



ASSESSMENT and  
QUALIFICATIONS  
ALLIANCE

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## GCE

### General Studies A

### Unit GA3W

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## Unit 3: Society, Politics and the Economy

### Introduction

The overall assessment objectives for General Studies are set out below:

- AO1 Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using Skills from different disciplines.
- AO2 Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.
- AO3 Marshal evidence and draw conclusions; select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.
- AO4 Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge and the relationship Between them, appreciating their limitations.

All mark schemes will allocate a number or a distribution of marks for some or all of these objectives for each question according to the nature of the question and what it is intended to test.

### Note on AO2

In all instances where quality of written communication (AO2) is being assessed this must take into account the following criteria:

- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter;
- organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate; and
- ensure text is legible and spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.

### Note on AO4

This is a new element in General Studies specifications. In the past, there has been a focus on the knowledge of facts and the marshalling of evidence – on what might be called ‘first order’ knowledge. This is still fundamental; but AO4 is about understanding what counts as knowledge; about how far knowledge is based upon facts and values; and about standards of proof.

By ‘different types of knowledge’ we mean *different ways of getting knowledge*. We might obtain knowledge by fine measurement, and calculation. This gives us a degree of certainty. We might obtain it by observation, and by experiment. This gives us a degree of probability. Or we might acquire it by examination of documents and material remains, or by introspection – that is, by canvassing our own experience and feelings. This gives us a degree of possibility. In this sense, knowledge is a matter of degree.

Questions, or aspects of them, which are designed to test AO4 will therefore focus on such matters as:

- analysis and evaluation of the nature of knowledge, evidence or arguments, for example, used in a text, set of data or other form of stimulus material;
- understanding of the crucial difference between such things as knowledge, belief or opinion, and objectivity and subjectivity in arguments;
- appreciation of what constitutes proof, cause and effect, truth, validity, justification, and the limits to these;
- recognition of the existence of personal values, value judgements, partiality and bias in given circumstances;
- awareness of the effects upon ourselves and others of different phenomena, such as the nature of physical, emotional and spiritual experiences, and the ability to draw upon and analyse first-hand knowledge and understanding of these.

**Q1**

**Read Source A. Using only information from the source, explain how Liberty will attempt to achieve success.**

**(5 marks)**

**Target: Comprehension of source.**

**Notes:**

Possible means of achieving success taken from source

- political lobbying/putting pressure on government
- publicity for human rights cases
- using various courts to test/challenge law/legal decisions
- advising members of the public/legal profession
- provision of training courses
- effective, democratic organisation.

**Level I**     *Simple, unexplained points from the source e.g. ‘lobbying’, ‘publicity’ or one explained point.*     (1-2)

**Level II**     *At least two clearly explained points from the source or at least three points indicating some understanding.*     (3-4)

**Level III**     *At least three clearly explained points from the source.*     (5)

(AO1: 2 marks    AO3: 3 marks)

**Q2**

**Read Source B. Using your own knowledge and information from the source, say why it might be difficult for the Socialist Party to achieve the rights stated in Source B.**

**(5 marks)**

**Target: Comprehension of source and understanding of political process.**

**Notes:**

- aims are unrealistic
- many people/voters would oppose some or all of the party's aims
- no indication of how the aims might be achieved
- minority/fringe parties traditionally attract few votes/little support
- few voters will have heard of the Socialist Party
- few candidates at elections
- Socialist Party lacks resources (MPs/funds/publicity/personnel)
- The Socialist Party is seen by some as extremist.

- Level I**     *Fragmented, undeveloped points e.g. "stupid ideas", "nobody would vote for them" or one clearly explained point.*     (1-2)
- Level II**     *At least two clearly explained points or at least three points indicating some understanding.*     (3-4)
- Level III**     *At least three clearly explained points combining own knowledge and information from source.*     (5)

(AO1: 3 marks    AO3: 2 marks)

## Q3

Read Source C. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this source?

(10 marks)

**Target: Assessing value and reliability of a source.**

**Notes:**

Possible strengths

- clearly written, outlining key changes in policy since 1990s
- gives the impression that it contains some factual research
- uses statistical information to provide supporting evidence
- underlines the importance of disability rights as a political issue in terms of the large numbers involved
- illustrates the scale of meeting the needs of the disabled
- identifies the issue of carers.

