

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

Paper 9239/01

Paper 1

Key Messages

Candidates should ensure they read the questions carefully and answer the actual question set. This was particularly relevant in **Question 2** where several candidates evaluated the argument rather than the evidence as required in the question.

The length of the answer should reflect the number of marks available. Many candidates spend too long on **Question 1** and **2** and leave insufficient time for the demands of **Question 3**.

The key skill, particularly in **Question 3**, needed to score high marks, is that of comparative evaluation, supported by precise reference to the passage and in relation to the question set.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content in order to evaluate the provenance, perspectives and argument to reach an overall judgment.

Brief and relevant quotations from the documents should be used to support arguments otherwise the answer is generalised or no more than a series of assertions or claims and will not reach the higher levels. This is crucial in **Questions 2** and **3**.

Candidates will not gain credit by bringing in material from their own knowledge from outside the documents.

The strongest responses reached a supported judgment about the issue under consideration.

General Comments

The overall standard of the responses was encouraging. There was no evidence of candidates misunderstanding the passages and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. There were a number who did not pay careful enough attention to either the marks available or the command words in the questions and this limited the level achieved particularly in **Questions 2** and **3**. It is encouraging to see some candidates applying the higher level skill of comparing the argument put forward in the passages in **Question 3**, although several simply compared content or repeated, without evaluation, the argument of the authors. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning for the higher mark questions and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

In **Question 2** several candidates assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument rather than the evidence used. It is important to carefully read, and understand, the question.

There were very few candidates who ran out of time, although the allocation of time relative to the number of marks available is an important issue. There were some candidates who wrote extensively on **Question 1a** and **1b** whereas a few lines would have been sufficient.

As a result, some answers to **Question 3** were not fully developed or supported by precise reference to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents demonstrating that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being considered and reached a supported judgment about the issue in the question.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

- (a) Only **brief** statements were required here having been identified in the text.

For example: “*Apps open directly into play mode and children are able to control the action.*”
These are two separate points so were awarded two marks.

- (b) The question required the identification and explanation of two benefits. Many candidates were able to identify a benefit from the author’s words but found the explanation, in their own words, much more difficult. A common approach was to continue extensively quoting the author which did not enable candidates to gain the explanation marks.

An example of a developed statement, awarded two marks is: “*The author thinks that the author can hold young children’s attention [Identification mark] which can help children with ADHD. This is because there are helpful functions, such as, talking software and multiple points of activity provided by the devices.*” [Explanation mark]. The information is provided in the passage but reworded by the candidate.

Question 2

It was important in **Question 2** to read the requirements of the question carefully. Several candidates did not recognise the need to address the evidence used and instead evaluated the strength and weakness of the argument. Although candidates used some evidence in their answer, several placed the emphasis of the answer towards argument so, for them, higher level marks were not able to be achieved.

A strong approach was to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the same piece of evidence in the same paragraph.

A good example of recognising a strength was:

“*US non-profit group, Common Sense Market convinces the readers that, as a not for profit organisation it reduces its chance of having a vested interest.*”

A weakness was:

“*However, as it is an advisory group supporting parents, it might not be neutral as is could be prejudiced on this subject presenting information from the parents’ view.*”

This could also have been developed to explain that the origin of the evidence is in US and therefore may not reflect a global perspective.

It was perfectly acceptable, also, to look at strengths and weaknesses as separate sections. Several candidates successfully used this approach.

Question 3

There were two main approaches used to answer this question. The first was to discuss the argument of the author of Document 1 separately from that of Document 2 and then attempt to synthesise the arguments to come to an overall judgment. This approach, for many, was only partially successful as the more difficult evaluation came at the end of the answer and was often limited in its scope. This approach also encouraged candidates to give much narrative description, in particular extensively quoting from what the authors stated rather than undertaking evaluation of the convincing nature of the argument. This limited the marks gained.

