

# GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

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Paper 9239/12  
Written Exam

## Key messages

Candidates showed that they had read the paper carefully and understood the content of the documents. All questions were answered but there was some evidence that time spent, and the length of answers given, was not always appropriate to the number of marks available for the question. In **Question 1** most candidates were able to identify three ways that palm oil production is better than other crop production and some of them explained at least one.

With a 6-mark question in **Question 1** it was important for candidates to create their own structure to their answer. The focus in **Question 2** was almost completely on the evidence with only occasional digression into unlinked commentary on argument. Most candidates responded to the idea of how far one argument was stronger in **Question 3**. For both **Question 2** and **Question 3** several candidates followed a formulaic approach that didn't always relate to the specific documents and arguments on this paper.

Some candidates wrote extensively for **Question 1**, where there were relatively few marks available. This was repeated by some for **Question 2** which was worth 10 marks, leaving the time available for the 14-mark **Question 3** (nearly half of the marks) restricted. **This** may have impacted on the thinking and writing time for **Question 3** but there was no evidence of candidates not completing the question.

To gain higher marks in **Questions 2** and **3** there should be clear development of the points made. This may relate to the impact of material in the documents on the evidence and the arguments. It may also show consideration of, not just **what** a strength or weakness may be, but also **how** or **why** it is a strength or weakness. There should also be explicit reference to the documents in **Question 3** and reflection on the impact of the evidence in **Question 2**.

So, candidates should provide brief and relevant references from the documents to support their evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised, containing only assertions or claims. They should also explain what impact this has on the argument or chosen evidence, which goes beyond a generic statement like 'weakens/strengthens'. They need to explain how the assessment does this.

**Question 3** required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content. The candidates need to focus on an evaluation of the provenance, perspectives, evidence and argument to reach an overall judgement as to whether one of the documents was stronger than the other.

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents. Equally, copying sections from the documents, without reference, except when asked to identify in **Question 1** will not gain credit.

## General comments

Many candidates answered in a structured way approaching different aspects of evidence (particularly in **Question 2**) and argument in **Question 3**.

No candidate appeared to run out of time in completing all three questions. However, for several candidates, the length of answers to **Question 3** appeared to be shorter than **Question 2**. This may have allowed less preparation and writing time to fully answer the question despite it being worth nearly half the overall marks

of the paper. The most effective approach to **Question 1** (worth 6 marks) was to provide three separate paragraphs (with identification and explanation) as this gave good structure.

Some answers to **Question 2** were not fully developed or supported by precise references to the documents. In **Question 3** stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents and evaluated their significance and impact on the argument. This demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being presented.

The rubric of the paper requires candidates to write in continuous prose. In **Questions 2** and **3** full paragraphing in an essay format, rather than bullet points, should be used. In **Question 1** as the question required 'identify and explain', short paragraphs were best for each of the three approaches.

Most candidates appeared to be well-prepared with clear understanding of the aspects of evidence and argument that they were looking for in the documents and answered in a structured way.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

As an 'Identify and Explain three ways...' question, **Question 1** required candidates to create their own structure for their answer. This was best done by creating a separate paragraph (including both identification and explanation) for each approach. **Question 1** provides encouragement to candidates to fully read and digest the detail of **Document 1**. The key words in the question relate to the ways palm oil production is better than other crop production.

The question required candidates to identify and explain outcomes for palm oil when compared to other crops. Some examples that were generic, like using factory waste as an organic manure, were not credited as these could apply to any crop and the author did not provide a comparison.

Candidates scored one mark for a basic, correct identification that could be quoted from the text, for example, 'it doesn't require chemicals' or 'it is good for the economy' for each of three impacts. For the explanation mark there was a need to reflect the author's thoughts and meaning without introducing the candidate's own knowledge. It is also expected that the answer should be in the candidate's own words or a paraphrase of those of the author – not directly copied from the document. However, correct synthesis of the author's words from different parts of the document was creditworthy.

This example shows information taken from the first and last paragraphs. The first is quoted using implicit comparison while the second is interpreted and rephrased by the candidate, giving 2 marks.

