

# GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 8004/11

Paper 11

## Key Messages

- Introductions should be brief/succinct and focused on the key words in the question.
- Conclusions should be more than reiterations of the main points already discussed in the essay. An effective conclusion is an evaluation of the content of the arguments or points made in answer to the question.
- The two essays answered **must** be chosen from separate sections of the paper.
- Focus responses to answer the question as set. Identify the key words, for example 'priority' in **Question 6** or 'human spirit' in **Question 5**, rather than allow a word – e.g. 'technology' to trigger an answer to a rather different question.
- Emphasise the argumentative points in your essay, by making clear how EACH paragraph relates to the title.
- Use evidence to support your argument, rather than just tell a story or rely on anecdote.
- Save ten minutes at the end of the examination for careful checking of your work's grammatical accuracy.
- Carrying out a personal estimation of the number of words in an essay.
- Ensure that handwriting is sufficiently clear to be understood.
- Avoid lapses in tone; the overuse of chatty, informal language and expressions.
- Ensure that you respond to questions on topics where you can confidently display your knowledge and offer meaningful examples and illustrations.

## General Comments

In this examination session, there were a variety of strong responses. The importance of reading the question carefully and with attention to every word was generally appreciated. However, responses in a number of cases suggested that some candidates lacked the maturity of judgement and depth of contextual knowledge that are important skills in tackling this examination. In some cases candidates could have scored considerably higher marks had their essays included wider discussion and more variety of technique in the promotion and presentation of alternative arguments, views and perspectives.

There were several very effective and discerning responses, with well sustained and synthesised debate, supported by illuminating examples. These strong responses demonstrate a keen awareness that there are often two (or more) sides to a question. These candidates were not afraid to express an opinion, but they also critically evaluated other points of view. In these responses, candidates had dissected the question, planned their responses in paragraphs that might well have adopted differing viewpoints, and wrote conclusions that proposed their own answers to the questions. Candidates who adhered to this technique in their responses usually scored well.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### Question 1

This question provoked a range of divergent responses from candidates, with most appreciating the value of criticism in an imperfect world. Those who read the question carefully did well by concentrating on **their own** country and not on a variety of countries. Another **key phrase**, 'well-being', when taken into account, enabled candidates to structure well-focussed responses. Several answers to the question built an argument that criticism is part of democratic debate, while others associated the word with negative connotations, for example, lack of patriotism. Some of the best responses considered both points of view. Responses that approached the question as an invitation to criticise **other** countries for their alleged

deficiencies, or equated criticism only with insurrection or rebellion, did not gain as many marks as those that responded to the actual question.

### Question 2

Answers that identified relevant goods and services achieved higher marks than answers that accepted the statement as being obviously true, demonstrating an unquestioning belief in the power of 'hard work' in order to access these goods and services. Responses that discussed access to quality services, medical, legal, housing, education, displayed a sound understanding of the wider economic and social considerations.

In a number of responses, the word 'privileged' was frequently misspelt, though this was written in the question. Candidates should ensure that they check their work carefully to gain the highest possible marks for Use of English.

### Question 3

Answers to this question were a combination of nuanced responses and simpler responses that argued only one side of the possible discussion, such as denouncing some of those who don't work as work-shy people that live off the state and other people's taxes. More nuanced responses recognised the range of ways in which people might contribute beyond paying tax, such as volunteering. There were a few answers that used the opportunity to reflect upon what the real needs of 'society' really are, often scoring high marks. The best essays made the distinction between those who chose not to work in order to fulfil another important role such as that of carer or homemaker, or those whose disability prevented them from contributing to the workforce, and those who were choosing not to work. The examination of benefits or social-security type systems (where some responses argued some adults had less or no incentive to work as the benefits they received could be seen as lucrative) was a viable area of discussion, though when this became the foundation of the entire essay, the candidates effectively restricted their marks because only one major argument was addressed. More balanced answers also offered counter-arguments, such as suggesting that some of those who wish to work are not able to due to high unemployment or inappropriate training. A few answers mentioned the retired, congratulating them on the hard work they had contributed to society.

