

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 1340/01
Written Paper

Key Messages

- The amount of time spent answering each question should be allocated according to the number of available marks.
- Candidates must number their questions. There were a significant number who either gave no indication of where one question ended and another began or who wrote their answer as one continuous piece of prose.
- Candidates need to answer the question set and focus on the key words in the question.
- The key skill needed to score high marks is that of evaluation, supported by precise and accurate reference to the document.
- **Question 3** required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison of the content and evaluate the provenance, content and perspectives to reach an overall judgement. This question brings together the skills that have been tested individually in the previous questions.
- Brief and relevant quotations from the documents should be used to illustrate a point and to support arguments; otherwise the answer is generalised or no more than a series of assertions.
- There is no requirement for candidates to bring in any of their own knowledge to answer the questions; it will not gain credit.

General Comments

The documents were accessible to the candidates shown by their engagement with the issues, arguments and views being put forward. Candidates were able to reach judgements about the strengths or weaknesses of the document/s under consideration. There were very few candidates who ran out of time, although once again the allocation of time was an important issue. There were a significant number of candidates who wrote over a side for **Questions 1(a)** and **(b)**, whereas a few lines would have been sufficient. As a result, some answers to the final question were too brief and ideas were not fully developed. Stronger responses selected relevant, concise and appropriate quotes from the documents demonstrating that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being considered.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates scored full marks on this question. Where candidates failed to score full marks it was because they failed to focus on the precise wording of the question, which required the focus to be on the economic benefits of the LEED system, not environmental. In discussing the economic benefits many candidates considered the rental rates, the link to the opening of new business ventures and how this would generate additional jobs. As mentioned in previous reports, candidates do not need to do any more than identify the benefits and this can be done as two bullet points. There were a number of candidates who wrote at length, even some who evaluated the

issues they had raised, but this will not score additional marks and will limit their time for the later questions. An example of a full mark response is:

One economic benefit of the LEED system given by the author of Doc 1 is that LEED certified buildings command 'higher rental rates'. A second benefit is that when LEED buildings catch on they will 'generate additional jobs'.

- (b) A significant number of candidates scored very highly on this question, but as with **question 1(a)**, there were a large number who wrote too much. The question required candidates to summarise the environmental issues. Questions that require responses to summarise involve putting the reasons into the candidate's own words and not simply copying out large amounts of text from the document, when this happens candidates will not score well. The purpose of the question is to test both the candidates understanding of the document, but also their ability to extract the key reasons, in this case in support of the LEED system. There were some responses where candidates did not get beyond identifying some environmental features of LEED and did not go on to develop them or explain them. Many responses focused on the depletion of the earth's natural resources and how these buildings will help to preserve the environment. There were some specific references to energy efficiency, both electrical and water. However, some answers drifted away from environmental issues and wrote about the economic benefits, which was the requirement of question (a). It is vital that candidates read the wording of the question carefully and respond appropriately.

Question 2

Most candidates answered this question reasonably well and had a clear understanding of the requirements of this type of question. It was encouraging to see that a large number of candidates were able to evaluate both the strengths and weakness and therefore access marks at least in Level 2, although there were still some at the lowest level who just described the content of the documents. The better answers used short and appropriate quotations from the document to support their claims and this is the ideal approach. Candidates should avoid both the sweeping generalisations with no specific support and over-long quotations, which detract from the argument being pursued. A good example of the use of short quotations would be:

The author attempts to appeal to the emotion of the reader which in turn weakens his argument and highlights a potential bias. This can be seen when the author uses the inclusive pronoun of 'us' in the phrase beginning – 'those of us'. He follows this by saying 'the part we are playing'. Such emotive language weakens the credibility of his argument because if his argument were sufficiently strong he would have no reason to draw the reader to it.

Many candidates worked through the strengths and then the weaknesses, which sometime meant that the issue under consideration appeared in both parts and the examiner was unsure about the overall conclusion, whereas better answers discussed the strengths and weaknesses of an issue before reaching a judgement about its overall merit. Centres should encourage their candidates to pursue this latter approach.

