GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 0457/01

Individual Research

Key Messages

- Candidates should produce two Individual Research reports with a question as a title for each report.

- Multimedia should be supported by a minimum of 750 words in continuous prose and all work should exemplify the assessment criteria.

- Titles of candidates' work should be written in the space provided on the Individual Candidate Record Cards (ICRC) so that is clear which piece has received which marks.

- For each candidate, Centres need to submit the work and the completed ICRC. The Centre needs to also include the MS1 for the component and the Coursework Assessment Summary Form (CASF).

- The total marks on the ICRCs, the MS1 and the CASF should be the same.

- Candidates should submit their work as a word document and adhere to the word counts as stated in the syllabus.

- Sub-headings linked to the assessment criteria can help candidates structure the pieces.

General comments

There was a change to the requirements for the Individual Research this year and Centres coped well with this change. Moderators are pleased to report that candidates produced interesting Individual Research reports covering a variety of topics from the 20 topic areas. Topics included: water, food and agriculture, biodiversity, climate change and belief systems.

The majority of candidates used questions to focus their research and their reports. It was clear that some Centres allowed candidates to choose their own questions to focus their reports on, whilst others were more prescribed. Many candidates also structured their reports well by using sub-headings linked to the assessment criteria, which is good practice and helpful for marking and moderation.

Some Centres had covered a range of topics and candidates were given freedom of choice as to which they chose for their Individual Research reports. It was pleasing to see an individual response to the question or topic chosen.

Some candidates are exceeding the word count of 1500 – 2000 words as specified in the syllabus. Centres are asked to advise candidates to produce their work as word documents so this can be checked and are reminded they should monitor this situation and advise candidates accordingly.

If other media, such as PowerPoint presentations, are produced, there should also be a minimum of 750 as a word document and both should provide evidence of the assessment criteria so it is clear where the marks have come from. Adding short comments linked to the assessment criteria in the space provided on the ICRCs also helps with moderation.

Centres will appreciate that the work produced must reflect the assessment criteria and should be in continuous prose. Some candidates are still providing primary evidence and class work which is unnecessary. The only requirements for the Individual Research are that candidates produce and submit two Individual Research reports. There should also be a completed ICRC for each candidate, and a CASF and MS1 submitted with the work for this component.

Centres should ensure that each Individual Research report is clearly labelled with the title of the piece in the form of a question which is the same as the title on the ICRC. Most Centres are now submitting ICRCs with marks and the titles of the reports in the appropriate place. It is also very useful to have comments related to the assessment criteria to reflect the marks awarded in the spaces provided.

Comments on specific questions

Teacher assessment

Most Centres are clear about the application of the assessment criteria and the difference between the mark bands, although some work was marked a little severely especially for the gathering of information representing perspectives and for the analysis of issues. Where an Individual Research report meets the assessment criteria fully, marks within Band 4 should be awarded. Where there is limited information for one of the criteria, candidates are given marks in Band 1. It is worth pointing out that it is very rare for a candidate who has produced a study to be given no marks for any of the criteria, as there is usually something of value that can be credited.

Gather information representing different perspectives

The majority of candidates were able to gather and present more than a limited range of information linked to the topic area and research question and this usually came from a range of sources. Candidates still need to be concise in presenting this information so that it does not take up a disproportionate amount of the word count.

Centres should advise candidates that as well as mentioning other countries in their studies, they should also be considering the perspectives of individuals or groups related to the study. It is not enough for candidates to simply name countries, there should also be an indication of what these countries, groups and individuals think about the issue under investigation. This area was well done with many candidates gathering information from Global, National/Local and Personal perspectives and some candidates even included viewpoints within these perspectives.

Analyse issues within the report

Analysis, this year, was on the whole better than in previous sessions. More successful reports covered fewer issues in depth rather than presenting information on a lot of unrelated issues. To analyse an issue, candidates should consider the conditions related to the question being discussed and the possible causes and effects of these conditions, as well as the current situations.

