

2011 Aboriginal Studies HSC Examination 'Sample Answers'

When examination committees develop questions for the examination, they may write 'sample answers' or, in the case of some questions, 'answers could include'. The committees do this to ensure that the questions will effectively assess students' knowledge and skills.

This material is also provided to the Supervisor of Marking, to give some guidance about the nature and scope of the responses the committee expected students would produce. How sample answers are used at marking centres varies. Sample answers may be used extensively and even modified at the marking centre OR they may be considered only briefly at the beginning of marking. In a few cases, the sample answers may not be used at all at marking.

The Board publishes this information to assist in understanding how the marking guidelines were implemented.

The 'sample answers' or similar advice contained in this document are not intended to be exemplary or even complete answers or responses. As they are part of the examination committee's 'working document', they may contain typographical errors, omissions, or only some of the possible correct answers.

Section I, Part A

Question 1 — Social Justice and Human Rights Issues – A Global Perspective

Question 1 (a)

Sample answers:

- Creation of Tent Embassy
- Lobbying politicians
- Increased media awareness
- Posters/signs/advertising
- Advocacy of land rights
- Participation and creation of community organisations
- Protest movements

Question 1 (b)

Sample answer:

The National Congress will help improve the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by informing political leaders directly about the needs of those communities. It will improve status by being independent, by its use of direct elections, and by being a voice for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. By being representative of a diverse membership, it will mean that lobbying will represent all voices rather than select community interests. These things will help to achieve self-determination and will improve the way Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are viewed in society, which will also improve their political status.

Answers could include:

- The National Congress is a grassroots, community-based, representative body and is NOT dependent upon parliamentary approval or recognition
- Advocating for recognition of rights
- Encouraging civic participation
- Economic, social and environmental issues: multifaceted approach
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have attempted to improve their political status by forming organisations

It is acceptable to argue that the National Congress will not improve the political status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These responses must provide reason(s).

Question 1 (c)***Sample answer:***

Governments have addressed the political status of Aboriginal people in several ways. In NSW, the government has acknowledged and honoured Aboriginal people as the first people of NSW in the Constitution of the state. As Source C indicates, this is a significant step in addressing political status by ensuring that the government formally confirms the status of Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of NSW. Another way government has addressed status is the 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations. Although this was only a symbolic act, it helped to bring the historical injustices against Aboriginal people into the public arena. By doing this, the government helped to explain the social and political conditions faced by Aboriginal people, and this acknowledgement may help to improve status in the long term.

Answers could include:

- May refer to all levels of government
- Use of welcome to/acknowledgement of country at the local level
- Apology from federal government
- The Constitution is the foundation legal document of NSW, so the inclusion of this in the preamble is a very important recognition of the history of connection to country
- Symbolic recognition only, some political status, no legal change in rights, issues of 'window-dressing'
- Spiritual, social and cultural relationship to country

Question 1 (d)***Answers could include:***

Students could conclude that recognition has been achieved to either a significant extent or a limited extent, or to any point in between.

Significant extent – examples to support could include:

- Recognition by various elements in society (eg, education, local government, business and media)
- Aboriginal issues and people appear more often in the public sphere, not hidden, in contrast with the practice in the past
- Some recognition in mainstream media, eg positive stories on successful Aboriginal people
- Initiatives – greater range and diversity and greater awareness in the wider community
- Equality of opportunity/access for education and employment

Limited extent – examples to support could include:

- Statistics – all social indicators are still poor and are not improving at the same rate as for many Indigenous peoples overseas
- Media representation is often simplistic (ie, either negative or feelgood)
- Equality of outcomes does not match equality of opportunity; the gains are small and hard won
- There have been trends including a return to paternalism, such as the Northern Territory intervention, involving a loss of rights and a loss of self-determination

Section I, Part B

Question 2 — Health

Question 2 (a)

Sample answer:

Three indicators of health standards are high infant or child mortality, lower life expectancy, and a high incidence of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and kidney disease.

Answers could include:

- Lifestyle factors
- High rates of substance and drug use/abuse
- Environmental factors such as poor housing, sanitation, lack of education and limited employment opportunities

Question 2 (b)

Sample answer:

Maintenance and knowledge of culture are closely interrelated with Aboriginal health issues. For example, Aboriginal people are working to regain their culture through maintaining Aboriginal cultural knowledge. This can assist in building a strong sense of identity, which can then lead to both physical and mental health benefits. Cultural knowledge is important in breaking down barriers to accessing health services. Aboriginal people and communities have benefited from culturally appropriate health services, such as [community examples]. This shows how important culture can be for health. In the end, the maintenance and knowledge of culture are important elements in improving health, but they are not sufficient alone and many other elements are required to develop long-term sustainable health improvements.

