

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 37	38 - 48	49 - 61	62 - 72	73 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 25	26 - 38	39 - 50	51 - 63	64 - 75	76 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The recent trend toward increasingly appropriate and well-focused research questions noted in the May 2011 report for this component was reversed this session. The number of candidates who presented well-focused questions and those who did not were evenly split.

As usual, issue-based reports were clearly in the majority. Examples of successful issue-based reports included a study of the changing economic and cultural meaning of artisanal production in Bogota, Colombia; a study of support networks involved with attachment parenting in London; an ethnographic approach to gender stereotypes and teaching techniques; an analysis of school subject choice and gender socialization.

Context-based reports focused as usual on a wide range of sites familiar to the candidates, such as gender roles in a fitness gym; an examination of local identity expressed in the celebration of Guy Fawkes Night; an analysis of role differentiation among the participants in an “occupy” movement in London.

Issue-based reports and context-based reports tend to have different characteristic shortcomings. Issue-based reports frequently lacked detail in data presentation, and were

often overly general, and sometimes superficial in approach. Context-based reports tended often to be overly descriptive. Both approaches often lacked an analytical framework, as required by the assessment criteria (Criterion D). It may be noted once again that some centres have clearly made progress in responding to the expectations regarding analytical frameworks, although it continues to be the case that Criterion D is probably the least well-served of the criteria.

While a few centres have made progress in the interpretation and analysis of data, responding to the more explicitly stated requirements of the 2010 assessment criteria has evidently been challenging for some. This task still represents a weak point in most reports, particularly in reports taking a context-based approach.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

As mentioned above, candidates in this session were less successful in presenting well-focused research issues or questions than were the candidates in the May 2011 session, as candidates in this session were evenly split between those having focused and those having insufficiently focused research questions.

Criterion B

While almost all candidates employed appropriate research techniques, a large majority could not both clearly describe their techniques and justify their use. This is one of the criteria where performance varies widely between centres. It was abundantly clear that some centres have carefully guided candidates in appreciating the focus on method in this component, while others appear to have left the selection and justification of research techniques up to the candidates. In particular, a majority of candidates did not adequately represent the context under which research was undertaken, that is, they did not describe one or more of the following: how informants were selected, what the independent or background variables distinguishing them might have been, the number of informants involved, and the circumstances as to time and place under which they were contacted.

Criterion C

It continues to be the case that most candidates are limited in the success they achieve in presenting data in a clear, well-organized and detailed manner. In this session, many of the reports were judged to be limited in both detail and in organization as to data presentation. There were numerous examples of research projects in which it was not clear that any data had been systematically collected. Here again, there was wide variation between centres as to candidates' success. Another issue which arose in some centres concerned the practice of presenting data, whether in interview form, descriptions, or tabular data, in appendices. Candidates should be selective in the material that they include in their appendices.

Criterion D

This appears to be the criterion which candidates found the most difficult to address. Almost half the candidates reviewed did not present the analytical framework called for in Criterion D. Application of anthropological concepts and theory to data analysis was often hampered by the candidates' omission of needed definitions of concepts such as "rites of passage," "globalization", "capitalism", "resignification", *etc.*, and also by the misapplication of theoretical approaches that were not well understood, or were only superficially applied.

Criterion E

The great majority of candidates mentioned ethical issues arising in field research, but only about half provided at least some discussion of these issues, and how they coped with them. While there has been gradual improvement in meeting the expectations under this criterion in recent sessions, communicating concern for a range of ethical issues clearly remains a problem in a number of centres. The expanded guidelines relating to ethical issues which were introduced in the *social and cultural anthropology subject guide* (first examinations 2010) may have helped raise awareness of the importance of these issues, but in some centres candidates are still not aware of their responsibilities as field workers. Again, as in May 2011, some candidates still have the idea that secret observation of individuals or groups is ethical as long as the observer is not intrusive. The broader issues of ethical practice in fieldwork and in ethnography, such as questions of selectivity of data, representation, positionality and reflexivity, were again rarely addressed.

Criterion F

As usual, there was a very wide range in the ability of candidates to demonstrate imagination and anthropological insight. There has been a downward trend in this regard since the May 2010 session. To do well under this criterion, candidates must have presented anthropologically valid and well-focused issues, and must show some sense of what constitutes a distinctly anthropological analysis of data. Some evidence of reflexive and critical thinking about the process of data gathering and issues of interpretation is also expected for full marks under this criterion.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Selecting and focusing the research question: As mentioned above, candidates in this session were less successful in presenting well-focused research issues or questions than was the case in the May 2011 session. As much as ever, centres varied markedly in the degree to which their candidates were able to focus their research. It remains that working with candidates to select worthwhile, feasible research issues, and guiding them in focusing these issues, is the single most important and probably the most difficult task facing the teacher.