Identify and evaluate possible scenarios and formulate possible courses of action

Candidates generally included scenarios within their reports. However, these are still largely scenarios that already existed and there remains an overall lack of creative thinking about possible scenarios. Where candidates had thought about possible scenarios, they sometimes considered the likelihood of these, and were awarded marks for evaluation. This skill is getting better, but is still not a regular feature of the work moderated.

A meaningful question to be asked to identify possible scenarios could be, 'What would happen if …?' Candidates then need to evaluate the likelihood of this and the possible consequences in order to be awarded marks for evaluation. By doing this, candidates can demonstrate that they have really gained a grasp of the research question.

It is important to point out that proposals developed in a logical way will score higher marks than those listed randomly at the end of a study. Whilst we are not expecting candidates to solve world issues, we would like to see that some thought has gone into the possible courses of action perhaps at different levels (Global, National/Local and/or Personal).

Develop evidence-based personal response demonstrating self-awareness

The evidence for this part of the assessment needs to be embedded within the report, or included as a separate section at the end of the report, which was regular practice, although some candidates still sent portfolio evaluation sheets which are not required. Many candidates were able to fully engage with the question posed and the perspectives gathered, and there was meaningful personal involvement linked to the information gathered.

Candidates usually made reference to their life at home, in school or where they lived in relation to the question posed, possible scenarios and courses of action, sometimes identifying what they had not realised before they commenced their research or something that they will be doing differently as a result of their research. There is no longer a requirement for candidates to complete the self-evaluation form, so Centres should advise candidates of this. This is still one of the weaker parts of research reports. Candidates should show that they have considered the evidence gathered and how what they have found out has changed their thinking about the issues and their actions in the future. Where there is evidence of this, marks should be awarded accordingly.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

| Paper 0457/02 |
| Project |

Key Messages

- A clearly identifiable project plan is an assessment requirement. The plan should include the rationale for, and aims of, the project and should identify a concrete project outcome which can be carried out. There should also be full details of all activities planned, along with time frames and roles and responsibilities of individual group members. Some indication of why responsibilities were assigned in the way they were is also required if candidates are to be placed in the top band for this criterion.
- It is most important that projects culminate in a concrete, active project outcome which is actually carried out. This is so that individual group members have something to evaluate in their evaluation of project outcome with reference to the project aims. Groups should think of some means by which the success of their project outcome may be judged in terms of how far it has achieved the aims set out in their project plan.
- There must be clear and concrete evidence of cross-cultural collaboration. Ideally, such collaboration will involve people in another country or countries. However, if this proves to be impossible, then candidates are advised to identify and collaborate with people from another culture or cultures within their own country. This means actually collaborating with people, rather than gathering general information from the Internet about the situation in different countries. It is also not advisable for candidates to rely solely on collaborating with candidates from other countries within their own school setting. This is because, on its own, such collaboration is unlikely to provide them with a rich enough experience to engage in an in-depth evaluation of what they have learned from cross-cultural collaboration, which is an essential element of the individual assessment.
- Cross-cultural collaboration needs to be undertaken with a purpose. It should be clear in the outcome itself, or in the write-up accompanying it, how the cross-cultural collaboration has been used to inform or support the project outcome.
- Individual group members must submit their own evaluations of: the project plan and the process of carrying out the project; the project outcome and an evaluation of their own contribution to and learning from the project. The latter must include some discussion of what they have learned from the group's cross-cultural collaboration, which is why it is essential that there has been concrete cross-cultural collaboration.
- When awarding marks, teachers should pay close attention to the wording of descriptors within the different mark bands and ensure that the work produced by the candidates does generally reflect the description in the mark band in which it is being placed.
- There must also be some brief explanatory remarks on the Independent Candidate Record Cards to support/justify the marks that teachers have awarded for each of the assessment criteria and comments should be specific to the descriptors. It is essential that the Individual Candidate Record Cards and the Coursework Assessment Summary Form are submitted along with the work.

