

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/11
Written Examination

Key messages

Candidates should ensure they read the paper carefully, looking at the key words, in order to answer the set questions.

It is important to note the number of marks available for each question. Some wrote large amounts for **Question 1** when it was only worth 20 per cent of the total marks.

To gain higher marks in **Questions 2** there should be consideration of not just **what** a strength or weakness may be, but also **how** or **why** it is a strength or weakness. Candidates should look at the impact of the identified evidence on the author's argument and come to an appropriate judgement.

Candidates should provide brief and relevant references from the documents to support their evaluation of evidence and argument. Otherwise the answer is generalised, containing only assertions or claims.

They should also explain what impact this has on the argument which goes beyond a generic statement like 'weakens/strengthens'. They need to explain how the assessment does this.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content. The candidates need to focus on an evaluation of the provenance, perspectives, evidence and argument to reach an overall judgement as to whether the author's argument in Document 2 was **more convincing** than that of Document 1.

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents.

In **Questions 2 and 3** copying sections from the documents without development or explanation, even if briefly quoting, will not gain credit. In **Question 1** copying directly is acceptable to identify, but not to explain. For explanation, the candidate must use their own words or clearly paraphrase or synthesise the words of the author.

General comments

There was little evidence of candidates misunderstanding the documents and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. Some candidates did not pay careful enough attention to the key words in the questions. For example, 'gender inequality in sport...' in **Question 1(a)**.

It was pleasing to see some candidates applying a higher-level skill by comparing the arguments put forward in the documents in **Question 3** and coming to a judgement as to which, if any, was more convincing. Many, though, only gave a general comparison and a limited judgement.

The length of answers was not always appropriate for the number of marks available, but few candidates appeared to run out of time.

Some answers in **Question 2** were descriptive and concentrated heavily on the provenance of the author when a more balanced approach would have been more successful.

Some answers to **Question 3** were not fully developed or supported by precise references to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents and evaluated their significance and impact on the argument. This demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being presented. Lower scoring answers tended to simply state what the authors had said and not undertaken any evaluation. Evaluating the documents separately was less successful than completing an ongoing evaluative comparison of aspects of the two documents.

The rubric of the paper requires candidates to write in continuous prose so, in **Questions 2 and 3** full paragraphing, rather than bullet points, should be used.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) The question required candidates to **identify and explain** two types of gender inequality in sport. Although most identified the issue of unequal payment the link to underrepresentation and stereotypes in sport was less well developed. Some referred to general life skills that did not show a link to sport or an idea of inequality. It is important to read the question carefully to identify the key words.

For the identification part of the question it is appropriate to copy from the document. This does not need to be extensive and could be covered with a short sentence. For the explanation part, candidates need to use their own words, clearly paraphrase the author's words or synthesise points from different parts of the document. Many candidates simply copied out sections of the text. This often gave 'identify' marks, but the explanation marks were not awarded unless rewording, or paraphrasing had occurred. It is not acceptable to use knowledge from outside the documents.

An example of a concise answer showing identification and explanation is:

'Men and women are not getting the same pay (I) for doing the same thing is a type of gender inequality (E). Another type of inequality is stereotyping (I), saying, that even though they may have talent they can not play this sport as they are girls. (E).'

'In Document 1 the two types of gender inequality are: women tend to get paid less than men (I) and they also lack representation (I). The USA team won the Women's World Cup in football and "they were paid four times less than the losing men's team from the USA". Even though both teams were from the same country the women still got way less although they won. (E) UN Women have to work to promote women being represented as the author implies that they are not well represented. If women have to work just to be involved in sports that is clearly unfair because men are typically thought of first in organisations like FIFA. (E).'

Lower scoring candidates tended to copy directly from the text and incorrectly used examples instead of clear explanation. The first sentence was credited for an Identify mark, but the explanation scored 0 as it was simply copied from the document without any rewording.

In these examples both candidates largely stated from the document for the identification (I) marks and did reword or synthesise the words of the author for explanation.

- (b) This two-mark question asked candidates to explain one specific way in which UN Women have promoted this. (Equality in Sport). There was one mark available for identifying (I) the specific way (HeForShe or UN Women logo) and one for explaining (E) how this promotes support to resolve women's inequality in sport.

Some candidates gave answers relating to the link with Brazil, and the Olympics or generally about under-representation in FIFA and IOC. These were not considered sufficiently specific enough for credit.

Some examples of high scoring answers are:

'For the fight to promote women's equality the UN Women have organised a campaign known as HeForShe. (I) By using this, UN Women are starting the conversation on promoting more equality for women in sport through the involvement of men and boys. (E)

'UN Women have been promoting gender equality in sports by encouraging male athletes to wear the UN Women logo on their Jersey. (I) Using this logo can stir up a conversation about the need for it (equality) and the (people can learn more about it by questioning. (E)

Question 2

It was important in **Question 2** to read the requirements of the question carefully. The highest scoring candidates addressed strengths and weaknesses of the argument about sport and gender inequality. However, some candidates looked at the argument in general terms using a formulaic approach to answer a question about argument. For example, several candidates concentrated solely on the background and experience of the author (as both strength and weakness) to the detriment of other possible parts of the argument. There was little clear evidence and minimal statistics, so candidates needed to look more deeply at strengths: the use of first-hand accounts from a named sportswoman, breadth of global examples; and weaknesses: unsourced details, untypical examples (was Abby Wambach's testimony transferable to other parts of the world?)

For strengths of the argument high scoring candidates used examples that included evidence like:

'There is a use of credible sources. Ngcuka uses sources from the US Women's World Cup football team and FIFA. Both have connections with sports or sports teams which gives them a good ability to see. The former captain gives information about her personal experience of unequal pay, "she is paid less than many men who have scored fewer goals." She experienced these effects first-hand giving her credibility.'

This shows the point made about the credible sources, the point explained as to how they are credible and illustrated with a brief reference to the document to ensure that understanding is clearly shown.

For weaknesses of the evidence high scoring candidates used examples like:

'However, some may view the author's position as Executive Director of UN Women as a weakness because her involvement in the organisation may lead to vested interest. Due to her position the author may want to over-glorify the actions and impact of the organisation as well as overexaggerating the severity of the issue to substantiate her cause. Therefore, the source of document 1 can be seen either as a strength or a weakness depending on the perspective from which it is viewed.'

This shows a common approach to the weakness caused by the author's possible vested interest. This example also includes some judgement in the last sentence. It refers back to an earlier part of the answer where the author used vested interest as a strength.

Part of the document could be taken as a strength or a weakness. The example below uses it as a weakness but could be interpreted as a strength as several did.

'In paragraph 3, the author writes in a tone where she takes the injustice done to Abby Wambach personally by saying "I mean how?", "I do not even have the words". The frustrated and angry emotion that is conveyed with the use of these phrases weakens the author's argument by showing that it is based more on emotion than on logic and facts.'

Question 3

The most frequent, and most effective approach was to directly compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two documents throughout the answer looking at their different perspectives and supporting evidence. The strongest candidates achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each author's argument. There was no correct answer and candidates were free to argue that Document 2 was more convincing than Document 1 or the opposite. It could be argued that both were equally strong even if in different ways.

Some candidates simply directly compared the content of the documents without evaluating their relative strengths or providing any judgement. This simplistic/undeveloped approach which describes a few points comparing the two documents rarely was marked higher than Level 1.