### Question 4

Many responses to this question discussed China's production of inexpensive goods and alleged fears surrounding the country's military strength and expansion of Chinese geopolitical and economic influence. Only a few responses included more nuanced examples, such as China's development work in Africa, or Chinese domestic concerns, such as pollution. Better answers considered human rights, global economics and culture, but where candidates did not have a secure understanding of China's role in such matters, answers tended to be poorly developed. The key words in this question 'extent' and 'the world' had to be at the forefront of candidates' minds.

### Question 5

This was a very popular question because of the word 'technology'. Responses demonstrated an awareness of the extent and power of technology in candidates' own lives, however, most candidates could have secured higher marks had they presented a more focussed response, particularly defining the phrase 'imprisons the human spirit'. Better answers looked into issues surrounding human contact, communication, learning, and the effects that technology has had on human relationships and family life. A key phrase, 'the human spirit', had to be defined and understood in order to write a focused answer.

### Question 6

Responses to this question generally were able to engage with this question and produce developed arguments on either side, or sometimes both sides, of the debate. Many argued, with some success, that such cases deserved greater priority and there were some very thoughtful and sensitive discussions particularly on the subject of obesity and/or the nature of addiction. Answers that did not recognise nuances of the debates tended to be more limited, though there were a few well-planned and very forthright answers that defended the proposal. Many candidates discussed the strains facing the medical services and the difficulties in treating many people. Only a few candidates, however, engaged with the idea that doctors have a duty to treat everyone irrespective of their condition. The question invited a viewpoint, but to attain the highest marks a balanced consideration of ideas is required before proposing a preference.

The key word in this question is 'priority', required candidates to consider their viewpoint when responding. 'Priority over what?' could have been at the heart of the answer. Responses that talked only about the three dangers without engaging in the proposition were the weakest, but a significant proportion of the responses were sympathetic to the medical and psychological needs of the addicts.

### Question 7

There were a variety of responses to this question. Many responses engaged with the notion that travel by itself may not broaden the mind. These essays not only discussed how travel can broaden the mind, but how the mind can be broadened by, for example, staying at home and reading books. Responses that focussed on the word 'travel' but wrote travelogue, whereas responses need to engage with the proposition to gain higher marks. Responses that identified, defined and engaged with the key concepts of 'broadening', and the matter of 'mind', were often able to attain higher marks. How travel can be a factor in enriching a person's life by learning and experiencing new ideas was noted in the best essays. Moreover several candidates wrote about the difference between travel and tourism, which allowed for real analysis.

Those who offered a list of what can be seen in various holiday destinations did not score well on this question; responses need to engage in discussion and/or debate with the proposition to attain the highest marks.

### Question 8

In the best responses to this question, candidates explained what *statistics* actually are, and how they might be used. The strongest responses noted the importance of the term 'people's lives'. A few responses considered the uses statistics might be put to. In some responses candidates listed a large number of examples of statistical information. Whilst the use of examples to support responses is important, responses need to engage in discussion or debate with the question first and foremost to attain higher marks. Some candidates could have gained higher marks had they ensured that the example they had given were truly statistical in nature.

### Question 9

The better answers realised that 'language' is in the singular not the plural 'languages'. Those who wrote about 'foreign languages' received some credit but not as much as those who wrote about varieties of their own language or languages. Bilingual candidates wrote some very interesting responses. Successful responses discussed the changing ways people communicate in everyday life due to advent of new forms of communication, such as social media. In addition, many responses developed the idea that people's language skills were evolving (not necessarily for the better) because of newer forms of learning in school, such as increased use of computers and a reduction in the use of textbooks. It was stated by some that language has been constantly changing throughout history, giving examples such as Shakespeare to illustrate the point. Slang and Internet language featured prominently, though better answers engaged in wider discussion, such as how language is impacted by changing lifestyles, medicine, technology, and science in general.

### Question 10

Strong answers to this question were able to define 'beauty' and 'modern art', and to give specific examples of art and artists. Many candidates incorporated a diverse range of examples from different art forms, including music, films, painting, murals (Banksy), photography, and not only painting, which was acceptable. When a candidate made good use of a range of examples across the subject area, a very good answer was produced, offering knowledgeable debates about the nature of aesthetics often with interesting and thought-provoking examples.

