

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 1340/01
Written Paper

Key messages

- Candidates should focus on the wording of the question and the number of marks given for each.
- Candidates should assess and evaluate both strengths and weaknesses of the documents, not simply describe them.

General comments

Candidates who read the documents carefully and depended only on the content of the arguments tended to give more accurate and focussed answers.

Candidates who had read the questions and noted the number of marks given for each, were able to manage their time. They did not spend too long on **Question 1** and had sufficient time to answer **Questions 2** and **3** fully.

Candidates who wrote full answers to **Questions 2** and **3** showed that they had engaged well with the documents.

Least successful candidates did not read all questions carefully and answered a different question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Question 1 carried 6 marks. Candidates who answered concisely, with six relevant points, or with three simply explained points, covered the requirements adequately but did not spend too much time on their answer.

Those candidates who wrote lengthy answers (some in excess of a page long), or who re-wrote the whole argument in their own words, lost time that would have been of more benefit to them in answering **Question 3**.

Question 2

This question carried 10 marks. Candidates who read the question carefully and answered fully and thoughtfully had the most success in their answers. They assessed a range of aspects of the document, including the content of the argument, its language, coherence, cohesion and structure and the credibility of the author. Each point made was illustrated with reference to the text and evaluated in terms of its impact on the argument and/or the reader. Successful evaluation was developed and explained and the candidate came to an overall, explained judgement.

Successful answers made a series of explicit judgements, justified by the detail provided, such as:

'Professor Jonathan Jones has presented a pro-GM argument, saying "Thanks to GM" and it "has been a resounding success" with not much detail of any negatives. As he is a scientist, readers would expect him to present both sides of the argument to allow us to make up our minds about the success of GM crops. This, combined with the fact that he is the co-founder of a biotechnology organisation, and may gain financially from GM crops, makes us less trusting of his argument and readers may wonder whether he is biased or has a vested interest in GM crops and is not presenting the whole truth. This undermines his argument and makes it seem weak'

Less successful answers tended to depend on vague assertions with gaps in their logic, such as:

'Professor Jonathan Jones is a scientist at a British university so he has expertise in GM crops and would know what he is talking about'

This was often without any explanation of the connection between his profession and GM crops, or what impact that might have on the quality of his argument, or the reader.

Question 3

This question carried 14 marks. Candidates who read the question carefully and answered fully had the most success in their answers. They read the passages carefully to identify where Document 2 challenged Document 1 effectively and where it was less successful (due to the relative strength of the argument in Document 1).

As in **Question 2**, those candidates who developed justified evaluative points and illustrated them with reference to both documents had most success. They chose a range of points of challenge between the documents, included comparison and/or contrast and balanced the strengths and weaknesses of the challenge throughout their whole answer.

The strongest answers had at least two strengths and two weaknesses. These responses identified, fully explained, illustrated, compared their impact on the argument, the reader and explicitly evaluate the success of the challenge. They considered a range of aspects, including content of the two arguments, evidence, cohesion, structure and language, coherence and credibility of the authors. Their evaluation was explicit and they made an overall detailed judgement.

Some weaker answers concentrated only on Document 2, with no real reference to Document 1. Others concentrated on either the strength or the weakness of the challenge and, having stated their judgement at the outset, only provided evidence for only that strength/weakness.

The weakest answers tended to list a few strengths and or weaknesses of Document 1 or 2 with little reference to the challenge and either concluded that it was a successful/unsuccessful challenge, or that it was a more/less convincing argument.

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Paper 1340/02
Essay

Key messages

The key messages from this series are:

- candidates planned and structured the essays well;
- most candidates successfully explored two contrasting perspectives related to an issue drawn from a chosen topic within the syllabus;
- candidates should evaluate their own work;
- reflection skills, particularly in relation to personal learning need to be developed further.