Many candidates were able to pick out the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility and style of the authors and the quality of supporting evidence provided. Candidates achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents, explained them and gave their impact on the overall assessment. Lower scoring answers simply relied on a formulaic approach of what could constitute a strong argument without linking it to the provided documents. Such answers were consequently superficial and relied, at best, on undeveloped quotes from the text. The three elements of: identify/describe, develop/explain and illustrate with appropriate material from the documents, were required for Level 3 answers. Lower scoring answers

tend only to describe. Middle scoring scripts tended to include two elements, for example often describing and explaining without relating directly to the document.

Some candidates evaluated the theme of the argument in terms of their own attitudes to and knowledge of the gender inequality in sport. This is not appropriate as the question requires evaluation of the authors' arguments.

Some candidates simply stated the points the authors were making rather than undertaking any evaluation of its quality in making a strong (or otherwise) argument. Several candidates simply copied out large sections of the document to show what the authors had stated. This was particularly true of the provenance of the authors. Often the background of the author in Document 1 was stated in isolation, not considering whether or how it might be more convincing than the author's credibility in Document 2. This is only a Level 1 skill as there was no development or evaluation.

The strongest responses adopted a structured response to answering the question: methodically evaluating the relative strengths of the argument (with intermediate judgements), using appropriate examples and analysis of impact, before coming to a reasoned judgment at the end.

Examples of strong evaluation of the arguments are:

'Document 2 focuses on inequality existing in a variety of sports such as, football, hockey and rugby, opposed to Document 1's discussion of inequality only in football. The inclusion of ways women are treated unequally in different sports widens the perspective that inequality is an issue in multiple aspects of sports. This increases the significance of the argument in Document 2 making it more convincing.'

This identifies the issue of breadth of examples, explains why it is significant and uses clear examples from both documents to confirm the point. It also includes an intermediate judgement to build the case overall.

'The author of Document 1 is the Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and was a former Deputy President of South Africa. From her position, profession and affiliation to the UN she has high-level credentials the strengthen her argument. This helps makes the unsourced, self-provided information more credible. She may though have a vested interest in promoting her own organisation that could lead to bias. Document 2 on the other hand is presented by Cheryl Roberts whose credentials, other than her motivational writing history, remain unknown. While being a South African resident does show some degree of expertise about the nation's affairs this does not qualify her to make claims equal to that of a professional.'

This looks at the relative credibility of the two authors. It not only compares the relative strength of the two authors but also looks at the strengths and weaknesses of Document 1.

Some candidates seemed to be looking for a formulaic approach to the question by making assumptions based on preconceived ideas about what makes a good argument, rather than reading and evaluating the documents clearly. Candidates are required to engage critically with the documents, rather than make generalised comments that could apply to any document.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/12
Written Examination

Key messages

Candidates should ensure they read the paper carefully, looking at the key words, in order to answer the set questions. This applied in all questions, for example in **Question 2** where some candidates evaluated the argument, rather than the evidence, as required in the question.

It is important to note the number of marks available for each question. Some wrote large amounts for **Question 1** when it was only worth 20 per cent of the total marks.

To gain higher marks in **Questions 2** there should be consideration of not just **what** a strength or weakness may be, but also **how** or **why** it is a strength or weakness.

Candidates should provide brief and relevant references from the documents to support their evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised, containing only assertions or claims.

They should also explain what impact this has on the argument or chosen evidence which goes beyond a generic statement like 'weakens/strengthens'. They need to explain how the assessment does this.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content. The candidates need to focus on an evaluation of the provenance, perspectives, evidence and argument to reach an overall judgement as to whether the author's argument in Document 2 was **stronger** than that of Document 1.

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents.

In **Questions 2 and 3** copying sections from the documents without development or explanation even if briefly quoting will not gain credit. In **Question 1** copying directly is acceptable to identify, but not to explain. For explanation, the candidate must use their own words or clearly paraphrase or synthesise the words of the author.

General comments

There was little evidence of candidates misunderstanding the documents and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. Some candidates did not pay careful enough attention to the key words in the questions. For example, 'make use of...' in **Question 1** and 'evidence' in **Question 2**.

It was pleasing to see some candidates applying a higher-level skill by comparing the arguments put forward in the documents in **Question 3** and coming to a judgement as to which, if any, was stronger. Many, though, only gave a general comparison and a limited judgement.

The length of answers was not always appropriate for the number of marks available, but few candidates appeared to run out of time. **Question 1** was less structured than previous years and this often led to a more verbose answer when, with some planning, a more concise approach would have been more effective.

Some answers to **Question 3** were not fully developed or supported by precise references to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents and evaluated their significance and impact on the argument. This demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being presented. Lower scoring answers tended to simply state what the authors had said and not undertaken any evaluation.

The rubric of the paper requires candidates to write in continuous prose so, in **Questions 2 and 3** full paragraphing, rather than bullet points, should be used.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The structure of this question was simpler than last year as it had no sub-sections. Candidates needed to **identify and explain** three different ways that the people of the MENA region **can make use** of the internet and social media. The most effective answers tended to split the answer into three clear paragraphs, one for each way. This effectively created a structure which helped with logical thought.

For the identification part of the question it is appropriate to copy from the document. This does not need to be extensive and could be covered with a short sentence. For the explanation part candidates need to use their own words, clearly paraphrase the author's words or synthesise points from different parts of the document. Many candidates simply copied out sections of the text. This often gave 'identify' marks, but the explanation marks were not awarded unless rewording, or paraphrasing had occurred. It is not acceptable to use knowledge from outside the documents.

An example of a concise answer showing identification and explanation marks for one way... is:

'The internet and social media can be used to employ young people, specifically in the growing mobile "app economy" (I). These young people can work on the development of apps which resonate with local languages. (E)'

Lower scoring candidates tended to copy directly from the text and incorrectly used examples instead of clear explanation. The first sentence was credited for an Identify mark, but the explanation scored 0 as it was simply copied from the document without any rewording.

'Social media can help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the MENA region to grow their business. (I) Facebook and other social media help SMEs through high-tech targeting, such as advertisements to reach the people that really matter'

Some candidates used the same point three times using three different examples. The question specifically asked for 3 **different** ways. This answer was only awarded one mark for the idea of growing the business.

'Social media can help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the MENA region to grow their business. (I), this would make their business more successful. Secondly, social media apps such as Facebook can make businesses grow by advertising to reach their business's target. Thirdly, through the MENA region's global connectivity they would allow small enterprises to expand. This would lead to an increase in profit.'

Question 2

This question was generally well answered with most candidates correctly assessing the evidence rather than simply the argument. Those who incorrectly answered as if this question was about argument were less successful but did gain marks as the evaluation of evidence was normally part of the answer. The question required an assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the evidence used by the author.

The highest achieving candidates recognised that the author used precise and relevant statistics from Deloitte, Just Falafel, Facebook and the UN. Higher scoring candidates named some or all of these, identified the accuracy of the data or organisation and, in particular, explained why the data was reliable and gave support to his conclusion. This, three stage approach tends to lead to higher marks.

Many candidates recognised that Labin as a senior executive of Facebook based in Dubai had strong provenance. However, it is important in an evidence-based question to relate this to his ability to select appropriate information.

For weaknesses, higher scoring candidates focused on the lack of sources for key evidence and as a counter to the provenance recognised that this could also imply bias in the selection of his evidence for personal benefit.

