was used effectively and most students did more than just recycle the Item. Weaknesses include:

- a few students did not have the knowledge of specific kinship structures and gave very general answers
- some answers focused more on gender roles rather than kinship. There is some relationship between the two, but who does what tasks in the house is not the focus of the question. Related to this is a confusion between matriarchal and matrilineal
- some answers did not use the material they presented to argue a point throughout. These students described a range of different kinship set-ups and then concluded at the end. These answers could still gain reasonable marks but to gain top marks students must be thinking of the debate implied by the question throughout the answer.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

## **Converting Marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

[UMS conversion calculator](#)