*'According to the Chairman of the Planters' Association of Ceylon, Sri Lanka's most profitable crop for over 50 years has been palm oil. (I) Since Sri Lanka is in a debt crisis, palm oil production can economically benefit them and help them out of debt (E).'*

Another example of a two-mark answer is:

*'.....it also uses old lands of rubber production (I). This way, deforestation is reduced and also the old rubber land does not go to waste (E).'*

It was not appropriate to refer to details such as: *'It helps to conserve soil moisture...because it usually results in lush undergrowth.'* The statement is used by the author but there is no implicit nor explicit indication that this would also apply to other crops.

#### **Question 2**

This question was generally well answered with most candidates correctly assessing the evidence rather than simply the argument. Some candidates seemed to follow a bullet-pointed formulaic approach where some answers could have applied to any document – not clearly enough linking the evidence to the author's argument. The bullet point approach does not fully address the rubric requirement of writing in continuous prose so could impact on the communication level.

The highest achieving candidates recognised that the author used a range of supporting evidence including quoted statistics (e.g. 95 per cent of palm oil mill effluent is treated) to support the claims. They also recognised the range of expert sources, for example, World Wildlife Fund and named officers of significant organisations. Higher scoring candidates recognised evidence, named appropriate examples, and explained why this showed evidence to be a strength. This three stage approach tends to lead to higher marks.

For weaknesses, higher scoring candidates saw that there were some unsupported assertions in the conclusion – for example: Sri Lanka has a debt crisis. Also, there were some pieces of vague evidence like: can pollute/may lead to/could result. Higher scoring candidates explained how both limitations had a negative impact on the reliability of the evidence.

The difference between higher and moderately scoring candidates was usually defined by the appropriate explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence and how much referencing of the document was included rather than just identifying them. Moderately scoring candidates made basic statements and illustrated **or** explained them. Higher scoring candidates made statements, illustrated **and** explained them with reference to the impact of the argument.

In an ‘evidence’ question the provenance of the document and the credibility of the author is mainly relevant when it shows the author’s ability to research and select appropriate evidence, including suitable sources (which may be themselves).

For strengths of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

*‘...Silva makes a generous use of sources with authority such as the World Wildlife Fund and the International Union for Conservation of Nature in order to explain the production of palm oil. They are globally renowned organisations for their expertise in environmental conservation and thus are likely to be credible sources that support the author’s claims well.’*

This example shows how the candidate has addressed the sources of evidence, explained the significance of the sources and given examples from the document.

*‘Author Silva uses statistical and quantitative data, for example, ‘54% of threatened mammals and 64% of threatened birds...’, ‘single most profitable crop for over 50 years’ and ‘95% of palm oil mill effluent is treated...’ These give objectivity to the evidence presented, giving clear statistical measures that accounts for and supports the strength of Silva’s argument in Doc 1.’*

This example uses quoted statistics and the idea of objectivity coupled with a link to the impact on the argument of the author.

For weaknesses of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

*‘...there are many vague statistics provided which as indicated through the use of words like, ‘most, ‘up to’, and ‘at least’. This depicts the evidence as assumptions and estimates which does not support the claims well as it lacks accuracy.’*

This makes the point about vague statistics, illustrates from the document and explains that they are assumptions and estimates leading to less accuracy. Three points are made.

### Question 3

The most frequent approach was to directly compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two documents throughout the answer looking at their different perspectives. The strongest candidates achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each document and by using intermediate judgements. There was no correct answer and candidates were free to argue that Document 2 was more convincing than Document 1 or the opposite. It was possible to argue that neither was stronger. In all cases candidates were required to justify their final judgement.

Many candidates were able to pick out the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g., the credibility of the authors and the amount of supporting evidence provided. Candidates achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents and their impact on the overall assessment, while lower scoring answers simply relied on a formulaic approach of what should constitute a strong argument without using supporting examples. Such answers were consequently superficial and relied, at best, on undeveloped quotes from the

text. Some used bullet points rather than continuous prose which showed this formulaic approach and impacted negatively on the communication level.

The strongest responses adopted a structured response to answering the question: methodically evaluating the relative strengths of the argument (with intermediate judgements), using appropriate examples and analysis of impact, before coming to a reasoned judgment at the end.