Data presentation and analysis: A detailed and well-organized presentation of data was realized by a minority of candidates in this session. Both teachers and candidates will benefit not only by studying the IA details and the assessment criteria

found in the subject guide (pages 44-48), but by studying the marked IA samples found in the *Teacher Support Material (TSM)*. Both may be accessed through the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC). Teachers must plan to devote some class time to preparing candidates for the IA. There are many guides to field research available as aids to this task, a number of which are annotated on the Teacher Resource Exchange site of the OCC (click on “Search resources,” then in the “category” drop-down box click on “1.3 Methods and data collection/field research methods”). Studying the marked exemplars with examiners’ commentaries in the *TSM* will also aid teachers and candidates in understanding how successful candidates integrated analytical frameworks into their data analysis, which was evidently the most difficult task candidates faced this session.

Ethical issues: The subject guide presents a much expanded list of ethical questions candidates can expect to face in carrying out fieldwork. As detailed above, there remains much room for improvement in the treatment of ethical issues in this component. Anthropology as a discipline has been increasingly concerned with ethical issues for many years, and almost all contemporary textbooks as well as most ethnographies reflect this concern, and can be consulted for sources of codes of professional ethics. This concern, and the reason for its existence across the history of the field, should itself be a major topic of study in the higher level social and cultural anthropology course.

Issues of organization and format: While there is no specific format for the HL IA report, unlike the case of the extended essay, it is advisable for teachers to produce a suggested format for their class, intended for example to raise candidates’ awareness of the requirements reflected in the criteria, and to encourage clarity of organization. The format used in the exemplar work in the *TSM* could be a good starting point here. Use of a table of contents, subheadings, and a bibliography specifically deserve attention, and should be part of classroom preparation for the IA. As mentioned above in regard to presentation of data, teachers should take care that candidates understand that appendices are for the presentation of ancillary material only, and should not be used to present basic data.

Group work for the IA: Teachers are reminded that they should clearly describe the circumstances under which group work, if any, was undertaken, detailing especially how candidates collaborated in gathering data (for guidelines on IA group work, refer to the subject guide, page 39). It is the teacher’s responsibility to insure that data interpretation and analysis are each candidate’s own work.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Mark range: 0 - 3 4 - 6 7 - 9 10 - 11 12 - 13 14 - 15 16 -20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Candidates were generally good at finding suitable locations in which to do their observations. Many were likely to be part of the observer's routine, such as shopping areas, cafés, and sporting events. Some were too well known to the observer and background information was given, detracting from observation. A few centres chose to make collective observations, where candidates were distracted by each other, and one chose to conduct two observations to be compared. The requirement to observe only was not always met, as some candidates also interviewed, participated, or researched the event or venue. These were exceptions, however. The majority of candidates chose venues appropriate for a one hour observation and presented interestingly detailed reports that gave ample material to later critique.

The critiques were generally insightful, the strongest point being awareness of personal bias. Social biases were less noticed. The weakest area of the critiques was the requirement to recognize the difference between descriptive inference and sound analysis in the reports.

There was too much focus on perceived mistakes in the report rather than self reflection on the role of observer, which is the main focus of the SL IA. The purpose of the critique is not to correct the perceived mistakes in the written report by pointing out bias. This is unfortunate because it too often reduces the critique to a list of missteps in the field or explanations of what should have been recorded and why. Some actually added new "corrected" information to the observation. On a more practical level this approach often veers the critique off in a direction that is not productive and makes it difficult for candidates to cover the criteria effectively.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

The Report remains the strongest and mostly successfully completed part of the SL IA. The observation sites were generally appropriate, although some candidates struggled with the scope of the context. For example, watching people mill about in a mall sometimes produced a mere list of shoppers, giving the candidate little to critique. More productive observations were framed with themes within the context, for example gender or age, and that helped to organize the parade of detail. The best reports followed some organizational scheme. Others simply described a context in a range of locations and events chosen for the observation.

Most were appropriate to the one hour limit set for the observation but in some cases the venue was too familiar. Some candidates still chose unsuitable settings such as family events, personal religious services or shifts at work. While some handled this well and reflexively, others had problems. Candidates should be encouraged to choose neutral settings they can observe without being made to participate.

Criterion B

This criterion proved again to be the most difficult for candidates. Many seem unaware of the meaning of the terminology itself and the reasons for considering analysis in relation to description. It has become more common to refer to the wording of the criterion (descriptive inference and sound analysis) but often with no examples or discussion, making it unclear whether the candidate has understood the meaning behind the words used. Differences in levels of competence here may be a matter of instruction rather than ability. Some centres have evidently given candidates the proper conceptual tools to deal with this requirement and others have not. Simply quoting the criterion without relevant examples is not enough to warrant better marks.

