



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

2012 HSC Aboriginal Studies '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 — Social Justice and Human Rights Issues

Part A – A Global Perspective

Question 3

Sample answer:

The graph shows that the median annual income of Indigenous people was significantly lower than non-Indigenous people in 2001. The difference is roughly the same in all countries shown.

Question 4

Sample answer:

Colonialism is a common experience that has had long-term effects on Indigenous communities. Institutionalised racism, mistrust of authority, lack of employment opportunity, lack of access to education and other services all contribute to lower income levels.

Question 6

Sample answer:

Closing the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians can be achieved through a strategy such as the Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS). By addressing health issues experienced by Aboriginal people such as diabetes, in an environment that supports Aboriginal community autonomy, the gap in life expectancy should be reduced. Aboriginal people feel more at ease with community-based health services and using this strategy addresses racism issues in the health industry.

Question 10

Sample answer:

One example of Aboriginal people trying to improve political status is the Freedom Rides. This was a campaign to create awareness and change attitudes about the status of Aboriginal people in rural NSW. This led to action on equality, the end of segregation and improved citizenship rights for Aboriginal people. This initiative was part of the broader push for political, social and legal equality in the 1960s.

Other examples could include:

- 10 year campaign leading to 1967 referendum
- Tent Embassy
- Wave Hill
- Treaty '88 campaign

Question 11***Sample answer:***

Government initiatives such as constitutional recognition go a long way to improving the social justice experiences of Aboriginal people. Of the countries shown in the table, Australia is the one country that does not recognise Indigenous people in its constitution. Some countries have recognised their Indigenous peoples in other ways such as Treaties, eg New Zealand and USA. The Australian Government's recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the constitution would be an acknowledgement of their unique place in Australia's history and contemporary society. Such an inclusion may better address social injustices with a dedicated and genuine focus in areas like health, housing and education.

Section I — Social Justice and Human Rights Issues

Part B – A Comparative Study

Question 12 — Health

Question 12 (a)

Sample answer:

The current health status of Aboriginal people can be described as below that of non-Indigenous Australians. The life expectancy of Aboriginal people is considerably lower than non-Indigenous Australians. In Aboriginal men the gap is more than 10 years. Also, Aboriginal Australians have a higher incidence of diabetes, infant mortality, renal failure and communicable diseases.

Diabetes in Aboriginal Australians is experienced at a rate 800 times greater than non-Indigenous Australians. In 2001–2005, the infant mortality rate for Indigenous Australians was twice the infant mortality rate for all Australians.

Overall it is clear that the health status of Aboriginal Australians is considerably below that of non-Indigenous Australians.

Question 12 (b)

Answers could include:

- Description of community health initiatives in an Australian community. These could be the local Aboriginal Health Service (or similar organisation). These provide culturally appropriate and ‘safe’ places for Aboriginal people to access medical care. Health care requires trust and community programs help to build and maintain trust between service providers and community members. These are more effective in improving health outcomes, which in turn leads to improved socioeconomic status.
- Community health initiatives in the international Indigenous community should be described. The link between these initiatives and health outcomes, through culture, language, community connection should be explored.
- Similarities in experiences between communities should be considered, such as remoteness, cultural barriers, historical mistrust of government, racism, socioeconomic disadvantage.
- Students should clearly state their conclusion regarding the effectiveness of these initiatives, demonstrating knowledge of what is actually required to improve socioeconomic status in relation to health and assessing whether these initiatives deliver on these requirements.

Question 13 — Education

Question 13 (a)

Sample answer:

Educational outcomes for Aboriginal people have improved since the 1960s, but there are still significant problems to be solved. In the 1960s, Aboriginal children could be excluded from public schools and so many Aboriginal children did not attend school at all. Despite improvements, statistical data shows that educational outcomes of Aboriginal children are still lower than that of non-Indigenous Australians.