In discussing the weaknesses of the argument many focused on the unsupported assumptions that were made, such as 'green technology will stimulate job growth.' In a number of responses this was developed further, with candidates commenting that the article was concerned about the economic impact of the new buildings, but failed to provide specific evidence with statistics. The absence of statistics to support many of the claims was picked up by a significant number of candidates. Stronger answers commented on the use of the analogy with green cars and suggested that this did not provide a valid comparison, however this point often needed further development. In discussing the strength of the document candidates were often less convincing, although there was some mention of the perspectives considered in the article and the apparent logic of the argument, although in discussing the latter point evidence from the document would have helped to make the comment more convincing.

Question 3

This question continues to be the one that causes the most difficulties for candidates. Although there were some encouraging signs of candidates attempting to evaluate the documents, there are still a significant number who do not go beyond a simple comparison of the content. Most are able to show an understanding of the views offered by both documents, but are often distracted by this and offer no more than a comparison of the content or views offered. There is also a tendency for many to forget the evaluative skills that they

have applied to the previous questions and this restricts the level that can be achieved. Where candidates do evaluate the documents they should ensure that the evaluation is linked to the actual question, in this case does the evaluation support the view that Document 2 challenges Document 1. As a result of these issues many responses did not get beyond the middle of Level 2.

It might be helpful for candidates to think in terms of the need for the material or evidence they are discussing to be reliable, and only when this is the case can it support or challenge the other document. It might also be useful to think of themes that could be discussed, such as the evidence, and having evaluated it for both documents make an interim judgement as to whether the evidence in Document 2 challenges or supports the views of Document 1.

There were a number of perspectives, such as environmental and economic that candidates considered, with many commenting that Document 2 challenged the views in Document 1 on the environmental efficiency gains. Candidates also questioned the credibility of the authors and their potential for bias and how this affected their reliability. Many responses also considered the evidence for success or otherwise of the LEED system, with responses suggesting that Document 2 successfully challenged the views in Document 1 because it used evidence, such as the 2004 survey, whereas Document 1 was heavily reliant on assumptions.

A number of high level responses considered the extent to which the documents reached a point of synthesis regarding the need for projects in the future. One such response commented:

Document 1 is too forceful in trying to persuade the reader to accept LEED as being 'cutting edge'. In contrast Document 2 is too critical in dismissing the validity of LEED through 'Soviet-style bureaucracy'. Yet taken together both documents reinforce the need for green projects in the future.

There was a great deal that candidates could consider and examiners did not expect all aspects to be discussed, what mattered was the quality of analysis, evaluation and judgement.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 1340/02

Essay

Key Messages

- Successful essays require a clear title in the form of a question. Candidate should be supported by their teachers in formulating a good global question.
- A descriptive approach to writing an essay will not meet the assessment criteria.
- Effective essays require evaluation of perspectives as well as sources. Evaluation of sources needs to look beyond content to their provenance and context.
- Strong essays end with a conclusion based on reflection as well as evaluation of the perspectives.

General Comments

There were some excellent essays this series. The majority of responses were based on appropriate questions; questions which set up a clear response to a globally relevant question, one on which differing positions could justly be described as differing global perspectives.

It is essential that candidates are supported in formulating an appropriate essay question. Guidance on writing appropriate global questions has been provided in previous Principal Examiner Reports to Teachers (PERTs) and teachers are encouraged to read and use this guidance. There is also an optional Outline Proposal Form (OPF) service for teachers wanting further support in this area. This service has undoubtedly helped some candidates, whose initial submissions were of titles that could not lead to successful outcomes.

There were some centres where clusters of candidates attempted identical or very similar questions, and some where several chose identical exemplar sources to evaluate. This often resulted in formulaic responses, lacking real engagement with the issues and personal reflection on them which characterises the strongest responses to this paper. The best responses, without exception, were those which gave the reader the impression that the candidate really felt the title was important and had really made an effort to empathise with the different perspectives, some uncongenial.

There were a few issues of word length this series. It is worth repeating that if an essay is too long, its reflection and conclusion are often not credited, as they usually form the last part of the essay, and therefore fall outside the 2000 word limit. This series the length issue was more commonly seen in the misuse of footnotes. There is nothing wrong with adding supporting comments in footnotes, which can be an effective technique; however if the majority of the evaluation of sources is in the footnotes this is likely to have an adverse effect on the mark awarded, not dissimilar to the loss of the conclusion in essays exceeding the word limit.