General Comments

Some of the areas explored by candidates in this examination session included: the impact of obesity in developed and developing countries; the lack of accessibility of clean drinking water in developing countries, and the problems of gang or drug culture in some countries, as well as worldwide economic problems.

Many candidate groups chose to raise awareness about an issue as their aim, which allowed them to choose a variety of means by which they could achieve their aim. Once again, video clips were a popular outcome. Many of these were of high quality and often demonstrated that the candidates had given a good deal of consideration as to how different perspectives could best be communicated. A number of candidates also engaged in outcomes which required them to carry out activities within their communities with people of another culture. An example of this was a group of candidates who carried out a series of lessons in a rural school in their area pointing out the dangers of unwise food choices and the problems of obesity, using hands-on experiments relating to different food groups. Since candidates are required to individually

evaluate the success or otherwise of their outcome in achieving the project aims, it would be advisable, at the outset, for groups to think of some means by which the success of their project outcome may be judged, for instance through a pre-post activity questionnaire or survey.

Comments on candidate response to assessment criteria

Production of a project plan

(Group assessment)

Many project plans were very well done. The most successful contained very clearly articulated project aims which made it much easier for individual group members when it came to evaluating the project outcome in light of the aims. Project plans were generally presented either as the initial segment of the group's write-up of their activities and outcome, or in a separate document, and both of these approaches worked well. However, there were some candidate groups who did not submit any form of project plan, or the plan simply took the form of minutes of meetings, which did not furnish the kind of detailed information required to address the performance descriptors.

Teachers are reminded that the "Project Plan" is marked on a group basis and this means that all candidates in a group should be awarded the same mark for this criterion.

Representation of different viewpoints and perspectives (including cross-cultural)

(Group assessment)

Cross-cultural collaboration is a key element of the Global Perspectives project component. This means that there must be evidence that candidates have interacted with people of another culture, either overseas, or within their own country, either by means of face-to-face communication or the Internet. Gathering general information via the Internet and then presenting it through a role play will not give candidates the opportunity to move out of their comfort zone and confront the issues they are exploring first hand. If little or no cross-cultural collaboration takes place, individual group members have nothing to comment on for this element in their evaluation of individual contribution and learning. In such a situation, even if the rest of their evaluation is very sound, the descriptors clearly indicate that the work cannot move beyond Band 1 for this criterion.

It is also important to remind candidates that cross-cultural collaboration is carried out as a means to an end and not an end in itself. It should be used to inform and support the outcome. This means that either in the outcome itself, or the write-up that accompanies it, it should be clear how the cross-cultural collaboration has been of importance in producing or carrying out the project outcome.

Teachers are reminded that "Representation of different viewpoints and perspectives (including cross-cultural)" is marked on a group basis and this means that all candidates in a group should be awarded the same mark for this criterion.

Constructive participation in group work/activities

(Individual assessment)

Assessment of performance in this criterion must be based on concrete evidence recorded during teacher observations of group work in progress. Brief supporting comments may either be included on the form provided for this purpose on the CIE teacher support website, or directly on to the Individual Candidate Record Cards.

Evaluation of project plan and process

(Individual assessment)

In the main, candidate evaluations of the plan and process were sound. The strongest evaluations considered both the strengths and weaknesses of the plan and process and this included some consideration of the strength or otherwise of the group's approach to and evaluation of the research. Weaker evaluations tended to focus solely on group dynamics and time management issues. In addition, very strong evaluations were usually characterised by the fact that the candidates concerned had used sub-

headings addressing each of the individual evaluation assessment criteria within their work. This ensured that they adequately addressed all of the elements within each of these criteria.

Evaluation of project outcome

(Individual assessment)

This examination session saw many interesting and very successful project outcomes and it remains the case that strong outcomes generally lead to strong individual evaluations of outcome. The strongest evaluations considered all aspects of the outcome with ongoing reference to the stated project aims. They evaluated both the strengths and limitations of the outcome and then considered the degree to which the aims of the project had been achieved after taking these strengths and limitations into consideration.