The second approach was to directly compare the two documents throughout the answer. The best candidates achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each approach. There was no correct answer and candidates could, and did, argue that Document 1 or Document 2 were more credible. Those scoring lower marks tended to directly compare the content of the passages without evaluating relative strengths. Many candidates were able to pick out the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility of the authors and the amount of supporting evidence. Answers were frequently

superficial and relied on undeveloped quotes from the text. The better candidates used the second method as they were able to methodically evaluate the relative strengths of the argument before coming to an appropriate judgment at the end.

“Document 2 is stronger than Document 1 by providing a wider range of perspectives for the readers. In Document 1, it was presented from mostly social and educational perspectives but Document 2 recognised the addition of health and psychological perspectives.”

In terms of credibility of the author a strong evaluation was: *“Tan Ly-ann is an educational journalist with her article being published in the South China Morning Post. It is most probably reviewed by an editor to ensure accuracy, whereas Document 2, written by Jodie Gale was published as a blog on her own website with no such checks.”*

It is very important for candidates to achieve the Level 3 category that they come to an overall judgment as to which of Document 1 or 2 has the stronger argument. It should be clearly understood that there is nothing in the question that implies that one is stronger than the other so a candidate can come to either conclusion. The key to gaining higher marks is to clearly justify their reasoning for this conclusion.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

Paper 9239/02

Paper 2

Key Messages

- It is vital that candidates be aware of the assessment objectives. Ideally, they should have access to the syllabus, and their teachers need to make clear to them what is expected.
- However great the merits of an essay may be, if it does not address the assessment objectives it cannot score highly. An essay converted from another discipline, such as Economics, Geography, Philosophy or Religious Studies, is unlikely to score highly, though of course much of the material used might be the same.
- One of the assessment objectives is the evaluation of sources.
- Length is checked. Work beyond the 2000 word maximum will not be included in the assessment, excluding the title, references, and footnotes.
- Submission must not be in PDF as examiners need to check the length of essays.

General Comments

This is an assessed essay. That means the candidate has the task of setting the question addressing the assessment objectives in their answer. Very occasionally, centres have given candidates not only topics but even questions, and taught the topic extensively. This does not help the candidates as much as might be thought. It tends to lead to formulaic responses lacking originality. Where a candidate chooses a subject of real personal interest, that interest and empathy tend to show and the reflection tends to be of a higher standard.

This does not mean that the candidates should face this demanding task alone. Centres have this series on average provided little assistance and could have supported their candidates more effectively. There are several things the centre is recommended to do: it appears that some centres are not offering candidates sufficient or clear guidance on the essential characteristics of a good Global Perspectives essay. There are basic issues including the citation of sources, balance between perspectives and a meaningful conclusion, based on the evidence. The title and topic may be the candidates' own, but they need to have practised the skills beforehand. Most candidates had been taught how to produce a bibliography, which is required, though it is of limited value if the essay does not make it clear where the sources have been used.

Length of essays was an issue for some candidates. They must be absolutely clear that the examiners do not read beyond 2000 words. There is nothing wrong with putting supporting material in footnotes: this can be useful. However, allowance must be made for this in the overall length of the piece. It is worth noting that some very strong essays were little over 1900 words in length.

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Choosing an essay title

The first thing the examiner sees, is the title. If that title is verbose, or does not set out clearly a debate between two global perspectives, then the candidate has not signposted to the examiner what to look for. Keep it clear, keep to a single contrast of perspectives, keep it a question rather than an assessment. These are the sort of things the candidates need to be reminded of and where their teachers can really help. This is why it has been remarked, not least in past PERTs (Principal Examiner Reports for Teachers) and other materials published by the Board, that a question starting with the word "should" tends to work well. Should

give a sense of “is it right to...” and clearly there will be a disagreement, and the candidate is led naturally into the sort of essay which addresses the assessment objectives. The first task may be to choose a topic on which there are differing global perspectives. The teacher can help with that, though the best essays are nearly always those where the candidate’s personal interest and engagement shines through. No amount of coaching can equal this.

Immediately following this, however, is the most important single task of all: to choose the title. The title must be in the form of a question, and that question must be one which would be answered contrastingly by people with differing global perspective on an issue. Past PERTs on this and its preceding qualifications have given examples of good and bad titles, but it may be helpful to take an issue and see how the question the candidates set themselves can help, hinder or even frustrate a successful response.