### Question 11

Strong responses took into account the term 'health and happiness', and there was some interesting insight into issues such as anorexia or depression. Many responses to this question thoroughly engaged with and subscribed to the idea that many young people made sacrifices that might affect their health in order to keep up with contemporary fashion. Examples of celebrities who had paid a price due to this sacrifice were the strength of many essays. Links between diet and mental well-being were subtle inclusions (eat well to feel good and so on). An outline of financial and human costs that were endured in order to achieve health and relative happiness were common and welcome inclusions in good essays.

A number of candidates could have attained significantly higher marks had they addressed the 'fashion' aspect of the question; some candidates did not address this word and wrote more generalised responses based on discussion of image. Responses need to be focused on the question set to attain the highest marks.

### **Question 12**

Responses to this question did attempt to discuss the 'modern' aspect of the question, while recognising the importance of the term 'extent'. Many responses showed evidence that candidates had paid attention to the wording of the question. Consequently many responses demonstrated sufficient historical knowledge to produce a balanced answer rather than rather than writing predominately about modern celebrity itself. These answers discussed the nature of celebrity and fame and considered how long it had existed for and whether its nature had changed over the years and centuries. They made careful distinctions between concepts such as celebrity, fame and historical significance. A few candidates could have gained higher marks by writing about this approach rather than writing about their favourite celebrities without addressing the extent to which 'celebrity' is modern or not. Essays that took a historical perspective did well. Some responses discussed the need for celebrity, often making pertinent points and gaining high marks. Other strong responses explored the role of the modern media and entertainment industry in promoting the cult of celebrity but added that celebrities existed in the past, though in different forms, such as national heroes, changers of society, inventors, composers, playwrights, and even explorers.

# GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 8004/12

Paper 12

## Key Messages

### Content

- Answer the **set** question and focus on the key words.
- Support your main points with appropriate examples. (Examples show knowledge and earn credit.)
- Keep anecdotal/personal evidence to a minimum.
- An introduction should immediately address the question and show understanding of it.
- A conclusion should be a reasoned assessment of the arguments made.
- Ensure that all aspects of the question are addressed.
- Re-visit the question after each paragraph.
- Choose a question which you are knowledgeable about, and fully understand.
- Keep listing and description to a minimum.

### Use of English

- Leave time to check your English thoroughly to avoid basic errors.
- Concentrate on using appropriate vocabulary so expression is fluent and precise. (The examination is not the time to try out new words.)
- Basic sentence structure/grammar needs to be accurate to ensure clear communication of content.

## General comments

More successful responses showed a clear understanding of the key words in the question, used examples to illustrate main points and developed arguments into a logical discussion with some evaluation. Assertive and generalised responses with few, if any, examples tended to be less successful but could achieve credit if they were relevant to the set question.

When the set question demands it, candidates should focus on aspects of their own country; if this is not the prompt then a broader focus is required. Stronger responses demonstrated good topic knowledge and included local, regional and global examples to support points. Less successful responses wrote on topics with which they were insufficiently familiar and provided little or no evidence to support points made. Candidates need to spend time studying the set questions and choose on the basis of their understanding of the key words and their own knowledge of that specific topic; it is advisable to re-visit the key words after every paragraph to check that the essay is doing what the question asks. This is a technique which could help further develop the considerable skills that candidates may already possess.

Most candidates used the time reasonably efficiently and were able to produce two clearly structured essays of around the recommended length. Introductions were often too long and unfocused; this is where the candidate should begin to address the key words, to reassure themselves that, from the beginning, they understand the question. Less effective conclusions merely listed points from the essay rather than arriving at a reasoned, personal assessment.

Despite the rarity of Rubric infringements and 'short' essays (less than 375 words), the quality of the Use of English was variable. A substantial number of candidates have acquired a wide-ranging English vocabulary but need to improve putting these words in an appropriate context. Similarly, candidates could improve their English mark by checking for basic errors, as outlined below. A thorough and systematic checking for such slips would greatly improve the standard, as well as clarifying content.