Examples of strong evaluation of the arguments are:

Provenance:

This is an example of an approach reflecting the relative strengths of the authors -

*'The authors of Document 2, Elizabeth Robinson and Harry Purnomo are experts in the topic as they are a Professor of Environmental Economics and Professor of Forest Management and Governance respectively. They have prior knowledge of palm oil production whereas the author of Document 1, Tharamulee Silva is a journalist with no [obvious] relation to palm oil production.'*

Several candidates looked at the sources used to support the use of evidence. They recognised that the author of Document 2 used statistics but didn't explain where they came from – making an assertion. This was compared to Document 1 where the sources were verified and shown to be credible. An example is:

*'The authors of Document 2 have lots of statistics and data, such as 'more than 7 million labourers employed' and that the link between palm oil production and deforestation is 'well known'. However, these are all unsupported claims as the authors do not clarify from what sources they are getting this data. Whereas in Document 1, the author uses data from trusted and verified sources and mentions them in the article.'*

Judgement – most candidates gave intermediate judgements and concluded with a brief summary. The alternative approach was to evaluate the argument of each document in turn and then give a reasoned conclusion to make a judgement although this was rarely used. This approach is acceptable but tends to be less effective than direct evaluation and judgement of different aspects of argument.

This example is the conclusion to an answer that made intermediate judgements throughout.

*'Overall, the arguments in Document 2 are stronger as it has more credibility in the authors' field of expertise, has more global relevance and gives relevant examples, although they are not always sourced. Document 1 focuses on one single country and has a narrower perspective, so overall, Document 2 is stronger than Document 1.'*

Some candidates followed a formulaic approach to the answer by looking for specific aspects of the argument to consider. Generally, this was well done with higher scoring candidates linking aspects to examples in the text and with explanation of why this supported the argument. A small number made assumptions based on preconceived ideas about what makes a good argument, rather than reading and evaluating the documents clearly. Candidates are required to engage critically with the documents, rather than make generalised comments that could apply to any document.

# GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

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Paper 9239/02  
Essay

## Key messages

- Candidates should ensure their contrasting perspectives are developed with arguments and evidence that pertain to clearly defined global contexts.
- The selection of research material is a key skill that underpins the entire essay. Learners should be judicious and not support their perspectives with too many different sources.
- Candidates should consider areas for further research and present these after the final conclusion of their essay.

## General comments

Much of the work submitted for the March 2022 series was of good quality and demonstrated engagement with a range of global topics. Popular topics that enabled candidates to develop contrasting perspectives included Ethical foreign policies, Climate change, and Impact of the internet, amongst others. There is a list of topics published in the syllabus.

Global Perspectives and Research is a skills-based course and in completing the Essay component candidates are assessed against seven different criteria. All the criteria have equal weighting. Addressing all of the assessment criteria within the word count requires candidates to plan their essays carefully. It remains the case that some essays omitted to address all the criteria. Two key omissions were critical evaluation of source material and consideration of ideas for further research.

This Principal Examiner Report for Teachers will consider four broad areas of assessment: Perspectives, Sources, Conclusions and Communication. Condensing the seven different assessment criteria into these broader areas of focus will address the interplay between them.

## Comments on specific areas

### **Perspectives**

There has been a welcome improvement in the title questions offered by candidates. It remains imperative that candidates select a title that enables them to develop contrasting perspectives and explore a range of global contexts. *'Is Artificial Intelligence an Existential Threat to Humanity?'* is a question that clearly sets up a debate between two contrasting perspectives and offers the opportunity to present arguments and evidence pertaining to different global contexts. Candidates that develop contrasting perspectives but without a global dimension cannot achieve higher levels at criteria **Empathy for Perspectives** and **Globality of Perspectives**. With that in mind it is important that candidates give themselves the opportunity to focus on issues with global significance.

A title such as, *'Conflict between Homosexuality and Religion'* is a title that fails to signal a debate. What are the two contrasting perspectives underpinning this title? Such a title is likely to lead to an informative and descriptive essay.

There are still candidates offering titles that began *'To what extent'*. This is not always effective, as a debate between contrasting perspectives may not emerge. Far better is a title that begins *'Is'* or *'Should'* as a clearer debate is likely to emerge. A question such as *'To what extent does Political Participation Influence Religion?'*, might lead to an essay where the contrast in perspectives is less easily defined.

Global Perspectives and Research encourages candidates to engage with perspectives that may challenge their preconceived ideas. This will offer better opportunities for genuine reflection when concluding the essay. It is important that candidates research an issue that they can approach with an open mind.

