



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Examination
June 2013

General Studies (Specification A)

GENA1

Unit 1 AS Culture and Society

Source Booklet

Sources for use with **Questions 1.1 to 1.30** and **Questions 2 to 5**.

Section A**Source A for Questions 1.1 to 1.30**

High culture heads towards creative bankruptcy

- (1) You might want to criticise the shallow vulgarity of the current obsession with TV celebrity, but it will be difficult with *The X Factor* juddering towards its climax, *Strictly ...* twirling in its slipstream and piles of celeb memoirs and cookbooks hogging the front tables of bookshops. *The X Factor*, after all, is a pop-cultural phenomenon that appeals to 10-year-old girls, so those of us who are, thankfully, above such things, can take comfort in the separation of elite culture and mass culture.
- (2) But that's where the trouble starts – how separate, really, are high culture and low culture? The Costa Prize, for example, is a literary event of some consequence, involving some distinguished contemporary writers, but its sponsorship and presentation would be utterly familiar to Cheryl Cole.
- (3) Something has happened to Britain's creative community and there's no better way to understand this than to go back to a speech that Graham Greene, one of the most admired novelists of the day, gave in 1969 on "the virtue of disloyalty". Responding to being awarded the Shakespeare Prize, Greene used the occasion to extol the writers for whom he had the most respect. Pointedly, he identified the middle-class Shakespeare as an establishment poet for whom he had little sympathy. Instead, with perverse glee, he praised Dante, Baudelaire and Villon, noting with approval that their writings had earned them either exile, an obscenity trial or the threat of hanging. "If only Shakespeare had shared their disloyalty and not fuked his obligation to challenge the state, we could have loved him better as a man."
- (4) Born in 1904, Greene was a child of his generation. He distrusted authority, loathed the state and, like his contemporary, George Orwell, believed the storyteller's task was "to act as the devil's advocate" and "to be a piece of grit in the state machinery". Both men believed that writers had a duty to elicit sympathy and understanding for those who lie outside the boundaries of conventional approval.
- (5) To many writers and readers who have come of age in the past 10, or even 20 years, such ideas of disloyalty will seem quaint, even outlandish. Many admired contemporary novelists would consider the conditions of isolation, poverty and contempt that inspire the virtue of disloyalty as the evils of an outdated age of creativity now promptly dumped in the dustbin of history. In the same way as some journalists aspire to be "popular intellectuals" and some film stars claim to be "goodwill-ambassadors", everyone wants to join the system, not keep it at arm's length.
- (6) The sure test of this proposition is to ask: whatever happened to the avant-garde? Once upon a time, it was respectable, even essential, to nurture one's art free from the taint of conventional taste. Now what? Well, there is no avant-garde to speak of and even the experimental and the provocative generally take place within the matrix of the establishment.

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- (7) Where, I wonder, did this change in mood come from? The short answer is: the market, a booming global economy, combined with the internet, in which every semi-articulate voice has become drawn into the kind of creative marketplace that would have Greene spinning in his grave. In the 40 years since Greene was speaking, artists of all sorts – writers, musicians, film-makers, painters and sculptors – have been showered with rewards and approval like never before.
- (8) State sponsorship and, before that, aristocratic patronage, have always been present, but the really corrosive rust in the creative imagination has been the money and attention lavished on good and bad alike. For the first time in the history of British (though not American) culture, it has become possible to sustain a good living without any talent. The panic-stricken search for a voice of one's own has been overtaken by an equally urgent quest for belonging.
- (9) At the same time, occasional episodes suggest that a belief in the power and responsibility of art to make trouble has not been completely squashed by consumerism. The Salman Rushdie affair of 1989 was about many things, but an important part of the tension that it inspired was the prospect of a lone writer bravely or foolishly risking his life for his creative integrity. Since then, there have been precious few equivalent moments of risk. Rushdie himself has become integrated into a literary community notable for its indifference to illegal wars, clandestine torture and the state-sponsored oppression of human rights. Until the recession of 2008–09, the creative community, like the world at large, gorged itself on a diet of unsustainable credit, merrily cashing the blank cheques of intellectual bankruptcy.
- (10) The cascade of money has brought with it a dismal trail of lesser evils: prizes, fellowships, conferences, festivals and, worst of all, the fatal seduction of unrestrained applause. Success is all very well, no doubt, and maybe it does, in the words of the cliché, breed success. But it also sponsors complacency and an appetite for entertainment, sapping the instinct to ask awkward questions of the status quo. It's surely no accident that this past generation, roughly 1980 to 2010, has seen more distinguished artists of every political stance accept peerages, knighthoods and other establishment baubles.
- (11) In the arts, the appetite for true greatness is never satisfied. The hunger for an authentic and original vision does not fade. In this *X Factor* era, you will find many intelligent people, good readers and passionate theatre goers, complaining about the curse of celebrity and its shameful triviality. What they overlook is that, in the creative community at large, this now exhibits itself as vanity. On all sides, in books, plays, contemporary music and painting, from Alan Bennett to Damien Hirst, the damaging effects of artistic vanity are all too visible. Never mind Greene's "virtue of disloyalty", we are now confronted with its polar opposite: the vice of complicity, where artists just go with the flow.
- (12) The paradoxes of complicity are, happily, not without irony. Poor reviews of Hirst's recent exhibition at the Wallace Collection no doubt gave him the satisfaction of being a pariah, but they were an unintended consequence: the space had been bought and lavishly restored by the artist.