The difference between higher and moderately scoring candidates was usually defined by the appropriate explanation of the strengths and weaknesses, not just identifying them but developing them and illustrating them from the document. Many candidates made basic statements without explaining or developing them.

For strengths of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

'The evidence utilised by the author is sourced from credible organisations and institutes. For example, he cites statistics from Deloitte, the UN and the Dubai school of Government. As independent bodies in the discussion relating to the opportunities heralded by the internet and social media, the statistics they provide, like youth unemployment in the Middle East would reach 29 per cent in 2016, are likely to be reliable.'

For weaknesses of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

'Various pieces of evidence presented lack sources. For example, "Just Falafel" making a "profit 18 times greater than their initial investment in Facebook" and traditional ways of finding work, "more than one in four young Arab people unemployed". This failure to mention sources greatly weakens the evidence which may have supported the author's conclusion.'

'...given that the author works at Facebook, the biggest social media platform, he is likely to select evidence that presents it exclusively in a positive light. This is seen with examples Just Falafel and Ahmed Sakr. This is a weakness of the evidence used.'

Question 3

The most frequent, and most effective approach was to directly compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two documents throughout the answer looking at their different perspectives and supporting evidence. The strongest candidates achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each author's argument. There was no correct answer and candidates were free to argue that Document 2 was stronger than Document 1 or the opposite. It could be argued that both were equally strong even if in different ways.

Some candidates simply directly compared the content of the documents without evaluating their relative strengths or providing any judgement. This simplistic/undeveloped approach which describes a few points comparing the two documents rarely was marked higher than Level 1.

Many candidates were able to pick out the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility and style of the authors and the quality of supporting evidence provided. Candidates achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents, explained them and gave their impact on the overall assessment. Lower scoring answers simply relied on a formulaic approach of what could constitute a strong argument without linking it to the provided documents. Such answers were consequently superficial and relied, at best, on undeveloped quotes from the text. The three elements of: identify/describe, develop/explain and illustrate with appropriate material from the documents, were required for Level 3 answers. Lower scoring answers tend only to describe. Middle scoring scripts tended to include two elements, for example often describing and explaining without relating directly to the document.

Some candidates evaluated the theme of the argument in terms of their own attitudes to and knowledge of the internet and social media. This is not appropriate as the question requires evaluation of the authors' arguments.

Some candidates simply stated the points the authors were making rather than undertaking any evaluation of its quality in making a strong (or otherwise) argument. Several candidates simply copied out large sections of the document to show what the authors had stated. This is only a Level 1 skill as there was no development or evaluation.

The strongest responses adopted a structured response to answering the question: methodically evaluating the relative strengths of the argument (with intermediate judgements), using appropriate examples and analysis of impact, before coming to a reasoned judgment at the end.

Examples of strong evaluation of the arguments are:

'The argument in Document 2 may be stronger than that in Document 1 due to its use of counterarguments, which make it more balanced. The argument in Document 2 discusses both the benefits and problems of social media use using examples like: "More liberal attitudes in gender relations" and "elderly parents feeling left out". This is more balanced than the claim made in Document 1 that "it seems obvious that the internet and social media are a positive force." The argument is, as a result, more believable thus making it stronger than Document 1.'

'Unlike Document 1, Document 2 discusses the matter from a broader angle through a variety of perspectives (lenses) such as social, cultural and political. This method critically dissects the issue on social media into different sectors. In Document 1 the focus is on the economical standpoint alone, disregarding more crucial views and lenses.'

Some candidates seemed to be looking for a formulaic approach to the question by making assumptions based on preconceived ideas about what makes a good argument, rather than reading and evaluating the documents clearly. Candidates are required to engage critically with the documents, rather than make generalised comments that could apply to any document.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/13
Written Examination

Key messages

Candidates should ensure they read the paper carefully, looking at the key words, in order to answer the set questions. This applied in all questions, for example in **Question 2** where some candidates evaluated the argument, rather than the evidence, as required in the question.

It is important to note the number of marks available for each question. Some wrote large amounts for **Question 1** when it was only worth 20 per cent of the total marks.

To gain higher marks in **Questions 2** there should be consideration of not just **what** a strength or weakness may be, but also **how** or **why** it is a strength or weakness.

Candidates should provide brief and relevant references from the documents to support their evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised, containing only assertions or claims.

They should also explain what impact this has on the argument or chosen evidence which goes beyond a generic statement like 'weakens/strengthens'. They need to explain how the assessment does this.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content. The candidates need to focus on an evaluation of the provenance, perspectives, evidence and argument to reach an overall judgement as to whether the author's argument in Document 2 was **more convincing** than that of Document 1.

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents.

In **Questions 2 and 3** copying sections from the documents without development or explanation even if briefly quoting will not gain credit. In **Question 1** copying directly is acceptable to identify, but not to explain. For explanation, the candidate must use their own words or clearly paraphrase or synthesise the words of the author.

General comments

There was little evidence of candidates misunderstanding the documents and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. Some candidates did not pay careful enough attention to the key words in the questions. For example, 'replace human workers...' in **Question 1** and 'evidence' in **Question 2**.

It was pleasing to see some candidates applying a higher-level skill by comparing the arguments put forward in the documents in **Question 3** and coming to a judgement as to which, if any was more convincing. Many, though, only gave a general comparison and a limited judgement.

The length of answers was not always appropriate for the number of marks available, but few candidates appeared to run out of time. **Question 1** was less structured than previous years and this often led to a more verbose answer when, with some planning, a more concise approach would have been more effective. The highest scoring candidates clearly identified and explained the three reasons in three clearly separated paragraphs.

Some answers to **Question 3** were not fully developed or supported by precise references to the documents. Higher scoring responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents and evaluated their significance and impact on the argument. This demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being presented. Lower scoring answers tended to simply state what the authors had said and not undertaken any evaluation.

The rubric of the paper requires candidates to write in continuous prose so, in **Questions 2 and 3** full paragraphing, rather than bullet points, should be used.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The structure of this question was simpler than last year as it had no sub-sections. Candidates needed to **identify and explain** three different reasons why technology might replace human workers. The most effective answers tended to split the answer into three clear paragraphs, one for each way. This effectively created a structure which helped with logical thought.

For the identification part of the question it is appropriate to copy from the document. This does not need to be extensive and could be covered with a short sentence. For the explanation part candidates need to use their own words, clearly paraphrase the author's words or synthesise points from different parts of the document. Many candidates simply copied out sections of the text. This often gave 'identify' marks, but the explanation marks were not awarded unless rewording, or paraphrasing had occurred. It is not acceptable to use knowledge from outside the documents.

Reasons could be identified and explained in a few ways with what was seen as identification in one answer being used as explanation in another.

This is an example of a concise answer showing identification and explanation marks for one reason. The Identification mark comes second in order and then explanation comes first.

'The IQ of machines is increasing at a high rate and will finally become higher than the IQ of most people. (E) Hence, machines will outperform humans in many jobs such as anaesthesiologist and radiologist. (I)'

Lower scoring candidates tended to copy directly from the text and incorrectly used examples instead of clear explanation. The first sentence was credited for an Identify mark, but the explanation scored 0 as it was simply copied from the document without any significant rewording.

'Foxconn, the world's largest manufacturer of gadget, is installing Foxbots at a rate of 30 000 per year to do daily jobs more cheaply. (I) In addition, Foxconn's Chief Executive reported that they will add one more million robotic workers in the future, which means the company will not hire the next million human workers.'