## Use of English

Use of English marks are not always gained when responses demonstrate basic errors and informal expression which candidates could avoid, examples are listed below:

- Subject/verb non-agreement
- Frequent incorrect use of definite/indefinite article.
- Omission of apostrophes.
- Confusion between their/there, to/too, your/you're.
- Incorrect comparative forms.
- Missing endings on plurals because of poor checking.
- Incorrect use of vocabulary. Need to know the language/diction appropriate to a topic.
- Avoid using 'conclusively', 'as a conclusion', 'in a nutshell'.

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

Stronger responses were able to identify the different characteristics of 'history' and 'myth' but most tended to assert that history was unchanging fact where as myths contained no truth at all, hence losing the opportunity to develop a more interesting debate. Myth was illustrated with reference to 'Robin Hood', 'The Loch Ness Monster and various cultural/religious tales. Better responses were able to discuss the ways myth, over time, acquires a sense of being truth simply by being repeated, firstly through oral traditions and then by being written down. Some responses ignored myth completely and listed the reasons why history could be significant today.

#### Question 2

Many responses to this question approached it with some enthusiasm and knowledge of candidates' own country. The best responses provided specific references to policies which favoured the 'elite'. Care should be taken to define key words in the sentence before writing, as some responses misunderstood 'interest', taking it to mean 'being interested'. The best debates covered a range of regimes and 'elite' groups, presenting a balanced and reasoned argument.

#### Question 3

Many responses to this question were well informed about this question and were often detailed and balanced. They suggested that hosting brings 'prestige', 'national pride', 'economic benefits' and 'global exposure'. This was balanced against, 'governments should prioritise the poor', 'build infrastructure', 'events are a side-show' and 'only the elite gain financially'. Subtler responses distinguished between countries which could easily afford and those that could not or should not. The economic benefits were sometimes exaggerated and events tended to focus on World Cup/Olympic Games, a few broadening the scope to include state occasions/local sports events and cultural festivals. However, there were some responses with no specific examples which would have benefitted from exemplification.

#### Question 4

Some responses to this question recognised that a debate for/against the proposition could be developed. Some responses could have gained higher marks if they had spent more time focussing on the debate and less time detailing the problems faced by poorer citizens with sweeping assumptions that 'aid' would cure everything. Better responses did provide informed examples and information rather than assertions, but only a minority or responses examined the extent to which financial support should be offered and often this was at a straightforward level, stating that rich families should be excluded. The best responses questioned the fairness of childless taxpayers subsidising those with families. However, this question was accessible to a majority of candidates as responses tended to cover it at some level.

#### Question 5

Many responses to this question were written about the importance of bees in the natural world. Responses tended to be well developed and provided a range of reasons why we should be alarmed, from their role in pollination, the economic benefits and the aesthetic variety and beauty they represent. Weaker responses made assertions about the medicinal value of honey and the danger of bee stings. However the best

responses covered a range of insects and evaluated their effects on various eco-systems. Occasionally there were irrelevancies in which all animals were considered instead of just insects.

### Question 6

Many responses to this answer would have benefitted had they clearly defined and addressed the term 'commodity'. Many responses listed every possible use of water without reference to this term. Some responses did refer to 'water distribution', 'selling bottled water' and 'an energy provider (H.E.P.)', but many were implicit or descriptive, whereas responses could have benefitted from being more analytical. The best responses did examine 'human rights' and the increasing costs of supply, storage, treatment and delivery of fresh drinking water to deprived areas.

### Question 7

Some responses to this question used it as an opportunity to write at length about global warming or climate change, whereas responses gain higher marks for more focussed discussion or debate around the terms of the question. Stronger responses looked at these and other issues such as the quality of the product, land erosion, injection of growth hormones and the effect on the eco-system. Weaker responses focused just on vegetarianism, or on the threat to endangered species. The concept of 'intensive rearing' was not well understood; some responses asserted that the intensive rearing of farm animals would result in their extinction.

### Question 8

Many responses to this question changed the focus of the question to a discussion of the general benefits and drawbacks of all kinds of technology. Some responses tried to re-work the keyword, 'secure' to address all forms of security (physical, job and emotional). The best responses focused closely on 'sophisticated' security with issues of data security and privacy citing examples such as wikileaks, drone warfare and social media.

