

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 0426/03

Written Paper

Key Messages

- Candidates used the source materials with enthusiasm to explore global issues
- Candidates performed well in the analysis and interpretation of information and evidence
- Successful candidates were able to use reasons and evidence to justify their own views and perspectives
- Increased opportunity to develop evaluation skills within courses would be helpful, especially of reasoning and evidence
- Overall, candidates' performance continues to improve

General Comments

It is pleasing to report that the quality of work and levels of achievement were very good; candidates and centres are to be congratulated on their achievements.

The paper was based upon several contrasting pieces of source material related to the global use of rare earth metals in electronic equipment.

Primarily, within the context of global perspectives, the paper was designed to test candidates' ability to:

- identify and explore different perspectives on global issues
- analyse and interpret information and evidence
- identify gaps in evidence and suggest lines of enquiry
- develop a line of reasoning and justify their views
- evaluate evidence and arguments

Candidates respond enthusiastically to the source material, especially in the extended response questions. Candidates generally revealed an appreciation of different perspectives on global issues, particularly distinguishing between different courses of action and evaluating points of view.

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. The paper also differentiated successfully.

In general, the questions were answered very 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 further lines of enquiry to support decision making about how to respond to issues like the creation of mines for extracting rare earth metals. These skills were tested mainly in **Questions 1, 2, 3a and 3b**.

However, the ability to evaluate other perspectives, evidence and reasoning was more challenging for many candidates and is a skill that would benefit from further development within IGCSE Global Perspectives courses. Candidates had clearly undertaken stimulating, well designed courses that were helpful in developing the skills to be tested.

Examination technique was generally very good. Candidates seemed to have sufficient time for the tasks. The vast majority completed all of the questions within the time allocated. There were very few rubric errors.

To improve performance further, candidates should be encouraged to:

- answer the question set carefully and refer back to the question regularly, particularly for essay questions
- give clear reasons and evidence to support an opinion or argument
- evaluate reasoning and evidence by referring to both strengths and weaknesses
- avoid simple assertion, opinion and anecdotal evidence

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1a

Candidates were asked to identify one use of rare earth metals from the source material. Candidates usually identified the following:

- batteries
- electronics
- defence technology such as night vision goggles, guided missiles and armoured vehicles
- clean technology
- medical technology
- rare earth metals make very small gadgets possible.
- energy saving light bulbs
- laptops
- iPods
- cell phones
- DVDs
- flat screen TV
- wind turbines
- hybrid cars

Candidates were not awarded marks for uses that were not linked in some way to the source. The vast majority of candidates correctly identified two uses and were awarded maximum marks.

Question 1b

Candidates were asked to identify one cause of the global shortage of rare earth metals from the source material. Candidates usually identified the following:

- the major producing country (China) needs its rare earth metals for its own industries
- use of rare earth metals exceeds mining (2010 figures)
- demand for rare earth metals is predicted to rise
- difficult to extract rare earths from the rocks
- environmental impact

Candidates were not awarded marks for causes that were not linked in some way to the Source. The vast majority of candidates correctly identified a cause and were awarded maximum marks.

Question 1c

Candidates were asked to identify two consequences of the global shortage of rare earth metals from the source material. Candidates usually identified the following:

- not enough rare earth metals for high tech industries in Japan, US, Europe.
- have to do without i-pods and phones
- have to reduce the number of gadgets we own
- keep gadgets for longer
- need to find a new source of rare earth metals
- need more rare earth metal mines in more countries.
- our way of life will be threatened
- slower development
- environmental impact

Candidates were not awarded marks for consequences that were not linked in some way to the global dimension. The vast majority of candidates correctly identified two of these consequences and were awarded marks.