General comments

Overall the quality of work and levels of achievement remained at high levels. Most candidates revealed enthusiasm and commitment in their research into a global issue of personal interest. For most candidates, the research into the issue was reasonably comprehensive and two contrasting perspectives were explored in some detail. Essays which explored the main issues successfully in appropriate breadth and depth tended to use between 10–20 sources in total, with about 6–8 of these being discussed at some length.

Successful essays tended to be logically structured with a clear proposal or claim about the issue. This was supported by an analysis and evaluation of the arguments and evidence associated with two perspectives on the issue. These essays tended to base their conclusions on personal reflection and substantial evaluation of the strengths and limitations of their own research, as well as the review of the perspectives. The conclusion was convincing, supported and balanced, as well as providing a clear answer to the research question.

Higher quality essays usually had evaluative rather than descriptive titles, framed as a clear question with at least two different perspectives implied. An example of a good title is, 'Should euthanasia become legal throughout the world?' or 'Do people in developed countries support the raising of taxes to increase aid to developing countries?' Lower quality titles tended to be descriptive, for example, 'How does deforestation affect the global climate?' or, 'To what extent has commercialisation encouraged corruption in sport?' Some candidates failed to choose an issue of global significance and were therefore restricted in the marks that could be awarded.

In general, the research for the essays was completed well and many candidates used a wide range of sources, usually gathered from the internet. Some candidates gathered evidence using primary research methods, typically interviews and questionnaires. The selection of sources and evidence were mainly relevant to the perspectives being assessed. However, candidates should be advised not to discuss a very wide range of sources or use several primary research methods as well as internet research, otherwise the research can become too extensive and therefore difficult to manage within the word limit.

Many candidates are learning to reflect upon the implications of research into global issues for their own personal beliefs, values and lifestyle. Candidates are also gaining in confidence in writing about their own learning and research. However, it is an area that could be developed further to raise levels of achievement.

To improve levels of achievement, candidates should also be encouraged to:

- avoid long accounts of personal opinion and anecdotal comment;
- avoid assertion without explanation and evidence;
- refer to strengths and weaknesses when evaluating reasoning and evidence;
- include fully explained suggestions for further research;
- cite and reference all sources used and include a full bibliography

Comments on specific tasks

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

1 Evaluation

Candidates are expected to demonstrate high level evaluation skills in the Essay. This includes evaluation of:

- arguments and evidence supporting each of the main perspectives being explored on the issue;
- arguments and evidence for each of the main sources being used to illustrate or describe the perspectives;
- research methodology within sources;
- their own research
- their own personal perspectives and learning;
- the strengths and limitations of their conclusions

It would be helpful for candidates to have many opportunities to analyse and evaluate sources and perspectives, as well as past examples of essays, as a central part of the course to develop and build confidence in these skills.

Many candidates only describe the sources. Some evaluate fully without using the argument and evidence within the perspectives and sources to develop their own argument. It is helpful for the candidate to describe and apply the content of the source to the essay title and global issue as part of an overall argument to support a claim about the issue outlined.

Candidates should think about potential bias, vested interest, weaknesses in the methodology, the credibility of arguments, expertise, validity and reliability, accuracy and ability to see. The tone of language and clarity of argument might also be assessed by candidates.

2 Reflection and personal learning

Candidates should devote about one or two 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 issue. This might include:

- a description of their main learning points about the issue;
- a description of their main learning points about conducting research;
- changes to or reinforcement of their own beliefs and values;
- implications for their own behaviour or lifestyle

Candidates should be encouraged to provide evidence to justify their reflections and judgements. This may take a range of different forms, including examples, incidents, quotations from sources or data gathered through primary research that were influential, notes from research diaries or course logs, extracts from discussions about the issue, reference to authors who have been convincing and shaped their views

An example of weak reflection is:

'Research into the causes of international conflict was interesting and very relevant to the current situation in the Middle East. I now think that the battle for scarce resources is the main cause of conflict. Apart from this I didn't learn very much.'

This example reflects very simply by describing their views after the work has been completed. There is no attempt to explain the reasons for any change or their implications.