Some candidate groups chose to present case studies as their outcome and often these had been very well researched. However, they were generally not the best choice of outcome for a project which should result in an active, 'do-able' outcome. This is because candidates generally find it very difficult to produce a strong critical evaluation of a case study as an outcome and do so in light of the project aims. Some candidate groups chose to have several outcomes, in some cases up to five or six different outcomes. This also proved to be problematic for individual group members who struggled to fully evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of all in light of the project aims. Candidates need to be advised that time spent on careful consideration of project outcome at the outset of the project will be time well spent when it comes to individual evaluation at the end of the project.

Evaluation of Individual contribution (including what was learnt from cross-cultural collaboration)

(Individual assessment)

Most candidates were well able to document what they had contributed to the project, in terms of research carried out, or specific activities. However, it remains the case that while candidates are generally very positive about their own contribution, they are less inclined to consider where own their weaknesses lie, or where their contribution could have been improved. Evaluations should be critical in that they consider both strengths and weaknesses of personal contribution, as well as the benefits and challenges of working as a group, as opposed to working individually. As noted previously, it is also a requirement that candidates engage in some discussion of what they have learned from cross-cultural collaboration and this remains the weakest area of consideration for most candidates. They should be advised that besides gaining general factual knowledge, they need to think about what impact cross-cultural collaboration has had on their own perspective and how their opinions have changed or been reinforced.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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| **Paper 0457/03** |
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| **Written Paper** |
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Key Messages

- The Source Material was used well by candidates
- Levels of achievement are generally rising
- Evaluating reasoning and the use of evidence are skills that need to be developed more fully
- Many candidates understood the potential of the Internet to influence thinking skills
- Successful candidates are critically aware of different perspectives on global issues

General Comments

The paper was based upon two contrasting pieces of evidence related to the growth of the Internet and its impact upon people and thinking skills. The Source Material consisted of an extract from a blog in which a group of young people from different countries are discussing the Internet and its affect upon thinking, alongside a cartoon that highlighted some of the potential dangers of using and acting upon information taken from the Internet.

Within the context of the Global Perspectives syllabus, the paper was designed to test candidates' ability to:

- identify and explore different perspectives on global issues
- analyse and interpret information and evidence
- suggest lines of enquiry to test ideas
- identify strengths and weaknesses in evidence
- develop a line of reasoning and justify points of view
- evaluate arguments and reasoning

In this session, the quality of work and levels of attainment were again very good; candidates and Centres are to be congratulated on their achievements.

From the evidence of candidate responses, the source material and questions were easily understood and accessible to candidates of all abilities. The vast majority of candidates were able to respond to the questions appropriately and demonstrate positive achievement.

Candidates appeared to enjoy responding to the Source Material and engaged with the issues enthusiastically, especially in the more extended essay questions. Through the tasks, candidates generally showed good awareness of different points of view in exploring global issues, particularly highlighting the positive and negative influences of the Internet on thinking and learning.

In general, the questions were answered well and there were some excellent responses to all of the questions. In particular, most candidates were able to demonstrate high levels of ability when analysing information and evidence from within the Sources. Similarly, candidates were able to identify evidence and suggest lines of enquiry to test ideas about the way the Internet may influence aspects of thinking, for example on awareness of important issues and problem solving skills. These skills were tested mainly in **Questions 1, 2 3a** and **3b**.

As in previous years, the ability to assess reasoning and evaluate evidence were more challenging for many candidates; these are skills that would benefit from further development within IGCSE Global Perspectives courses. Marshalling evidence and providing reasons to support an opinion were also challenging for some candidates. These skills were tested mainly in **Questions 3c** and **4**.

In general, candidates seemed to benefit from careful preparation for this examination by Centres. They had clearly undertaken stimulating, well designed courses that were effective in developing the skills to be tested, as well as engaging in the exploration of different perspectives on global issues.

Most candidates revealed good examination technique; the vast majority completed all of the questions within the time allocated. There were hardly any rubric errors. Some candidates attempted to write at greater length than the available space allowed; however, it is not necessary, as it is easily possible to score maximum marks in the length of answer indicated within the Question Paper Booklet.

