

GCSE Citizenship Studies

Citizenship Action Guidance

January 2023



GCSE Citizenship Studies

What is 'Citizenship Action'?

'Citizenship Action' may be defined as a planned course of informed action to **address a citizenship issue or question of concern**. It is **aimed at delivering a benefit or change** for a particular community or wider society.

Taking 'Citizenship Action' in an authentic **out-of-classroom context**, allows students to understand that their actions as active citizens **can make a difference**.

It allows students to **apply citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills**. In addition, they gain different citizenship insights and appreciate different perspectives on how we live together and make decisions in society.

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What are the aims of 'Citizenship Action' ?

They will carry out an investigation leading to 'Citizenship Action' and will develop the following skills:

- Research and enquiry
- Interpretation of evidence (including primary and secondary sources)
- Planning
- Collaboration
- Problem-solving
- Advocacy and campaigning
- Evaluation

These transferable skills have great academic benefit across the wider curriculum and beyond.

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What are the aims of 'Citizenship Action' ?

Empowering: It gives students the opportunity to take responsible actions and play a positive role in public and democratic life as informed and active citizens.

Developing active citizens: students and centres have free choice of 'Citizenship Action', so students can engage with topics close to their hearts while they develop skills in research and investigation, problem solving, advocacy and campaigning.

Reflects current issues, questions and debates: students develop knowledge and understanding of the role of citizenship, in relation to current issues that impact on modern society. It engages them with what it means to be an active citizen and preparing them for their next steps in today's global world.

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Differences from Old Specification to Current Specification

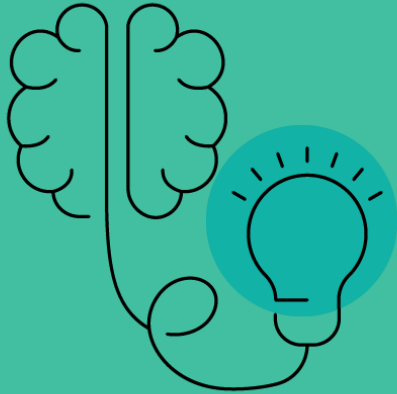
'Citizenship Action' on our previous (A*-G) specification carried **60%** of the marks for the whole qualification.

In the current GCSE (9-1) specification, the 'Citizenship Action' component carries **15%** of the marks for the whole qualification.

Therefore, the scale of the action must be greatly reduced compared to previous practice if candidates are to do justice to themselves in the limited amount of time available.

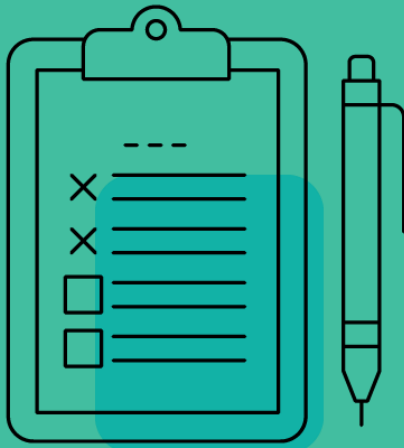
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How is 'Citizenship Action' carried out?



Students must carry out an **in-depth, critical investigation leading to 'Citizenship Action'** .

The investigation and action can be based on **any aspect or issue arising from the course content** and should be **designed to have an impact** locally, nationally or globally.



There are many investigations and actions which students can undertake, which will require careful consideration of approach and use of citizenship skills. The choice of action will depend on the issue or challenge which they are addressing and what they intend to achieve.

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How is 'Citizenship Action' assessed?

Students will be assessed on the investigation and action they have undertaken through a series of examination questions.

Section A of **Paper 2** will focus on assessing the 'Citizenship Action'.

- This part is worth **15%** of the total qualification.
- A maximum of **24** marks are available.

This comprises of one question divided into a number of separate parts. Tasks will require short and medium responses, and will end with a 12-mark task.

Students must base all of their answers on the knowledge and understanding that they have gained while carrying out their 'Citizenship Action'.

In the examination, students will be required to provide the **title** of their 'Citizenship Action' which identifies and summarises what action was taken, in no more than 20 words.

