GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

| Paper 9766/11 |
| Written Paper |

Key Messages

- Each question should be read carefully as candidates need to focus their answers on the specific demands of the question.
- Answers given by candidates should be directly proportional to the marks available for the question. Lengthy answers do not necessarily equate to accurate answers, especially for **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b).**
- The skill of evaluation, especially for **Questions 2** and **3** requires candidates to go beyond comparing documents or describing content and to include explanation and exemplification that justifies a point of view or argument presented. Evaluation requires a clear process of personal reasoning.
- When reference to documents is made, it should be made for exemplification and explanation; any direct quotation should be used to construct an evaluation.
- The evidence in the documentation provided should be the only focus for reference.
- Evaluation also requires a judgement to be made; however this can be included throughout the process of personal reflection and/or at the end of an answer as a more traditional conclusion.

General Comments

The candidates found the passages accessible and were able to identify the views and arguments put forward by the writers, which allowed responses to engage with the issues, arguments and views being put forward. However some candidates do need to read the document attribution carefully as there were some who thought that Kofi Annan, as opposed to a journalist had written Document 2. Most 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 is 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. The skill of comparative evaluation in the final question was often absent, with the documents being tackled in a sequential manner, which makes overall judgments more challenging.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1(a)

Most candidates were able to score full marks on this question, but there were a significant number who spent time developing their ideas, despite the question simply requiring 'identification'. Two marks were awarded where candidates simply bullet pointed two statements. Candidates did not need to explain these issues, some wrote up to half a page, with some even attempting to evaluate the statements. This gained no extra credit and also had detrimental impact on the time available for the later questions which carried a greater number of marks. In some instances candidates failed to score full marks where the statements did not fully show why the author believed that the UN had been a success; this was particularly noted where candidates commented on the 18 peacekeeping missions in the world and requests for more, but did not go on to make the important point that if the UN has failed why did the demand exist.

Question 1(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 asked candidates to summarise the evidence and this

required candidates to explain the evidence in their own words. Where candidates had simply copied out large parts of the document they were not given credit as they had not followed the command word in the question. Unfortunately there were some candidates who did not understand the word summarise and evaluated the evidence. This was not necessary and was not credited. Many answers commented on the decline in state conflicts, the avoidance of a Third World War before going to consider the various agencies that have contributed to the success of the UN; these comments were often supported by reference to the statistics in the document to reinforce the view of success.

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 the strengths and weakness of the argument and therefore access at least level 2, although there were still some at the lowest level who just described the content of the passages. The better answers used short and used appropriate quotations from the document to support their claims.

Candidates should avoid using sweeping generalisations with no specific support and the over-long quotations, which detract from the argument being pursued. 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 conclusion about its overall merit. Centres should encourage their candidates to pursue this latter approach. This was particularly evident when discussing the use of sources and statistics, with many commenting on the number of 'facts' in the document, which added to the strength, before going on to challenge the absence of the sources from which the evidence was drawn and therefore raising doubts about the reliability of the evidence.

Candidates should look to go beyond the assertion that the argument was either weak or strong and support it with evidence from the document and clear explanation. This was particularly true when candidates acknowledged that the document had a counterargument, but did not cite it or discuss it, simply stating that this made the argument stronger. However, some did note that the author acknowledged failures in Rwanda and Kosovo, but also commented that these examples were largely dismissed amongst a welter of evidence that stressed the successes. A significant number also discussed the range of examples used and argued that it was a strength, but also commented that the examples were not developed, which made it a weakness, yet they failed to reach a judgement as to whether this was an overall strength or weakness of the document. There was some discussion as to whether the use of rhetorical questions made the argument stronger or weaker.

Candidates should attempt to consider a range of material if they are to reach the highest levels and not rely on discussion of, for example, just the provenance and the structure of the argument, but make some reference to the full range of issues, such as the evidence, the use of language and style.

