

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

Paper 9777/01
Written Paper

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

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Paper 9777/02
Essay

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

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Paper 9777/03
Presentation

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

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Paper 9777/04
Independent Research Report

Key messages

- Relevance is important in AO2.
- Evaluation should not depend just on consideration of the origin of the evidence.
- Intellectual challenge should not depend just on whether the material was part of an A level syllabus.

General comments

Though there was a relatively small entry, there was a good range of topics and marks. Centres assessed AO1 in accordance with the evidence provided in appropriately completed teacher assessment forms. There was a lot of agreement about the marking of the other Assessment Objectives and a great deal of care was taken to annotate work and where appropriate to ensure a common standard by internal standardisation. The reports were evidence based and most offered a critical approach to at least some of the sources used and were able to sustain a discussion about the validity of different perspectives,

In order to help centres with marking and in their advice to candidates, there are three elements which this report will stress.

1. The strongest work focused on arguments and used knowledge to explain and assess different overall viewpoints. The knowledge was relevant. The reports did not include lengthy descriptions and kept to the point. Less successful reports had elements which strayed from the central discussion and included information which had not been properly thought through. This meant that the reader had to decide why it had been included and what its relevance was to the topic or the debate. The difference between a report and a general project is that there is little value in information being included unless it is useful to the decision-making process. There is little point in evaluating sources unless the information or arguments which they contain is relevant to the issue in the question. Where answers make use of case studies, it is particularly important that there should not become standalone elements which offer information which is not directly linked to a perspective. Candidates should be advised to consider whether separate case studies set out in sections are really being integrated into a discussion.
2. Candidates and teachers those marking their work must make a distinction between evaluation which uses a range of critical criteria and is well supported and evaluation which relies heavily on looking at the authors of sources or their origins and making generalised comments. A good example of the limited usefulness of this is the flood of opinion from different experts in the current pandemic. Diametrically opposite views on lockdowns have been offered by people with very similar academic backgrounds, qualifications and credentials. It has been of little use to look at the journals in which they have written, at their status as academics, at their qualifications in order to assess their views. To do that it has been necessary to look at the basis of the evidence, assumptions made and correlation between their views. Of course it makes a difference if a view is offered by an unqualified commentator in a newspaper and the head of a major university department, but when views of similarly qualified sources differ evaluation does have to go beyond the relatively low level assessment of origins. Better reports did offer a more searching critical analysis.
3. It is important when choosing topics and selecting evidence that the requirement of AO5 is considered. It is not necessarily complex topics which can lead to intellectual challenge. However this is not provided simply by a topic which is not studied as part of the A level syllabus. It is provided by engagement with challenging concepts and material or by developing critical skills at a level of sophistication and understanding not normally required at A level. Markers should ensure that the

higher level marks for AO5 do reflect appropriate levels of challenge and relatively straightforward topics which have not taken candidates beyond the type of material or analysis of A level studies are not given equivalent marks to very demanding surveys of complex topics in say, cosmology or advanced linguistics. It is a feature of Pre-U that scope is offered for work which is of a higher standard than A level and marking should ensure that only reports which demonstrate that should be placed in the highest level.