Question 1d

Candidates were asked to explain, in their opinion, which consequence of the global shortage of rare earth metals was the most important. They were expected to give several reasons or some evidence for their choice. Candidates usually gave the following types of reasons to justify their choice:

- nature of consequence – how severe
- the range of impacts on other aspects of the human and natural world
- urgency or time factors
- degree of impact/seriousness/magnitude
- how many people/groups/countries are affected
- increasing cycle of difficulty e.g. from pollution

The strongest answers provided several clearly reasoned explanations of why one consequence is more important than others; this often directly compared the selected consequence with one or more other consequences. Weaker responses often simply stated the consequence or did not link the reasons to the global shortage of rare earth metals explicitly.

Most candidates answered this question well.

Question 1e

Candidates were expected to discuss to what extent the supply of rare earth minerals is a global problem and justify the answer. The question was testing candidates' ability to evaluate global issues and develop reasoning to support a view.

- the benefits/consequences for individuals
- the benefits/consequences for communities/countries
- the benefits/consequences for global society
- issues of equal opportunities/fairness – impact on inequality/poverty
- access to jobs in the industry affected
- in response to government/united nations and humanitarian aims and goals e.g. millennium goals
- interdependence – we are all affected

Stronger responses were supported by clear reasoning and explanation justifying why the issue was of global importance. These responses contained a range of reasoned arguments and evidence to support the views expressed, clearly and explicitly related to the global dimension.

Weaker responses tended to give asserted statements about the significance of the issue but tended to ignore the global dimension. Arguments were often partial or generalised, or simply repeated source material.

Question 2a

Candidates were expected to make suggestions about what type of further information they would need to help them be sure that people in Greenland would definitely benefit from the introduction of modern industries and ways of life. This was designed to test candidates' ability to identify evidence and suggest further lines of enquiry about global issues.

The strongest responses tended to suggest information that was clearly related to the issue. Weaker responses tended to suggest information that was only tangentially related to the issue; for example about current ways of life rather than about potential impacts of change on local culture and ways of life.

The most common responses suggested the following types of information:

- what the life expectancy of people in Greenland is now – is it significantly higher?
- the levels of poverty in Greenland now and in the past – are people better off?
- What are the disadvantages of the introduction of modern industries – for example if people are a lot less happy working in a mine than they were as hunters

- the current levels of general well being and happiness – have they improved?
- the impact on the environment.

Question 2b

Candidates were expected to make and explain suggestions about what type of further information they would need to help them to make a decision about whether or not to support a proposal to transport and process rare earth raw material across their country. This is designed to test candidates' ability to identify evidence and suggest further lines of enquiry to support decision making about how to respond to issues.

The strongest responses tended to suggest information that was clearly related to the issue of transporting and processing rare earth raw material; for example about the effects on the environment and dangers from radioactive material. Weaker responses tended to suggest information that was only tangentially related to the issue; for example about the length of time to transport materials.

Candidates were also asked to explain how the information gained from the answer to the question would help them to make a decision about supporting the proposed development. The strongest responses tended to clearly describe the way that the information linked to rare earths would help them in the decision-making process. Weaker responses tended to simply describe the type of information in more detail and not link the information to decision-making, or simply to describe their own opinion in an asserted way.

The most common responses suggested the following types of information:

- viability of the project
- size and plan – to help assess its general impact on the locality and people in the area
- distance – potential fuel and other costs
- economic benefits
- cost – how expensive to build and who will pay
- profits – who will benefit from the profits and are they likely to be very high
- incentives - is there going to be any compensation for loss of amenity or impact on the visual environment
- public views - the opinion of other local people about this type of project
- impact of the building project - possible disruption that creating the plant is going to cause and for how long
- impact of possible radiation and other pollutants from the transport and processing plants
- benefits to the environment - possible positive impact on the environment in general due to reduction in fuel emissions from more efficient gadgets or other benefit

Question 3a

Candidates were asked to evaluate a statement from the source material to assess the reasonableness of a perspective about the impact of rare earth shortages on access to electronic gadgets in the future. The question was designed to test candidates' ability to make value judgments about arguments or claims.