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Assessment Objectives in GCSE Citizenship Studies

Assessment Objectives

Students must:		% in GCSE
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of citizenship concepts, terms and issues.	30
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of citizenship concepts, terms and issues to contexts and actions.	30
AO3	Analyse and evaluate a range of evidence relating to citizenship issues, debates and actions, including different viewpoints, to develop reasoned, coherent arguments and make substantiated judgements.	40
Total		100%

Assessment Objectives covered in Section A of Paper 2

1 (a)	1 (b)	1 (c)	1 (d)	1 (e)
2 marks	4 marks	2 marks	4 marks	12 marks
AO1	AO2	AO2	AO2	AO2/AO3

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When in the course should this be covered?

Taking 'Citizenship Action' can be addressed at **any point in the course** and students should be clear about how the action they take relates to the citizenship concepts and issues they are studying.

For this reason, it is advisable for candidates **not to commence their 'Citizenship Action' until they have gained sufficient understanding of the themes.** This means they will be able to identify meaningful links between the specification themes (e.g. diversity, democracy, power, justice, accountability, equality, participation) and their 'Citizenship Action'.

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Stages of planning: Stages 1 - 3

1

Stage 1: Identify an issue, form a team and carry out initial research

- **Identify an issue, problem, cause or social need** that relates to citizenship concepts and issues studied as **part of the course**.
- Understand the range of methods and approaches relevant to 'Citizenship Actions' that can be used by governments, organisations, groups and individuals to address citizenship issues.
- Form a team (of at least two people) and start to research possible elements of the activity.
- Carry out **secondary research** to investigate an issue and **prepare to carry out primary research**.

2

Stage 2: Undertake primary research

- **Identify** and **sequence** research questions relating to the issue, problem, cause or social need.
- **Carry out primary** research to answer research questions.
- **Analyse answers** to research questions to identify evidence which assists the team in deciding the activity they wish to undertake.

3

Stage 3: Represent their own and different points of view

- Show understanding of the issue, including their own opinions and the views and perspectives of different people.
- Review the evidence and research undertaken and the different viewpoints expressed. Then consider why some evidence or viewpoints may be more compelling or persuasive than others.
- **Consider the different viewpoints** and make the case for what the team think should happen.

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Stages of planning: Stages 4 - 6

4

Stage 4: Plan the action

- **Identify** who the action will target, **set goals** for the proposed activity and **identify criteria for judging success**.
- **Consider possible methods and approaches** for the activity to form a clear plan of action. This should include key steps, their sequence and order of priorities, taking account of the time and resources available.
- **Allocate roles** and tasks to each team member, anticipating any possible difficulties and how to overcome them. Then establish a simple system for recording decision-making and progress.

5

Stage 5: Apply skills of collaboration, negotiation and influence whilst delivering the activity

Demonstrate team work and role-awareness in delivering the activity, showing the importance of collaboration, negotiation and influence, in carrying out the action. Then either:

- Organise and deliver an event, meeting or campaign** to advocate for the selected issue, problem, cause or social need. It should argue the case, raise awareness and establish commitment by informing, influencing and persuading the target audience.
- Organise and deliver a social action project, social enterprise or other form of community action** that aims to raise awareness, establish commitment and create a social benefit (resources, support, advice or service) to benefit others.

6

Stage 6: Critically evaluate the learning and the impact of the action

- Consider how and why the action did, or didn't, achieve its intended effect, **assessing the success** of the activity in relation to the goals.
- **Assess how well the method selected worked** in practice and what could be done differently in a future 'Citizenship Action'.
- **Consider the impact** the action had on their own citizenship learning, including learning from any mistakes.

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Support for planning

Candidates are not being assessed on the nature of their action but rather the skills which they have learned through the process (both positives and areas of development).

It can be useful practice (although not a requirement) for students to record their progress throughout their 'Citizenship Action', providing regular reflection as they complete each stage of the planning process.

- Stage 1: Identify an issue, form a team and carry out initial research
- Stage 2: Undertake primary research
- Stage 3: Represent their own and different points of view
- Stage 4: Plan the action
- Stage 5: Apply skills of collaboration, negotiation and influence as they deliver the activity
- Stage 6: Critically evaluate their learning and the impact of the action

This record effectively prepares candidates for the exam; instead of revising the action taken, a useful and practical idea is to instruct candidates to revise from their reflection of the six stages, and the skills they have learnt.

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Planning Research

Secondary research may include one or more of the following:

- Published sources of data.
- Findings and official reports from public bodies.
- Reports in the news and media.
- NGOs, groups and other organisations.
- Opinion polls, statistics, videos and other sources relevant to their study.