To improve performance further candidates should be encouraged to:

● give clear reasons and evidence to support an opinion or argument
● answer the question set carefully and refer back to the question regularly, particularly in the longer essay questions
● evaluate evidence in a balanced way by referring to both strengths and weaknesses
● evaluate reasoning and argument explicitly, going beyond asserted agreement or disagreement, for example using concepts like authority, use of language, tone, sufficiency of evidence, type of argument and potential bias
● evaluate evidence in an explicit way, for example by using concepts like valid, reliable, generalisable, representative, sampling and fitness for purpose
● avoid simple assertion, opinion and anecdotal evidence

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

(a) Candidates were asked to identify three ways that the Internet might have a negative effect on thinking, from the Source Material. Candidates tended to identify the following ways:

● getting distracted following links
● losing the ability to concentrate
● losing the ability to think about issues in detail
● thinking less clearly
● filling brains with celebrity nonsense
● filling brains with pointless games
● young people do not think about important issues any more
● young people do not know many facts

Candidates were not awarded marks for causes that were not contained within the Source Material. The vast majority of candidates correctly identified three ways from the Source Material and were awarded maximum marks.

(b) Candidates were asked to identify one way in which the Internet can help people to go beyond local perspectives, from the Source Material. Candidates usually gave the following ways:

● the Internet allows everybody to be heard
● the Internet allows everybody to have their say
● having Internet friends from other countries
● helps people to think more internationally
● the Internet helps people in getting to know each other (depth)
● helps everyone to realise that we are all people (not just foreigners or enemies)
● gives knowledge about people and relationships
● expands social networks (range)
● develops social thinking (skills)

Most candidates answered this question very well and obtained maximum marks. Candidates were not awarded marks for ways that were not contained within the Source Material.

(c) Candidates were asked to identify two ways in which the Internet might have a positive effect on thinking, from the Source Material. Candidates usually identified the following ways:

● improve problem solving skills

- learn skills to deal with information
- may give young people thinking skills beyond previous generations
- develops social thinking
- expands social networks/relationships
- think more internationally
- become more aware that we are all people sharing a common humanity (not just enemies)
- gives knowledge about people and relationships

Candidates were not awarded marks for ways that were not contained within the Source Material. The majority of candidates correctly identified two ways and were awarded maximum marks.

(d)   Candidates were asked to identify three different kinds of thinking mentioned in Source 1. Candidates usually gave the following kinds of thinking:

- concentration – intense or focused mental activity/thinking
- connecting facts together/linking ideas
- thinking in detail
- thinking about issues
- virtual/creative/fantasy
- confused thinking/with lack of clarity
- international thinking
- problem solving or strategic thinking (from games)
- knowing facts
- dealing with information
- social thinking

Candidates were not awarded marks for kinds of thinking that were not contained within the Source. The majority of candidates correctly identified three kinds of thinking and were awarded maximum marks.

Question 2

(a)   Candidates were expected to suggest a method for verifying or testing the claim that computer games make young people less aware of important issues, for example in current affairs. This question was designed to test candidates' ability to identify evidence and suggest further lines of enquiry to verify claims or statements about global issues, for example to test a hypothesis.

Responses at the higher levels tended to contain strong, supported description and explanation of a method(s) to test and evaluate the claim. These responses were clearly and explicitly related to the issue of the effect of computer games on young people's awareness of important issues. The higher level responses tended to explore a comparison of groups over time, to examine the 'any more' dimension of the claim, and were clearly related to both variables - 'computer games' and 'thinking about issues'.

Responses at lower levels tended to contain weak, generalised descriptions of a method of research. These responses were likely to be simple, undeveloped and asserted suggestions without explanation. If present, explanations were partial and lacked clarity. The claim being tested was mainly implicit. Candidates at this level tended to simply recycle or copy material from the Source without any explanation or development.

