

2000 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre Society and Culture

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Society and Culture

Introduction

In 2000, 2638 candidates sat the examination in Society and Culture. 415 of these candidates also sat the 3 Unit examination.

2/3 Unit (Common)

Personal Interest Project

The Personal Interest Project is worth 30 % of the examination mark in the 2 unit course. In 2000 the overall standard of Personal Interest Project continued to improve. The vast majority of candidates met with the minimum requirements, and most candidates effectively dealt with the criteria identified in the syllabus.

Above average Personal Interest Projects demonstrated superior preparation, planning and organization of their research and presentation of their findings. Typically, the investigative skills and the use of research methodologies indicated a high level of social literacy. These candidates verified their knowledge and understanding of their topic by meaningfully integrating appropriate course concepts in a way that developed analysis.

Average Personal Interest Project tended to be predominately descriptive with some analysis and integration. Candidates also struggled with a meaningful use of their research methodologies. Their Personal Interest Projects tended to be compartmentalized, and subsequently lacked the qualities of integration evident in better projects. An example of this is where candidates dedicated one section of their work to a specific research methodology, but did not integrate their findings in the Personal Interest Project as a whole. Extra components such as synopsis, concepts page, multiple introductions and multiple conclusions are not acceptable. The PIP requirements are clearly identified in the syllabus and these requirements are a clear guide to the format for Personal Interest Project.

Below average Personal Interest Projects were identified by their lack of any investigative methodology and analysis. They typically lacked the required structure, were not able to demonstrate a link to relevant course concepts, were sometimes incomplete in their attempts to use methodology, or failed to acknowledge their sources.

In the process of compiling the Personal Interest Project it must be stressed that teachers adhere strictly to the guidelines with particular reference to starting and finishing times. Candidates who identified working on their topic during the Preliminary course, or were still completing their Personal Interest Projects after the completion date, jeopardize their result in this section of the course. In addition, research protocols regarding correct referencing and resource listings, especially Internet referencing, needs greater emphasis. The Personal Interest Projects continue to reflect the diverse interests and cultural diversity of the candidates, and often surprise examiners with their originality, aptitude and passion.

The marking scheme used during the marking process is supplied to provide information on the descriptors used to assess each project.

Personal Interest Project – HSC Marking Scheme

| GRADE | MARK | DESCRIPTORS |
|-------|--|--|
| A | 30 29 28 27 26 | Sophisticated PIP with clearly applied S&C focus. All compulsory elements comprehensively completed. Highly socially literate student. Conceptual understanding applied and integrated throughout PIP. Research understood and applied, with critical analysis of findings and methodologies used. Clear cross cultural understanding and application to topic. High level communication and integration skills. |
| B | 25 24 23 22 21 20 | Well developed topic clearly related to S&C. All compulsory elements fully completed. Socially literate student, well integrated S&C concepts. Sound methodologies used - comprehensive social research and sound analysis of findings. Cross cultural component well developed. Good level of communication and integration skills evident. |
| C | 19 18 17 16 — [Mean] 15 14 13 12 | PIP topic clear, though not fully developed and extended. PIP related to S&C. All compulsory elements completed. Evidence of social literacy. Attempts made at inclusion of S&C concepts – evident though not fully understood. Basic research methodologies applied - some integrated, limited analysis of findings. Cross cultural component not integral to PIP. Reasonable communication and integration skills. |
| D | 11 10 9 8 7 6 | PIP lacks direction and focus. Limited relationship to S&C. Most compulsory elements completed, although not well developed. Little evidence of social literacy. Few S&C concepts apparent. Simplistic methodologies with little or no analysis of findings - reporting of findings only. Cross cultural component limited. Limited communication and integration skills. |
| E | 5 4 3 2 1 | PIP limited in scope. Very limited relation to S&C. Compulsory elements not done/poorly done. S&C concepts not included/understood. Very basic methodologies. Cross cultural component missing/poor. Simplistic communication skills. |

Question 1: Concepts and Methodologies of the Syllabus

Above average responses featured a sustained effort by students across all aspects of the question. These answers demonstrated a high level of social literacy, as well as good time management, with the time spent on each question appropriate to the mark value. These responses featured an accurate reading of the graph in 1(d) and a competent discussion of the implications of institutional change.

Average responses featured candidates who failed to adequately respond to all the questions, or were deficient in one part of this question. For example, in 1(b) candidates described technology without indicating social and cultural effects of technological change, or gave prepared answers often giving inappropriate or outdated examples. In 1(c) candidates explained the nature and purpose of social research without effectively evaluating their chosen methodology. Students were able to identify features on a graph in 1(d) but did not effectively identify trends, nor could they identify institutions.