A much better example of reflection is:

'At the beginning of this research I thought that the conflict in the Middle East had historical and cultural causes. The creation of Israel after the Second World War and rivalry between different branches of Islam being the main historical and cultural reasons. However, analysis of different perspectives on recent case studies of conflict in the region suggests that securing access to oil for the developed world, maintaining security of defence and ensuring access to world markets for all middle eastern countries is also important. I have learnt that these and other conflicts cannot be resolved easily unless all parties believe that they can preserve their dignity and gain something of value from any attempted solution. Solutions to conflict and war cannot be found unless the complexity of their causes and the different perspectives of interested parties is understood. Strong evidence from the BBC correspondent supports this perspective and influenced my views.'

Although my research explored two case studies of recent conflict in the Middle East, I cannot be certain that the conclusion I have reached applies to all countries or will be valid in the future. Recent changes in the Middle East may alter future scenarios. For example, better Western relations with Iran, the war on terrorism and the glut in world oil supply may make a difference to the pattern of conflict in the region. A new American president is another factor.

These political and economic developments suggest some further research is needed. These are ...'

This example of reflection describes and explains several learning points from the research which are applied to the context of the essay and conflict in general, including reference to some supporting evidence. The reflection and review of the conclusion is then used to explain and justify some possible further research. Personal reflection often leads to the recognition that there is still much to learn and that work can be improved. An important part of reflection for the essay is therefore to identify aspects of the global issue or perspectives that could be better understood through further research.

3 References and citation

All sources used in the writing of the Essay should be acknowledged, cited and referenced in a bibliography that appears at the end of the Essay, possibly in an appendix. This is to ensure that academic integrity is preserved and plagiarism does not happen. The bibliography should follow the conventions of a simple academic system and contain sufficient information for the source to be located by an independent third party who may wish to verify the authenticity, validity and reliability of the source material.

Unfortunately, some candidates lose marks by forgetting to include a bibliography.

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**Paper 1340/03
Presentation**

Key messages

- Candidates should consider which of the topics from the pre-release material is their starting point and plan their research and analysis accordingly.
- A planned structural approach to the presentation can support candidate achievement but can also in some circumstances limit more sophisticated and individual development.
- The clarification of terms is most successful when linked to the argument being made.
- Sources are given more credit when explicitly selected, and more still when compared with other sources in order to evaluate perspectives and make an argument.
- Conclusions should be supported by evidence and respond directly to the question the candidate has set.
- Although not directly assessed, oral presentation tends to help the achievement of candidates.

General comments

Candidates continued to produce a range of interesting and often impressive work for this component in this series. As in previous years, this report identifies strengths and explores areas for further development across a number of specific areas.

Response to the source material

As is usually the case, the stimulus booklet provided candidates with two possible issues to pursue: this series these were nationalism and fossil fuels. Nationalism had the majority of documents (1–6) with fossil fuels making up an alternative opportunity with the final two (7–8). Most candidates realised that these were alternatives. The requirement is only for one argument or piece of evidence to be used as a starting point and there is nothing to be gained by trying to combine topics from multiple documents. Therefore presentations on nationalism and fossil fuels in nearly all cases found it hard to achieve a clear focus. Both areas had many opportunities for research into areas of contemporary concern: the election of President Trump and Britain's vote to leave the European Union featured in the vast majority of responses to the first topic. For the second, the on-going debate over climate change and its causes provided much research material for presentations. More successful presentations ensured they used this material and placed it in a global framework, making links between the situation in the US or Europe and a larger global context. In many cases this also made it easier to establish alternative perspectives.