Question 3

This was a challenging question and many candidates found it difficult to produce an answer based on comparative evaluation. In many instances, where there was evaluation, the documents were considered sequentially or Document 1 was largely ignored. There were also a significant number who did not go beyond a simple comparison of the content of the two documents. Most are able to show an understanding of the views offered by both documents, but were distracted by this and offered no more than a comparison of the content or views offered in the documents, suggesting that Document 1 was supportive of the UN, whilst Document 2 focused on the failures and then simply went on to list either the successes or failures, with little analytical or evaluative comment. This reinforces the picture of an increasing tendency among a number of candidates to forget the evaluative skills that they have applied to the previous questions.

Obviously this has a significant impact on the level that can be reached and it is disappointing to report that there was an increasing tendency to see answers in level 1 or the bottom of level 2 because the evaluative element to the response was so limited. The Key Message bullet points have drawn attention to what is meant by a perspective, and candidates who were able to focus on the differing perspectives, such as social, political or economic were able to score reasonably well, with a number of answers noting that Document 1 considered a far wider range of perspectives than Document 2 as a result of its coverage of the social, humanitarian and economic work of the UN, as well as the political, whereas Document 2 focused exclusively on the political aspect of intervention. When evaluation of the documents does occur the better answers link their evaluation to the actual question set and do not evaluate in a vacuum. The better responses often re-capped on the strengths and weaknesses of Document 1 and compared them point by

point with Document 2, made interim judgements about the issue in the question and then an overall judgement in a well-developed conclusion. Strong answers included comments on the authors' agendas, with candidates commenting on the author of Document 1 writing an article to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the UN and therefore focusing on its successes, whilst Document 2 was a review of the memoirs of the Secretary General and noting that if the Secretary General considered there had been failures this was likely to be more reliable than a eulogy aimed at praising the UN.

Answers often compared the depth and detail into which the authors went when examining specific incidents and events and often suggested that this made Document 2 more convincing as the views offered were supported, whereas in Document 1 the lack of detail meant that there was little precise detail to support the claims made. It was the direct evaluative comparison between the two documents which took such responses into the higher levels and candidates should be encouraged to think in terms of comparing the provenance of documents, the evidence used, the language and tone, the use of a counterargument, the structure and the range of perspectives in order to judge which is the more convincing. They also highlighted the type of language used within the documents, suggesting that the author of Document 2, for example, wanted to emphasise the message of failure and did this through the use of emotive language and referred to words such as 'debacle', 'massacre' and 'slaughtered. In order to score highly, candidates needed to sustain their evaluation and make a judgement as to which document was more convincing.

An area in which candidates could improve is in developing their judgements in the conclusion as this can often help raise the quality of the response. Once again, candidates would be well advised to support their arguments by precise reference to the documents, but need to avoid lengthy quotations that detract from the overall argument. It might help some candidates if they decided the line of argument they were going to take in the first paragraph and pursued that throughout their answer and explaining why the other view is less valid as this will also help to ensure that the argument is consistent.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

> **Paper 9766/12**
>
> **Written Paper**

Key Messages

- Each question should be read carefully and candidates need to focus their answers on the specific demands of the question.
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- The skill of evaluation, especially for **Questions 2** and **3** requires candidates to go beyond comparing documents or describing content and to include explanation and exemplification that justifies a point of view or argument presented. Evaluation requires a clear process of personal reasoning.
- When reference to documents is made, it should be for exemplification and explanation and any direct quotation should be used to construct an evaluation.
- The evidence in the documentation provided should be the only focus for reference.
- Evaluation also requires a judgement to be made; however this can be included throughout the process of personal reflection and/or at the end of an answer as a more traditional conclusion.

General Comments.

The standard of responses this year was very good overall and most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements of questions set. This is a skills based examination and the marks awarded tended not to be directly proportional to the amount written, especially for **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)**.

Most candidates used their time effectively and in proportion to the marks available for each question. Very few candidates ran out of time but there were some who clearly spent too long on **Question 2** to the detriment of **Question 3**.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1(a)

For two marks allocated, all that was expected for this answer was to accurately state two clear examples from the document of ways in which Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used in cars. There were three clear possibilities, namely, self-parking, self-driving and automatic braking in recognition of pedestrians. Nearly all candidates scored two marks. Two marks were awarded for simply stating the examples and two marks were also awarded to lengthy explanations of two of the three possibilities. Lengthy explanation, however, is not necessary.