A significant minority of the essays were short. Centres are reminded that the word limit is 2000 words. Essays significantly shorter than this are highly unlikely to cover the assessment criteria in sufficient depth for success.

An essay appropriate to another subject will rarely score highly in this syllabus. While the topic area may be identical, the credit lies in the identification and development of the perspectives, which is not necessarily a requirement elsewhere. The result can be an essay which has many virtues but scores poorly as it fails to address several of the required assessment criteria.

While most candidates had clearly worked hard, and communicated to the best of their ability, there was a disappointing minority of responses showing a lack of sufficient care. For example, one candidate wrote: "Scripture states, 'In the beginning the Creator made them male and female. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'" Carelessness like this in quotation, particularly when the quotation is a well-known one, is unnecessary and makes the work less convincing.

Candidates should be encouraged to proof read their work carefully prior to submission.

Comments on Specific Questions: examples of differing practice

An example of a good global question is given below:

Are languages and cultures practiced by only a few people worth protecting?

This is a variation on the ever reliable “should” question. This question, if properly addressed, would elicit an appropriate response. There is the opportunity for a global treatment, in terms both of the languages and cultures used as examples and of the world views implied by giving different answers. It is a fact that such languages and cultures are under threat. It is an opinion that they are worth protecting. The candidate would be able to offer a personal perspective and reflect on how this may, or may not, have changed during the research process.

We can also learn from considering examples of less effective practice. Three examples of questions requiring an improvement are given below:

- “To what extent should Euthanasia be legalised globally?” Here both ‘to what extent’ and ‘globally’ are redundant. Globally might have the virtue of reminding the candidate that the response to euthanasia is very different in different cultures and societies but ‘to what extent’ is a misnomer. The candidate presumably means ‘under what circumstances, if any’, but is not thinking clearly. This is an ideal topic, in that there multiple arguments and potential lines of approach, but the title requires refinement. A better question would be - Should euthanasia be legalised?
- “To what extent is the Islamist terrorist threat genuinely a threat?” ‘To what extent’ is an active danger in this question. It presupposes an assessment, a pulling together towards a consensus on an appropriate answer. Moreover, the essay will require very careful definition of the word ‘threat’, if it is to address the question set. The candidate has set up an unnecessarily difficult task. A better question would be - Is Islamic terrorism a genuine threat to the west?
- “What is the most successful way to learn a foreign language?” This is a question of different opinions about how to achieve a shared goal: not necessarily a contrast of global perspectives. In fact the answer did attempt contrast but it was clear there was not enough difference: for example, one could deny that total immersion is the best way, but not that it can be hugely effective, where possible and appropriate. Moreover, it has been said before, and academic debate does not necessarily qualify as global. In this instance it is difficult to phrase a suitable question as there is no contrast of global perspectives. Everyone wants to teach the language as well as possible, so it is a discussion of technique towards a shared end rather than a debate between different views about what the end should be.

Finally in relation to questions, one candidate wrote:

“From my research, there was not enough information to form an argument.” If this is the case, then an examiner is likely to think that if an argument cannot be constructed - the question was clearly not a good one. It cannot be stressed too highly that the choice of a question on which there are genuinely contrasting global perspectives is the first task of the candidate. It could be argued that this is a demanding task. It is. Teachers should be supporting candidates in the formulation of a good question and the OPF service is there to use when needed.

The skill of evaluation is crucial in constructing a good global perspectives essay. Effective evaluation moves well beyond assertion to use external evidence in evaluating a point or source. Comments such as ‘the reasoning is weak’ or ‘it is based on an unwarranted assumption and therefore flawed’ are almost meaningless unless the candidate specifies what the weakness/assumption is and why it is flawed. Examples of unsuccessful evaluation:

- *“Additionally, her argument demonstrates lack of reasoning making it an unwarranted assumption, and because her perspective is based on her background (coming originally from Nigeria) it is biased.”*

There needs to be some support for these assertions. To attack a source in this way requires some external evidence.