In the current troubled state of some parts of the world, immigration is an issue widely discussed, and evoking strongly contrasting responses. If we take this as a subject that interests a candidate, what sort of question could help or hinder?

“...” – no title. A minority of candidates this series failed to pose a question, leaving the examiner to try to work out what global perspectives are being addressed. This is automatically a hindrance to clarity, and is treated as such.

“Discuss the problems faced by MEDCs with the current rising levels of immigration.” Some centres seemed to think this was a good question structure, as a large number of their candidates used it. It is unhelpful. Contrasting perspectives can emerge, but a descriptive approach or an overview of the problem are much more likely, with far too little emphasis on the debate or the people who hold the differing perspectives.

“To what extent is immigration happening in European countries?” This is unhelpful as it requires an assessment not a debate. There may be arguments, but it is in fact not looking for one, rather for an accurate reading of statistics.

“To what extent is immigration a problem for European countries?” This is better, as at least there is the potential for differing opinions, global perspectives, to emerge.

“Should the USA accept more immigrants?” The debate is clearly shown in the title. “Should...” is probably the safest word of all with which to start a Global Perspectives essay. By definition, it leads the candidate to consider contrasting answers, with some people arguing that x should happen and some arguing that x should not happen. An argument is a contrast of opinions. However, even if the country is among the biggest in the world, this is not in itself a fully global question. To qualify as a global response the candidate would have to cite other parallels, and to use sources from several other countries, recipients as well as donors.

“Should the West accept more immigrants?” At last a question which presupposes a global treatment. Assuming the candidate can find sources which disagree, sources from the different countries involved, and preferably some personal views from immigrants, this is set up for an appropriate response.

It is crucial to choose a clear question and exemplar sources which develop clear perspectives on that question. Then the candidate has to show an understanding of how the sources sit in the wider context of their perspective, and why different people might have different perspectives. It helps if the candidate can come to a conclusion which shows an awareness of their own perspective.

Sources

The commonest shortfall this series was in the evaluation of the sources. Two or more sources need to be chosen to exemplify the wider global perspectives being debated. These need to be evaluated. The great majority of candidates chose good sources but used them merely to illustrate the wider perspectives, and did not evaluate them. It should be stressed that this is not just the evaluation one might make of an unseen source in a timed examination. The best evaluation shows a knowledge of the background of the sources, which have themselves been researched as part of the research of their global perspectives. It is worth noting that choice of strong sources is a huge help to the overall strength of the essay. If a candidate considers a chosen source weak, it is very hard to move on to an evaluation of the strengths of the perspective. So why is the chosen source strong, or typical, or instructive? Why is it worthy of choice as an exemplar, especially if the candidate is going to move towards a conclusion which rejects its perspective,?

Teachers should be happy to help candidate choose their sources (though we do not expect, to see the same source used by significant numbers of candidates – it would be evidence of a lack of individual involvement and research).

The best selection of sources involves not only clearly differing opinions but also different types of source. The danger of the internet is that candidates are led to the “professional”, if they can be called that, sources. It is easy to find academic / government / official sources. However, global perspectives are held by individuals, too, and often well exemplified by them. For example, this could be an individual farmer in a LEDC (Less Economically Developed Country) with strong opinions on the rights and wrongs of fair trade, or a relative of someone very ill with strong opinions on the issue of the right to die, or an individual with personal experience of the effects of immigration. Sometimes candidates quote the experience of themselves, family members or friends and move on very effectively to the wider perspective.

Examples of unsuccessful evaluation from this series:

Some source evaluation relies on stock ideas such as that sources are always self-serving, such as the assertion here: *Although it is very convincing to show only the bright side of this program such as “the successful cap-and-trade auctions, the market is robust and healthy and the budget for reduction may be less costly than (sic) expected” (qtd. in Reyna par.3), the argument will be biased by being selective in presenting the information thus decrease their credibility.* This sort of comment begs the question why the candidate chose the source. Was there no better justification for the perspective?