Possible weaknesses

- too short to provide an effective understanding of key issues
- more description than analysis
- doesn't always explain specialist terms (e.g. "the Incapacity Benefit row", "Labour gave it teeth", "the carer's premium")
- political bias towards what Labour Party has achieved in government with little (and critical) coverage of previous Conservative governments
- statistics might not always be reliable.

<b>Level I</b>	<i>Mostly simple, unexplained points, perhaps repeating parts of source, identifying very few strengths/weaknesses.</i>	(1-3)
<b>Level II</b>	<i>A few explained strengths/weaknesses showing some ability to look critically at the source but not consistent and may not cover strengths and weaknesses equally. [A candidate who covers only strengths <b>or</b> weakness can only achieve a maximum of 5 marks.]</i>	(4-6)
<b>Level III</b>	<i>A range of mostly explained strengths/weaknesses showing mostly sustained ability to look critically at the source.</i>	(7-8)
<b>Level IV</b>	<i>A wide range of consistently explained strengths and weaknesses showing sustained ability to provide critical and logical analysis.</i>	(9-10)

(AO2: 2 marks AO3: 4 marks AO4: 4 marks)

## Q4

**Read Source D. To what extent do you think the two letter writers provide good arguments for their case? Which argument do you support? Give reasons for your answer.**

**(15 marks)**

**Target: Analysing and comparing arguments used in a source.**

**Notes:**

To score the highest marks, it is essential that candidates meet AO4 requirements by seeking to set out what they consider to be some of the essential points of a ‘good’ argument in terms of language, communication, knowledge, reasoning, construction etc. Candidates who do not attempt this, or who do not succeed in making any valid points about what might constitute a ‘good’ argument, should not be awarded a mark beyond Level II.

Letter One

- claims to have read “an accurate piece about Huntingdon Life Sciences” but the reader does not state what it was
- doesn’t refer to any direct evidence of the work done at HLS
- uses rhetoric (“Who would you believe?”)
- some generalisations/value judgements (“the same old stories”, “moderate members of society”)
  
- ✓ highlights link between testing drugs and safety regulations
- ✓ criticises animal rights activists for not backing up their claims with reliable sources
- ✓ identifies part of the role of the Advertising Standards Authority in identifying false claims made by animal rights supporters

This is clearly written to criticise animal rights activists, presumably by a person who counts him/herself among the “moderate members of society”. It makes value judgements usually with little or no justification in terms of supporting evidence. Nevertheless, although the arguments are not particularly “good” the points about animal rights activists not backing up their claims and their relationship with the ASA may not be unreasonable. Someone who did not support some of the methods of animal rights activists and/or believed in the importance of animal testing at HLS for medical advancement would probably be sympathetic to/support the views of this letter writer.

Letter Two

- very short (although it appears as it did in the newspaper)
- reference to “sympathy” and “compassion” suggests that it is primarily an emotional response
- doesn’t elaborate or develop the points made
- sweeping statement (“vivisection is big business in disguise”)
- bias towards animal kingdom
  
- ✓ rejects emotional appeal (‘living in a state of siege’)
- ✓ shows compassion
- ✓ indicates (albeit vaguely) that alternative testing methods are available

The writer of this letter is sympathetic to the rights of animals and may be a supporter of the animal rights movement. The letter is very short and it is possible that emotion dominates over reason. Although the arguments are not particularly “good” there are potential (but undeveloped) arguments about alternative methods of testing, the need for adequate funding and the ethics of business/animal testing. Those who have similar thoughts and ideas are likely to sympathise with/support this letter writer.

Neither letter offers a balanced view of the issues surrounding animal rights but candidates can justify their choice by using some of their own knowledge/arguments and some of the grounds mentioned above even though there are few ‘good’ arguments. An exceptional candidate might suggest that the newspaper concerned has edited one or both of the letters and that it has given unequal coverage to the pro-animal rights letter because of the newspaper’s own stance on the issues surrounding the activities of protestors.

- Level I**      *Limited use of sources. Little or no clear indication of what might constitute good arguments for the case of the letter writers. Some indication of which argument might be supported but reasons may be limited/unconvincing.* (1-4)
- Level II**      *Uses sources and demonstrates limited and sometimes inconsistent ability to identify and explain good arguments used by letter writers. Offers mostly narrow range of reasons to show which argument is supported. [Candidates who answer only one part of the question are limited to maximum of 8 marks.]* (5-8)
- Level III**      *Uses sources and demonstrates mostly sustained ability to recognise good arguments and to criticise quality of arguments used by the letter writers. Offers a range of mostly clearly argued reasons to show which argument is supported.* (9-12)
- Level IV**      *Uses sources and demonstrates sustained ability to recognise good arguments and to criticise/evaluate quality of arguments used by the letter writers. Offers a wide range of clearly argued reasons to show which argument is supported.* (13-15)

**Note:** Candidates who conclude, with logically argued reasons, that neither letter writer uses sufficient good arguments and thus decline to support either argument as they stand can, if they answer both parts of the question, be awarded a final mark in Level 3 or 4.