In 2006, the proportion of Indigenous people over 15 who completed year 10 was 33% in urban and 24% in remote areas. The proportion completing year 12 was only 29% urban and 13% remote. University enrolment indicates a similar situation, with 6% of Aboriginal people between 18–24 attending, compared to 24% non-Indigenous people. Unfortunately these statistics are comparable in all educational areas for Aboriginal people in Australia.

Question 13 (b)

Answers could include:

- The cultural-appropriateness of these strategies will also have an impact on the educational outcomes in Aboriginal and Indigenous communities.
- Students will make reference to strategies such as Aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs), Norta Norta funding, Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, School-based scholarships, mentoring programs, school-based cultural centres, homework centres. They will need to discuss these strategies and make a judgement as to the factors that make them successful or unsuccessful.
- Students will also make reference to an international Indigenous community and strategies that have been implemented to improve educational outcomes of Indigenous students. Students will need to also make a judgement on factors that have led to the success or failure of these strategies in the international context.

Question 14 — Housing**Question 14 (a)*****Sample answer:***

The current socioeconomic status of Aboriginal people is lower than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Socioeconomic factors include educational attainment, income levels, health care and employment opportunities. These factors greatly affect the ability of Aboriginal people to access housing that is both suitable and culturally appropriate.

Aboriginal people experience higher levels of unemployment, which contributes to lower levels of income and a higher level of welfare dependence. This in turn limits access to home ownership and rental properties. For example, only 12% of Indigenous households own their homes outright, compared to 35% of non-Indigenous Australians. Furthermore, 27% of Indigenous people were living in overcrowded conditions, which goes to the question of culturally suitable housing in Indigenous communities.

Overall, it is clear that access to housing is greatly affected by a range of socioeconomic factors.

Question 14 (b)***Answers could include:***

- Many local Aboriginal communities already purchase housing through organisations such as Aboriginal Land Councils to allow their members access to reduced rental properties.
- Initiatives such as No Interest Loans through various banks offer Aboriginal people the opportunity to purchase their own home without the cost of paying thousands of dollars in interest.
- Statistics show that Aboriginal people are less likely to purchase their own home than non-Indigenous Australians, and are more likely to live in Housing Commission / NSW Housing homes which are inadequate for the needs of many Aboriginal families. This often results in issues such as over-crowding, health problems associated with over-crowding, and non-access to many facilities due to the location of these housing estates.
- The Australian and NSW governments need to recognise Aboriginal people's rights to self-determination and autonomy in the area of housing, consulting with Aboriginal communities on their needs for those who require government housing options. Many Aboriginal families require more than the standard three-bedroom housing, with extended families often living in the one house.
- Aboriginal autonomy is vital in establishing housing options for local Aboriginal communities. It has been shown to work in communities such as Moree, with the Aboriginal Land Council purchasing houses for their members to access cheaper rental properties, and the rental income staying within the Aboriginal community.
- Socially, there is a stigma attached to the ability of Aboriginal people to own their own homes and this needs to change in order for younger generations of Aboriginal people to break the cycle of poverty and move towards autonomy.
- International Indigenous communities have the same issues as Aboriginal communities in Australia, with statistics showing that Indigenous people are less likely to own their own homes than their non-Indigenous counterparts.
- There are many initiatives that have been successfully implemented within these Indigenous communities to improve the living standards of Indigenous peoples and increase autonomy and self-determination.

Question 15 — Employment

Question 15 (a)

Sample answer:

In 2006, the unemployment rate for Indigenous people was 16% compared with only 5% for the non-Indigenous population. Factors such as education, health and criminal justice issues can affect the participation of Aboriginal people in the workforce. Aboriginal people are more likely to be employed in trade and retail services, with the average weekly household income for Indigenous people in 2006 measuring only 62% of the non-Indigenous weekly household income.

Programs such as the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) and Aboriginal Employment Strategy have been set up to enable local Aboriginal communities to provide training and employment and reduce dependence on social security. In 2006, over 14,000 Aboriginal people were participating in CDEP programs.