An example of the “unseen” evaluation error: *Amanda Shum’s paper does have some weaknesses. There is not much information provided about her, which is very important in order to know her level of authority, if any. Since she is still a student (graduating next year) her authority is not high at all, this should not affect her credibility though. She uses the U.S. Constitution as a main source of information. The constitution is there for everybody to read, so of course her evidence is accurate and can be proven.* There is nothing here that could not have been written in a timed answer, addressing a previously unseen source.

It is worth noting that candidates are looking to evaluate differing global perspectives. It follows that these are different ways of seeing the world, rather than the truth set against a falsehood. There is nothing to stop a candidate from coming down firmly on the side of one of the perspectives, but the firmer the conclusion, the more important it is that there should be empathy with the opposing view. The candidate must strain to show an understanding of why some people think so differently.

The clash of global perspectives which candidates tend to find most difficult to handle in this way is religious. It can be done. One candidate wrote in the context of an ethical discussion “I am a Catholic and I believe...” and then went past this to discuss the implications of other approaches to the issue. This was good. A clear global perspective had been stated, and the Catholic showed she understood her Church’s position. She then did justice to other views and evaluated them. Her conclusion showed not that she had changed her views but had reflected on them and probably come to a better understanding of them once she had seen why others disagreed. She also appreciated why others might not agree with her position or accept the authority on which she claimed to hold it. More common, however, is the response which does not question its own position on a religious issue. It is not enough to quote the Bible or the Koran as an authority without showing an appreciation of for who and why they are authoritative. More common is the rejection out of hand that a legitimate global perspective may be based on the authority of religion. One candidate discussing an ethical issue wrote that one should never allow religion to intrude on a consideration of right and wrong, oblivious of the fact that people of faith would look exactly there to help them form their judgement.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

<p>Paper 3 Team Project</p>

Key Messages

- Candidates need to show awareness of other team perspectives and differentiate their own.
- Conclusions to presentations need to propose solutions to a problem.
- The reflective paper must be present, and should both evaluate collaboration and reflect on the development of the candidate's own views.
- Each team should be assisted by the teacher to identify a global issue with local significance and individual team members should develop specific approaches to that issue

General Comments

This session marks the second cohort of candidates to take this component. As such, centres are strongly encouraged to read the detailed advice contained in the report for the first session, in June 2015, and to consider this alongside the specific points made in this report.

Presentation

Differentiation of the Candidate's Perspective

It was pleasing to see that many centres and candidates were engaged with the process of the team project and had responded to feedback from June. This led to teams clearly allocating different approaches to a common issue to each member, and stating those approaches clearly as part of their individual presentations. The following presentation, part of a team focusing on surveillance and privacy, is a good example of this:

In a global context, surveillance is used on a mass and miniature scale, and has been made much easier to be carried out due to the introduction of advanced technology into our world. In my presentation I will be exploring some of these uses of technology for purposes of surveillance, but why is surveillance needed and if so, what is the cost towards privacy?

My partner talked about the extent to which our privacy has been invaded. I will be talking about how the benefits of surveillance outweigh the possible invasion of privacy.

The issue is first summarised and contextualised in general, before being narrowed to a debate about privacy. This allows the candidate to identify the approach taken by the other team member and to indicate how their own differs from this. As this has been done at the beginning of the presentation, they are then enabled to make a coherent argument for their own approach and to deal with counter-arguments from the opposing perspective they have already identified. The same approach was taken by other candidates at this centre, each following a similar structure. This allowed them to show awareness of opposing perspectives, clarify their own point of view and argue appropriately for it and against alternatives.

Conclusions proposing a solution to an issue

Presentations with the most successful conclusions recognised that they needed to propose solutions to the problem identified by the team in the issue they selected. A good example of this is the candidate working within a team which investigated long-term unemployment caused by excessive migration into large cities within their local area. They conclude by proposing 'the loan project ... to encourage people to go back to their homeland with a loan they will later pay back' and justify this as follows:

So the expected result with this project is that people leave the city of [deleted] go back to their hometowns and be able to sustain themselves in a more human livelihood they did not achieve here living in squatter settlements. This will also could tackle many problems such as the overcrowding in traffic and the new steady tax could be used for the development of the city of [deleted] and these cities around the whole country.