Having analysed their research material candidates are required to make links between the arguments and evidence of different sources to build coherent perspectives. While some candidates still treat each source in isolation, increasingly candidates are able to make links between source materials, making it clear how one source supports or corroborates another source. Here is a current example of a candidate synthesising their source material.

*A major barrier to implementing policies aimed at the wealthiest people is their political influence. Even though over 71% of global emissions comes from just a hundred companies (Riley 2021), these companies and the billionaires that created them are known to have led misinformation campaigns. They influenced public and political attitudes towards climate change for decades, for profit. An example is ExxonMobil, which in 2018 claimed to be 'committed to being part of the solution' but has continued to fund organisations that challenge climate science. Since 1998, it is alleged they have spent \$39 million to oppose climate policies (Negin 2021).*

This candidate uses an example provided by Negin to explicitly support the point made by Riley.

### Source Material

Candidates should consider the provenance of their source material. Global Perspectives and Research assesses the candidate's ability to draw upon a wide range of research material. Candidates must support their perspectives with arguments and evidence emanating from reliable and relevant sources. To reach higher attainment levels candidates should gather their source material from publications with a range of global provenance. A successful candidate from this series used articles from The United Nations, The Cambridge Journal of Economics (UK), The Africa Report and The Conversation (US). These are all credible sources with globally diverse provenance.

Having selected their source materials, the next requirement for candidates is to demonstrate their understanding of the selected material. Having read and analysed their research material, the candidate needs to be able to present the arguments emanating from the source in a logical and coherent manner. Selecting credible and academic sources will enable candidates to engage with appropriate concepts. Candidates that do this successfully will be able to achieve higher levels for the criterion **Analysis of Sources**.

This short extract from a successful essay demonstrates strong understanding of source material. The candidate is clearly in control of their material which is taken from a credible source; the World Economic Forum.

*He suggests a 'human-on-loop' approach so that humans can still assert power over AI-led warfare equipment, which may prevent catastrophic risks. Implementing more transparent communication channels and setting up trustworthy authoritative bodies to oversee AI risk management are effective and practical solutions that can prevent mishaps in the future (WEF 2021).*

Having initially selected and analysed relevant and globally diverse sources and then demonstrated their understanding of the research material in a coherent and controlled manner the candidates are expected to subject their material to critical evaluation. In essence the candidate should demonstrate why the source is worthy of being used but also acknowledge any weaknesses it may contain.

There are still too many candidates that are not critically evaluating their source material. Candidates should be measured in their approach, there is no need to write an extensive amount of critical evaluation and candidates would be better advised to offer different forms of evaluation for four of their chosen sources. Here is an example of a candidate offering some succinct but well-developed and insightful critical evaluation.

*Although it provides first-hand evidence via a victim's reaction, it is one-sided. The experience affected the victim significantly making it difficult for her to have a neutral view, the excessive use of emotive language causes readers to relate emotionally rather than considering the facts and this makes the article appear biased.*

Candidates must strike a balance when critically evaluating their research material. Too much emphasis on critical evaluation will not give the opportunity for candidates to demonstrate understanding, whereas limited or no critical evaluation will prevent candidates from reaching higher levels. Candidates should try and use a range of criteria when critically evaluating their source material. This could be the use of evidence, vested interest, author credibility, logic of argument, balance or provenance amongst many other possible areas for critical evaluation.

## Conclusions

To reach the higher levels for this criterion (**Conclusion and Reflection**) candidates are required to present a supported and reflective conclusion. The quality of reflection continues to improve with more candidates offering evaluative reflection that considers the impact of contrasting perspectives on their standpoint.

Here is an example of some developed reflection from this series:

*After researching the topic, I can understand both points of view deeply. Initially, my opinion about DVAs (Digital Voice Assistants) was that they should be banned because they capture a lot of our personal information, and I believe that firms would use this information for profit or if the government invades our privacy, they will misuse data captured. Nonetheless, after completing this essay based on a wide range of sources, I can rationalise with the idea that we should not ban these DVAs on the condition that the data collected is used only when necessary and the information collected by companies will be kept private. Engaging with the opposing perspective also made it clear to me that DVAs are not the only gadget that infringe on people's privacy, other tools exist as well, so prohibiting DVAs will not solve the issue of protecting people's privacy.*

Many candidates will evaluate each perspective holistically before arriving at a final conclusion. Candidates move beyond source evaluation to consider the perspectives with reference to strengths, weaknesses, implications and reasoning. A conclusion leading on from this process will naturally be supported.