Question 1(b)

As this is a skills based paper, one of the most important skills for analysis is the ability to recognise key aspects of an argument or to select clear examples given in an argument. Like a traditional précis, this question required the candidate to identify the ways in which the author believed AI could bring a greener future for everyone and summarise these in their answer. Simply copying extracts from the documentation did not always explain how that evidence could bring a greener future; for example, simply stating 'through the use of 'smart technology'' needed further support through exemplification that this smart technology adjusted heating systems because it 'learns the householders' preferences, and automatically recognizes when the home is unoccupied'.

Three key elements were expected in the summary. The first was the use of smart technology to adjust heating through measuring and recognising when a house is unoccupied. The second and third aspects

required in the summary were with reference to the 'MyJoulo' logger system. One point was that the system measures 'every two minutes for a week' and then provides 'personalised advice' to homeowners meaning that they could 'build a mathematical model' of how the home responds to heat and adjust the thermostat or 'changing timer settings'. The final way in which the author considered AI could bring a greener future for everyone was by the 'MyJoulo' being able to 'spot homes which leak heat most rapidly' and therefore 'prioritise interventions', the most immediate of which could be to insulate better the home.

Answers scoring full marks either used extracts from the text as above to select the key ways or presented the ways using their own wording. Some answers scored six marks with a simple paragraph demonstrating a high level of skill in extracting the information. Other answers were lengthy and included too much information from the documentation that was not really relevant, some of which covered the whole document. Of these some managed to score six marks but not always through obvious selection in response to the focus of the question.

Question 2

The first point to mention here is that the question required both strengths and weaknesses although not necessarily even coverage of both. The skill of evaluation tested here requires identification of an element of the argument that could be seen as strong or weak with a good explanation of why this is the case in relation to the author's complete argument and the subject of AI in general.

A small number of candidates unfortunately selected the wrong document and so their answers contained little creditworthy discussion. In addition, there were also some answers that discussed the strengths and weaknesses of AI per se rather than the author's specific views and argument about AI.

Some candidates seemed to use a structured formula for answering this type of question. This often included reference to author, style of writing and language used to more technical and critical use of phrases such as bias, vested interest, ability to perceive/see, straw man argument and fallacies such as cause and correlation. Sometimes the use of such a framework was good support for the candidate to explore relevant aspects of the author's argument about AI. Nonetheless, as this paper is skills based, such a framework must not become a strait-jacket that drives the answers because it was clear that some candidates were struggling to find aspects of their framework in this particular document. The best answers differentiated between what was relevant and what was not, selected appropriately and drawing clear exemplification from the document to support their process of reasoning.

In general, the best answers were able to see both the perceptive nature of Marcus' argument as a Professor of Psychology as being of great value and adding something new and insightful to the debate – clearly explaining why his expertise and examples given were strengths – but also balancing this by challenging the weaker and more questionable nature of his process of reasoning that 'trying to rival human intelligence by programming computers will never work', unpacking both assertion and assumption to good effect.

Question 3

This question was challenging for candidates.

The question required a focus on the 'challenge' presented in Document 1 to the argument found in Document 2 about the 'value' of AI. A few candidates pointed out that the areas of focus for each document were very different and that one was clearly positive about AI and its future whilst the other was very negative. The best answers then used this as a springboard for further discussion of how the positive aspects of Document 1 challenged the evidence base and the conclusion of Document 2. One or two, however, stated their differences and then concluded that as they were very different the question could not really be answered. Such answers were unable to show this skills required to reach the highest marks for this question.

There were some very different approaches to this question but what was clear from the cohort was that the most effective were those responses directly focused on how Document 1 challenged Document 2. Others weighed up the value of different types of AI rather than evaluating the challenge. Some simply described which document seemed more convincing whilst others evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of each in turn and then briefly discussed the 'challenge' presented at the end, sometimes with no strong connection to what had been written before.