Candidates tended to discuss the following methods:

- Types of Information
  - compare statistics/information on attitudes of different groups of young people – maybe past and present/those who use and do not use computer games
  - questionnaire, survey and interview data from young people
  - expert testimony from psychologists/educationalists/computer experts
- Sources of Information
  - national and local governments
  - psychologists/educationalists/computer experts
  - research reports
  - case studies
  - media and worldwide web

- Methods
  - review of secondary sources/literature/research/documents
  - interview young people
  - observe young people using computers
  - interview relevant experts
  - Internet search
  - case studies of different countries/groups/ages
  - experiments

(b) Candidates were expected to suggest a method for analysing the effect of a computer game on problem solving skills; specifically to test the idea that computer games can increase problem solving skills. This question was designed to test candidates' ability to identify evidence and suggest further lines of enquiry to verify claims or statements i.e. to test a claim or hypothesis.

Responses at the higher levels tended to contain a strong, supported description and explanation of a method(s) to test and evaluate the claim. These responses were clearly and explicitly related to the issue of the effect of computer games on problem solving skills. The higher level responses tended to suggest a comparison of groups over time to explore the 'improvement' dimension of the claim and were clearly related to both variables - 'computer games' and 'problem solving skills'. The most common approach was to conduct a simple experiment with a 'pre-test - post-test' design. Usually candidates described a group of volunteers who were given a test of problem solving skills before and after playing computer games for a period of time. A popular alternative was to compare the problem solving skills of 'gamers' and 'non-gamers'.

Responses at lower levels tended to contain weak, generalised descriptions of a method of research. These responses were likely to be simple, undeveloped and asserted suggestions without explanation. If present, explanations were partial and lacked clarity. The claim being tested was mainly implicit. Candidates at this level tended to simply recycle or copy material from the Source without any explanation or development.

Candidates tended to discuss the following methods:

- Types of Information
  - data from an experiment or test of the problem solving skills of the game players taken at different times or after playing the game
  - compare data on skill levels of gamers to other groups who do not play the game
  - compare statistics/information on computer gamers and skill levels in problem solving generally and for the game itself
  - compare statistics/information on success of computer gamers generally
  - questionnaire and interview data from gamers/non-gamers
- Sources of Information
  - national and local governments and their departments
  - gaming or computer experts
  - research reports
  - case studies
  - volunteers willing to participate in an experiment
- Methods
  - review of secondary sources/literature/research/documents
  - experiments
  - interview gamers
  - observe gamers
  - interview relevant experts

Most candidates were able to describe at least a simple research design and explain how it related to the central issue to be explored.

(c) Candidates were expected to identify and explain potential problems with the test they had suggested in **Question 2b**. The question was designed to test candidates' ability to evaluate research methods, evidence and conclusions.

Candidates tended to identify and explain the following problems:

- practical e.g. time and cost

- the limitations of the research method
- gaining access to information and subjects e.g. gatekeepers
- from interpretation and analysis
- sampling
- possible bias
- in drawing conclusions
- level of prior learning
- validity of test
- intervening variables

Candidates at the higher levels of response tended to use concepts like 'validity, reliability, representative and generalisable' in their answers. The responses at higher levels also contained supported reasoning and explanation of a problem(s) and were clearly and explicitly related to the test chosen in 1b.

An example of a higher level response – *'It may be hard to find people who are computer gamers who are willing to take part in the experiment because it takes so much time; a small group or sample might not reflect everyone, so the results may not be true for everybody and you cannot generalise.'*

Answers at the lower levels of response tended to contain simple descriptions of a problem in research in general, with undeveloped and asserted suggestions. The issue being tested, of computer games and problem solving skills, was only implied or not clear.

An example of a lower level of response – 'People do not always tell the truth or act normal.'

Most candidates were able to describe at least a simple research design and explain how it related to the central issue to be explored.

(d) Candidates were asked to apply and examine the implications of the tests that they had designed in their answers to **Questions 2(a), 2(b)** and **2(c)** to the disagreement between 'keep_us_free and no1gamer' in Source 1. The question was designed to test candidates' ability to interpret and apply evidence to reach a conclusion.