Some candidates conflate the concepts of bias with opinion. One wrote:

- *“I feel that there is a vested interest in the source as I believe that we should eradicate child soldiers from society and allow children to live a normal life. However the source is not very neutral - it is a one sided article to show what is being done and why it is a good thing to be done.”*

Being one-sided does not necessarily make something biased.

Another wrote:

- *“He does not use evidence except his own experience in the field which shows a little bias, but still makes it credible because he knows what goes on in the field.”*

A person’s expertise and experience do not necessarily make them biased.

A better use of the concept of bias can be seen by the following comment:

“Both interviewees may have provided a biased point of view and their neutrality can be questioned. This is because both are local business people in Kenya. Due to the influx of European and American goods, this may have led to the decrease in competitiveness in Eva and Andrew’s respective businesses. It can be said, both of them have vested interests in the matter as they do have something to gain/lose i.e. business revenues”.

Candidates should be aware of the meaning of ‘bias’ – it is increasingly over and often incorrectly used. Bias is based on the action of supporting or opposing something in an unfair way, often allowing personal opinion to influence a judgement. So, in the case of using first-hand experience in the field, this would only be biased if it was based on personal judgement. Separating personal experience from personal judgement is incredibly difficult (if at all possible) so it would seem very harsh to accuse those using their experience of being biased.

The most successful essays, and in this series there were many, were characterised by simple, appropriate questions which were then addressed with even-handedness and reflection on the candidate’s own perspective, awareness of limitations and the way forward. It appeared from responses such as these that the candidate was really thinking. It is to be hoped that as well as the immediate goal of success in the paper, these candidates have been rewarded by finding that their appreciation of their chosen topic has been enriched and matured.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 1340/03
Presentation

Key Messages

- Successful presentations tend to locate a clear, single focus within the pre-release material.
- Perspectives should be clearly and separately identified, and individual sources should be organised within these.
- Candidates should allocate space in their presentations for elaborated, supported conclusions.

General Comments

Responses to the Pre-Release Material

As was the case in June 2014, and as is now a well-established pattern, the pre-release material created two clear alternative options for candidates in a major topic (youth unemployment) and a minor topic (robotics), the latter comprising a smaller number of documents (and in this case only consisting of Document 7). Either topic offers equal possibilities as the starting point for a presentation: Centres should be reminded that the rubric of the material only asks candidates to 'engage directly with an issue, an assumption, evidence and/or line of reasoning in one or more of the documents'. The focus is on using this to identify and reflect on alternative perspectives using their own research, rather than remaining with the materials themselves. The most successful presentations took up this invitation, formulating questions focused on an area within the topic of youth unemployment or within developments in robotics. The significant minority of candidates who attempted to combine the two topics, with questions such as, 'To what extent do robots cause youth unemployment?', generally found it more challenging to produce a sharply focused line of argument. More successful presentations also located a specific conceptual framework within one or more of the documents and used this to organise their research: *laissez-faire* economics in Document 2, for example, or Government intervention in Document 1. Alternatively, they isolated a particular line of questioning in Document 7, such as robot ethics. As long as these conceptual foci are linked to the evaluation of arguments and evidence in specific supporting sources, they serve as effective means of organising perspectives. More descriptive accounts of the youth employment situation did not tend to produce the same effective debates. Some candidates took Document 4's argument about the relationship between practical and academic skills as the starting point for a debate about the effectiveness of different educational routes. As long as these made sufficient global contrasts between different educational practices then they worked effectively, particularly if they had a genuine perspectival focus on the difference between academic and vocational approaches.

Perspectives and sources

The June 2014 report contained detailed discussion on the distinction between overall perspectives and individual sources, and the most successful candidates continue to be able to handle this precisely and sensitively. They have an understanding that an overall position, or perspective, is supported by underlying, individual source arguments and evidence which must be treated synthetically. For example, one candidate posed the question of whether political stability in the Middle East relies on employment opportunities for its youth, drawing on Jeffrey Sachs's discussion in Document 3. The economic basis for political stability was unfolded through a variety of economic commentators, their arguments closely linked together, and opposed to a linked succession of political scientists articulating alternative determining factors for political stability. The result was a coherent and logical line of argument, where sympathetic reflection on each perspective was supported by the synthesis of a range of relevant and credible sources. Another example of the effective integration of sources into larger perspectives was a presentation which asked the question, 'Should the problem of unemployment should be left to the free market, or reduced through government intervention?' clearly organising sources in the pre-release booklet in relation to perspectives:

Document 2 presents the perspective that employment law should be relaxed in order to free up the job market, and allow workers to be justifiably dismissed and then open up their jobs for those looking for employment, rather than having a closed-off job market. This contrasts with Document 1's perspective that young workers are fired too frequently due to a lack of experience, and their job security should be increased. A way to achieve this is through the education reform measures detailed more thoroughly by Document 4. Employment law deregulation could be implemented effectively alongside pathways for young people to get into work, such as apprenticeships and job placements, to ensure that they get the experience they need, and I think the two do not have to necessarily be mutually exclusive.

Here, each source is first located within a wider perspective, and these are both opposed and combined where necessary as an organic part of the argument which is being advanced. The only clear opportunity for further improvement here would be to more closely integrate the candidate's own research beyond the confines of the pre-release material. Other presentations, on the other hand, tended to elide the notion of a perspective with that of a source:

My first perspective comes from the article "Education reform is not only necessary, it is essential" by Chris Skidmore and Neil Carmichael. Chris Skidmore studied at Oxford along with being a Dixon Scholar and president of the oxford university historical society. ... The first perspective's argument is that education reform is essential to benefit candidates. The reasons for his argument are that business leaders call for reform on exams to make them rigorous and challenge candidates more.

By naming the source before summarising the perspective, the two in this case are not *clearly* differentiated, and this makes it harder for the presentation as a whole to score in Level 3 or above for those aspects of the mark scheme which focus on perspectives. In addition, there is a primary focus on source credibility before summarising the argument made. More effective presentations demonstrate that all of their sources are credible through the selections they have made, rather than assessing this at length for each source used in the presentation. This allows more space and focus for the evaluation of perspectives, and the ways in which the arguments and evidence researched support them. It is certainly true, however, that candidates who are supported to specifically name sources within a larger debate and spend some time assessing them individually will almost inevitably gain a profile of Level 3 achievement, an excessive focus on sources to the detriment of perspectives and the larger debate will prevent overall achievement from moving much further beyond this.

Conclusions

It is worth also saying something more about the importance of effective conclusions. These are specifically assessed in the final bullet point of the mark scheme and a candidate's performance in their conclusion can either significantly support or limit their final mark. A very small minority of candidates produced presentations which were in excess of 15 minutes, and the effect of this was to severely curtail or eliminate their conclusion, as any material over the 15 minute mark could not be assessed. A more common problem was a very brief conclusion, even following an argument which was detailed and evaluated perspectives in the light of evidence from sources. For example, this was the complete conclusion made by a candidate to the question 'To what extent is work experience more important than academic qualifications for securing employment for youth?'

In conclusion I still believe that Work experience is more important than Academic qualifications for employing the young, however with the increase in STEM jobs, qualifications and Work experience complementing each other exponentially will dramatically increase employment, more so if the education system is changed.

Its length limits it to a series of partially reflective assertions. In order to produce a conclusion which incorporates reasoning, evidence and reflection and therefore achieves at least in Level 3, a two-stage approach is most advisable. The most secure and well grounded conclusions are those in which the candidate summarises key strengths and weaknesses in each of the perspectives they have considered, and then uses this to explicitly reach a judgement.

Comments on Specific Questions

Much has been written in previous reports to teachers on the importance of question setting and Centres are encouraged to consult these, both for Paper 2 and Paper 3. In both cases, the requirement for candidates to formulate their own question, with the support of a teacher, is a key factor in their overall success. Question setting was generally effective in this series and most candidates realised the most important requirement, which is to focus on a specific debate, where there are arguments on both sides and a judgement can, in principle, be reached. If this is then placed into a global context then it is stronger still. A straightforward, relevant debate, in this sense, often produces the best outcomes:

Can governments solve the growing problem of youth unemployment?

Or,

Should the demand for jobs be increased in order to overcome youth unemployment?

On the other hand, descriptive questions are not so effective:

Have countries adopted targeted measures to support youth employment?

Such cases were, however, rare, and centres are, in general, clearly supporting candidates to produce effective questions.