



GCSE

Citizenship Studies

8100/1 Paper 1

Report on the examination

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General

The specification continues to allow students to express their opinions and showcase their depth of knowledge about the world they live in.

Many centres had effectively prepared students on how citizens can take an active part in society, with a good knowledge of protest movements and pressure groups. This was also seen with a good foundation on the principals of democracy and dictatorships around the world. Subject specific vocabulary was also deployed well, such as the nature of representative systems and the debate around voting age. More specific key terms and roles of institutions were less secure, such as the Civil Service. This is a shame as understanding the role of this institution is an explicit feature of the specification.

The active citizenship section of the paper remains extremely enjoyable to read, and mark, as it provides insightful glimpses of the exciting projects young people have been involved in. The more tightly focused investigations provided more opportunities for students to reflect on their project and gauge success and/or impact. This year the team saw a number of very interesting and successful activities, such as reducing littering, raising money/awareness for Bowel Research UK, building community gardens, helping the Royal Life Saving Society and water safety, recycling old clothes to avoid land fill and working with local foodbanks. Where investigations had a clear set of aims, it allowed students to judge success against these. Students who were analytical in their approach could appraise their plans, methods and outcomes far easier. Simply describing a set of actions would not enable students to access the higher levels in the mark scheme. With regard to safeguarding, please could all teachers be aware that the safety and security of all students is paramount. This needs to inform the decisions, taken by centres, on how some issues should be investigated. For example, an investigation into reducing knife crime in a community would require a secondary source of information rather than primary.

Once again, the Lead Examiner would like to say thank you to all centres for the support they provide their students. It was abundantly clear that this subject means a lot to so many young people.

Question 1.1

The majority of responses could identify Age UK as a voluntary group.

Question 1.2

Most responses provided a clear definition based around what a demonstration could involve, such as a protest or a march.

Question 1.3

Many responses demonstrated an accurate knowledge of the advantages of being in a Trade Union. Many students wrote about the protection of workers' rights and improving things such as pay.

Question 1.4

The majority of student's understood what charities do to raise money and could provide a suitable example. The most common responses centred on voluntary actions like fundraisers in the local community and the positive consequences these can have. A number of responses also branched into the digital world being used by charities and could cite specific examples.

Question 1.5

Students responded very well to this question and could accurately define what digital democracy is alongside a relevant example, such as online petitions or social media campaigns.

Question 1.6

Stronger responses used the source as a starting point to discuss what UK citizens can do to stop child labour, many referring to fast fashion and then explaining how this could be tackled. After this, wider knowledge was used to discuss other ways people can help, such as campaigns online or pressure group activity. Stronger responses were characterised by some good use of precise knowledge and examples, such as how the digital world could be effectively used to reach government. Responses that simply focused on the extract didn't demonstrate enough own knowledge to progress to the higher levels.

Question 2.1

The majority of responses could clearly identify what primary research they accessed and what influence it had on their topic. Identifying the specific research and its utility was needed for both marks.

Question 2.2

Students were able to successfully explain how they planned their citizenship action. Stronger responses used clear examples of what tasks were planned and some of the rationale behind decisions.

Question 2.3

A summary of the evidence gathered was provided by the majority of students. Stronger responses went into detail on what specific evidence they collected and how this directly informed/supported their action, some even commented on the overall effectiveness of it.

Question 2.4

The majority of students used the scaffold in the question to effectively organise their thoughts. The strongest responses clearly evaluated how much of an impact/difference they had. Reflection on the methods used and degree of success provided high level analysis in responses. Some responses were more narrative in style and simply stated what they did so could not progress to the higher levels. Some examples of really strong projects were ones where the end goal was attainable and measurable, such as creating a community garden for an elderly home, improving resources about mental health in the school, creating a sensory room in school and hydration awareness and accessibility around a school.

Question 3.1

There was good knowledge on the issue of time allowed between general elections, with many correctly choosing 5 years.

Question 3.2

Many responses could accurately identify the simplicity and ease of use for an advantage of FPTP. Identifying the disadvantage was slightly more challenging, with many picking up the second mark available by citing the unfairness for smaller parties.

Question 3.3

Responses that simply lifted some figures from the source did not progress to higher levels. The strongest responses used an example from the source and then developed this with an explanation of its importance. For example, the need to have a representative in our democracy when there is a vacant post.

Question 4.1

The majority of students couldn't identify the monarch as the one who appoints the UK Prime Minister.

Question 4.2

The majority of students could correctly identify both chambers of the UK Parliament. Many used the terms 'Commons' and 'Lords' which was acceptable as correct answers.

Question 4.3

This question required two differences, between the roles of the UK and French Prime Ministers, to be discussed. The source material provided students with some examples of the role of the French Prime Minister. Higher level responses choose a point from the source then compared it directly with the UK Prime Minister. Less secure responses made more undeveloped points about the level of 'power' each individual had.

Question 5.1

Most responses correctly identified the countries which have an absolute monarchy. The correct answers were Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Question 5.2

Most responses correctly identified the two features of the UK political system. The correct answers were constitutional monarchy and representative democracy.

Question 5.3

This style of question enabled students to apply their knowledge of political participation in the UK when compared to that of North Korea. Responses which gained higher marks clearly made a comparison between what opportunities are available in each country. Many cited the UK as having a multi-party system and freedom of the press to express political ideas.

Question 6.1

This question provided a range of responses from students about the principals of the Civil Service. Successful responses generally centred on the impartiality of the Civil Service. Some students mistook the Civil Service as being part of the police force.

Question 6.2

There were a range of responses to the debate about the amount of power the Civil Service has. Some responses demonstrated an excellent knowledge of the role and function of the Civil Service. For example, the role it performs in the UK Government's decision making. Many of the stronger responses also discussed the unelected nature of the Civil Service and the subsequent issue of accountability. The highest marks were awarded to those responses that arrived at clear judgements and used subject specific terms and language. A number of responses provided a brief overview of what the Civil Service does without any direct consideration to the demands of the question. These were unable to access the higher mark bands.

Question 7.1

There was a range of responses to what the voting age, in elections to the Welsh Parliament, is. The most common responses were 16 and 18. The correct answer was 16.

Question 7.2

There were some extremely strong responses for this question, with many students referring to voting ages in different parts of the UK. Responses which gained higher marks could confidently deploy a set of coherent and evidenced arguments for the debate. These responses were also specific in deploying examples, such as what legal entitlements are found at 16. There were some responses that provided an overview of the debate but lacked any subject specific terms and, appropriate, examples to support their response. These could not access the higher mark bands.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.