- (13) In conclusion, the dreadful cultural cost of complicity is simply stated. If disloyalty encourages the writer to roam at will through human hearts and minds, and gives the novelist a fourth dimension of sympathy and intuition, then complicity just narrows the creative arteries. It propagates a me-too-ism in the community that works against originality, and promotes a wannabe mentality that has nothing to do with the advice of the eminent American poet, Ezra Pound – “Make it new.”
- (14) Such lowered standards extend to the media, too: journalists following other journalists, like sheep; reviewers won over by public relations people; the newspaper community looking over its shoulder, as it did in the run-up to the Iraq war. The complicity of all artists makes them fearful of risk, vulnerable to propaganda, and the prisoners of conventional wisdom. Disloyalty liberates, complicity enslaves.

Source: adapted from an article by ROBERT McCrum, *The Observer*, December 13, 2009
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END OF SOURCE A

Section B**Sources for Questions 2 to 5**

Source B**Cost of youth crime rises to £1.2bn a year**

The cost of youth crime in Britain has risen sharply to £1.2bn a year according to a report by the Prince's Trust and the Royal Bank of Scotland. According to the trust, fewer young people are being convicted of offences, but more are being imprisoned than before. The cost is equivalent to £23m a week. The current re-offending rate means that three-quarters will be in trouble again within two years.

The number of young people aged between 16 and 24 claiming unemployment benefit for more than 12 months has also quadrupled since the start of the recession, the study reveals. Young people's prospects have been more severely affected than in previous recessions because firms have tended to hold on to existing workforces while suspending fresh recruitment programmes.

The rise in unemployment has left the UK with a much higher youth jobless rate than many other European countries. Martina Milburn, chief executive of the Prince's Trust, said: "The easy buck you might earn through crime may seem worthwhile in the short term. But one of the saddest things I saw in Reading Jail recently was a prison officer who said he's now locking up the children of those fathers and uncles he first locked up when he came into the service."

Source: adapted from OWEN BOWCOTT 'Cost of youth crime rises to £1.2bn a year',
The Guardian, 2 December 2010 © Guardian News and Media Ltd.

Source C**A quarter of all UK schools have their own police officer to crack down on youth crime**

One in four schools has its own police officer as part of a crackdown on youth crime being extended to all primaries and secondaries. Government figures show that 5 000 schools – almost 25 per cent – have a dedicated officer stationed on the premises permanently or shared with a cluster of schools. The extent of police presence in schools emerged as ministers encouraged more head teachers to sign up to the Safer School Partnerships initiative.

But Opposition politicians said that the growing presence of officers in schools was a sign of collapsing classroom discipline. Figures showed that police were summoned to deal with 7 300 violent incidents in schools last year across 25 forces. Across the country, the figure is likely to be 10 000. The Safer School Partnerships initiative originated in the US and involves officers working closely with schools to stamp out crime and unruly behaviour. In some schools, they patrol corridors and playgrounds and frisk pupils for knives and other weapons.

However, the idea has not been free of controversy, with children's rights groups claiming that they criminalise children for playground spats and pranks. Critics claimed that the growing liaison with police was a sign that heads were losing confidence in their ability to keep order.

Source: adapted from LAURA CLARK 'A quarter of all UK schools have their own police officer to crack down on youth crime',
Daily Mail, 3 January 2009

Turn over ►

Source D**The only way to stop youth crime is to help the parents**

In London, a group of teenagers in school uniform chased a young boy through the ticket hall of Victoria Station, then stabbed him to death. This was yet another indication of how badly the criminal justice system fails either to deter or to reform teenagers who behave in seriously bad ways.

Government policy aims, through punishments and rewards, to persuade violent or irresponsible teenagers to choose a less destructive way of life. That, in essence, is what the criminal justice system exists to do. But there are good reasons for thinking that it's bound to fail. Evidence from neuroscience explains what has gone wrong with teenagers who are extremely violent and why it can't be fixed by trying to change their behaviour: the problem lies in their minds.

The idea that if things have gone sufficiently wrong with your earliest upbringing, you will be unable to choose to do the right things later on is profoundly unsettling – partly because it undermines our belief in free will. However, it is increasingly well-supported by the scientific evidence.

The evidence has led the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), to come up with a very radical proposal: the only way to diminish youth crime is to concentrate on prevention rather than punishment.

The CSJ believes that state resources should be focused on programmes designed to help parents, and especially mothers, bond with their babies and raise them in ways that enable their brains to develop properly.

Source: adapted from ALISDAIR PALMER, 'The only way to stop youth crime is to help the parents',
The Telegraph, 27 March 2010

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