(AO1: 2 marks   AO2: 4 marks   AO3: 2 marks   AO4: 7 marks)

## Q5

Read Source E. Using specific examples from some or all of the five sources, and your own knowledge, examine the difficulties of ensuring that different groups in society have access to the rights to which they might be entitled.

(15 marks)

**Target:** Extrapolating from a range of sources and showing understanding of different types of knowledge and their limitations.

**Notes:**

- The question requires candidates to use both information from at least *some (minimum two)* of the sources and their own knowledge. Those who rely *exclusively* on either their own knowledge or the sources should be limited to a maximum of 8 marks.
- The question requires candidates to write about “different groups” in their answer. This could mean two, or more. Candidates who write about only one group should be limited to a maximum of 8 marks.
- The answers of candidates who reach Level IV should show clear evidence that they are able to discuss and analyse the issue of rights and the access to rights in a way that satisfies the requirements of AO4.

Source A

- Deals with access to rights and freedoms in a broad sense (Human Rights Act) from the perspective of Liberty, a human rights pressure group.

Source B

- Rights mentioned include those of asylum seekers, right to a fair trial for terrorists and anti-discriminatory/minority rights (race, gender, sexuality, disability) as set out by The Socialist Party.

Source C

- Focuses on *disability rights* and related social security benefits. The title of the book claims to be making an audit of successes and failures of Labour governments since 1997. The authors, Polly Toynbee and David Walker, though not uncritical of New Labour, are broadly sympathetic to its aims.

Source D

- The subject of the two letters is animal testing and, by association, animal rights. Although the question refers to the rights of different *groups* in society, candidates should be given appropriate credit for relevant analysis of moral/ethical issues that might arise from animal testing and the pursuit of rights for animals.

Source E

- Talks in broad terms about human rights but also makes specific references to children’s rights and this may be useful in prompting candidates to extend their thinking about international issues such as child labour. The source, *Save the Children*, outlines the work of this well-known pressure group.

Much is likely to depend on which groups candidates choose to write about but the emphasis of the question is on *gaining access to rights* and the *sort of obstacles that might exist to restrict this*. Some of the following points might emerge:

- Securing laws that apply to particular groups.
- Obstacles which may impede the operation/effectiveness of laws.
- Historical/cultural obstacles.
- Cost factors.
- Discriminatory practices/prejudices.
- International implementation/enforcement.
- Numbers involved/majority & minority views.
- Lack of consensus.
- Existence of/effectiveness of pressure groups.
- Ability to generate favourable publicity.

NB: This list is not meant to be exhaustive and credit should be given for any other relevant points.

- Level I** *Uses some sources, or own knowledge, or a combination of the two. Makes some reference to rights/difficulties but may be generalised and/or limited to one group with little evidence of why access might be difficult. Might rely heavily on wording used in sources.* (1-4)
- Level II** *Uses some sources, or own knowledge, or a combination of the two. Some ability to recognise a few obstacles to gaining access to rights but analysis might be limited with points not always fully developed. Might be limited to one group.* (5-8)
- Level III** *Uses combination of some sources and own knowledge to provide mostly sustained analysis of a range of obstacles to gaining access to rights involving at least two groups. Points are nearly always well-ordered and fully developed with, perhaps, some recognition of disagreement about rights and different moral stances.* (9-12)
- Level IV** *Uses combination of some sources and own knowledge to provide sustained analysis of a wide range of obstacles to gaining access to rights involving at least two groups. Points are well-ordered and fully-developed with clear, logical arguments and a clear recognition of disagreement about the nature of rights and different moral stances and values.* (13-15)

(AO1: 6 marks AO2: 4 marks AO3: 2 marks AO4: 3 marks)

#### Distribution of Assessment Objectives for the sources and issues analysis

Question number		1	2	3	4	5	AO marks per unit
	AO1	2	3	-	2	6	13
	AO2	-	-	2	4	4	10
	AO3	3	2	4	2	2	13
	AO4	-	-	4	7	3	14
Total marks per question		5	5	10	15	15	50