A common feature of the stronger answers was a clear plan in relation to the specific question set which allowed them to explicitly draw out, with examples, how Document 1 challenged Document 2. Such answers

were able to handle nuance and used tentative expression of opinion when writing rather than simply asserting through description of a document and then rushing into an uninformed judgment. Style of writing included expressions such as 'this might suggest…because…' and 'this means that…' to clearly pinpoint their evaluative aspects. Weaker answers tended to be a simple comparison of content of each document with the very weakest restating what was written without commentary. A few were very lengthy responses but unbalanced in that they focused mainly on the weaknesses or strengths of Document 1 rather than the challenges it made toward Document 2.

Despite this, the overall standard of answers was good for **Question 3** with many insightful and different justifications offered. Overall, the best clearly exploited the weaknesses of Document 2 and its bleak pessimism for AI whilst simultaneously realising the parameters beyond which Document 1 could not extend its challenge and hence its limitations in challenging Document 2.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 9766/13
Written Paper

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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Paper 9766/02
Essay
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Key Messages

The key messages from this series of essay papers are that candidates:

- performed well in the creation of well-structured essays
- used sources effectively to support their argument
- need to develop evaluation skills more fully
- should include more extensive reflection and evaluate their own research and conclusions
- should develop suggestions for further research more fully.

General Comments

For this component candidates write an essay exploring a global issue of their choice drawn from the topics listed in the syllabus. The essay should contrast and compare different perspectives on the chosen issue.

At its best, the essay is a written comparison of two different perspectives on a global issue that has been thoroughly researched by the candidate. From preliminary personal research on the issue and discussion with the teacher, candidates are expected to develop a research question. The candidate is expected to assess each perspective and present convincing and well-supported judgements, based on argument and evidence, which provide an answer to the research question within the conclusion of the essay.

Within the essay candidates are expected to analyse and evaluate the arguments and evidence for each perspective. To do this, candidates will need to find sources that support each of the perspectives by doing research. The research is most likely to be internet based but may also involve other primary and secondary forms of research. These sources will need to be analysed and evaluated by the candidate as each perspective is reviewed and assessed.

To complete the essay candidates are expected to reflect upon their own learning as a result of completing the research and analysing the perspectives. Candidates should also suggest further relevant research.

To summarise, the essay mainly involves the following skills:

- designing research into a global topic and issue
- identification and selection of relevant sources from research
- assessment of the credibility of selected sources by evaluating the arguments and evidence within the sources
- analysis of contrasting perspectives on a global issue
- presentation of convincing and well-supported conclusions that answer the question(s) posed
- explanation of how the research has affected their own learning and personal perspectives
- evaluation of the limitations of their own research and conclusions
- developing and explaining suggestions for further relevant research
- communicating effectively and concisely, using technical terms where appropriate.

Overall, the quality of work and levels of achievement continue to be very good; candidates and centres are to be congratulated on their achievements. Many candidates clearly enjoy thinking about and researching global issues, appreciate the complexity of social, economic and technological change, and want to respond positively to the challenges posed by globalisation. They are clearly developing a critical awareness of global topics and issues.

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Similarly, many candidates are also learning to reflect upon their own experience and developing personal perspectives by considering the implications of global issues for their personal beliefs, values and lifestyle. From the evidence of the essay scripts, the aims of the syllabus are being fulfilled.

In general, the research was completed well and there were some excellent essays. Most candidates were able to present a well-structured essay that contained a clear line of argument that led to a conclusion which answered the research question, usually posed within the essay title. The selection of sources and evidence was usually relevant to the perspectives being assessed.

However many candidates could improve their essays, and therefore overall marks and level of achievement in this component, by improving their identification of a title and research question, and their evaluation skills. In particular candidates and centres are advised to consider the following areas for improvement:

● the title and focus of the research question
● evaluation of the sources used to describe and support each perspective
● reflection on learning and personal perspectives
● consideration of the limitations of the candidate's own research for the essay
● suggestions for further research.

