GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

| Paper 9777/02 |
| Essay |

Key Messages

- Centres need to remember to label candidates' files correctly as explained in the document *Submitting Global Perspectives Work to Cambridge*, available on the Teacher Support Site and on CIEDIrect.
- Titles should always take the form of a question.
- A good choice of exemplar sources is a significant advantage in that it helps set up a convincing argument.
- Candidates need to address the limitations of their sources and the need for further research.

General Comments

There was much to praise during this series. Centres have clearly taken on board the need to encourage their candidates to choose topics that really interest them. The result was some thoughtful and insightful responses.

The vast majority of essays were within word limit, which is rigorously enforced. Examiners do not read beyond the 2000 words. Given that reflections, conclusions and awareness of limitations and research often come right at the end of an essay, the occasional over-long response penalised itself. It is noticeable that many strong essays were 100 or 200 words short of the word limit and this is evidence that candidates are able to address the question within the limits set. There were only a few very short essays which tended to lack either width or depth of analysis and evaluation. Another pleasing feature was the quality of the bibliography and citation of sources in the great majority of responses. This is important, and it was good to see candidates taking care with this.

As ever, some Centres had done more to support their candidates in choosing an appropriate question. Previous reports have highlighted the need for candidates to pose themselves a question which sets up a debate between differing global perspectives. It was very noticeable that in some Centres all the candidates knew to do this while in others a significant number did not. Past published materials, including past PERTs (Principal Examiner's Reports to Teachers), have explained this and given examples. To summarise the advice, a sound question might well start with the command word "should". This sets up a question where there are "shoulds" and "should nots": people who would argue both sides clearly. Against this, "to what extent" is less likely to produce an appropriate response, as it is more likely to lead towards a consensus. It is important that a candidate answers a question on which it is possible to produce a strong conclusion and often "to what extent" questions make this difficult. Candidates have a right to their own opinions, their own global perspectives. What is expected is that they should show empathy and respect for those which they do not share. A strong conclusion, therefore, is not only founded on the text of the argument but also – and this is the place for reflection – demonstrates an awareness of the alternate position or positions.

After the careful choice of question, the choice of sources to support each perspective is crucially important. The strongest essays use what could be termed 'exemplar sources' to exemplify the global perspectives being considered. These exemplar sources must be credible. These sources can then be evaluated in the context of the perspective and the wider context of the essay. This can be detailed, if only one source is chosen for each perspective, or less so if a range of sources is marshalled to support each side of the debate. Candidates should avoid evaluating a source out of context, so statements such as "the article lacks credibility because it is more than five years old" adds little if anything to the evaluation of a source, context of an essay or undersanding of a global perspective.

The criteria of assessment must be addressed. Candidates who are not clearly aware of these are liable significantly to underachieve. An example of this seen this session was an essay entitled "the plight of Indian women". The essay took the form of a well-written and engaging overview, but the largely descriptive treatment, coupled with the absence of any specific reference to exemplar sources, meant that the candidate had done very little that could be credited under the assessement criteria as used in the mark scheme. We strongly advise candidates to read the syllabus: it is in the public domain. We also strongly advise candidates to make use of the Outline Proposal Form service. This gives an opportunity for candidates to gain feedback on titles which are unlikely to enable them to address the criteria. There were a few candidates who submitted essays which gave the appearance of being prepared to different subjects. These were essays of real quality but, again, not addressing issues in the way required by the subject. There may very well be overlap between what the candidate is studying in Geography, Philosophy or Religious Studies for example and the title which can be submitted for Global Perspectives. It is however very unlikely that the structure of the questions submitted will be equally applicable for both subjects. There is nothing to stop candidates building on knowledge that they have gained elsewhere for this essay but the essay itself needs to be planned for the assessment criteria in *this* syllabus.

Easily the weakest section most essays was the recognition of limitations and the need for further research. Some candidates add on a comment along the lines of "if I had more time I would research this further". Many ignored this section completely. Its purpose is with the candidates to be able to demonstrate their awareness of the limitations of their own knowledge and understanding of the global issue they are dealing with. The nature of the further research is bound to vary hugely according to the nature of the subject. There are some questions, such as those dealing with environmental issues, where the future is unclear and some, notably ethical, questions where much of the discussion is unlikely to be changed by future discovery. There are also some questions where research into one of the global perspectives under discussion is much more difficult than the other. The best responses to this criterion should awareness of limitations in their evaluation of the exemplar sources and also in caveats to their conclusions. An awareness of the need for further research was also often a feature of balanced, nuanced conclusions.

The following extract from a strong essay has several characteristics which may be helpful for teachers and candidates. The title was "What theoretical model of conservation is most effective?"