The idea of nationalism enabled a number of presentations to develop perspectives in a conceptual way and led to sophisticated work. A popular starting point was Document 3 and its distinction between patriotism and nationalism. This did sometimes produce descriptive accounts of examples of each, but the most convincing arguments moved beyond this in a sustained, supported comparison of the two ways of thinking which moved beyond definitions alone, such as the following conclusion:

Arguably, the boundaries between the two have become blurred due to inappropriate use of the words and conflation of the terms due to misunderstanding. The evidence I have presented concurs that this 'misunderstanding' is due to the similarities of the effects they can both have. Both patriotism and nationalism can unite people, and both can evoke discriminatory attitudes – but these are not outlined in their definitions.

The issue of fossil fuels, on the other hand, supported candidates by allowing them to draw on knowledge about energy usage, resources and climate change, and to organise this into a debate which was familiar. The inclusion of descriptive research or knowledge (on the processes of climate change, or techniques of mining, for example) did not, however, gain extra credit. A number of candidates also created presentations on this topic but did not explicitly engage with either Document 7 or 8, making their presentations 'relevant' to the source material (Level 2) rather than 'based' on it (Level 3 or higher).

Structure of argument and engagement with perspectives

An increasing number of presentations showed evidence that an effectively structured argument had been planned which engaged with more than one perspective. This usually took the form of an initial contextualisation of the argument and clarification of terms, followed by a summary of each perspective and exploration of its evidence base and finally a developed conclusion responding to the question and supported by the arguments and evidence which had been given. Presentations which used this as a template were supported into Level 3 of the mark scheme, but this could also become a limiting factor where the structure was followed without following the nuances of the question which has been set. One key area where this distinction emerged was in the clarification of terms. Some presentations provided general definitions of each of the terms in the question, but others linked these to the argument which was being established and definition became an important and relevant stage in the overall development of the argument. The following introduction to a presentation is an example of a thoughtful and focused definition of terms. The question is 'to what extent is nationalism responsible for the decline of the West?':

In this presentation, I will be exploring the relationship between the rise of nationalism and the decline of the West. For the purposes of this research, I will use the term nationalism according to the Oxford Dictionary definition that is 'a feeling of superiority over other countries'. For the decline of the West, I will follow the perspective of German historian, philosopher and politician, Oswald Spengler, who predicted the 'downfall' of Western civilization in his 1918 book 'Der Untergang des Abendlandes' (The Downfall of the Occident) and the breakdown in international relations which has defined what we call the 'East' and the 'West' up until the present day. These terms will help me to analyse the credibility of the claims that the West is in terminal decline either due to obstructive nationalist agendas or as a result of rapid immigration through globalisation.

In this example, key terms in the question are not defined for their own sake, but the definitions are linked to the sources and perspectives used and the overall arguments being established by the candidate.

Use, selection and synthesis of sources

The treatment of sources by the candidate, both those from the source material and those they have located for themselves, continues to be an important differentiator. It is important that sources are recognised, analysed and evaluated as sources from a specific context, rather than simply utilised for the information they contain. As in previous series, some presentations relied on evaluating sources in terms of their credibility, assessing them for reliability of evidence and the reputation of the author among other factors. This did allow them to reach Level 3 on this criterion in many cases as it demonstrated selection of source material, but was also a limiting factor as it prevented the integration of the evaluation of sources into the candidate's exploration of the arguments offered by alternative perspectives. This difference can be seen the following two examples. The first is from a presentation entitled 'Should we all be nationalistic?':

This source is reliable to the extent that it is from an official and well renowned newspaper, The Guardian, and bases its arguments on accurate facts and figures. There is no doubt it holds a strong bias against Nationalism, but provides sufficient and convincing examples to back up the main messages and ideas.

Here, the candidate focuses on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the sources (it is 'official and well renowned' with 'accurate facts and figures' versus its 'strong bias') rather than on whether it strengthens the arguments of the perspective opposing nationalism. In the second example, on the other hand, from a presentation with the question, 'To what extent has economic inequality led to an increase in nationalism?', links a source's year of publication precisely to a wider context of events in support of a perspective:

Nouriel Roubini, writing 'Economic insecurity and the rise of nationalism' for The Guardian in 2014, argues weak recovery from the 2008 economic crisis has provided an opening for 'populist parties' to blame foreign trade and workers. ... Written in June 2014, Roubini suggested that the 'some countries i.e the UK, may exit the EU'. These predictions were prescient, as two years later the UK left the EU, supporting claims by journalists such as Darvas, who suggested this happened due to a rise in economic insecurity. Roubini's findings support Darvas et al.'s work, where deprived areas were more likely to vote leave in the referendum and support extremist views.