Most candidates presented essays which were close to the word limit of 2000 words. Candidates who presented essays much less than 1750 words in length tended to provide insufficient material and evidence about each perspective or only explored the issues superficially. Centres are reminded that any material in the body of the essay over 2000 words in length will not be assessed or count in the award of marks.

To improve performance further, candidates should be encouraged to:

● develop titles and research questions with a clear, specific and manageable focus on a genuinely global issue
● target the essay on two contrasting perspectives related to the issue being researched
● avoid simple assertion, opinion and anecdotal evidence
● evaluate reasoning and evidence in sources by referring to both strengths and weaknesses
● practise the analysis and evaluation of sources on a regular basis during the Global Perspectives course
● *apply* key concepts for example validity, bias, reliability, expertise and ability to see
● practise and include reflection and the evaluation of their own work, perhaps through peer assessment and group exercises.

Specific Comments

In this section of the Report some guidance is given to centres on how to improve the quality of the essays.

1. Titles and research questions – some candidates are presenting essays that are not genuinely global in focus. Essays should consider an issue of global significance that affects more than one country or has implications worldwide. These implications or the global nature of the issue should be explained fully in the introductory sections of the essay. The title and research question(s) should reflect the global nature of the issue.

   For example, the title, *'Should nuclear weapons be banned in all countries throughout the world?'* is global. Alternatively, the title, *'Should nuclear energy in Japan be replaced by alternative energy sources?'* is only likely to be national.

   Similarly the title and research question(s) should present or imply two perspectives that can be compared. For example the title, *'Is the migration of refugees to developed nations an economic gain or loss for the host country?'* clearly has two distinct perspectives implied – those who argue for the perspective of economic advantage and those who argue for the perspective of economic disadvantage. The title, *'How do economic refugees affect the life of a host country?'* suggests a simply descriptive approach which is not appropriate.

2. Evaluation of sources – candidates are expected to research, find and then present sources related to each perspective in the essay; however the sources need to be both described and evaluated in the essay. A significant number of candidates only describe the source. The assessment criteria for the essay award marks for the evaluation of the sources associated with the perspectives. It is therefore very

important that candidates discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each source, particularly challenging arguments, claims and evidence using their critical thinking skills. Candidates might consider potential bias, weaknesses in the methodology, the credibility of arguments, sample sizes, expertise, validity and reliability, accuracy and ability to see. The tone of language and clarity of argument might also be assessed by candidates.

3. Reflection and personal learning – candidates should devote at least 1–2 paragraphs to describing and explaining how the process of research and exploration of the global issue has affected their own personal perspectives and beliefs about the topic under consideration. This might describe what they have learnt, changes to their own beliefs and values and potential changes to their behaviour or lifestyle. Some candidates do not present any reflection and therefore lose marks that are easily gained.

4. Limitations of the research and suggestions for further research – reflection often leads to the recognition that we still have much to learn and can improve our work. An important part of reflection for the essay is therefore to identify aspects of the global issue or perspectives explored that could be better understood through further research. Identification of further research usually begins by thinking about the following questions:

    ● If I had more time, what would I like to explore further on the global issue?
    ● Are there any gaps or omissions in my knowledge and understanding of the perspectives that could be filled through further research?
    ● Has the research suggested new points of view or additional perspectives that could be explored?
    ● Is there further evidence that might strengthen or confirm the conclusions?
    ● Are there implications or consequences of the conclusion, or my own perspectives, that could be explored?
    ● What are the strengths and weaknesses of my research and essay?
    ● How certain can I be about the conclusion? Are there any limitations to the conclusion? Can it be generalised to other situations?
    ● From an evaluation of the research and essay, how could further research improve the quality?