Primary research (conducted by students) may include one or more of the following:

- Data and findings from observations.
- Discussions with members of the community.
- Qualitative and quantitative interview data.
- Recordings, results of polls, votes and surveys.



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Advice from the Principal Examiner

Choose a 'Citizenship Action' where **all of the six stages can be exemplified and evaluated** in an examination.

Ensure the goal is **clearly defined** and **realistically achievable** (and in some way **measurable**).

Choose a topic which **clearly links to the themes** taught within the course.

Aim to **commence 'Citizenship Action' once candidates have sufficient understanding of the themes**. This will help to identify meaningful links between the specification themes and the action.

Avoid large generic topics with little chance of success. It is better to work on objectives which are achievable.

If the 'Citizenship Action' seeks to change opinions or raise awareness, it is important to **establish a baseline on audience knowledge or belief** at the start and end. It is important to measure, test and evidence the impact of the action.

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Choosing a 'Citizenship Action' focus

To ensure a potential action meets the requirements of the specification, review it against the six criteria listed below:

1. Does the proposed action have a **clear goal** (whether in terms of raising awareness or undertaking social/community action)?
2. Is the topic listed in **one of the four themes** on the specification **or very closely related to a theme**?
3. Is the proposed action **likely to make an impact or difference locally, nationally or globally**?
4. Does the team have **sufficient time or resources** to carry out the action?
5. Will the proposed topic **link closely to the concepts and terms which apply to the theme** on which the proposed action will be based?
6. Will it be possible to **measure in a precise and reliable** way the **success** of the action?

All criteria should be met! If this is not the case, it is advisable to amend the proposed 'Citizenship Action' to ensure it meets all requirements.

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Common difficulties faced by candidates in exams

The **most common issue** on Paper 2, Section A arose when candidates whose choice of 'Citizenship Action' was **not clearly connected and drawn from** the Citizenship specification.

Candidates who chose topics outside the specification were disadvantaged in the following ways:

- Firstly, they found many of the Section A questions very challenging, as their own experiences of taking action were **more suitable for PSHE than Citizenship** or were **not related** to taking action.
- Secondly, the students who linked to the specification had the **advantage** of being more informed and were better prepared for questions which arose across both exam papers.

A further issue arose for candidates when answering Section A questions where the **objective was not realistic** and the action chosen was **unlikely to provide a benefit or offer change** for a particular community or wider society. Candidates with actions such as this **found it difficult to offer analysis, or evaluate** whether their aims had been fully or partially met. In some cases, they were unable to explain what their aims were.

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Examples of suitable projects

As long as specification **themes are clearly and explicitly linked to the action**, the focus could be within the **school** or within the **community**.

Projects within school: These could relate to themes of democracy and participation.

- e.g. uniform, sports available, timetable, homework patterns, menus offered or charitable projects undertaken.

Projects within the community: The target could be within the community, through identifying and publicising problems, to encourage local councils, other bodies or voluntary organisations to remedy them.

- e.g. road safety/pedestrian crossings, leisure facilities/opening times, times/routes of local bus services/location of bus stops, accessibility of council meetings to the public, locations of local courts, opening times and services for police stations or other public bodies, issues involving the elderly or safety issues such as installing sprinklers in blocks of flats.

*Plans which seek to engage with local media or to persuade a local council or individual councillors to support a cause are recommended.

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Appropriate example projects from 2022 exam series

Theme A: Living together in the UK	Theme B: Democracy at work in the UK	Projects which combine themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating children on the meanings and impact of racism and diversity. • Helping the issue of loneliness and isolation of the elderly in our community. • My group taught a lesson to young students educating them on their human rights. • Spreading awareness about discrimination and where to go if it happens to you (to young people) • Educating young people on human rights. • To raise student awareness on the issue of rising orphan numbers in war torn countries • Wo(man) – an action to tackle institutional sexism at a local scale. • To raise awareness of what our local government does. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get more people voting and participating in our local youth council election. • Our citizenship action was to raise awareness about voting and to help increase the voter turnout. • To create a school council to get young people more politically involved and get their voices heard. • To raise student awareness of the three main political parties by organising a mock election. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A poster campaign to reduce ableism in the school as well as educate them on discrimination. (Theme A & D) • Raising awareness of poverty to help people learn about it. (Theme A & D) • To change and adapt the rules of uniform to be fairer and more comfortable. (Theme A & D) • Tackling financial inequality by raising awareness locally of the issue of foodbanks. (Theme A & D) • We set up a petition to bring back play schemes for young children. (Theme A & D) • Our citizenship action was to raise awareness for health and hygiene for students and cause direct sanitary change in school. (Theme A & D) • Encouraging more governmental and charitable aid to go to African countries. (Theme B & D) • To raise student awareness of lowering the driving age, by organising a mock referendum. (Theme B & C) • To raise student awareness of arguments supporting the UK re-joining the EU by organising a mock referendum. (Theme B & D)
	<p style="text-align: center;">Theme C: Law and justice</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise awareness of the injustice in the UK justice system. 	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Theme D: Power and influence</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of bias in the media by presenting a PowerPoint to young generations. • To create a social media trend to raise awareness about discrimination against young people in the media. • To raise awareness about fake news. 	