Question 15 (b)

Answers could include:

- Government strategies include the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) that aims to develop training programs in Aboriginal communities for those Aboriginal people receiving government benefits. It helps to develop skills in these employees so they are more likely to be employed within the community.
- Statistics show that Aboriginal people are more likely to be unemployed than their non-Indigenous counterparts, a state exacerbated by institutional racism and discrimination by employees.
- The Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) was established by Dick Estens and seeks to employ Aboriginal people within their local community, as well as providing job seekers with training opportunities to improve their general skills in the workforce. The AES operates in many towns with Aboriginal populations and is successful in helping to break the cycle of poverty through employment opportunities.
- Aboriginal-identified positions in many organisations such as local Government, allow Aboriginal people the opportunity to apply for positions that are only to be occupied by Aboriginal people. This aims to break the institutional racism present in many organisations so that Aboriginal people gain a voice in these institutions.
- International Indigenous communities, such as the Maori in New Zealand, show statistics similar to employment statistics for Aboriginal people in Australia. There are many initiatives in New Zealand that are striving to improve the employment opportunities for their Indigenous people, such as programs to improve the employment of Maori people in the police force.

Question 16 — Criminal Justice

Question 16 (a)

Sample answer:

The causes of over-representation are extensive and deep. Lower socioeconomic status could lead to engaging in high-risk illegal activity. This is exacerbated by lower levels of education that lead to low levels of employment and greater levels of unemployment. Some researchers have also raised the issue of over-policing within certain communities. Historical attitudes towards authority will also impact upon the relationship between the justice system and Aboriginal communities. Recent data shows that young Aboriginal males are jailed at a rate 20 times higher than their non-Indigenous counterparts. In practice, no single factor causes these problems, these issues are all related to each other.

Question 16 (b)

Answers could include:

- Reference to diversionary programs such as Circle Sentencing which are important programs used by governments. Acknowledges that these programs are not always successful in preventing re-offending. Better answers will incorporate data and statistics on re-offending.
- Reference to the use of preventative / policing programs that aim to address over-policing
- Programs such as IPROWD, through NSW Police, enable Aboriginal people to train as a police officer to break the institutional racism present in organisations such as the police force. Many Aboriginal people are trained and then established in their own communities to improve police relations with local Aboriginal communities.
- Development of support programs for families to address victimisation.
- Reference to relevant programs from the chosen International community. These programs may include justice conferencing, inclusion of community members in court procedures, education programs or other similar strategies.
- Students should make a clear conclusion about the degree of success, using phrases such as ‘very successful’ / ‘unsuccessful’ / ‘failure’.

Question 17 — Economic Independence

Question 17 (a)

Sample answer:

Colonialism has had a major impact on the economic status of Aboriginal people. Colonialism has carried on, through issues such as exclusion from education, failure of government to consult with communities about self-determination, continuation of low-skilled, low paid employment, and long term under/unemployment.

During the 1930s and 1940s, calls for equal pay for equal work were continually rejected by the Australian government. It wasn't until 1965 that Aboriginal stockmen were granted award wages, which had flow-on effects across Australia. Since then, specific government programs have tried to overcome disadvantages in employment, education and other areas. In 2006, the average weekly household income was almost \$300 lower for Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people.

All of these issues can be traced to aspects of colonialism that have carried on since the 1960s.

Question 17 (b)

Answers could include:

- Reference to specific community initiatives within each community.
- Examination of these initiatives could focus on the employment, income and business elements of various ways that communities assert independence. Reference might be made to tourism, management of natural resources, housing and development, agriculture or other similar enterprises. These strategies could be, but are not limited to, commercial enterprises run as a business.
- Employment programs, such as the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and similar initiatives in other communities, can provide independence by building reliable and steady income. This breaks the cycle of welfare dependence that may have developed over generations of de-skilling and exclusion from the workforce.
- Land Councils and housing corporations are Australian organisations that address a socioeconomic need – housing – but also lead to the long-term development of economic independence.
- Students must show how the initiatives in each community lead to similar or different outcomes for economic independence.