    Candidates should be encouraged to devote at least one to two paragraphs to the evaluation of their own work, which should include an assessment of the scope and limitations of their conclusions as well as suggestions for further research and improvement. The purpose and likely impact of the further research on the candidate's understanding of the issue should be explained.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 9766/03
Presentation

Key Messages

- Successful presentations were coherently and relevantly structured

- The careful selection of documents and points from the pre-release materials produced more effective presentations

- Learners should focus on the synthesis of carefully researched sources rather than the evaluation of source credibility

- Contrasting perspectives, developed conclusions and effective questions remain central to high level work

General Comments

Responses to the Pre-Release Materials

The June 2015 pre-release materials took the value of nature as their main topic, using Documents 1-5, and how quality of life might best be measured and developed, in Documents 6 and 7. As in previous series, most successful learners identified one of these topics as their focus and then explicitly referred to one or more claims from one or more of the documents. Learners need to demonstrate within their presentations that they have used a specific starting point from one of the pre-release materials. The vast majority of presentations focused on the environment, mainly debating the case for green economics or pricing the environment as it was identified in Documents 1 and 2. A significant number also responded productively to Jaboury Ghazoul's opposing view in Document 3, or framed their work on the basis of the debate between John Sauven and Lee Lane in Document 4. Document 5 was less popular, although some learners worked well to place China's environmental policies within a larger global context. The notion of pricing nature provided a stimulating conceptual starting point for many learners, although others found it challenging and would have benefitted from a wider range of preparatory research before developing their arguments. A number of learners did identify a specific claim or piece of evidence from one of this first group of documents, but then produced a more generic debate around the environment. This did not necessarily produce a less successful outcome, but learners do need to ensure that they produce an argument focused around a debate which is coherent as possible in its structure. An inconsistent focus, or presentations which tended to give information about the environment rather than make arguments on its value led to achievement at a lower level.

Jeffrey Sachs's introduction to *The World Happiness Report* in Document 6 was an effective starting point for many learners in their research into different measures of national happiness as a global topic. Document 7 proved an interesting choice for many: as a pairing with Document 6, Jesse Klein challenges Sachs's assumption that happiness can be managed and improved as a matter of public policy. Behind this, however, lies a deeper scepticism about the appropriateness of state intervention and the role of government. Many learners identified this and used Document 7 alone as the starting point for this debate. Such an approach was often very effective and conceptually rich, although it was notable that the most successful learners critically evaluated Kline's assumptions about the role of government rather than simply accepting them and placed the debate over 'big government' into a global context rather than dealing with it at the level of a single nation. As always, the identification of a debate, and the seeking out of opposing perspectives in a global context through the learner's own research, were key to successful presentations.

Learners were more likely to produce focused work when they selected one or two documents from the pre-release material and identified specific claims or lines of argument which they then developed into a specific debate around a well-chosen question using their own research. Learners who attempted to address four or

five (or in some rare cases six or seven) documents found it much harder to produce focused and relevant work. One particular issue arose when some learners attempted to combine the value of nature with happiness in their presentations. This gave rise to questions such as 'Do conservation strategies help promote people's happiness?' or 'How can the environment impact personal happiness?' Although, with the right research, it is in principle possible to produce an effective presentation which addresses both topics, in practice learners found it challenging to do so effectively. It is worth bearing in mind by Centres that the offering of a major and minor topic in the pre-release materials is primarily intended to provide learners with choice, and the emphasis is on flexibility and freedom in their own research as long as there is a clear starting point from 'an issue, an assumption, evidence and/or a line or reasoning in one or more of the documents' (as the rubric states). Coverage of the pre-release materials is not in itself rewarded and may in fact be counter-productive if it limits the learner's own research or the coherence of their argument.

Structure

The ability of learners to structure a coherent argument of their own, and to organise contrasting perspectives effectively within their presentation, remains a key skill assessed by this component. Some learners worked to a predetermined structure for their presentation which in a number of cases was effective. Over-formulaic or imbalanced structures worked less effectively, however, especially where separate sections were dedicated to the evaluation of the credibility of sources. This is not rewarded in itself (it is merely expected that learners select credible sources and evaluate arguments and perspectives) but has the potential to disrupt the course of the learner's presentation.