Although most candidates did try to make a distinction between descriptive inference and sound analysis, and many were able to cite examples from their observations, relatively few were able to develop this knowledge in a systematic and anthropologically informed fashion.

Criterion C

Most critiques largely focused on this aspect of the exercise and many candidates were quite effective in identifying areas of their observation that indicate bias in some form. The more successful IAs associated these assumptions with conceptual habits and learned behaviour or with wider social issues and systems of classification. Candidates generally recognized personal biases. Social biases are less noticed.

One problem, as mentioned above, is that discussions about bias were too self-critical. Many candidates seem to believe that anything less than perfect objectivity is a mistake and should be noted and corrected in the critique. This is not the case. Bias is not a mistake in itself. For the SL IA, the mistake is not recognizing that bias can shape our perceptions, for example as taught in TOK. It is central to the SL IA that candidates reflect on the ways in which bias and personal choice have shaped the observation. The larger issue is methodological and revolves around the tension between subjectivity and objectivity when conducting fieldwork. Some candidates were quite impressive in their understanding of these issues and expertly related them to issues of description and analysis.

Criterion D

Critical reflection is the area that varies most widely in terms of content and ability. At one end of the continuum there were candidates who presented full discussions on the nature of fieldwork or the legacy of Malinowski and others who seem to be unaware of what they had experienced in the field and largely repeated information from the report. Likewise there was the occasional candidate who overloaded the critique with theoretical analysis or methodological history, and others who did not reflect at all about the fieldwork experience. Generally there was a balance between these extremes, however, and many candidates were quite perceptive. Since this is a holistic criterion, it rewards candidates for anthropological insight they have brought to their critique. The central element here is that candidates make an attempt to reflect on the fieldwork process and its challenges, to recognize the way in which they have operated in the field, and how the choices they have made are connected to

wider anthropological issues. There were quite a few who managed to balance these elements.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates are generally quite good at identifying personal bias and assumption and this can be further improved in two ways. First by helping candidates to understand that these are not only personal but also social issues, reflecting attitudes in the society at large. Attitudes towards race, class, and gender for example, are not created in a vacuum. Candidates often describe people in terms of these categories in their observation but seldom comment on them thoughtfully in the critique. Before completing the critique assignment, teachers could direct candidates to consider at what might lie behind the assumptions in their observations.
- Secondly, candidates should not think that these assumptions are “wrong” and need to be “corrected” in the report; some reports are merely a list of perceived mistakes. This misses the point of the exercise, which is to give candidates an opportunity to reflect on bias and assumption and to connect this to methodological issues in anthropology. Teachers could find examples in the work of anthropologists who have discussed the personal challenges of objectively when collecting data.
- Future candidates need to be more aware of the requirements in Criterion B on description and analysis. Some described “races” and “ethnic” groups observed as part of the work, but were unable to demonstrate an understanding that such apparently “descriptive” categories are themselves socially constructed and may well reflect both social and even political positions. Many candidates analysed some aspects of their observation (e.g. gender or age difference, numbers or percentages of people or activity) but not all specifically refer to this in the critique. Candidates should be encouraged to look carefully at these issues and to recognize the distinction between descriptive inference and sound analysis.

Higher and standard level paper one

Higher level component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 2	3 - 5	6 – 7	8 - 9	10 - 12	13 -14	15 - 20

Standard level component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate a general understanding of the text, in this case an extract which examines the relationship between tradition and modernity in the context of tourist experiences in a rural village in north-western Romania. However, many answers remained on a descriptive level, or were written in a very generic way. In a significant number of cases candidates were quite dependent on the text and appeared unaware that they should be using their own words.

Most candidates were able to attempt all questions. However, relatively few candidates attempted to define or discuss relevant key concepts or issues such as social interaction, market exchange, commodity, tradition, modernity, and the uses of the past. Without this it was sometimes difficult to determine whether or not the understanding of these terms was only based on common sense. In some cases, candidates failed to see beyond the tourist's description of their experiences, hence missing the essence of the text. They assumed, as the tourists, that the village of Botiza – a tourist site, was actually an authentic manifestation of the past, failing to see the anthropologist's analytical viewpoint. In particular, many candidates failed to recognize this interaction as an economic exchange where the object purchased is the embodiment of the jointly created meanings, and that, having made of "the past" a commodity, the encounter takes place as a modern economic exchange. Related to this, the other main difficulty lies in the recognition that tradition and modernity (re)create each other and are not mutually exclusive.

Some candidates repeated material from question 1 in question 2 which meant that at least one of the questions was not answered appropriately. In a small number of cases candidates were not able to complete all the questions on the paper. Particularly, question 3 was sometimes left unfinished, or so brief as to be too short to gain a good mark.