Despite the unifying presence of UNEP, many governments recurrently fail to commit. This was voiced by Guardian journalist Monbiot[1]1, in context of the Nagoya[2] summit where governments were 'invited' to set targets, framing any specific targets in square brackets, hence contesting their adoption. Del Mar believes the 'traditional' goals of economic prosperity in Western nations disrupt the political will to conserve. A stinging critique of Western countries was delivered by Dasgupta[4], writing for The Times of India, who compared UN objectives with what they achieved - 'the sharp decline in economic activity in (Soviet) economies... resulted in a corresponding reduction in (agreeing countries')... emissions', implying that targets met were attributable to chance, yet were 'trumpeted' as successes. The US, which alone emits 7% of global emissions, rejected the Kyoto protocol, yet it has often pressed India to sign up to limits. India, however, traditionally perceived as 'obstinate' (Yardley[6]), is not concerned with '(saving) the planet' but rather with '(accommodating) the rights and aspirations of millions of Indians' (M. Singh, TIME), for whom industrialization will bring increased standard of living

Throughout, this essay was extremely well supported by cited and referenced sources. Although not a formal requirement this candidate did use footnotes to add to the essay. It should be noted that this is a tactic which can be effective as it was in this case. However, the Examiners are very alert to the word limit. The word limit of this essay was given at just over 1,900 words and this was checked. The comments in the footnotes were therefore noted. Had they taken the total to over 2000 words, they would have been ignored. A second feature of this extract is the way the candidate handles the global nature of the discussion. An Indian perspective is put by an Indian. Throughout, the essay not only dealt with global issues but gave them fully global treatment, obtaining a Level 4 for this criterion. This is a characteristic of the strongest

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[1] Monbiot has 28 years of experience in environmental journalism and has filmed the documentary Amazon Watershed, about the illegal logging practices in the Amazon that affected the local tribespeople's livelihoods. He now writes exclusively for the environment section of the Guardian newspaper.

[2] Only a third of countries even sent a minister to Nagoya. Only two heads of state were present

essays. More modest responses regularly address different perspectives but the non-Western one is voiced by a Western commentator. It can also be seen in this extract that the candidate used a number of exemplar sources, quoting and briefly evaluating each. This is just as acceptable as an in-depth evaluation of as few as two exemplars. What matters is that the exemplar of sources genuinely exemplify the perspectives and do not merely commentate on them.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

> **Paper 9777/03**
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> **Presentation**

Key Messages

- Stronger presentations make use of the resource booklet to frame a clearly global debate

- Successful presentations carefully locate sources using arguments and perspectives

- Communication is rewarded for clarity and coherence of argument

- Effective question setting remains important.

General Comments

It was very pleasing to see a continuing trend this session of candidates responding to the guidance in previous Principal Examiner's reports and crafting presentations which responded to the requirements of the mark scheme and the spirit of the qualification. This produced work of the very highest quality in a number of candidates but also meant that the work submitted was able to respond effectively to the sources and debates in the resource booklet across the ability range.

At the same time, a number of candidates from a smaller number of Centres would benefit from a reading of this and previous reports as well as the study of the exemplar scripts which are available on the Teacher Support website. For this reason, there is also some specific guidance here for how these presentations might have more closely and effectively matched the requirements of this component.

Responding to the resource booklet

In the main, candidates are rewarded for their ability to construct effective, evidence-based arguments which engage genuinely with alternative perspectives and use that engagement to come to well-grounded conclusions. However, the sources and debates within the resource booklet are there to support candidates, and can facilitate effective responses across the range of achievement if they are used in this way. The documents for this session were concerned with the conflict between freedom of information and the need for security and privacy, with a particular focus on the Internet. In this way, there were some clear debates on topics which were familiar and engaging to candidates, and nearly all of the work submitted did engage in debate rather than conveying information only (which is not rewarded). The very strongest work used this effectively to focus a debate that was explicitly global:

> Recent events such as the 'whistle-blowing' of Edward Snowden, the leaking of confidential government documents by Wikileaks and the censorship of media in countries such as China and Egypt have significantly brought freedom of expression and the 'right to know' centre stage in discussions about the value of liberty across the globe. However, this worldwide debate can be further expanded; is there a limit to our freedom and, if so, where is it?

This type of focus even supported weaker work, such as this presentation which still began with the global nature of the Internet and the debate around the WikiLeaks controversy 'which has released secret information from many a country. All these secrets would never have reached the public's knowledge if it was not for the Internet. Which begs the question, should governments regulate the Internet?'

Some candidates engaged explicitly with the resource booklet at the outset but did this by identifying a less central aspect. One candidate, for example was led to 'the sustainability of the Chinese communist party' on the basis of Document 4's discussion of Internet censorship in China and the simultaneous establishment of

the country as 'a major international player'. If argued in this way, presentation can establish at least some global significance and a basis in the source materials. However, others limited themselves by focusing, for example, only on the US legislative framework for freedom of speech and national security.