Question 2

This question was generally well answered with most candidates correctly assessing the evidence rather than simply the argument. Those who incorrectly answered as if this question was about argument were less successful but did gain marks as the evaluation of evidence was normally part of the answer. The question required an assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the evidence used by the author.

The highest achieving candidates recognised that there were several strengths of the evidence used by the authors. Many identified the successful use of relevant examples to illustrate replacement of workers, namely, Foxconn's addition of robotic workers, Seday's machine and computers to replace anaesthesiologists and radiographers. Higher scoring candidates named some or all of these, identified the accuracy of the data or organisation and, in particular, explained why the data was reliable and gave support to the conclusion. This three stage approach tends to lead to higher marks.

Several candidates saw that the authors both had a reliable technological background, so their selection and judgement of evidence was likely to be strong. It is important in an evidence-based question to relate this clearly to their ability to select appropriate information – not just showing they were credible as would be appropriate in an argument-based question.

For weaknesses some higher scoring candidates referred to the limited perspective of the evidence as it was only taken from developed countries; UK, US and China which are all highly technological. Some also saw that this may not be typical in other areas of the world that were not mentioned.

For strengths of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

'Document 1 makes use of evidence from organisations with high reputation. For example, they use evidence from the US Food and Drug Administration to show that technology can do tasks without the need of humans. This supports the conclusion that robots can replace human workers. This organisation is very professional and famous in the US, so it is very likely to provide accurate evidence and informed judgement about whether the practice of robots replacing human workers is justified.'

For weaknesses of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as this where reference is made to estimate of statistics and predictions that contain assumptions:

'Some evidence used by the authors are only estimates. For instance, the author assumes that machines will have an IQ of 90 per cent of the US population if the technology continues to improve at the current rate. However, this is just an estimate (assumption) as it is not as convincing as facts that have already happened. Maybe scientists might encounter obstacles in the near future.'

'The author gave a statement "by 2025 these machines will have an IQ greater than 90 per cent of the US population and would put together another 50 million jobs in the US within reach of Smart machines." The author gave clear statistics that are significant in the US but may not be applicable to other countries. This statement is also hypothetical or can be said to be an assumption as we are unsure whether it will happen or not.'

Question 3

The most frequent, and most effective approach was to directly compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two documents throughout the answer looking at their different perspectives and supporting evidence. The strongest candidates achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each author's argument. There was no correct answer and candidates were free to argue that Document 2 was more or less convincing than Document 1 or were equally convincing.

Some candidates tended to directly compare the content of the documents without evaluating their relative strengths or whether they contained any judgement. This simplistic/undeveloped approach which describes a few points comparing the two documents rarely was marked higher than Level 1.

Many candidates were able to pick out the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility and style of the authors and the quality of supporting evidence provided. Candidates achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents, explained them and gave their impact on the overall assessment. Lower scoring answers simply relied on a formulaic approach of what could constitute a strong argument without linking it to the provided documents. Such answers were consequently superficial and relied, at best, on undeveloped quotes from the text. The three elements of: identify/describe, develop/explain and illustrate with appropriate material from the documents, were required for Level 3 answers. Lower scoring answers tend only to describe. Middle scoring scripts tended to include two elements, for example often describing and explaining without relating directly to the document.

Some candidates evaluated the theme of the argument in terms of their own attitudes to and knowledge of the internet and social media. This is not appropriate as the question requires evaluation of the authors' arguments.

Some candidates simply stated the points the authors were making rather than undertaking any evaluation of its quality in making a strong (or otherwise) argument. Several candidates simply copied out large sections of the document to show what the authors had stated. This is only a Level 1 skill as there was no development or evaluation.

The strongest responses adopted a structured response to answering the question: methodically evaluating the relative strengths of the argument (with intermediate judgements), using appropriate examples and analysis of impact, before coming to a reasoned judgment at the end.

Examples of strong evaluation of the arguments are:

'In Document 2 the authors quote from the executive manager and workers of the company to argue that technology facilitates the tasks for labourers. He also quotes the experience of a 54-year old worker to show the increasing efficiency and decreasing burden on workers. In Document 1 the only quotation is a sentence from the CEO of Foxconn. The use of direct quotation is a strength as it gives the first-hand experience to show the effectiveness of technology on the workplace.'

In terms of evaluating statistical evidence:

'Document 2's use of statistics is much more convincing as it quotes exact figures. For example, the Japanese Government's plan to expand its robotics market – it is stated to be from ¥660 billion to ¥2.4 trillion by 2020. This is unlike the quantitative data in Document 1 that mostly approximates its figures, like "over", "more than" and "greater than". Saying exact figures and not rounding them creates a sense of credibility to the reader.'

For the judgement:

'Overall, the author of Documents 2 uses personal experience and substantiated claims to develop his argument. Compare to Document 1 where there are more unsubstantiated claims and no mention of how machinery has actually affected people's lives. Therefore, the argument in Document 2 is more convincing than that in Document 1.'

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/02
Essay

Key messages

- It is essential that both teachers and candidates are familiar with and fully understand the assessment criteria and syllabus aims.
- The choice of essay question must provide opportunities to develop globally contrasting perspectives.
- Sources selected should offer firmly supported judgements or conclusions based on some combination of evidence, reason, argument, experience, authority or opinion.
- Evaluation of sources and perspectives should form a substantial element of candidate's essays.
- When concluding, candidates should take the opportunity to display the skill of reflection, Assessment Objective AO2, when considering the impact of perspectives on their own standpoint and making suggestions for further research.

General comments

The work seen by Examiners in this series was of very variable quality, with a minority of candidates achieving at higher levels, whilst a significant number of candidates struggled to reach Level 3. There are indications that some centres have not fully embraced a skills-based approach; specialist subject knowledge is elevated at the expense of deconstruction and reconstruction. This is particularly true when essays submitted appear to have been written for an alternative syllabus. Support and training materials are available to assist with the development of this approach which, to some, may be quite new.

As with any academic essay, planning is key to success and only a minority of submissions displayed significant deficiencies in this respect. Many candidates utilised the permissible word length very well but there appeared to be an increase in both the proportion of essays substantially shorter and longer than the requested word length (1750 – 2000 words). In both cases, achievement was negatively impacted. Examiners stop reading when the upper limit is reached, and this can result in non-assessment of the conclusion. Essays substantially shorter than the advised minimum length of 1750 words were more common. The lower limit might not affect candidates in the same way as too long essays, but Examiners may find it difficult to award at higher levels. This particularly applies to criterion 3, as a very good or excellent understanding of source material cannot be demonstrated or in the case of criterion 5, where perspectives are neither detailed nor full.

Essays were, generally, well structured and followed accepted conventions making them easy to read and understand candidates' thinking and direction. Highly successful candidates displayed a particularly good level of planning, when striking the necessary balance between the presentation of evidence, analysis, evaluation and synthesis in order to address all assessment criteria.

An informed and thoughtful consideration and wording of the essay title or question is the starting point for a successful essay. The best titles are concise and leave little room for confusion as to the candidate's aims. For instance, '*Should euthanasia be legal?*', or, '*Should laws be implemented in favour of vaccinations?*', offer questions which are clear and, as they call into question ethics and values, contrasting perspectives may be developed in differing global contexts. Conversely, many titles do not serve this purpose as is the case with, '*How does the standard of living and the quality of life differ among similarly industrialised nations?*'. Quite often, essay titles took an all-too common form as in, '*To what extent is racism affecting the world?*'. The tendency here is to provide an answer which is descriptive and framed in terms of degree rather than offering any contrast. In a quite different example, a candidate asks, '*Which will come first: Nuclear annihilation or climate change?*'. It is difficult to see how this question could be reasonably answered given its hypothetical nature and the absence of sources addressing the question. Finally, '*How does*

overpopulation affect the economy?', is open-ended with limitless possibilities and creating problems for the candidate in providing an adequate answer. Precision will help to focus candidates' minds.