Sources

Alongside structure, the use of sources is an important criterion where learners can be usefully prepared to achieve well. Lower level presentations not only tended to address each source individually, they also focused on source credibility primarily or exclusively as opposed to its placement within a larger perspective. To move to higher level achievement (Levels 4 and 5), it is essential on this criterion that learners synthesise sources. This means that they should identify specific claims or evidence in more than one source and directly compare them. Where learners had acquired the skills required to do this it strengthened their presentations considerably. It is useful here to compare specific examples. In the first, the learner presents a source they have found supporting the argument that 'ecosystem services' should be priced:

This argument is strengthened by the report from DEFRA, this is because they are a government department responsible for "policy and regulations on environmental, food and rural issues" so they are responsible for budgeting and above all, have the nation's interest as a top priority rather than further commercial gains. Although Caroline Spelman does not have a degree in environmental sciences, she has been in office in various roles, like Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment from 1997-2012; because she has been re-elected she's obviously developed trust amongst the public to make vital decisions.

This evaluation of the source's provenance, although detailed and mostly (though not completely) accurate, does not add to its support for the perspective being explored. On the other hand, the following is from a presentation which poses the question, 'Is happiness an absence of government control?':

In document seven, Jesse Kline writes that the Government's decisions inevitably cause economic problems; that pro-growth policies create economic bubbles and austerity measures "lead to a decline in the standard of living — which isn't good for anyone". Having written this in 2010, he was likely referring to the recent economic crash. The global economic recession in 2008 and 2009 caused the world's GDP to dip severely, and subjective well-being also dipped. It is often blamed on the government by the press. However, the papers 'The Great Recession Of 2008-2009 And Government's Role' by Alexander Katov and "No One Saw This Coming": Understanding Financial Crisis Through Accounting Models by Dirk J Bezemer show that the issue is much more complex than that. In the 1990s, one of the US government's political agendas was to enable less affluent people to buy houses, and US banks subsequently relaxed their lending regulations. In 2000, well respected analysts were predicting the recession, but the US government did not exert any control over the banks.

The learner focuses on the global economic crash of 2008 and Jesse Kline's argument that it (and the resulting unhappiness) was the consequence of government interference. However this is directly opposed to two specific claims, and linked evidence, in two other sources which argue that the 2008 crash arose precisely from an absence of government control. This second learner spends far less time on the credibility of each sources (yet they are all highly credible) and instead makes comparisons and contrasts which advance their argument and are relevant to their question.

CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Other issues

Alongside responses to the pre-release materials, structure and sources, engagement with alternative perspectives and conclusions remains central to strong achievement, and there is more extensive discussion of these aspects in previous Principal Examiner reports which should be used by Centres. It is worth bearing in mind that successful conclusions are structured so that they marshal specific evidence and arguments from the main body of the presentation before reaching final judgements on the basis of this. As such they occupy a relatively significant part of the volume of the presentation as a whole. The definition of a perspective as 'a coherent world view which responds to an issue, made up of argument, evidence, assumptions, and/or from a particular context' remains valid as a guide for Centres and learners. It means that, by definition, perspectives are synthesised and evaluated summaries of multiple sources and must also contrast in that they represent genuinely distinctive world-views. As such, they cannot remain within a single local or personal context. Another way of putting this is that a perspective cannot be represented by a single source.

Comments on Specific Questions

One of the distinctive features of this component, as is also the case for component 2, is that learners develop their own questions with the assistance of their teachers. Because of this, there is much useful material on question formulation in previous reports for both components. It is worth, however, raising some specific examples which arose from presentations submitted in this series. Presentations should respond to questions, not statements: 'Human activity is one of the biggest threats to the environment and its ecosystems' does not leave much room for debate. Similarly, 'Happiness and the government' is likely to give rise to description not argument. Factual questions, such as 'What is happiness?' tend to have the same descriptive effect.