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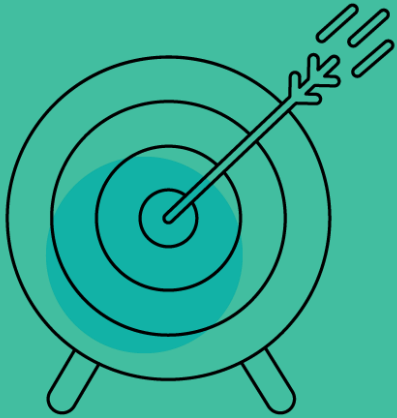
Examples of unsuitable projects

- Researching the advantages and disadvantages of the death penalty
- Investigating whether or not firearms should be legalised in the UK
- Investigating whether dogs should be weaponised
- Debating whether or not involuntary manslaughter should be given a prison sentence.
- Ending the exclusion of LGBT from the US military
- Reducing the power of the police
- Deciding whether or not war and genocide can be justified
- Going on strike to raise the wages of an individual.
- Why society only hears about certain news stories
- Investigating if punishments are harsh enough in Britain
- What the effects of Brexit will be
- Researching the advantages and disadvantages of sexting
- Reducing radicalisation in UK prisons
- Reducing food waste in Europe
- Organising a student strike to improve canteen food
- Increasing the number of recycling bins
- Stopping knife crime
- Debating whether there should be more legal restrictions on freedom of the press
- Stopping human trafficking
- Reducing discrimination in stop-and-search by the police
- Picking up nitrous oxide canisters
- Simple statements that did not identify the action taken, such as human rights or Black Lives Matters.
- The struggles of Kenyan education
- Improving internet speeds in a local area
- How drugs and alcohol affect people
- Ending famine
- What are superpower nations and should they be allowed?
- Litter in our school

**Further examples can be found within the Paper 2 examiner reports*

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What if the 'Citizenship Action' does not go as planned?



In considering the focus of the 'Citizenship Action', students will need to **be realistic** about the likelihood of their aims being wholly or partially met.

However, students **will not be penalised** where an action did not go as planned.

If the goal was only partially achieved, candidates will need to be able to explain why this was the case; this must link back to chosen specification themes.

Although the specification makes it clear that candidates will not be penalised if an action didn't go to plan, **this would not necessarily excuse an unsuccessful activity which was poorly conceived and ill-matched** to resources available such as commitment, time, funding, skills or expertise.

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Authentication of the 'Citizenship Action'

Centres **must provide written confirmation** that students entered for the qualification have completed their own in-depth investigation and 'Citizenship Action'.

Teachers must **complete, sign and date** the 'Taking Citizenship Action Form' which can be found [here](#)

Completed and signed forms should be uploaded via the website (link below) by **15th May every year of assessment**:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/forms/taking-citizenship-action-form.html>



Taking Citizenship Action form

Teacher declaration
I declare that each student listed below is entered for the Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Citizenship Studies and has carried out an in-depth, critical investigation leading to citizenship action, as defined above.

Centre name:			
Centre number:			
Teacher name:			Date:
Teacher signature:			

The candidates entered for the Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Citizenship Studies are as follows:

Candidate name (surname, first name)	Candidate number

(Add more rows as necessary)

5

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Where to go for further support

Website (subject):

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/subjects/citizenship.html>

Email: TeachingCitizenship@pearson.com

Telephone: (UK) 0344 463 2823

Teams meeting appointment:

<http://bit.ly/3xltNo6>

Subject advisor email updates:

<https://t.co/696s6KS2Vx>

Citizenship community page:

<http://bit.ly/3EBfnrV>

Citizenship Studies Subject Advisor

Susan Currey