Only a minority of candidates appear to understand the centrality of globally contrasting perspectives when planning and writing their essays. Their starting point is to articulate precisely what these perspectives are and why they are global in character. Arguments and evidence are analysed and evaluated for one perspective and then for the other. Having clearly established the terms and content of the debate, they move on to synthesising the evidence for both perspectives lending them coherence and order, explaining the particular strengths or weaknesses within each perspective before offering a comparative evaluation which will lead them to a supported conclusion. Essentially, candidates who follow this process are thinking in terms of perspectives throughout the essay. Without doubt, this process of reconstruction is not an easy one but necessary if candidates are to achieve at a higher level.

Many candidates encountered difficulties in developing globally contrasting perspectives, limiting the opportunity to achieve at higher levels. A significant number struggled to develop contrasting perspectives, limiting their achievement to lower levels. Some of the recurring issues which contributed to these difficulties follow:

- Confusion between the meaning of lenses and perspectives. Lenses (also referred to as *Themes* in the syllabus) refer to differing ways of viewing issues. One candidate researching the issue of violence in schools chose to structure the essay around the lenses of social, economic and technological. As an approach, this was not unreasonable. However, despite the differing classifications, contrasting perspectives did not emerge.
- Some candidates' research was framed by questions which appeared to offer little hope of developing a contrasting perspective, as in, '*Should climate change be considered a serious threat to our planet?*' Little effort was made to develop the contrasting perspective that it does not. This might be due to the inherent difficulties, instead of which the candidate discussed measures which might serve to mitigate the threat. Whilst this approach might be considered to result in the development of another perspective, it must be understood that it is a complementary rather than contrasting perspective.
- Quite often, candidates will research a topic which has the potential for contrast across differing global contexts, as in '*Should animal experimentation be banned?*'. The candidate undertook worthwhile research, presenting arguments both for and against but which were not contextualised with specific regions or nation states. Nor were they clearly differentiated because of levels of economic development or political systems or with differing cultural or religious traditions. This approach fails to engage with differentiated human experience and the perspectives developed, whilst contrasting, are not globally contrasting.
- Candidates may research a topic with their research firmly focused on the West or USA and then show some awareness of the need to develop their research at a global level. Occasionally, this simply takes the form of providing some data which briefly illustrates the situation in a different region. On its own, this does not add a meaningful global dimension, unless it is accompanied by some degree of reasoning or argument researched by the candidate and explaining the data.

Finally, centres need to be aware of the syllabus requirement that candidates are solely responsible for the content of their essays and teachers should not be offering comments on drafts or final versions. Examiners reported an increasing number of essays which had comments in the margin, and which were assumed to have been added by teachers or other learners. In these cases, essays will be reviewed for potential malpractice.

Plagiarism is a growing problem with increasing reliance on internet-based research. Inaccurate citations and in-text references, verbatim copying and pasting of large sections instead of paraphrasing and synthesizing of materials as well as discrepancies between text citations and the bibliography are some of the more common issues. The use of 'spinner' software, designed to confuse plagiarism search tools, has also been noted. It is essential that candidates are conversant with citation and referencing conventions and utilise them appropriately.

Comments by criterion

Criterion 1 focuses on communication skills, essay structure and the quality of citations and referencing. Almost universally, candidates are well-versed in essay structure and, on the whole, Examiners find essays generally clear in their direction and easy to follow. Candidates commonly achieve at Level 3 with a substantial number achieving at Level 4 as their command of English is very good. Just a small number of candidates reach Level 5 by virtue of the quality of expression, use of a wide-ranging vocabulary and

complex sentence structure. Many candidates could improve their level through quite simple measures including careful proof reading, removing common and repetitive errors, the use of 'signposting' to guide the reader through the different stages of the essay and appropriate paragraphing. Many candidates used an introduction to successfully convey the purpose and direction of the essay. One candidate wrote, *'Throughout this essay, I'm going to be analysing two contrasting perspectives and come to a conclusion of whether genetic modification of humans is the key to our advancement as humankind, or if we're taking a step too far by overlooking the possibly dangerous repercussions.'* Whilst the quality of communication and essay structure is the main determinant of level, Examiners take careful note of the quality of citations and referencing which may impact this level positively or negatively. Citations should clearly indicate the source used on that page without ambiguity and then appear in the bibliography. Many candidates use the briefest in-text citation which is inadequate and, quite often, not all citations appear in the bibliography or appear in a bibliography listing many sources which have not been used. Others use only web addresses which are ineffective as they frequently omit the author's name and date of original publication. An increasing number of centres are encouraging their candidates to use numbered citations which are translated into full, footnoted citations which is highly effective and has the added advantage that they do not contribute to the overall word count of the essay.

The next two criteria consider the sources used. Criterion 2 examines the quality of source selection. A significant minority of essays were reliant on fact-based sources, which were descriptive and devoid of argument. Whilst their inclusion may have some value, they are less open to meaningful analysis and evaluation when addressing the third criterion. Several essays, including some which were particularly well formulated, were entirely reliant on Western sources, limiting them to Level 3 for this criterion. Additionally, by using limited sources it can then be difficult to develop perspectives with global content. In order to achieve at higher levels, candidates are required to access sources which demonstrate global contrast. The term global should be understood in a wider context than, simply, geographical region. Sources may originate from differing cultural, religious or political systems or traditions as well as from countries or regions with differing levels of economic or industrial development. It is undoubtedly a challenge for candidates to locate Anglophone sources of contrasting provenance, but the strongest essays often made good use of international English-medium news outlets, like Al Jazeera, the Straits Times, the Cape Argus and China Daily. When deciding on an essay title and the research they intend to pursue, candidates need to be aware of the range of sources they can access. One candidate investigating industrialisation and environmental damage utilised sources from China, Kenya, India and Vietnam as well as drawing on information from a UN agency and achieved at the highest level.

Criterion 3 concerns the treatment of sources in terms of analysis and evaluation and should be considered as containing two distinct elements, both of which require fulfilment for high achievement. A key issue here (and linking to the previous criterion) is one of quantity or quality. In order to achieve well for criterion 2, sources should be detailed or full and detailed. In order to achieve well for criterion 3, analysis should show a very good or full understanding and critical evaluation should be undertaken across a range of criteria. It is difficult to see how any of the above can be achieved with a large number of sources. The strongest essays tend to be limited to a relatively small number of principal sources with, perhaps, other sources used to provide background data, facts or corroboration. Successful candidates used relatively brief, yet telling, quotations from sources followed by critical analysis and few candidates achieved less than Level 3. Occasionally, candidates incorporate lengthy quotations from sources which is not helpful as this limits the candidates' own work within the permissible word length. The outcomes for evaluation were very mixed. Many candidates offered no evaluation although an increasing number do so. At the lower levels, evaluation is both formulaic and simplistic, restricted to assertive comments on bias and the author's credentials and biography (sometimes at great length). Successful candidates assessed the credibility of the sources' claims and implications for the candidate's conclusions about their focal question. In an essay investigating hate speech and governmental control, one candidate wrote, *'Furthermore, the main argument of her article rests upon the idea that if a state were to control speech, it would become totalitarian. However, there was no clear link explaining why preventing hate groups like the American Ku Klux Klan from spreading Neo-Nazi or Anti-LGBT propaganda would result in an undemocratic regime. Therefore this reasoning is at least somewhat flawed as governments can continue to uphold the rights of citizens to critique the government while preventing hate groups from targeting vulnerable social groups.'*