The final aspect to consider in the conclusion is the suggestion for further research. It is still the case that candidates are omitting this aspect of their essay. The critical path that underpins Global Perspectives and Research is an iterative process. In concluding their essays candidates should consider any new areas for research that present themselves or equally identify any gaps in their research that could usefully be filled by further research. In this example the candidate considers two areas for further research that have not been addressed in the essay.

*Further research could be done into developing nations and whether they will create coal burning power plants to fuel the electric cars as little has been done in researching that. Research into the use of coal burning plants may negate the effect of switching to electric cars in these nations. Further research may also need to be done with regards to surveying the public about their opinions on whether they will buy an electric car or not, and this should be done with groups of all economic and social backgrounds. This would potentially help car manufacturers know whether people are able to afford electric cars and run them.*

## Communication

Most candidates were successful in communicating a logical and coherent debate. To reach the higher attainment levels for this criterion, candidates need to structure their essays effectively. The use of structural signposting is a useful way of demonstrating structure and one that guides the reader through the essay.

Successful candidates used discursive signposts such as: firstly, secondly or finally to show the order of ideas. Many candidates were able to indicate the start of a new perspective using signposts such as; 'The opposing perspective argues' or 'In contrast'. Other useful discursive signposts include; 'in conclusion' or 'on reflection'.

Finally, candidates must offer full referencing of their source material via citations and a bibliography. Candidates should not bolster their bibliographies by reproducing the bibliographies presented in their source material. Only sources that the candidate has researched themselves should be referenced.

For referencing to be considered effective, it should be consistent and functional, this means that the relationship between citation and the bibliography is logical and obvious. Candidates may use any referencing system they choose, the Harvard and Oxford referencing systems are the most widely used.

# GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

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**Paper 9239/03**  
**Team Project, Presentation and**  
**Reflective Paper**

## **Key messages**

- Effective presentations identified and defined their issue, then logically explained it with structured and supported examples.
- Candidates should develop and justify the differences between their own perspective and those of others.
- Arguments are strongest when they are supported by accurately selected discourse markers and evidence for each point made.
- Solutions should also include an explanation of why they are effective.
- Reflective papers are more effective when they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of collaboration rather than just providing a narrative account of what happened.

## **Comments on specific tasks**

### *Definition of the issue*

The majority of candidates defined their issue to some extent. The best presentations considered the local, national or global dimensions of the issue in order to define it more clearly. All candidates demonstrated some research to support their definition of the issue. Stronger presentations used a variety of different types of sources – some used primary research to show how the issue impacted local people. Overall, the most successful approaches to this criterion began with a clear definition, developed it with structured explanation and made use of a variety of appropriate evidence.

### *Differentiation of perspectives*

Most candidates differentiated their perspective from their team members' perspectives. In some cases, candidates did not go further than identifying their own perspective and that of each of the other members of the team. The strongest presentations explained clearly how its perspective differed and justified its own approach.

### *Structure of argument and support*

Most candidates made sequenced points which supported their conclusions. Some candidates connected these together using discourse markers in order to create an effective overall argument. In most cases some points were supported by evidence. The most successful candidates supported all of their points effectively with evidence.

### *Conclusion and solution*

The majority of candidates included a conclusion within the eight minutes allowed. The best candidates linked their conclusion to the evidence they had presented through the whole of the presentation, showing that it was thoroughly supported. Most candidates provided some detail about their solution but could have been even more successful by linking this to evidence. Some candidates achieved at a higher level by explaining why their solution was effective. For example, the solution of social security benefits for migrant workers was justified because '*it covers a wide range of migrants in need and addresses the economic and social challenges faced by migrants*'. In order to achieve at Level 5 for this criterion a supported justification was also required to explain why the solution is innovative.

### *Presentational methods*

Every candidate used at least some presentational methods this series, for example the production of visual aids in the form of electronic slides. Most candidates used their slides to some extent to support their presentation. The most successful candidates directly engaged with their slides by indicating diagrams or graphs to support their argument.