Section I — Social Justice and Human Rights Issues

Part C – Global Perspective and Comparative Study

Question 18

Sample answer:

There has been a lot of progress towards formal equality for Indigenous people, but the lived experiences of people in Indigenous communities are not equal to those of non-Indigenous people.

Equality relates to broad issues like legal recognition and citizenship rights, and to more specific topics such as health and criminal justice. Two communities that can be compared are the Yolngu People of Yirrkala and the Oglala Lakota Pine Ridge in the USA.

Health outcomes remain highly unequal for both Yolngu and Lakota People. In Yirrkala, health issues include: high rates of communicable and chronic disease such as kidney disease; high smoking rates and other substance use/abuse issues; ante-natal and neo-natal care for mothers and babies; infant mortality and life expectancy. Health issues link to other socioeconomic issues such as housing and income, which impact overall equality.

The Oglala Lakota of Pine Ridge face many health challenges and experience significantly lower health outcomes compared to the wider US society. Substance use, particularly alcohol and tobacco, are significant problems with the nearby town of White Clay being seen by some as existing simply to serve alcohol to the Lakota from Pine Ridge two miles away. Chronic diseases such as diabetes are also a significant issue, with community health services struggling to meet the needs of the community in both treatment and education. Obviously, these issues cannot be separated from the socioeconomic disadvantage that confronts so many Indigenous communities.

It is clear from the examples of Yirrkala and Pine Ridge that equality in real health experiences has not yet been achieved.

Experiences in the criminal justice system in both communities indicate significant ongoing inequality, with over-representation in prison; young offenders; victimization; over-policing; diversionary programs such as circle sentencing or justice conferencing. Positive outcomes do also occur such as police recruitment, and community success stories are also important.

Criminal justice issues for the Lakota in Pine Ridge are often caused by lack of resources and they are complicated by being a 'sovereign nation', as recognized by the Fort Laramie Treaty in 1868. This means that offenders sent to prison go straight to federal prison, which limits the chances of rehabilitation. Over-representation in prison is also a huge problem. Native Americans make up 12% of the state's total population but 60% of young people in detention. These examples demonstrate that criminal justice remains a significant challenge for this community and is yet another part of the complex cycle of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Clearly equality in health and criminal justice are still only a goal. Equality in a formal way includes things such as legal recognition and citizenship rights. These areas show some strong progress towards equality. Yolngu people have fought for their rights since the Bark Petition and the Lakota have their own Treaty with the US Government. Australia's First Peoples have still not been recognised in the constitution, however there are moves towards changing this soon.

It is clear that Indigenous communities have achieved real equality only to a limited extent. Despite gains in formal legal recognition, the realities of life in communities show clear

disadvantage. The cycle of poverty can be broken and real equality can be achieved, but this requires long-term, community-based programs that build strength and capacity within individuals, families and communities.

Section II — Research and Inquiry Methods

Question 19 (a)

Sample answer:

Community members might be reluctant for different reasons. Some things are very personal and it can be hard to share personal experiences with strangers. There are different points of view in the community on some issues and an individual may not be comfortable speaking on behalf of others.

Question 19 (b)

Sample answer:

The student should use ethical research practices in order to show respect for community members and their knowledge and to ensure that the final project authentically reflects Aboriginal experiences and perspectives.

The student should introduce him/herself to members of the local Aboriginal community who might be interested in being involved and explain why he/she is interested in learning from them. The student should explain clearly and honestly what the project is about and how the information is to be used. This may influence what community members are prepared to discuss. Not all Aboriginal people share the same view so it's important to consult a range of people in order to reflect this diversity.

There are different kinds of Indigenous knowledge, some is public and accessible and can be shared openly, while other knowledge is secret, usually spiritual and reserved for community members. This is why it's a good idea to provide questions in advance so that the people being interviewed can indicate which areas they are prepared to speak about.