The next three criteria assess perspectives. To demonstrate a developed dimension of global contrast, candidates must explore how perspectives on a topic differ in differing global contexts (e.g. that GM crops might provoke concerns about agri-industrial monopolies in MEDCs but offer scope to avert starvation in LEDCs). Asserting generically that a topic is of inherent global relevance (e.g. that gay people face discrimination in many countries/everywhere or that climate affects us all) attracts limited credit for developing contrast. Specifically, Criterion 4 examines a candidate's capacity to present perspectives in a balanced way, as well as displaying empathy for alternative perspectives by way of acceptance or

understanding of an opposing view and especially one they do not agree with. This does not necessarily need to be overtly stated as an essay which gives equal room and treatment to contrasting perspectives is indicative of a measure of empathy. However, this balance, coupled with a clear appreciation of opposing views, will raise the level of achievement. One candidate researching into government propaganda wrote, *'In my opinion, government propaganda should be considered immoral because it enables the propagation of falsehoods, manipulation of opinion and can be exploited for personal and commercial gain. However, it is necessary to differentiate the context (political, social, economic) when looking at propaganda as educational awareness campaigns focused on health, pollution or smoking may be considered propaganda, but such propaganda is beneficial to a nation and its citizens'*.

Criterion 5 involves an assessment of the character and quality of the perspectives developed. The majority of candidates had little difficulty in developing contrasting perspectives and many developed global dimensions and global contrast. A smaller number offered little or no contrast as a consequence of generating a single or vague perspective. It is essential that candidates have undertaken sufficient research and reading in order to clarify, in their own minds, what perspectives are relevant to the topic they are researching, the degree of contrast they generate and the extent to which they can be globally differentiated. With this in mind, they must be prepared to modify their approach or, quite possibly, consider a different area of research. Only when perspectives are globally contrasting can candidates access Levels 4 and 5. To reach high levels candidates need to consider multiple global contexts. The best candidates demonstrated an awareness of how and why these differed – e.g. by exploring how differing cultures, economies and histories have formed different perspectives. Examiners will also consider the breadth and range of arguments assembled in developing perspectives.

Criterion 6 assesses candidates' understanding and evaluation of perspectives. This is a key area for development across the majority of centres, as candidates rarely synthesise the arguments derived from sources into clearly delineated perspectives. Stronger candidates are able to analyse and evaluate the relative strengths of arguments in terms of their contribution to perspectives as well as evaluate the relative strengths of perspectives. Not only do perspectives become coherent as a consequence of this work, but so does the conclusion which, to a large extent, is justified as a result. Having said that, many more candidates are outlining perspectives in their introductions as well as offering some explanation of their contrasting nature and global character, possibly supported by some key data. Not only is this beneficial to the candidate in providing focus but also to the Examiner who, from an early stage, has a clear idea of the candidate's intent. Candidates' work benefits from analysing and explaining contributing arguments but it is essential that they understand they are the building blocks used to construct and develop perspectives, the central aim of this component.

Criterion 7 assesses the quality of the conclusion and the level descriptors indicate that Examiners are looking for several contributing factors. The starting point is a supported and balanced conclusion which should emerge from a consideration of the relative merits of developed perspectives. Better conclusions go beyond generic and noncommittal acknowledgements that both perspectives have some merit or simple summaries of competing arguments. Candidates are also assessed on their capacity for reflection and it is important to note that Examiners are not looking for reflection on the work processes or research undertaken. Whilst it is important that candidates should develop their learning skills, reflection on this should not form any part of the conclusion. Candidates should reflect on their findings; what are the implications and consequences for their personal standpoint, other people, communities or nation states? One candidate concluded, *'Before completing my research on this issue, I believed wealthier nations had a moral obligation to educate the children in poor nations because, in the long run, it would benefit everyone. Educating the children of the world today will improve the future world we live in. On the other hand, without help, it is unlikely anything would change, and the poor would remain poor, generation after generation. However, I now understand the opposition's position, which has swayed me to change my opinion and I now no longer believe wealthy nations have a moral obligation to educate the children of poorer nations. There may be truth in the position that education can bring people out of poverty, but it should not be an obligation when America's national debt and that of other nations is already so high. A moral component may guide nations when making their decision, but it in no way should be considered a moral obligation.'* Also, *unless the corruption of governments can be resolved first, there is no guarantee that the aid provided for education will truly be used to educate children. This was the primary reason for changing my position.'*

Finally, a further element of reflection is required whereby the candidate makes suggestions for further research which they could undertake rather than the generic need for further research by academics, experts or the world at large. This element was commonly overlooked altogether and reduced candidates' marks. Successful candidates accept that their research is limited or incomplete and go on to consider how they may further their own understanding, as well as indicate specific research to address this.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/03
Team Project

Key messages

- Presentations should focus clearly on the team's issue and set out to define and differentiate this.
- Consistent reference to the title is an effective way to maintain a coherent structure.
- It is important to state evidence supporting the conclusion and use this to reinforce the solution which is proposed.
- Evaluation of collaboration in the Reflective Paper should identify specific strengths and weaknesses of the teamwork.
- Candidates should reflect on how their thinking has changed throughout the presentation.

General comments

The Presentation

Titles

The most successful titles were clear, direct and allowed candidates to focus on their issue and intended solution. For example, *'Protecting Coral Reefs'* created a focus on the issue of coral reefs and the development of a solution which would protect them. A statement, as in this case, describing the issue and focused on possible solutions, tended to be more successful than a question focusing on a debate or explanation (e.g. *'Why do coral reefs need to be protected?'* or *'Should we protect coral reefs?'*) as these made it harder to focus on a problem leading to a solution.

Definition of the Issue

The first criterion to be assessed is the extent to which the presentation has clearly defined the issue which the team has chosen and forms the topic of the presentation. Some presentations used brief examples to set the scene for their issue and therefore began to define their issue in vivid ways. For example, one presentation introduced its topic of 'refugees' as *'the people who are forced to leave their homes in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster'*, continuing that *'according to the United Nations refugee agency, every 3 seconds, a refugee is displaced. Perhaps it was a 2 year old girl, or maybe a 30 year old mother who left her four young children behind.'* Presentations which signposted to the audience that they were defining the topic were also successful as this demonstrated that they had control over the structure of what was being said and also allowed them to focus more clearly on the task.

Some presentations defined key terms on their own rather than the overall issue. As a consequence it was harder for them to make clear the topic which they were discussing. Some candidates also posed questions but did not identify a problem or issue at all. Where the issue was clearly narrowed down within the context of the eight minute presentation, and candidates made it clear what the issue was they were addressing, and why it was a matter of concern, the definition of the issue became much stronger.

Range of Research

Candidates are rewarded for the range and variety of research they reference in their presentations. For this reason, they would be advantaged if they were to tell their audience that they have varied their research by carrying out interviews or surveys as well as accessing secondary sources.