### *Reflective paper*

#### *Evaluation of collaboration*

Weaker responses described the work done by their team as a narrative rather than evaluating it. More successful reflective papers included evaluative judgements on the effectiveness of their group work. For example, *'we knew each other well and did not need an introductory period of familiarization. This was a great benefit as it allowed us to immediately immerse ourselves into finding an area of common interest.'* Some candidates also reflected on how their work together could have been improved further. Evaluations which highlighted the weaknesses of less effective collaboration were rewarded in the same way as those which demonstrated the strengths of successful group work.

#### *Reflection on learning*

Most candidates demonstrated what they had learnt from the team project and their investigation into the issue selected by them and their team. The highest scoring candidates clearly identified what they had thought prior to starting this project and how this had changed based on what they learnt through research and from their teammates' perspectives. This reflective paper reflected on this in the following way: *'Before I began detailed research, I assumed that most of our connections to the internet were necessary and I was sceptical about whether my topic had sufficient scope for discussion. Through the course of my research, this assumption was significantly changed by what I found out. For instance, the number of internet users has drastically increased in recent years.'*

Some candidates discussed the limits to their own or the team's conclusions to reflect on what they had learnt and how further research may have enabled additional learning.

# GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

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**Paper 9239/04**  
**Research Report**

## Key messages

- Reports must develop the critical skills learnt in earlier units
- There must be a log which is a key working document
- There must be an appropriately worded question which leads directly to a sustained discussion

## General comments

There was considerable variation in the ability of the reports to meet the requirements of the various assessment objectives. Successful reports had the following characteristics:

- The question was clear and led directly to a discussion of different viewpoints about an issue
- There was a log which showed not only which research materials had been used and what they contained but also the progress of the candidate's thinking about the issue and how the research was being developed as a result of evidence being analysed
- The evidence chosen was appropriate and relevant. It was analysed – that is related to the question and the discussion – and not merely described.
- There were clearly established perspectives – that is overall contrasting viewpoints about the issue in the question, not just aspects of the topic, such as 'economic' or 'ethical'
- There was a clear critical sense throughout and both evidence and viewpoints were tested using a range of evaluative criteria
- There were interim judgements made as a result of this critical analysis and these led logically to an overall conclusion which offered a supported judgement about the issue
- There was a separate section on Reflection in which the adequacy of any judgement made was considered in the light of the methodology adopted and the evidence chosen
- There was clear referencing of sources used and the evidence was included in a bibliography
- The level of written communication was high with appropriate terminology deployed and a clear structure and effective expression
- Evidence from the centre showed good oral communication in a discussion in which the candidate defended the conclusions and methodology effectively
- Overall, the report showed that the skills learnt in the earlier units had been deployed and extended in a well-researched and critical report which went beyond being an essay or a project.

Where reports were less successful, they had shown some of the following weaknesses:

- The research question was unlikely to lead to a sustained discussion. Some titles were not in the form of a question but a general topic so it was difficult for the report to engage with an issue as opposed to conveying information. Some questions asked not for evaluation and judgement but simply for explanation, for example asking 'why?' or 'how?' rather than more searching questions like 'To what extent' or 'How far'. Sometimes there was not sufficient debate possible or questions lacked a single focus so that sight of the issue was lost. Some questions simply did not make sense.
- Some sources were not suitable or not related directly to the issue but more to the general topic. In some reports evidence was simply described.
- In some cases there were large sections of the reports which were not directly evidence based with no sources being acknowledged or referenced. This is a key difference between an essay and a source-based report.

- There was some misunderstanding of the need to establish perspectives with reports outlining different aspects of a topic without engaging with contrasting viewpoints
- In some cases 'evaluation' was seen as being explanation, not offering a supported critical judgement
- Reflection was restricted to limited personal experience or a restatement of conclusions rather than considering the methods and evidence employed. In some cases there was no reflection.
- In some cases there was no indication of the way in which the findings and methods had been discussed and defended.
- In some cases no log was offered, in which case the highest mark which can be given for AO1 Research is level 1. In other cases, logs were no more than descriptions of websites used. The log is a key part of the process which some candidates neglected.

In general, though there was considerable variation, there was a lot of research undertaken and this independent study continues to be of considerable personal and educational value. Centres are thanked for their participation in the qualification, and it is to be hoped that the explanations above will be helpful in the future.