Answers could include:

- Connection between mental health and Stolen Generations
- Holistic approach to Aboriginal health issues
- Aboriginal Medical Services contribute to cultural expression

Question 2 (c)***Answers could include:***

- The involvement of Indigenous people and community members is important in all aspects of health service delivery
- The impact of community-based initiatives in terms of empowerment for Indigenous people to implement strategies, rather than having to take directives from government; this builds links to the future through capacity building
- Examples of community-based initiatives, such as:
 - Aboriginal/Indigenous health services/clinics
 - Local training programs
 - Pre-natal and ante-natal health programs

Answers must include specific examples from Australian and international Indigenous communities.

Question 3 — Education**Question 3 (a)*****Sample answer:***

Colonisation continues to impact Aboriginal education due to the structure of mainstream education. There are systemic issues in education. The current system is a Western system, based on Western philosophies. As such, Aboriginal education programs that might produce benefits (eg bilingual education) are often changed to fit into a non-Aboriginal view. This has consequences on attendance rates and other issues, such as levels of engagement, literacy and school completion.

Answers could include:

Students can choose either a positive or a negative impact.

Positive impacts:

- Education contributes to self-determination through successful Aboriginal people driving the agenda, rather than governments driving/setting the agenda
- Structures have been set in place for Aboriginal people to address education (as well as other issues)

Negative impacts:

- Loss of cultural knowledge, heritage
- Loss of language
- Loss of opportunity to practice traditional culture

Question 3 (b)***Sample answer:***

Socioeconomic status is related to educational outcomes in several ways. This is based on the cycle of disadvantage, where socioeconomic indicators such as poor housing, health and income all have an impact on education. For example, a student living in an overcrowded house may not be able to study successfully. Having few role models of educational success can influence commitment to studies. Lack of formal education leads to poor literacy, which means limited input into decisions, or little access to decision-making processes. This means decisions are less likely to meet community needs. Education also can contribute positively to developing socioeconomic status through self-determination, empowerment and identity.

Answers could include:

- Students can incorporate a range of socioeconomic indicators, such as linking housing or health standards to school attendance

Question 3 (c)***Answers could include:***

- Provides examples of community-based initiatives in a range of educational settings, such as:
 - Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) – can be local, regional and state examples
 - Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
 - Young Mob Leadership Program
 - Homework centres
 - GenerationOne – where this operates as a community-based initiative
 - Community traineeships and apprenticeships
 - Cultural leadership programs
- Link between community-based initiatives and self-determination regarding the future; capacity building, sense of ownership over the future as a result of community-driven education initiatives
- Importance of the involvement of Indigenous people and community members in education, including the development and delivery of programs

Answers must include specific examples from Australian and international Indigenous communities.

Question 4 — Housing

Question 4 (a)

Sample answer:

One initiative to improve housing is Aboriginal Housing Corporations. These corporations organise a range of financial programs to assist Aboriginal people own their own homes. This might be through low-interest loans, through private rental assistance, or through home purchase and construction programs. These initiatives improve housing by assisting Aboriginal people to achieve the same housing standards as non-Aboriginal Australians.

Answers could include:

- Features of an Aboriginal initiative, such as:
 - Land Council housing projects
 - Specific projects, such as Pemulwuy Project Redfern
 - Aboriginal Housing Corporations
 - Community partnerships
- Characteristics of the chosen initiative, such as:
 - Funding
 - Leadership
 - Community involvement
 - Programs and initiatives
 - Goals

Question 4 (b)

Sample answer:

Colonisation continues to impact on Aboriginal housing in several ways. Aboriginal people have struggled to regain control over their living conditions following centuries of dispossession. This has required adjustments to Western models of housing. Also, colonising ideas are seen in the modern political emphasis on private/individual home ownership and the restrictions on land tenure in town camps following the Northern Territory intervention. Despite government promises to improve housing, the impacts of colonisation reflect the low priority of this issue for governments. Consequently, quality of life is reduced if housing conditions are poor or if there are limited opportunities or inadequate government assistance to improve the housing situation.

Answers could include:

- Permit systems
- Economic participation and access to individualistic economic system
- High level of dependence on housing provision by governments impacts on quality of life

Question 4 (c)***Answers could include:***

- The notion of housing is a Western construct, whereas Aboriginal culture may emphasise concepts such as shelter, community, living and caring for country
- Clear examples of how land and culture relate to housing, such as:
 - Aboriginal people are intrinsically connected to country
 - Housing options should be developed 'in country'; this creates challenges in relation to the need for adequate housing
 - Impacts of inadequate housing create problems for the maintenance of culture
 - Cycle of disadvantage
- Examples of solutions incorporating cultural needs and housing, such as men's kitchens and community-based improvements
- Importance of involvement of Aboriginal people and community members in all aspects of housing

Answers must include specific examples from Australian and international Indigenous communities.