Below average responses featured sections that were omitted or were inadequate, concepts were poorly explained and the relevance of these concepts were poorly understood. Responses were basically descriptive with little analysis or evaluation. Typically candidates misinterpreted the graph in 1(d), and gave an imaginative response without supportive evidence.

Question 2: Intercultural Communication

In part (a), above average responses were able to deal with the question directly through analysis of the way culture affects behaviour, and how the behaviour of others is interpreted. The three selected concepts were analysed and integrated throughout the responses. Examples were specific and relevant, supporting a critical discussion.

Average answers tended towards description of the various aspects of culture, and lacked analysis and integration. Examples, if used, were general and lacking in focus and relevance.

Below average answers regularly fell into the 'prepared' category, with general descriptions of intercultural communication which were not relevant to the question. Examples were lacking in relevance to the concepts selected.

A characteristic of above average responses in part (b), was the ability to integrate concepts into a coherent analysis of inter-cultural communication. There was a clear structure to the responses that enabled candidates to deliver an effective discussion of a particular cultural group. Examples were specific and supported a coherent argument. Above average answers were able, in part (iii) to specifically outline proposals that applied to both groups under discussion.

Average responses tended to be descriptive of the characteristics of another cultural group. There was typically only limited discussion of inter-cultural misunderstandings or of ways to achieve better understanding between Australians and the selected cultural group.

Below average responses often failed to mention a particular cultural group. Answers frequently became a description of irrelevant cultural practices, and parts of the question were not considered.

Question 3: Religion and Belief

Above average responses in part (a) provided critical reflection on the statement, which applied well-structured examples throughout the answer. Arguments were logical, and all concepts were well integrated into an answer where all elements of the question discussed.

Average responses dealt with most of the elements of the question, but in a more descriptive fashion. Some responses made attempts at analysis of the statement, and despite demonstrating some basic understandings, these answers did not effectively deal with all elements of the question.

Below average responses showed limited comprehension of this Depth Study. Discussion and communication skills were poor, even if the facts were correct. A common confusion was distinguishing the terms “Christian” and “Catholic”.

In part (b), above average responses showed a high level awareness of the contemporary society. They provided a sophisticated evaluation of the significance of the chosen religion, the details of which were correct and relevant. The required concepts were treated in a balanced, controlled way, which added to the strength of the overall argument.

Average responses typically made generalised attempts to provide an evaluation. Examples were quite descriptive, and the linkages with the Depth Study were not fully explored. Although these answers demonstrated some basic understandings, they did not effectively deal with all elements of the question.

Below average responses did not provide a meaningful structure reflecting the components of the question. Significant concepts such as time, change and continuity were not considered. Most lacked any balanced approach to evaluating the significance of religion.

Question 4: Social Inequality, Prejudice and Discrimination

In part (a), above average responses demonstrated an excellent understanding of the relevant concepts and were able to discuss the perceptions of equality and how these perceptions may differ from reality. Appropriate illustrative examples were used and responses were related specifically to all three selected concepts. Arguments were presented clearly and logically and conclusions were drawn.

Average responses again showed a good understanding of course concepts, and were able to relate relevant illustrative examples to the question. Examples however tended to be descriptive. Many lacked sufficient depth of analysis of the differences between reality and the perception of equality. Generally these answers identified the three selected concepts and showed a good understanding of the interrelationships between them.

Below average responses often showed a lack of in-depth knowledge of the concepts and lacked social literacy. Often examples were treated superficially and were not specifically related to the question. Answers tended to describe examples of inequality and not relate them specifically to the question.

Above average responses in part (b), demonstrated an excellent understanding of the relevant concepts of prejudice and discrimination. They were able to identify two distinct groups that gave them scope to answer the question in detail with appropriate levels of analysis. Better answers presented well structured, integrated arguments, directly linking

ways to reduce prejudice and discrimination to their causes. High levels of social literacy and social sensitivity were also evident.

Average responses again showed knowledge and understanding of course concepts. Responses tended to be more descriptive, and solutions tended to be more simplistic and less organised than the better responses. Candidates did however show good levels of social literacy, and were able to describe in detail, examples of prejudice and discrimination experienced by a wide variety of groups.

Below average responses tended to be simplistic and descriptive, showing a limited use of concepts. Examples lacked detail, and suggested solutions tended to be superficial attempts to solve complex problems. Some answers lacked social literacy.

Question 5: Work, Sport and Leisure

In part (a), above average responses generally made positive attempts to discuss the stimulus statement, incorporating change and the future in their response. Correct statistics were applied effectively, and quotations from commentators and social theorists were well related to the question, with a large range of viewpoints used to assess the implications.