Responses at the higher levels contained strong, supported reasoning and explanation of how the answers given to the previous questions might solve or relate to the disagreement between 'keep_us_free and no1gamer'. The responses were clearly and explicitly related to the evidence gained in the tests of the claim and the difference of opinion between the two characters. Answers at this level also frequently explored the difficulty of reaching firm conclusions and/or explained the importance of gathering firm, 'scientific' evidence to help prove one claim or the other – 'objective' as opposed to 'subjective' approaches.

An example of a higher level of response – *'If the test of the problem solving skills shows that people who play Internet games a lot have higher levels of skills than other people, then this supports no1gamer and not keep_us_free. On the other hand, if the tests show that young people do not know much about important issues then keep_us_free is right. It is good to get hard evidence so that it is not just opinion. Of course, both might be right, or the tests inconclusive.'*

Responses at lower levels tended to contain undeveloped and asserted suggestions. The issue over which the bloggers disagreed was often implicit or not clear. The response was likely to be generalised and lack relevance or simply repeat/juxtapose the arguments of the two bloggers.

An example of a lower level of response – *'If the results go with one person you have to conclude they were right.'*

Candidates tended to find this question quite challenging.

Question 3

(a)   Using the cartoon in Source 2, candidates were expected to explain why claims made online might not be reliable. The question was designed to test candidates' ability to evaluate claims and sources of evidence, especially those which are Internet based.

Candidates tended to explore the following issues:

- unknown authorship
- lack of evidence
- potential for bias
- difficulty of verifying or checking claims
- problems associated with security of information, especially in social networking sites
- potential for dishonesty
- cyber crime and cheating

Responses at the higher levels tended to contain strong, supported reasoning and explanation of why online claims might not be reliable. The responses were clearly and explicitly related to the Internet context of the claims and the issue of reliability.

An example of a higher level response **–** *'Claims made online in social networking sites cannot be checked very easily so it is not possible to see if they are accurate or true – they may just be opinion with no factual evidence to back them up so they cannot be trusted and are not reliable.'*

Responses at the lower levels tended to be generalised, simple descriptions of a problem with Internet information in general. The responses were likely to contain an undeveloped and asserted reason which lacked clarity.

An example of a lower level response – *'All the information is not official and given by just anyone.'*

(b)   Using the statement from Zafar_66 in Source 1, candidates were expected to assess the reliability of evidence that consisted of 'a number of books'. The question was designed to test candidates' ability to evaluate evidence.

Most candidates suggested that 'a number of books' was not reliable, or explored both points of view. Only a few argued that this type and quantity of evidence was reliable.

Candidates tended to explore the following arguments:

Arguments for reliability

- books may provide some independent evidence
- books may be written by people who are experts
- books may be written by people who have done some research which is more than just opinion
- there is more than one source/book that gives grounds for confidence

Arguments against reliability

- sample size is small and therefore may not be representative
- books may be biased
- books may be misinterpreted or misrepresented
- the research in the book may not be high quality
- do not know which books were used
- Zafar_66 may not be telling the truth

Responses at the higher levels tended to contain strong, supported reasoning and explanation of why this evidence might not be reliable. The responses were clearly and explicitly related to the Internet context of the claims and the issue of reliability.

An example of a higher level response **–** *'This is not reliable as a source of information as it does not tell us who wrote the books so we do not know if the information comes from an expert or is backed up by research; the evidence about the Internet and thinking is not clear or fully explained – what did the books contain?'*

Responses at the lower levels tended to be generalised, simple descriptions of a problem with the evidence in general. The responses were likely to contain an undeveloped and asserted reason which lacked clarity.

An example of a lower level response – 'This statement does not tell us who wrote the books.'

(c) The question asked candidates to compare and assess the reasoning within the statements made by two different bloggers in Source 1 who were debating about the impact of the Internet on thinking. In order to do so candidates were expected to consider the arguments, reliability of evidence, and the reasoning or values behind the argument to reach a considered conclusion about the relative strength of the statements.