Question 5 — Employment**Question 5 (a)*****Sample answer:***

Colonisation continues to impact on Aboriginal employment through issues such as generational unemployment and cultural barriers imposed by employers. Some Aboriginal families have had to rebuild their employment capacity following the generational loss/lack of employment opportunities and the resulting welfare dependence. As Aboriginal people were locked out of the mainstream workforce for so long, increasing Aboriginal employment is now a long-term issue.

Answers could include:

- This challenge is often misunderstood in non-Aboriginal Australia (a misunderstanding which itself is an echo of colonisation)
- Colonising ideas of superiority and entitlement excluded Aboriginal people from work
- Stolen wages employees may have been alienated from work
- Loss of traditional lifestyle and therefore 'employment' in traditional ways
- De-skilling
- Long-term unemployment or underemployment

Question 5 (b)***Sample answer:***

Aboriginal initiatives have many impacts on employment outcomes for Aboriginal people. In most cases, these initiatives would result in positive impacts; however, it is possible that some may result in unintended negative impacts. An example of a positive impact is the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, which began in Moree and runs as a partnership between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the community. This program assists job seekers and works with employers to provide mentors and other assistance to ensure that both the worker and the employer benefit. Other initiatives include Aboriginal business training schemes, which train people in the key skills needed to run their own business. These initiatives have a clear goal of increasing Aboriginal employment, which has definite benefits for the community in the future, such as self-determination, capacity building, income, increased employment and social justice.

Answers could include:

- Any initiatives that impact on employment, not just specifically targeted employment initiatives
- It is likely that most initiatives would result in positive impacts; however, students can provide negative impacts where appropriate
- Specific examples could include things such as:
 - Community Development Employment Programs
 - GenerationOne, where working in partnership with community organisations [or other Aboriginal and business partnerships]

Question 5 (c)***Answers could include:***

- Cycle of disadvantage, such as poor education → poor employment → income → health → education/participation in the workforce
- Poor education → poor skills and therefore limited employment opportunities
- Lifestyle factors as a result of low socioeconomic status, such as work hours, punctuality, etc
- Frequent movement between houses impacts upon employment; impact of family obligations can be heightened by overcrowding, which impacts upon employment
- Criminal justice involvement limits employment opportunities
- Financial security provides more choices for employment
- Work readiness through generational role modeling
- Engaging appropriately with employers (authority and hierarchy)
- Power of disenfranchisement
- Lack of informal employment network opportunities

Answers must include specific examples from Australian and international Indigenous communities.

Question 6 — Criminal Justice System

Question 6 (a)

Sample answer:

Three indicators of Aboriginal over-representation in the criminal justice system are increased rates of incarceration (as high as 20 times over-represented in jails), increased victimisation, and disproportionate rates of juvenile cautions, offences and incarceration.

Answers could include:

- Male v female
- Juvenile incarceration rates and offending rates
- Types of offences, eg the 'trifecta' (drunkenness, resisting arrest, assaulting police)
- Arrest rates
- Incarceration rates
- Sentencing – Aboriginal offenders are more likely to receive a custodial sentence

Question 6 (b)

Sample answer:

Several changes have occurred in law enforcement and judicial agencies that have impacted on outcomes for Aboriginal people, both within and outside the system. Examples of specific changes include more employment of Aboriginal people in courts and police, as well as improved cultural awareness training of police and other employees in the justice system. Increased use of circle sentencing and more effective legal representation would also be effective. Many programs to change outcomes for Aboriginal people have run as trials or on a small scale (eg the police Aboriginal recruitment schemes), so one key change would be to increase and build up existing programs to ensure they have maximum impact.

Answers could include:

- Language used in courts and accessibility of the process
- Positive use of the social concept of 'shame'
- Training of justice system personnel
- Increased Aboriginal participation in juries

Question 6 (c)

Answers could include:

- Denial of human rights and social justice can lead to increased criminal justice issues
- Two-way link between social justice and criminal justice – each depends on the other
- Liaison officers and increased numbers of Indigenous police officers to address issues of over-policing in Indigenous communities, such as through programs such as 'I Proud'

- Pro-active education programs about legal rights and responsibilities, diversionary programs for youth and recidivists (repeat offenders), and programs to rehabilitate offenders to address issues of overrepresentation within the criminal justice system
- Aboriginal Legal Service, Legal Aid, and circle sentencing to address the lack of access to legal representation
- Community support programs for families of offenders to address family and community dysfunction
- Appointing Indigenous judges and magistrates, increasing cultural awareness across the justice system, and improving attitudes towards Aboriginal people all address issues such as length of sentences
- Community initiatives, such as Night Patrols, to address over-policing
- General initiatives, such as Aboriginal Justice Advisory Councils
- Other issues could include deaths in custody, victimisation, etc

Answers must include specific examples from Australian and international Indigenous communities.