Good examples of 'detailed and varied research' included a presentation on the impact of K-Pop and other external cultural phenomena on indigenous culture. In this case, the candidate demonstrated that she had

used Google Trends to research the popularity of K-Pop over time, had sampled music tracks, explored TV listings, and delved into the websites of online fashion retailers; another member of the same team had accessed Spotify music-streaming charts and also the websites of online retailers. The immediacy of the data they presented was both engaging and refreshing.

Differentiation of Perspectives

Candidates are also required to differentiate their own approach to the issue from those taken by other team members (or other perspectives they have found in their research). One common, but successful, approach which candidates adopted was to show one slide naming their group members with their respective perspectives which they then expanded on briefly by naming their own perspective and then listing those of the other members of the group. Where candidates then went on to explain why their solution was the best out of the group it was possible for them to achieve at the highest level for this criterion. Where candidates did not acknowledge any perspectives apart from their own, they had difficulty in moving beyond Level 2.

The following extract, from a presentation on the issue of opioid abuse, demonstrates on the other hand how candidates can achieve at the highest level by actively engaging with the views of other members of their team:

'Examining other solutions: One of my group mates has proposed a solution of reducing opioid use by tracking prescription narcotics. Though I believe this will be effective for the 40 percent of opioid overdose deaths that can be attributed to prescribed narcotics according to Talbott Recover, "...this is still less than 50 per cent of opioid-related deaths". My other teammate has proposed taking legal action against companies that market addictive drugs such as oxycodone as "non-addictive". I believe this is an unwise way of using government resources as legal action can be very costly and does not address the root of the issue. Most importantly, these two solutions do not address the issue of synthetic drugs which is the main supply for most users.'

In selecting a perspective, there was a variety of possible approaches all of which were potentially successful. One was to select one of the overall themes listed in the Syllabus (i.e. technological, environmental, economic, ethical, cultural, etc.) and apply this to their issue and solution. Doing so allows for a focus on key ideas as well as a reflection on how these can be applied to a solution to the issue. Candidates were more successful in doing this when they had a good understanding of the ideas behind a specific perspective which aided them in applying it to their issue. Where this was not the case, for example with some presentations which named an ethical approach but did not use ethical ideas (i.e. what is right or wrong about the situation), candidates found it harder to be consistent in their approach. One candidate offered a rare example of a well-defined ethical approach to an issue (Recreational Marijuana) which created a good platform from which the candidate could reach a logical conclusion:

'When beginning to consider this topic many questions about ethicality and morals begin to arise. Like: 'Is it morally permissible to use marijuana?' and 'If it is morally acceptable, should it be regulated by law? To even begin to answer these questions, we need to look into what makes something unethical. Although what is right and wrong varies from person to person, we can look at it through the views of two major philosophers: Aristotle and Immanuel Kant. Aristotle's views about proper function, ethics, and human nature point to him not believing in habitual use of marijuana. Aristotle argues and believes that proper human function involves the use of reason. According to him, we ought to use reason to make choices that promote our individual well-being as well as contribute to the common good. And therefore any activity that undermines or degrades our rational capacities has a moral reason to be avoided. This reasoning may be applied to marijuana and other types of drugs to say it should not be used. Although this does not prove that we should never use marijuana, it does help to show that there is a moral reason to avoid using it excessively'

Structure of the Presentation

Thirdly, the arguments made by candidates in their presentation are assessed on how effectively structured they are. One way candidates successfully did this was by referring back to their title each time they introduced a new point and supported it with evidence, which kept the overall direction of the presentation clearly in view. There were some excellent presentations that built an argument focused solely on their question. For example, one presentation took the title 'predation on the internet' and used either one or both of these key terms in every topic sentence, so that their argument was entirely built around them.

Presentations which made full use of the running time available (up to eight minutes) developed the structure and fully elaborated the points made. Presentations which were significantly shorter than this (four to five minutes or even in some cases as short as three) often only made a series of several assertive points.

Conclusions and Solutions

Presentations are also assessed on how well the argument supports the conclusion, as well as the quality of the solution. One way in which this was achieved was where candidates opened their conclusions by summarising the evidence they had collected and relating it back to the title. One successful approach was to provide evidence in the conclusion which directly supported their innovative solution, as was the case for this presentation on the problem of ocean acidification:

'So my solution is to directly neutralize the acid in the water and do this by the use of calcium powder. So this is based in real science because calcium carbonate and carbonic acid are what dissolve with each other in ocean acidification. This directly removes the acid from the water, and it has an immediate effect. So you could just go to an area you would disperse this powder. And it would help to reduce increase the pH of the water and restore it to normal. So calcium is abundant, it's the fifth most common element in Earth's crust so this is going to help keep the cost down. And it's going to help so instead of the acid reacting with the corals, it's going to react with the powder in the water because there's going to be more of it.'

By giving specific reasons for why their solutions would work, successful presentations were able to demonstrate their effectiveness and so achieve in the higher levels for this criterion.

Truly innovative solutions were produced but less commonly. The following extract from a presentation on homelessness is a good example:

'The solution that I propose is that we open a community improvement program. And what this is going to do is give them basic community service jobs, that not only help our area look nicer, but it also occupies their time and helps them appreciate the value of work. And what is so unique about this is they're not going to have to seek us out like they normally would. We are going to go out and find these people and inform them of this program. And they're going to learn life skills which are eventually going to lead to them designing a fundraising event to raise money for the program and our organisation. So not only does this get them off the streets but it also gets them back on their feet and they become useful to us as well. So there is a solution like this in San Francisco called the Homelessness Employment Collaborative, and they help homeless people find jobs and give them financial assistance. The problem with this is most of these people are not ready for a job yet, many have drug and alcohol problems so they are not ready for this kind of responsibility yet. And not all of them know this program exists. When coming up with this solution I had to think that Salvation Army already has free shelter, meals, financial assistance and more. But this is unique because it is going to build them from the ground up and the most important thing is for them to start small and this is the best way to do it.'

Presentational Methods

Finally, presentations are assessed on the effectiveness of the presentational methods used. One successful approach was where presentations had clearly been well rehearsed, so that candidates did not have to read closely from their script and were able to more fully utilise the visual aids and other presentational methods at their disposal.

PowerPoints and other slide-based formats were most effective when they had a link or connection to the presentation and were not simple background illustrations; markedly few candidates referred directly to the slides that they had created but when they did, it clearly enhanced and justified the arguments proposed.

The Reflective Paper

Reflective papers are assessed on two criteria: the candidate's evaluation of the effectiveness of the collaboration of their team and their reflection on their learning over the course of the team project.

In order to successfully evaluate collaboration, a useful starting point was to identify and explain specific strengths and weaknesses of the teamwork undertaken. This is because the reflective paper is an opportunity to take a step back from the experience and identify what went right and what went wrong. What were the areas of conflict, and where did co-operation function well? Where the work of the team was described without highlighting strengths and weaknesses or the group was not mentioned at all it was harder to demonstrate that collaboration was being evaluated.

It is important to note that the reflective paper asks candidates to reflect on their learning from other perspectives on their issue: the focus is on learning about the issue. This means that candidates did not achieve in the higher levels when they focused only on the process of producing their presentation and

assessing its success. Higher achieving candidates therefore highlighted what they had learned from both their research and their teammates' input, whereas less successful candidates merely explained that they had learned to manage their time better.