The question was designed to test candidates' ability to evaluate argument and reasoning.

In general, candidates tended to consider the following aspects of the reasoning behind the statements:

- quality of the argument
    - clarity
    - tone – emotive; exaggerated; precise
    - language
    - balance
- quality of the evidence
    - relevance
    - sufficiency
    - examples
    - source
    - date
    - factual, opinion, value, anecdote
    - testimony – from experience and expert
- knowledge claims
- potential sources of bias
    - political
    - personal values
    - experience
- likelihood of assertions
- consequences of arguments or assertions
- acceptability of their values to others
    - how likely other people are to agree with their perspective/view

Responses at the highest levels contained very good, well supported judgements about whether the reasoning worked in both statements. They justified their conclusion about whose reasoning was stronger; this included coherent, structured evaluation of how well the reasoning worked with a focus on evaluation of issues, with a range of points about knowledge claims, evidence, consequences and values. Many candidates were unafraid to quote from the statements to support their argument. These responses were usually balanced, exploring both statements, with a clear assessment or conclusion reached.

At the lower levels of response the discussion was unlikely to be supported and mainly asserted with little clarity of argument. These answers tended to focus on issues rather than knowledge claims, evidence, consequences or values. There was little overt evaluation at the lowest levels of response. Responses at this level tended to focus on only one of the statements.

Candidates found this question quite challenging. Most candidates argued that Violet_blue's reasoning was stronger, focusing upon the evidence, personal testimony and general tone of the statement, which appeared to many candidates to be more supported, clearly argued and more reasonable in tone than that of Keep_us_free. However other candidates made good cases for the opposite view, that Keep_us_free used stronger reasoning, and were rewarded accordingly.

Centres are again encouraged to give candidates opportunities to evaluate argument and evidence for a range of purposes during their courses in order to prepare for this type of question. Some key concepts in the evaluation of evidence and argument to consider would be:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Bias
- Authority
- Expertise
- Source of evidence
- Sufficiency of evidence
- Facts
- Opinion
- Assertion
- Values
- Beliefs
- Quality of reasoning/argument

Question 4

In this question, candidates were expected to assess the impact of the Internet on thinking and to justify their opinion on the degree to which the effects are generally positive or negative. The candidates were expected to use the material found in the Sources, but go beyond simply repeating or recycling without further development. Other material may also have been introduced but it was not necessary to gain full marks.

The question was designed to test candidates' ability to develop a line of reasoning and evaluate.

The arguments used by candidates to consider different levels of response tended to include:

Candidates tended to consider the following positive effects:

- improves thinking skills generally
- improves problem solving skills
- develops strategic thinking
- encourages social thinking and relationships
- promotes internationalism and mutual understanding
- gives access to lots of information to inform our thinking
- helps with learning generally

Candidates also tended to consider the following negative effects:

- confuses thinking because there is too much information
- promotes lack of depth in thinking
- affects the ability to concentrate
- affects the ability to think about issues in detail
- It is filling our brains with unimportant material e.g. celebrity nonsense
- It is filling our brains with pointless games
- young people do not think about important issues any more
- young people do not know any facts any more/they have empty heads
- the dangers of the Internet – e.g. addiction

The arguments/criteria which were used to consider which are most significant tended to be:

- reference to scale of impact – how many people are affected
- reference to degree of impact – how strong is the effect
- how long it takes to influence thinking
- the effects on different groups – age; gender; culture; class
- the consequences for people's lives e.g. employment/education/relationships

Responses at the highest levels tended to have well supported, logical reasoning and make clear judgements about whether or not the impact of the Internet on thinking was mainly positive or negative; this included coherent, structured argument and evaluation. A clear, balanced assessment or conclusion was also reached. In these responses, a number of points or arguments were developed beyond simple points.

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Responses at the lower level tended to be generalised, lack relevance to the issue and focus on the Internet in general rather than the impact on thinking. Arguments tended to be unsupported and asserted, often using personal experience or anecdote in a simple way. There was often a lack of clarity and little structure to the argument.