### Question 9

Most responses took the statement at face value and wrote about the importance of English in business and education as something which would eliminate differences in culture, religion and personality. Stronger responses were able to see the glibness/irony of the question and discuss the limitations of the language's role as a 'bridge-builder'. There was often a discussion of the threat of English to local languages and a consideration of the expansion of China and the growth of the study of the Chinese language outside China as an alternative to English.

### Question 10

Many responses knowledgeably discussed personal reading and the effects authors had on the candidate. Noticeably, responses did not re-tell plots but made clear attempts to respond to the question by carefully selecting and evaluating key moments which addressed it. Less successful responses interpreted 'stirred your conscience' as 'having an emotional effect' and could have gained higher marks had they chosen material which linked to 'injustice'.

### Question 11

Many responses discussed the need to halt the decline in local culture, to educate the young and make local culture known to the outside world. Many responses discussed what they saw as the pernicious effects of television and western culture. Some responses strayed into areas which are not the normal remit of a Culture Minister such as politics and economics, and would have achieved more credit had they remained more focussed. Stronger responses offered a detailed range of cultural examples, whereas weaker ones generalised about the measures which they hoped to implement with little reference to specific cultural elements which needed prioritising.

### Question 12

Many responses demonstrated a good knowledge of their nominated artist. However, many responses could have gained higher marks had they made clearer in their discussion the links to national traits, as these elements in many responses were not consistently present or effective. This was a question which needed a good degree of specific knowledge.

# GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 8004/13

Paper 13

## Key messages

### Content

- Focus on the keywords of the question and ensure that all aspects of the question are covered.
- Choose two questions carefully, making sure you understand them fully and have sufficient knowledge/examples to produce meaningful content.
- Keep anecdotal material to a minimum.
- Responses should be of sufficient length to develop an argument.
- Only address issues raised by the question.

### Use of English

- Check your English thoroughly to avoid careless errors.
- Avoid writing in a 'chatty', informal style ('way too much', 'tons of').
- Provide a clear linkage between sentences so that there is logical progression through the paragraphs.

### General Comments

There were many detailed and thorough responses which addressed the question, with some focus on the keywords and supplying a variety of relevant examples to illustrate the main points. Many responses could have benefitted from additional exemplification though, as a considerable number of responses contained few or no examples, resulting in vague and generalised arguments; credible evidence, not just anecdotes, is needed to support points.

Candidates should focus on their own country when prompted to in the question; if this is not the case then a broader focus is required. Many candidates possessed good knowledge of the topic, especially if it concerned their 'own country', and provided balanced answers to the question.

Candidates will gain higher marks by using an appropriate register for their language. A number of candidates wrote their answers in informal, colloquial English which was inappropriate for a serious, formal examination. Often this reduced the impact of important statements. Some candidates did adapt the tone to match the requirements of the question and writing was often accurate with appropriate vocabulary.

Most candidates managed their time wisely and completed both essays, but there was evidence that some candidates rushed the second essay, leaving insufficient time to conduct a thorough and systematic check of the English.

Introductions should focus on the key words of the question to show understanding of it, rather than be a lengthy pre-amble. Conclusions should not simply list the points made in the main body of the essay but should be a reasoned assessment of previous arguments.

Although there were very few instances of rubric infringement, a number of essays were 'short' (below 375 words) and lost marks for the Use of English as a result. Also, this would not be of sufficient length to develop a meaningful argument.

To emphasise, candidates need to answer the actual question set, and candidates will achieve higher marks by focussing on the remit provided, rather than writing everything they know about a topic area.



## Use of English

Use of English marks are not always gained when responses demonstrate basic errors and informal expression which candidates could avoid, examples are listed below:

- Subject/verb non-agreement.
- Informal vocabulary such as 'kinda', 'gotten', 'awesome'.
- Words not separated e.g. 'a lot', 'infact', 'aswell'.
- Confusion between there/their, to/too, hear/here, crisis/crises.
- Incorrect use of apostrophes.
- Use of 'amount' instead of 'number' (amount of people).
- Overuse of 'their' and 'they'. Suggests the need for a more formal style.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

Many responses would have benefitted from being broader in scope, as many interpreted 'social change' in terms of socialisation: making friends, building team spirit, overcoming shyness and learning about responsibility. Better responses considered the effect of sport on race and gender, citing credible examples from history, and also widening the scope to include the effect on local and national community cohesion/sponsorship.

