

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE Economics (4350) Paper 03

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PE Report On Examination Paper 4350/03

General Comments

The paper provided opportunities for all candidates to demonstrate their economic knowledge and understanding together with their ability to use this in relationship to the sources and the questions asked.

Better candidates had used the pre-released material as a basis for further study and had a good understanding of the issues involved in competition and the effectiveness and role of governments. Many of these used information from their own country to enhance their answers. In addition, these candidates took careful note of the 'key word', and used the sources, in order to answer the precise question that had been asked.

Candidates who in parts 3b, 4 and 5 used the same country usually gained more credit than those who selected two or three different ones. This was because they showed greater depth of knowledge and understanding of the one country.

In general, candidates appeared better prepared than in previous years and to have taken greater notice of the need to answer some of the questions in the context of a country of their choice.

Comments On Individual Questions

1. (a-c) Although the majority of candidates gained full marks for correctly understanding the chart, there were some who appeared to not fully understand what was required and offered a range of incorrect responses.

(d) To gain full marks candidates could either address both exports and imports in terms of food or adopt a more theoretical stance often referring to the idea of comparative advantage. Weaker candidates, however, only dealt with one or the other, while, at the bottom, some candidates offered definitions which gained no credit.

2. A reduction in supply or an increase in demand could explain a sharp rise in food prices and earn full marks. The best answers thought about elasticity (the question did say sharp rise) and perhaps moved both supply and demand curves. Such answers went beyond what was necessary at this level. With supply and demand being central to an understanding of economics it was pleasing to see many candidates achieve full marks, but disturbing to find that a sizeable minority still seem to have little idea.

3. (a) At the top were those candidates who were able to identify two factors from Source C, and then to fully explain them using economic ideas such as shortage of supply and elasticity. Many candidates could identify and offer some development, but failed to go beyond simple explanations. Weaker candidates could just identify or offered incorrect explanations.

(b) Most candidates were able to identify the effects of rising food prices using the sources. But too many stopped at that point thus achieving only Level 1. A significant minority, however, considered how rising food prices had different effects on groups such as farmers and consumers and, at the top, linked these strongly to a specific country.

4. Candidates were generally able to identify some appropriate policies and to offer some explanation as to how they could reduce food prices. Better answers used economic ideas to develop these further. At the top were those who realised that 'recommend' meant offer an answer as to which policy or policies should be used. It was pleasing to see that most candidates tried to place their answers in the context of a specific country though worrying to find that some thought that Africa was one country.
5. Nearly all the candidates had some knowledge of protection and/or free trade and were able to make use of the source material and their own understanding. Once more, the very best answers were nearly all in the context of a specified country. Candidates who laid out the advantages and disadvantages of protection, or the advantages of protection and free trade, and then came to a supported conclusion gained high marks. Starting with an assertion such as 'my country should adopt protection' led to many one-sided answers. Once again, weaker candidates settled for assertions rather than explaining their thinking.

Grade Boundaries - June 2010

Statistics

Option 1 - Foundation tier paper (1F) and paper 03

| Grade | C | D | E | F | G |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Grade Boundaries | 57 | 50 | 44 | 38 | 32 |

Option 3 - Higher tier paper (2H) and paper 03

| Grade | A* | A | B | C | D | E |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Grade Boundaries | 82 | 73 | 64 | 55 | 50 | 47 |

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