Candidates tended to make the following arguments in support of the assertion in the source being reasonable:

- it's reasonable to some extent, because there will be a shortage of goods such as iPods which are made with rare earth metals if the supply runs out
- other uses may be more important, for example in medical equipment that can save lives
- we have no other choice

Candidates tended to make the following arguments in support of the assertion in the source being unreasonable:

- it's unreasonable because it suggests only two extreme alternatives
- a false alternative
- there are other solutions - our existing iPods and cell phones will keep working for quite a while
- we could recycle
- we could buy gadgets made in China

The strongest responses tended to clearly discuss the reasonableness of the claim and offer a coherent, structured evaluation of the perspective with several developed evaluative points. These responses were usually balanced with a clear assessment or conclusion reached.

Weaker responses tended to give limited discussion and assert an opinion without reason or explanation.

The majority of candidates were able to discuss some aspects of the perspective with confidence.

Question 3b

Candidates were asked to evaluate a statement from the source material to assess the reasonableness of the view that our way of life is more important than other people's. The question was designed to test candidates' ability to make value judgments about arguments or claims.

Candidates tended to make the following arguments in support of the assertion in the source being reasonable:

- it is natural to see our way of life as more important than others' – just as our families, friends and communities are more important to us than strangers - in some situations it is natural to place our own way of life first
- people tend to look after their own interests
- survival of our culture and way of life has as much value as others

Candidates tended to make the following arguments in support of the assertion in the source being unreasonable:

- others' ways of life are important in terms of general human rights and equality
- others should not be endangered for trivial things
- it's not morally acceptable to exploit others and threaten their way of life just so that we can have gadgets

The strongest responses tended to clearly discuss the reasonableness of the claim, often referring to values as well as pragmatic issues. Coherent, structured evaluation of the perspective was offered with several developed evaluative points. These responses were usually balanced with a clear assessment or conclusion reached.

Weaker responses tended to give limited discussion and assert an opinion without reason or explanation.

The majority of candidates were able to discuss some aspects of the perspective with confidence.

Question 3c

Candidates were expected to evaluate the reasoning in the two statements about nuclear power and compare their effectiveness. They were expected to make a supported judgement with some explanation about which person had the most effective reasoning.

Candidates tended to consider the following types of issue:

- quality of the argument
 - clarity
 - tone – emotive; exaggerated; precise
 - language
 - balance
- quality of the evidence
 - relevance
 - sufficiency – range/type/depth/detail
 - source
 - date – how recent
 - factual, opinion, value, anecdote
 - testimony – from experience and expert
- knowledge claims
- sources of bias
- likelihood of claims and consequences of their ideas

- 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 which reason worked best with a clear assessment of the relative value of each statement; this included coherent, structured evaluation of how well the reasoning worked for each blogger with a focus on evaluation of issues, with a range of points about knowledge claims, evidence, consequences and values. These responses were usually balanced with a clear conclusion.

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.

Candidates found this question quite challenging. Centres are 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 prioritise different forms of action to reduce energy usage in a crisis, making a judgment about which types and level(s) of action are the most likely to succeed. 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 arguments used by candidates to consider different levels of response tended to include:

- amount of impact - how much difference can be made
- extent of impact – how far a difference can be made within and across countries
- how long it takes to make a difference
- the effects of culture and values on criteria for decision making e.g. value attached to saving lives
- barriers to fuel reduction
- consequences of fuel reduction
- ease of action and difficulties in reducing fuel use
- the influence of individuals and groups
- the role of vested interests and power differences
- potential conflict
- long term and short term factors

Responses at the highest levels tended to have well supported, logical reasoning and make clear judgements about which type/level of action to prioritise; this included coherent, structured argument and evaluation with at least two types/levels of action compared. A clear, balanced assessment or conclusion was also reached.

Responses at the lower level tended to be generalised, lack relevance to the issue and focus on issues of fuel usage rather than an explanation of why a type/level of should be prioritised; or provide a list of ways to reduce fuel use without explanation of why these actions are most likely to succeed. Arguments tended to be unsupported and asserted.