



Pearson

Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE
Government & Politics (6GP04)
Paper 4D: Global Political Issues



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It was evident, once again, that a good proportion of candidates had been well prepared for the 4D examination. Subject knowledge was strong and there was, for the most part, a pleasing focus on the wording of the questions. The most popular short questions were the responses on realism and on soft/hard power. The most popular long response was the question on whether concerns about a “clash of civilisations” are justified with the least popular of the long questions being the question on international courts and tribunals. The question on international courts and tribunals was still answered by a significant number of candidates. The two least popular short responses, on the environmental crisis and on climate change, both came from the same section from the specification. The most popular of the short responses was on nuclear proliferation.

The advice from previous examiner reports remains valid. As usual, there were a few key differentiators between candidates’ responses. The key to success in responding to the questions set is to recognize that not one, but in the case of the longer essay response, four marks are being awarded for each script. Whilst Assessment Objective 1 (A01) knowledge may help a candidate to achieve 12 of the available 45 marks, there are still 33 marks available for A02, synopticity and A03. A large proportion of candidates score well in A01 because they provide detailed and developed knowledge and understanding with relevant and accurate work but they can fail to attain the marks that are available elsewhere. The intellectual skills required to perform at the highest level in A02 revolve around the ability to provide analysis, evaluation and parallels or connections. This can be a challenge for those candidates who rely primarily on production of learnt fact and knowledge. Synopticity, where candidates are expected to provide an awareness of competing viewpoints or perspectives, can be a weak area for some. The longer questions are designed for debate and discussion of alternative viewpoints. A03 can also be an issue for some candidates. There is a need to bring all of the earlier A0 elements into a structured and logical response which provides balance and use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Q1

The question on humanitarian intervention was the second most popular of the short responses and there were a high number of strong responses where students provided clear definitions and then a wide range of justifications with supporting material.

Q2

This question worked well with a range of responses across all mark levels. Although one of the least popular short questions, it did provide the opportunity for some particularly strong

responses where candidates covered a range of different actions taken by the international community to deal with the environmental crisis.

Q3

Question three was the most popular of the short responses and a sizeable number of candidates appeared to be well prepared for a question on the difficulty of preventing nuclear proliferation. A number of students seemed to confuse vertical and horizontal proliferation. The key reason identified by most candidates as they explained the difficulty in preventing nuclear proliferation was deterrence value with prestige and status not far behind.

Q4

There were a number of very strong responses to question four although there were also some weak responses where students failed to identify specific criticisms of aid and spent time simply outlining global South poverty. The stronger responses often explained the impact that aid can have on existing state industry, discussed corruption, the impact of tied aid and the argument that aid is simply insufficient.

Q5

This was only the fourth most popular question in this section of the examination paper although close to the third most popular and certainly more popular than the least popular question which can be found in the same section of the specification. Despite lack of popularity the question was dealt with rather well by a large number of students who could clearly identify at least three well explained and example laden obstacles to cooperation over climate change.

Q6

Question six was the least popular of the longer questions on the examination paper even though international courts and tribunals has been a reasonable reliable question in the past when linked to human rights. This may say more about the desirability of the other two available questions.

Q7

Question seven was the second most popular of the long questions and there were a significant number of candidates who appeared to have been well prepared for the challenge of dealing with the question. Balance was important but a number of candidates wrote particularly one sided responses with an assertion that the North was indeed responsible for the poverty of the South.

Q8

Question eight was the most popular of the longer responses and allowed candidates the opportunity to proceed in numerous directions with a wide number of examples available to support both sides of the debate. Stronger responses clearly had a detailed knowledge of the thesis and the ability to provide supporting evidence from contemporary or very recent events.

Paper Summary

It is evident that most, if not all, teachers are aware of and focussed on the 'Further guidance for Route D' document, prepared by the previous Principal Examiner, which can be found on the Edexcel website. This document provides additional content explanation and advice to support the initial specification document. It is also pleasing to note that teachers and students are making good use of recently developed resources and of contemporary examples to support assertions.