### Question 2

Many responses interpreted 'quality of life' as meaning 'availability of care homes, mobility aids and medical care'. Better responses broadened the scope to discuss other issues: time/money freedoms, opportunity to try new things, state benefits for that age group. Some responses did consider 'improved' in the context of lifestyle when younger, linking longevity to a continuous process of keeping fit and healthy. Some weaker responses looked only at how life in 'their' country had improved over several generations with little reference to 'over 60'.

### Question 3

Responses to this question often made use of a wide range of pertinent examples. Some responses would have benefitted from a wider scope, as some were restricted by focusing on just one issue such as 'interference with gun laws', or describing rules or regulations which restrict personal freedoms. Better responses did consider wider issues: the need to protect from terrorist threats, duty to care for the poor/vulnerable and the need to enforce laws. The best responses presented a balanced view and were convincing on both sides of the argument, considering the interference of their government compared with other less democratic, more totalitarian regimes.

### Question 4

Most responses to this question argued in favour of the arts, arguing that they helped literacy and numeracy anyway as well as providing motivation and an escape from boredom. Better responses were less generalised, and provided more detail to support this line of argument, including research. Weaker responses became too personal and anecdotal but still showed understanding of the question. The best ones were well balanced, focused on young learners and also considered the value of 'literacy and numeracy'.

### Question 5

Most responses to this question clearly demonstrated knowledge of both the Internet and of music, and a clear awareness of the benefits and drawbacks of their relationship. The best responses provided more detail/development, using pertinent examples throughout.

### Question 6

Many responses to this question were confused, and candidates need to go beyond repetition of the wording of the question to gain marks. Responses would have benefitted if a clear understanding had been demonstrated of the key terms, as 'genetically modified' was often confused the term with 'organic' or 'the

dangers of pesticides'. Better responses did show some understanding and considered the benefits of modifying to adapt to arid climates as well as arguing that GM was still an unknown quantity. The best responses addressed 'cause for concern' with some evaluation of this phrase, but very few managed this level of understanding.

### Question 7

Many responses to this question listed the benefits in a 'travel brochure' style with a main emphasis on 'own country'. Some responses listed the benefits and disadvantages of holidaying in a candidate's 'own country'. Better responses moved away from a purely descriptive approach, and provided more balanced arguments with a more developed comparison, including participating in alternative activities abroad and highlighting the sense of adventure/educational aspects of 'the abroad' experience. Some responses balanced this against the dangers of leaving 'own country' and the 'cosiness' of familiarity, especially speaking the same language.

### Question 8

Most responses to this question focussed on 'the supernatural' with limited reference to 'science'. Often there were descriptions of supernatural experiences with reference to films and television, suggesting that the growth of supernatural television reality shows encouraged people to believe that it could be fact. Better responses presented a more philosophical approach introducing historical/religious/cultural perspectives as well as scientific responses.

### Question 9

Some responses to this question attempted to define both terms, and many examples provided from 'School'. Better responses broadened the scope with a range of examples and evaluated the premise, 'more about conformity than individuality' with developed points on both sides of the argument. The level of response depended on whether the candidate understood the varied and complex meanings of words like 'conformity' and 'individuality', and could apply them to a wide range of fashion examples. A small number of responses achieved this, and produced the best responses.

### Question 10

Most responses to this question saw the 'radio' as a device for listening to their favourite music, often dismissing it as out-dated compared with the latest 'listen on demand' technology. Better responses were able to broaden their scope by recognising the other uses of 'radio', as a local community interactive service, especially in cases of emergency. Also such responses did present a balanced discussion focused on 'no future'.

### Question 11

There were too few responses to this question to produce a report.

### Question 12

Many responses to this question chose to use 'Anne Frank's Diary' as their chosen text. Most responses chose appropriate moments, sometimes with specific quotations, and produced considered reasons for their choice. The best responses were able to explore the emotional impact of the text on modern day teenage readers. Weaker responses generalised about writing their own diaries but it was accessible to most candidates.