Question 7 — Economic Independence

Question 7 (a)

Sample answer:

Three indicators of Aboriginal participation in the economy are rates of home ownership, income levels, and rates of employment or unemployment.

Answers could include:

- Business ownership rates
- Attaining competence in financial literacy
- Statistics such as education, employment and criminal justice

Question 7 (b)

Sample answer:

Economic independence has been asserted in many ways by Aboriginal communities. For example, communities run employment initiatives and programs to develop employment skills that empower individuals to enter the workforce. Community initiatives, empowerment, and capacity building also help to build economic independence by developing skills within the community that encourage self-sufficiency. Programs that encourage home ownership and skills in the management of personal finance also assist Aboriginal communities to achieve economic independence.

Answers could include:

- Entrepreneurial mentoring
- Land rights and native title claims
- Tourism and land management, eg Yulara Village at Uluru

Question 7 (c)***Answers could include:***

- Provides clear examples of how land and culture are related to economic independence
- Land gives access to opportunities for economic independence through food, housing and financial stability
- Cultural rejuvenation provides opportunity for entrepreneurial business development
- Economic independence builds on confidence in identity and capacity, which comes through relationships with land and culture
- Economic independence creates the opportunity to develop stronger connections with land and culture by allowing freedom and choice of movement

Answers must include specific examples from Australian and international Indigenous communities.

Section II**Question 8 — Aboriginality and the Land****Question 8 (a)*****Answers could include:***

Students do not need to address every possible response; however, a high-quality answer should examine a variety of responses. Responses to government decisions can be different and varied; however, some general themes could include:

- Government views on issues such as conservation and job creation
- Aboriginal views on issues such as the importance of keeping land and culture, and the need for economic development
- Industry or corporate views on issues such as profits, shareholders, expansion, employment, etc. Some recent evidence of interest in Aboriginal community development
- Non-government organisations, such as World Vision, AusAID, etc
- Churches
- Environmentalist views on issues such as conservation, limited development, etc

Question 8 (b)***Answers could include:***

Students need not cover all of the social, political and cultural aspects in depth, or with even weight, in order to receive full marks. Higher order answers should cover these broadly, and references to social, political or cultural aspects can be inferred.

Higher order responses should show clear understanding of the various components of this complex issue. This would involve evidence of understanding about land and water rights, along with the 'various responses' and their impacts on the lives of Aboriginal people in social, political and cultural ways, including:

- Positive government decisions, such as land rights legislation
- National Parks and Wildlife protection has given Aboriginal people an opportunity to be involved in a joint management initiative, generating jobs and opportunities to protect sites
- Regional development committees established fishing and cultural rights
- Local, state and federal government decisions
- Indigenous Land Use Agreements
- Examples of where land and water rights have been restricted due to government decisions, such as local council decisions
- Government inertia/inaction in intervening between private landholders
- Government decisions being swayed by lobby groups and the media
- Lack of political will
- Federal government overriding state and local decisions
- Complexities of court decisions

Question 9 — Heritage and Identity**Question 9 (a)*****Answers could include:***

- Aboriginality is not about appearance or colour
- Aboriginal people are judged according to preconceptions, rather than the reality of their achievements
- Aboriginal people are judged by stereotypes, which impacts upon all spheres of life and contributes to discrimination; examples of stereotypes include views of Aboriginal people's success that are limited to sport/music and omit academic fields
- The nature of discrimination faced by Aboriginal people, including examples
- The way stereotypes inform people's views about Aboriginality and how these views can contribute to discrimination
- There are stereotypes in the source about both the job candidate and the Aboriginal community
- Lack of education about Aboriginal people and issues

Question 9 (b)***Answers could include:***

- Responses to expressions can include positive and negative non-Aboriginal responses
- Reference to how non-Aboriginal views are informed about Aboriginality
- Education or lack of education about Aboriginality in schools
- Public opinion and populist or sensationalist views are most likely to be heard
- Government statements and actions
- Examination of the perceptions of real Aboriginal people – noble savage v contemporary adaptable and flexible culture
- Tokenistic positive responses to 'acceptable' Aboriginal representations – dance, ceremony, dot paintings
- Definitions of Aboriginality in legislation

Section III**Question 10 — Research and Inquiry Methods – Major Project****Question 10 (a)*****Sample answers:***

- Involvement of Elders or experienced community members
- Taking interview transcripts back to participants
- Reliable secondary sources (not just internet blogs, etc)
- Following protocols
- Use of multiple primary sources and appropriate acknowledgement of these
- Ongoing use of logbook

Question 10 (b)***Sample answers:***

- Must refer to Aboriginal viewpoints to access top range of marks
- Clearly demonstrates the use of multiple sources
- Clearly demonstrates an understanding of presenting perspectives
- Clearly links the use of sources to how these show perspective
- Identifies sources such as primary and secondary
- Gives clear examples of different perspectives about issues that arose in the project