Arguments and perspectives

The Principal Examiner's report for the June 2013 session set out the distinction between arguments and perspectives in this way: 'an argument is a line of reasoning leading to a specific conclusion, either made by the candidate or located by them in a specific source. A perspective is a coherent world view which responds to an issue, made up of argument, evidence and assumptions which may come from a particular context.' Many candidates now have a clear understanding of this which is assisting them in creating effective presentations which engage with different perspectives. One candidate did this with his question 'Should America act as a global police force?' (in response to Document 7). By keeping a firm distinction between sources and perspectives he was able to identify both Arab political and US economic perspectives against intervention (each supported by different sources) but also to contrast a number of sources which have an ideologically interventionist perspective. Constructing their presentation in this way allowed the candidate to identify more than one 'point of synthesis' between sources in constructing each perspective and then to combine all in this part of their strong final judgement:

> Max Boot's sound and well-supported argument, supported by Clark and The Heritage Foundation, for the necessity of America, as an economically, ideologically and military strong power, to act as a global police force in the absence of an effective alternative body, remains ostensibly unchallenged by the opposing perspective, which, whilst recognising the necessity of establishing a peace-keeping force, does not offer reasonable alternatives.

Not only are arguments and perspectives firmly differentiated, but this is used as the basis for the sustained synthesis of a range of sources. In this way, the candidate is meeting more than one criterion for high level achievement. Other candidates, however, persisted in referring to individual arguments as 'perspectives' which inhibited their ability to combine individual sources into larger perspectives and respond to them.

Evaluating the credibility of sources

Given the assessment objectives for this syllabus, it is clear that some evaluation – of whatever sort – will be rewarded more than no evaluation at all. However, the quality and relevance of evaluation also matters, and is worth considering especially for candidates who wish to move from the middle to upper levels of the range of assessment. Consider, for example, the way in which these two candidates contextualise a source:

(a) Robert Cryer is a professor of international and criminal law at Birmingham Law School. He holds a doctorate in his field of study and has released several publications about international law already. He has no readily clear bias or vested interest and can then be considered a reliable source.

(b) Kenan Malik, a renowned British political campaigner for free speech, is of the perspective that hate speech, online and elsewhere, should not be banned.

Although more concise, candidate **(b)** has situated Malik relevantly in terms of the perspective to which he subscribes. There is also an implied understanding of the ideological bias this brings which will be developed in evaluating his argument. Candidate **(a)** on the other hand has recorded more detail about the provenance of their source but does not focus this in terms of its perspective. They also assume that education and academic expertise automatically demonstrate neutrality, rather than considering how even reliable evidence might well be being presented to reinforce a particular set of assumptions.

Communication

An important aspect for candidates to consider is an appropriate response to AO4 – Communication – in their presentations. This has a significant weighting for this component, but is assessed through the candidate's ability to communicate argument effectively, rather than the generic usage of a range of presentational devices. In other words, the audience should be engaged by the coherence of the presentation's structure and the precision of the evidential support it offers. This is best achieved through detailed, scripted argument which fully exploits the 15 minutes of delivery time which is permitted. There is no requirement for this to be delivered live – PowerPoint presentations with audio tracks, or electronic posters with a recorded commentary are equally acceptable, along with a number of other formats, and many candidates may be better assisted by being allowed to construct their presentations in this way.

Having said that, there were a great many excellent live presentations this session which delivered a carefully prepared argumentative script with the support of visual aids. It was their communication of argument which was assessed though, not the visual aids or any other presentational devices in themselves. This was significant for a number of candidates from some Centres who chose to utilise audience interaction, play extended video clips or even use other candidates to act out dramatic scenes. Interesting and often entertaining as these additions were, they did not add elements which could be rewarded under the mark scheme and took time away from the communication of argument and evidence.

On the topic of time, it should also be observed that the most effective presentations worked efficiently to present their strongest, most detailed and coherent arguments just within the 15 minute maximum time. A number of other candidates, however, gave presentations which were substantially shorter than this, and in some cases significantly under 10 minutes. Considering the requirements which are tested for this component and its weighting of 45% of the Global Perspectives qualification, it is expected that candidates undertake enough research and develop sufficient argument to fill the allowed 15 minutes in order to be able to access the middle and upper ranges of achievement.

Comments on Specific Questions

The positive trends noted in previous reports have continued in question setting. Most candidates and Centres now appear to recognise that a key feature of both Papers 2 and 3 is that candidates must formulate their own question as part of the process of learning and teachers need to support them in creating effective questions and giving them feedback on their efforts. Some questions tended to be presented as statements – 'Revolution, Jihadi Terrorism and the Role of the Internet', for example – or as questions which just called for descriptive explanation: 'What are the Global Perspectives regarding the Wikileaks issue?' Neither of these strategies helps to focus a debate leading to an evaluative judgement. Occasionally, questions were correctly focused yet created a debate lacking in genuine alternatives: 'Can a revolution be effective without social media?', for instance, is problematic insofar as there have been a number of revolutions in history which were very effective without social media. Focused, direct but open debates, such as 'Should our governments censor material on the Internet?' or 'Should online hate speech be banned?' were much more effective.