An innovative solution is proposed then justified in terms of specific benefits which are linked back to the arguments the candidate has already made about housing and development. This can be compared to this candidate's presentation, where they set themselves the question, 'Are transnational organisations doing enough to promote global peace and stability?':

Transnational groups have done a lot to stop diseases and other such outbreaks, but when it comes to militant groups they have proved to be very weak. We see this in the case of Osama bin Laden, who was killed by a single country, not a joint force of countries such as the United Nations.

A conclusion is reached which answers this question, and it is supported by some evidence (the reference to the case of Osama bin Laden). However, apart from the lack of a clear local dimension, it does not propose a solution to a problem, and hence has difficulty satisfying the requirements of the mark scheme for this component. It is therefore important that teams pose themselves problems with concrete local dimensions, rather than generic global questions, and ensure that each individual presentation proposes a solution to that problem, as in the first example.

Presentational methods used to communicate the candidate's arguments and ideas to the audience

It was pleasing to see a range of examples of effective presentational methods linked to the substance of the argument the candidate was communicating. As in the previous summer session, the use of extended video clips to make points, especially those sourced from elsewhere, were less effective, and took away from time within the eight minutes allowed when the candidate could have been presenting their own argument themselves. Visually effective slides or other aids enhanced communication, as did eye contact and vocal intonation on the part of the candidate, linked to the points at hand. In general, a confident and fluent delivery, which creatively enhanced the persuasiveness of the candidate's argument, enabled presentations to reach the higher levels for this criterion.

Reflective Paper

A number of effective reflective papers were produced by candidates for this session, and there was much evidence that in these cases they had found the process of reflecting on their experiences helpful. It should first be noted that the reflective paper is a required part of the assessment for 9239/03. It is the only way in which collaboration can be externally assessed (as the candidate's ability to articulate and evaluate the extent to which collaboration has taken place) and the only place in which reflection itself can be assessed as the candidate is given the opportunity to reflect on the process, and how their views have developed as a result of their encounter with other perspectives. 10 marks out of a total of 35 are awarded for the reflective paper, and if it is not present then these will be lost.

It is also important to note that both elements, evaluation of the collaborative process, and reflection on the encounter with other perspectives, are equally assessed in the reflective paper. The omission of one would effectively halve the possible marks which could be awarded, and reflective papers which use their 800 words to address topics outside these two will again not be able to gain marks for those.

An excellent example of the place of reflection comes in this effective reflective paper, which, after evaluating strengths and weaknesses in the team's work together, reflects on the strength of the candidate's own solution to problems in the prison system in New Zealand against that of another team member:

We came to the decision that the best solutions were [candidate B's] solutions. It was fairly obvious that these solutions were the best from the beginning as they were the solutions that appeared to produce the

best results and dealt with the roots of the crimes as opposed to dealing with the prisoners after they had already committed the crime and been put in prison. By taking an approach that looked at the core issues resulting in a higher rate of crimes and then finding a solution, [candidate B] was able to develop three key resolutions to stopping crimes in the first place.

The effectiveness of the candidate's ability to reflect here is shown precisely in their willingness to acknowledge and precisely articulate the greater strength of another team member's solution.

Comments on Specific Questions

The same comments here apply as were made in the June 2015 report: there are no questions set because an essential part of the process is the identification of areas for research by the teams themselves, supported by their teachers. Unlike the previous version of this component, 8987/03, there is no booklet of pre-release materials, so it is a matter for teachers and candidates in individual centres to select global issues, drawing on the global topics in the syllabus, with local significance for their own situation. The team should select an issue, and then individual members should identify their own approaches and solutions, allowing for presentations on a common issue which argue for specific approaches and against others. In this way, candidates will be able to successfully differentiate themselves from others in their team and also reflect on differences and similarities in their approaches.