These processes should be respected because Indigenous people own their own knowledge. In the past, researchers have not always understood this and is important to do this the right way.

Aboriginal people are the custodians of their knowledge and culture and information they provide remains their intellectual property and should be acknowledged. The form of this acknowledgement can be negotiated. Some people may not wish to be named, in which case it may be appropriate to name the community instead.

Section III

Question 20 — Aboriginality and the Land

Question 20 (a)

Answers could include:

Country is important for Aboriginal people today because it is integral to Aboriginal identity, cultural maintenance and the potential improvement of socioeconomic status.

Country is strongly linked to an Aboriginal person's identity through several things such as family, totems, languages and cultural practices. Country can be important for a person's spirituality, wellbeing and cultural maintenance.

Determining custodianship of Country is important in the determination of who may have the capacity to authentically speak for their Country in things such as Welcome to Country.

Custodianship is central to native title, yet despite ongoing connection to Country, many Indigenous people have been removed from their country and so remain unable to access native title.

Question 20 (b)

Answers could include:

Students could approach the importance of the Mabo decision in various ways. For example, importance could be addressed through concepts such as:

- recognition of custodianship
- identity
- access to / control of land
- sovereignty
- self determination.

Alternatively, the importance of the decision could be addressed through:

- *Native Title Act 1993*
- Wik
- Native Title Amendment Act
- Yorta Yorta.

Strong answers are likely to include elements of both approaches.

Question 21 — Heritage and Identity

Question 21 (a)

Sample answer:

There are a variety of ways in which Aboriginal people express their identity in contemporary Australian society. These may include expressions of Dreaming spirituality, autonomy and cultural affirmation and can be seen through different modes such as sport, art, music, business, education, dance and health.

Aboriginal dancers and dance groups, such as Bangarra Dance Company, are a perfect example of expressing Aboriginal identity through dance. They tell the Dreaming through dance, but also represent the spirituality of individual dancers.

Another way includes sport. Sam Thaiday, Chris Sandow and Preston Campbell are all examples of Aboriginal people expressing their identity through sport. These people are strong Aboriginal role models for young people, who allow the Aboriginal community as a whole to feel positive about this form of expression of identity.

Music has been a part of Aboriginal expressions of identity in the past. However, Aboriginal performers such as Jessica Mauboy and Brother Black are using contemporary styles of music to express their identity in contemporary Australian society. Gurrumul's first album, contemporary music sung in his Yolgnu Matha language, has been very popular and has revived interest in conserving and promoting Aboriginal languages.

Answers could include:

Students can respond to any of the variety of ways that Aboriginal people express their identity in contemporary Australian society, with examples drawn from the stimulus and the student's own knowledge.

Question 21 (b)***Answers could include:***

Both traditional and contemporary expressions of identity are very important and they both help to improve socioeconomic status. This happens in many ways, including promoting understanding and reconciliation, development of cultural pride and autonomy, the breaking of stereotypes, the promotion of cultural and economic independence, promotion of human rights such as self-determination.

Traditional expressions include dance, language, music and these are used to reconnect both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities with the longest continuous culture on earth. Traditional expressions help Aboriginal communities strengthen cultural pride and autonomy.

Non-Aboriginal communities also benefit greatly from these traditional expressions. This is because non-Aboriginal people may not understand how rich and diverse Aboriginal culture is, and this might be a reason for negative attitudes. If non-Aboriginal people can understand the importance of traditional culture, then they are more likely to recognise its value. This improves socioeconomic status because it reduces discrimination, which, in turn, opens opportunities.

Contemporary expressions of Aboriginal heritage and identity are very important. Stereotypes about Aboriginal identity restrict/constrain Aboriginal socioeconomic status. Stereotypes include ideas that all Aboriginal people are unemployed, or they are all the same, or that culture is just about dot painting or boomerangs. New expressions of identity help to change these attitudes and improve status. For example Colli Crew; a young Aboriginal rap group. This shows that Aboriginal people can be themselves and be successful in contemporary society.