Sometimes this can produce some profound reflection on how thinking changes as a result of the research that has been carried out by the individual, as in the case of this reflective paper responding to a presentation on the issue of 'water shortage':

'While choosing my subtopic, I knew that I wanted to explore an issue that I could solve with a technological and innovative approach. At first, fixing the water distribution system seemed apt for this approach, but it also seemed very underwhelming. As it turns out, it is a severe problem that has not gained as much traction as the other sensational issues covered by the media. It was a shock when I found that nearly half of all the water supply is wasted due to water leakages and unauthorized water connections. What struck me during the research process was how easy it seemed to fix this problem. After all, fixing one damaged pipeline is not difficult. The cumulative effect of several pipelines spread across hundreds of kilometers is what makes this a dangerous problem. Upon some reflecting, I understood that keeping track of leakages at different places at real-time is what was essential, not the implementation of the pipelines itself (which is a relatively straightforward process). For once, the research carried out afterward informed my initial intuition, rather than the other way around, which was interesting to observe.'

Reflection here is engaged with the substance of the issue that was researched, and genuinely exploratory of the candidate's evolving views. In this, it is the authentic reflection on a collective learning experience which represents this component at its most rewarding.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/04
Cambridge Research Report

Key messages

- There should be effective use of logs as a working document.
- A range of criteria should be used to evaluate evidence and perspectives.
- Reflection is one of the Assessment Objectives (AO) and a key part of the Critical Path, which is the basis of the qualification

General comments

Once again, the range of topics covered was extensive and the writing showed a high level of personal interest and commitment on the part of candidates. Most reports were firmly based on evidence and were not extended essays but rather critical reviews of sources as required. Planning and undertaking the research necessary for an extended report and maintaining a log are demanding in terms of focused effort and time and it is much to the credit of candidates and their teachers that so much worthwhile work was produced. The experience of undertaking the Cambridge Report will stand candidates in good stead for the demands of higher education and also for the world of work where initiative and a sense of judgement are valued qualities. The comments which follow should be seen in the light of the overall work and enthusiasm of candidates and are intended to help improve future performance, not to denigrate this year's achievement.

AO1 Research.

Most reports were source based, but the referencing of sources could have been improved in some cases and there remains a credibility gap in some work between the actual evidence analysed and the bibliography. Though it is possible that a wider range of evidence was used in order to gain background knowledge, there is no real point in including lists of evidence which have not been consulted. It is inevitable that in order to produce up to date information there will be considerable use of websites. However, by their nature some of these have not been quality checked, so a critical consideration of their findings and judgements is very important. Choosing appropriate and challenging research material is an important consideration when making the initial decision of the choice of topic. However interesting something may appear, there must be evidence available to support competing perspectives about it. To be sure that a topic will work, a good range of evidence should be identified and included with the proposal form.

Part of the assessment of AO1 Research does include the use of a log. This aspect was more varied than some of the marking indicated. The logs should be working documents which record the thinking process and not merely extended bibliographies or a description of what was found to be relevant in the research undertaken. This allows some good ideas to be recorded rather than coming into one's head and then being forgotten. It records important points about research and critical processes gained from seminars and consultations with teachers. It is excellent preparation for future research and should not be seen as a mere requirement for examination purposes but as a really useful working document which will help with the final report and avoid wasting time hunting for references to evidence consulted. Markers should look carefully at the quality of the logs before giving higher level marks for this aspect.

AO1 Analysis.

The selection and analysis of evidence was probably the strongest element in the process

Most reports were evidence based and generally the evidence was used relevantly. There was some over reliance on descriptive writing gained from evidence. One recent proposal suggested that a lengthy description of the main elements of the topic was necessary because the reader might not have an interest in the topic. There were examples where the evidence base was too restricted for judgements to be effective and some reports simply did not use acknowledged sources very much at all. Luckily, these were in a minority. However, candidates should be assured that their target audience – their teachers and the moderators will be very interested in their ideas. The key point of interest is not necessarily information about the topic but how the reports treat the evidence and the personal voice that emerges about the issue. After all, if the readers just wanted to know more about the issue they could find out for themselves. What they cannot find out is what candidates think and feel about the debate surrounding the issue and the sources should be used for that, not lengthy expositions. It is worth stating that the better the quality of the evidence in terms of well-informed research, the better quality the analysis will be and the greater the opportunity to look at the methodology behind the research. There is not much to say about an untested and unreliable blog except that it is unreliable, which raises the issue of why it was used in the first place.

AO1 Evaluation.

This is a demanding skill, but a vital one. It is part of everyday life and essential for anyone who is a consumer or has to make decisions: financial, personal or political. Without a critical sense we are defenceless in a complex world ever more able to manipulate us. So, there are no apologies for stating its importance in relation to the Cambridge Research Report. It is still common to see reports which analyse different sources but offer no judgement about them. They are aware of competing views but do not offer any critical assessment of them. Judgements are required in the reports and they must be made on the basis of evaluating the different perspectives. The way that this is done is by using a variety of techniques for thinking critically which have been developed in the AS units. Looking at the origin of the source is important, but it is not the only or sometimes the most useful way of assessing arguments. Deeper analysis might be based on the information of the research and methodology which underpins the views, using the technique of corroboration to see if the views are backed by other evidence and using knowledge to test claims, arguments, assertions and assumptions. In other words, this is the really interesting part of the process which puts the researcher in the driving seat and moves away from merely explaining a series of opinions. When assessing this, teacher markers should be looking for sustained and supported evaluation before going to higher level marks and should not shy away from recognising when there is no evaluation. More marginal annotation about the nature and support of evaluation is often helpful, not only for the moderator but also for the marker to ensure that the right level is given.

AO1 is the core of the marking requirements but it is important that attention is given to the other requirements. It is very helpful when centres explain how well candidates performed in the interview in which they defended their judgements and that marking for communication is based on how effectively the arguments are communicated. The use of spelling and grammar checks means that there are relatively few inaccuracies but the thread of argument can become much less clear than the marking suggests. It is also important to see if words are used correctly, even if their spelling is correct.

The other vital part of the process which does need some attention is the reflection. Reflection is a vital part of the critical path. Like evaluation, to which it is closely linked, it is also a part of everyday life. It involves reflecting whether a decision has been made on the basis of sufficient evidence or been reached in the best possible way. It should relate to a clear conclusion but should be separate from it and it should be part of the main report, not the log. Thus, a judgement might have been reached, say, about the part that nuclear energy should play in meeting energy needs and the judgement might be that it should play no part at all, based on an evaluation of different evidence. In itself that might be valid but there needs to be some reflection on any assumptions that lie behind the decision and whether it is based on adequate evidence. It should also reflect on whether there are some factors beyond the scope of the report that might be taken into consideration and also what the implications of the decision might be. This is not far removed from a decision, e.g. to holiday in summer rather than autumn – autumn may be less crowded but will the weather be good enough? Is the cheaper price in autumn worth the risk of some rainy days? Did we look at weather levels in autumn? Did we take into account that the range of accommodation might be greater in summer? Reflection is a key part of any decision – it is even included in sales when the advice comes up 'Do you wish to review your order?'. There are quite substantial number of reports which do not attempt any reflection in the body of the report and this does indicate that a walk along the Critical Path both before and during the research process would be healthy exercise.

The organisation of the writing of these reports, helping candidates to acquire key skills and to understand the research process and keeping up energy levels and morale, is a demanding but ultimately rewarding teaching experience and colleagues are sincerely thanked for their support of the qualification and for the time spent on marking, often in considerable detail, the final outcomes.