Questions which begin with 'To what extent' can make it harder for learners to clearly identify and contrast perspectives, and 'what' and 'how' as question stems are also less suitable for this component (e.g. 'What is the value of planet Earth and its contents?' or 'How have governments limited their citizens' happiness?'). On the other hand, conceptually focused questions like 'Should conservation be a moral imperative?' produced a sharper focus in the evaluation undertaken as part of the debate. Other helpful and clear questions included 'Is it the responsibility of governments to ensure the happiness of their citizens?' and 'Can governments measure happiness?' As in previous series, there were many impressive presentations which identified a clear, conceptually focused debate relevant to the source material and produced focused evaluations of competing perspectives in order to reach a supported conclusion.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 9766/04
Independent Research Report

Key Messages

- The evaluation of sources is central to the Independent Research Report (IRR) and should develop critical analysis skills gained throughout the course
- The level of intellectual challenge is a key assessment criteria and should be considered when choosing topics and the approach to research
- There should be evidence of reasoned reflection on personal research and conclusions

The standard of work and its assessment was often very high. There were demanding topics which displayed higher level thinking skills and which were marked with a high level of accuracy by Centres. There was more accurate application of AO2 this year, though it is important not to be over influenced by the actual choice of research materials or the sophistication of writing. A02 assessment should focus on the critical evaluation of evidence.

Although internal assessment was broadly accurate, some Centres are not appreciating the importance of assessing evidence rather than simply accepting it at face value and using it to illustrate or support candidates' own arguments or explanations. Candidates need to base their judgements on an assessment of the evidence they research. This is a key aspect of this Global Perspectives course which has at its heart the development of the sort of higher level critical skills needed for learners to manage the mass of information they are confronted with in the modern world. The report is therefore indicative of the key life skills the IRR should develop and not just with meeting examination criteria – those these, too, are important. Writing a report based on independent research, considering the evidence for different perspectives critically, coming to a personal judgement and then reflecting on that judgement is specific to this qualification. If the critical path is forgotten and candidates fall back on writing a longer version of subject essays or term papers, then opportunities for personal and academic development have not been properly taken

AO1 This assessment objective was largely marked accurately with few cases where the overall judgements were inconsistent with the levels awarded.

AO2 Centre assessment was very different here. Some Centres were highly realistic about the quality and nature of the evaluation of evidence and offered helpful marginal comments explaining their views. Others seemed to place insufficient weight on evaluation and to see it as synonymous with explanation of different views and evidence. As has been emphasised above, this assessment objective is crucial and without assessing the evidence, it is unlikely that the overall argument will be convincing or effective. Evaluation which is reliant on commenting on the nature of the sources and offering general comment - this is a newspaper and will be biased because it needs to sell copies; this is from an expert so will be reliable; this is from a supporter of Gun Law reform in the US so will not be reliable – and so on, is much less convincing than evaluation which uses a wider range of critical judgements, for example, corroboration, assessing argument, weighing views using contextual knowledge; looking at assumptions; looking at the nature of the samples in surveys and the methodology of experiments. Guidance on this is available and candidates should have practised evaluation in Global perspectives. Thus reports which are merely taking evidence at face value should not be over-rewarded.

AO3 Most reports considered different perspectives and reached judgements about the issue. Weaknesses were in the failure to base analysis on sufficient critical consideration of evidence and neglect, sometimes in work which was otherwise very strong, of the requirement for reasoned reflection. Any major decision must be reflected on in both personal and academic contexts. Centres are urged to make this a key element of the Global Perspectives course and to encourage it in IRR which brings together the skills.

AO4 Most candidates performed well on this assessment objective. Coherent writing was often sustained over a long stretch and much care was taken to check work. In specialist studies, technical vocabulary was deployed with confidence and often there was the impression of reading work at a higher level. There was

much agreement with the assessment here and Centres helpfully pointed out instances where the expression was more opaque or inaccurate.

AO5 In general, Centres took a realistic approach to assessing this. In many cases, the level of challenge offered by the question seemed appropriate for individual candidates and it is better for learners to deal with a relatively straightforward topic clearly than to attempt over-complex topics only to produce reports which show poor understanding or unsophisticated analysis. However, in topics which in themselves do not go beyond those likely to be studied at A level or A level equivalent, it is important for marking to identify where the approach to research demonstrates a higher level of intellectual challenge. For 5 or 6 to be awarded there should be clear evidence to meet the demanding criteria of this assessment objective.