Average responses were often focused on the impact of a specific area, such as technology. These narrow answers were not necessarily well balanced. Patterns, and/or attitudes, and/or relationships were explained in simple terms. Many were descriptive of the past but weak on the future. Examples were often brought in to add to the descriptions presented.

Below average responses typically used technological change to explain everything. Many answers relied too heavily on personal experience, and did not deliver on the broader issues of the question. For example, limited knowledge of demographic trends, or the implications for the future, were evident.

Above average responses in part (b), provided an analysis of “social role and place in personal life” which was balanced and well supported. These responses used a framework for “contemporary Australian society” which was accurate and encompassing. Also, a clear distinction was made between the meaning and significance of sport and leisure.

Average responses were typically anecdotal and descriptive, yet covered the main requirements. One sport or event tended to dominate the sport option, while leisure technology was often discussed without the consideration of other factors. Candidates sometimes diverted into their own personal life experience without dealing with the broader issues in Australian society.

Below average responses were simple, judgmental, often biased commentaries. The social role of sport or leisure was typically ignored.

Question 6: Popular Culture

Both 6(a) and 6(b) showed a marked increase in student knowledge and understanding over previous years. It was clear that where an appropriate focus study had been studied, students were able to apply conceptual understanding to both questions.

In part (a), above average responses were distinguished by their ability to critically discuss the relationship between the production and consumption of a clearly defined case study.

Specific examples were utilised to support an argument that related chosen concepts to the discussion of producers and consumers.

Average responses tended towards description of a specific popular culture. Often only two of the three concepts were discussed, and treatment of producers and consumers were usually descriptive. Specific examples were used sporadically in a descriptive manner.

Below average responses were totally descriptive and showed very little understanding of the concepts or idea of production and consumption. Very few examples were used, and case studies were usually inappropriate, with only a tenuous relationship to popular culture.

Above average candidates showed a clear conceptual understanding of the nature of popular culture in part (b). Their choice of case study was linked directly to an understanding of popular culture, and was enhanced by their choice of concepts. Examples were clear and specific, and students understood the role of popular culture in influencing individuals. The understanding of future directions was of a sophisticated level.

Average responses showed a good knowledge of a case study, but were not able to apply it consistently to all the elements of the question. Candidates often displayed a naive understanding of the acceptance of popular culture by the masses. There was a tendency to describe the concepts, and only basic understandings of future directions were evident.

Below average responses showed no real understanding of the question and used case studies that could not be related to the characteristics of a popular culture. Concepts were only briefly described, and parts of the question were often ignored. This was particularly the case with part (iii), which attracted only a simplistic response, if it was commented on at all.

3 Unit (Additional)

Knowledge and understanding demonstrated in the 3 Unit examination was generally of a high standard. Students generally showed a thorough understanding of the nature of continuity and change, and the concepts and theoretical ideas that explain why continuities and changes occur. They also demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of their country of study.

Question 1

Above average responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the questions and answered all parts in a balanced way. There was appropriate reference to the photo in (a) and other stimuli, and a sophisticated integration of concepts with appropriate supporting examples. The use of illustrative examples tended to be beneficial in producing an in depth analysis of the question. In part (b) better candidates demonstrated an understanding of the interactive nature of continuity and change, not just sound knowledge of the two concepts. Better responses in part (c) clearly distinguished between 2 and 3 unit methodologies.

Average responses also showed a sound knowledge of concepts, but were not strong in applying those concepts to examples. Nevertheless, candidates did use examples in their answers. Most, if not all parts of the question, were answered but there was a tendency to be repetitive or answer in a non-integrated manner

Below average responses showed a confusion or lack of understanding of concepts. Terms such as “modernity” were often misused, or the candidates tended to select concepts from the question and link them together without any real application or understanding. These responses often misinterpreted the question.

Question 2

Above average answers featured excellent communication skills and a high level of social literacy. Candidates fully answered all parts of their chosen question, all of which were of a high standard requiring scholarly responses. Candidates followed directives such as analyse, evaluate, and critically discuss. In-depth country knowledge was demonstrated with relevant facts, current statistics and excellent examples.

Average responses often contained aspects of prepared answers. Candidates demonstrated a solid understanding of the concepts and country of study, but failed to integrate this knowledge into effective answers to what was asked. Candidates did apply knowledge and understanding to the question, but typically left parts incomplete.

Below average responses showed no substantial detail. They lacked facts and current details to substantiate their answers. There was a poor choice of examples and conclusions were often tenuous.