This example is also valuable because it demonstrates strong synthesis of sources, as the arguments of Roubini and Darvas are compared in a close and sustained manner. The comparison works as a tool to evaluate the overall perspective which in turn provides an explanation for how those communities in the UK turned towards more nationalist approaches.

As one final point on sources, candidates are expected to use a range. This means going well beyond the sources in the pre-release material, which are only intended as starting points. Without locating and organising a range of sources, candidates will not be as successful in building perspectives which are relevant to the questions they have set for themselves. In this sense, the skills of research, of the location, selection and utilisation of sources, are crucial aspect of this component.

Conclusions

Most presentations submitted now recognise the importance of an effectively developed conclusion. The key point of differentiation is between those which only base themselves on reflection (in other words, personal opinion) and can achieve up to Level 2, and those which combine that with specific argument and evidence from the presentation as a whole. In order to be able to do this, conclusions must be developed in length and substance. This opening to a conclusion demonstrates this point. The question is, 'Should the use of fossil fuels be halted globally?':

To conclude, I do not think the use of fossil fuels should be halted globally. We are currently reliant on fossil fuels for energy and steel and, as a planet, we could not completely stop using fossil fuels at the present time, as made clear in the Dominion Post article. Alternatives to fossil fuels, particularly renewable energy sources, need to be developed further before they become a viable alternative, as currently they are too expensive and have too low potential to supply increasing demand, as indicated in the Forbes article. Halting fossil fuel use would have the greatest negative impact on the poor, as argued in the Reuters' article. However, I believe global fossil fuel use should be significantly reduced and other sources used where possible.

The candidate does not just give their views, but combines these with specific arguments and pieces of evidence they have already addressed from particular sources in their presentation. More than this, however, the conclusion is firmly focused on the candidate's own question, and therefore whether the use of fossil fuels should be halted on a global scale.

Presenting work

The title of this component is 'Presentation'. On the one hand, the mark scheme does not explicitly assess the technical quality of the oral presentation and therefore the candidate's skills of presentation as such are not directly assessed. On the other, however, it is very useful for candidates to construct their submissions as presentations and to actually present their work. Just like the pre-release material, the need to make a presentation provides a structure and focus for a challenging task. Those candidates who did orally present work as presentations were more likely to use techniques such as explicitly signposting stages of the argument. This tended to make their arguments more logically coherent and also allowed for more effective organisation of perspectives and conclusions in a way that clearly responded to the question set.

Comments on specific questions

As in previous series, the point should be made that there are no set questions for this component. Instead, it is up to the candidate (with guidance from their teacher) to construct a question of their own. Because of this, candidates both have the opportunity to focus precisely on the argument they want to make and the perspectives with which they want to engage, but it also means that the question set may limit the achievement of a presentation. For example, these questions are limited to the context of the US or UK and hence do not allow easily for a global context:

Is Trump an unapologetic nationalist or a patriot?

Is Nicola Sturgeon right to ask for a second independence referendum?

Questions with 'what' or 'how' stems tend to encourage descriptive or factual responses rather than argument and debate:

What is contributing to the rise in nationalism globally?

How does nationalism affect international cooperation?

These questions however all produced high-scoring presentations. They are relevant to specific arguments in the pre-release booklet, are global, but also focused on a specific debate which could give rise to a final judgement:

Has more sophisticated means of communication led to improved freedom of speech?

Is the cost of decarbonising the global economy too high?

Has increased immigration resulted in increased nationalism?