Though this session shows improvement, many candidates still fail to recognize the viewpoint of the anthropologist in question 2, or to fully identify their comparative ethnography in question 3.

Areas of the programme and examination in which the candidates appeared well prepared

As usual, the range of achievement was wide, with the critical difference being the ability to write conceptually and analyse rather than describe. Some were able to make sound statements about the viewpoint of the anthropologist and where the line of thought was well reasoned this was credited. The third, comparative, question produced a good range of well structured answers drawing on several different ethnographies across the candidate cohort.

Many candidates demonstrated good comprehension and analytical skills, critical thinking, and the ability to interweave ethnographic materials and anthropological concepts to make well-developed arguments. Some candidates showed an ability to bring in relevant anthropological concepts, as well as to produce convincing discussions and comparisons supported by relevant, fully contextualized ethnographies. In terms of the programme, many candidates demonstrated knowledge of processes such as commodification or globalization;

or even sophisticated analyses about tourism – which provided relevant conceptual frameworks for critical reading and analysis.

Most candidates had one or two ethnographies to call upon for comparative purposes, and generally these were presented in a detailed and competent manner. Some ethnographies were highly relevant and current but others were a little old and problematic.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

Most candidates seemed capable of identifying relevant points/examples but generalizations were limited. The more successful responses presented relevant generalizations and examples, but others were rather dependent on the text itself. Weaker scripts relied heavily upon the text and quoted answers rather than summarizing in the candidates' own words. A small number of answers were composed almost entirely of quotations from the set text.

Though many candidates were able to describe how tourists and locals jointly create an image of the past, only a few offered generalizations. The better answers proved understanding that this interaction was framed in the form of an economic exchange which implied the tangible commodification of “the past” in this tourist site.

Question 2

Stronger answers provided detailed analysis, and discussed the ways in which tradition and modernity interact and recreate each other in these tourist experiences. Many candidates chose to discuss this interaction in light of the concept of globalization. Other interesting answers referred to concepts related to the anthropology of tourism or discussed the moral dimension associated to the tourists' perception of their experiences. Some discussed this relationship with references to concepts such as the invention of tradition.

Weaker candidates saw tradition and modernity as mutually exclusive categories, failing to understand the nature of the interactions presented by the passage. Some responses were only descriptive, and many did not identify relevant anthropological concepts.

A significant proportion of candidates are still failing to make any reference to the viewpoint of the anthropologist and so are failing to gain more than 4 out of 6 marks for this question. The majority of candidates who did recognize the anthropologist's viewpoint discussed it – with few exceptions in terms of emic/etic distinctions.

Question 3

It is encouraging to see that most candidates structured their answers as an explicit comparison and could introduce a comparative ethnography, which was relevant in

many cases and allowed to structure a proper answer. Popular ethnographies chosen were Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*; Lee's *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*; and also Kraybill's Amish materials. Other candidates drew from Safa's account of *The Urban Poor of Puerto Rico* and Foley's *Learning Capitalist Culture*. Ong's *Spirits of Resistance*; Fernea's *Guest of the Sheik*, Okely's *The Traveller-Gypsies* and Chavez's *Shadowed Lives* also provided relevant material for comparison.

Some answers were more narrative than comparative in nature and structure. Candidates who did particularly well on question 3 often did so because they chose well-contextualized and well-justified comparative ethnographies. Those who did not do so well often appeared to have ignored the focus of the question which was how different societies relate to the past.

Many cited the publication date of ethnographic works rather than identifying the ethnographic present, although several were very good on this point too. Some used inappropriate sources such as journalism (e.g. National Geographic) or (less problematic) documentary film which should be discouraged unless used critically and supported by more solid anthropological material.

Finally, some candidates would introduce two different ethnographies even though the question specified that only one such group should be introduced. In a very few cases no ethnography was cited at all. Full identification of comparative materials continues to be a problem for a good number of candidates. They are required to fully contextualize their ethnographic materials. Quite often candidates would only mention a very generic reference to a group of people, without any identification in terms of place, author or historical context.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- As recommended in previous sessions candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully and structure their answers accordingly. It is always a good practice to work with previous paper 1 texts and markschemes in the classroom.
- Another good practice is to encourage candidates to be explicit in demonstrating their understanding of concepts by defining the terms used.
- Candidates should make sure they are actually answering the questions, and be aware that question 1 is usually descriptive but question 2 is more analytical. Teachers need to help candidates clarify key question terms, to make sure that answers are relevant and closely focused; again, practice with previous texts should be helpful here.
- In question 1, candidates need to use their own words rather than rely heavily on quotations. Candidates are expected to go beyond simple description and develop some generalizations that are relevant to the terms of the question and link them to relevant points and examples given in the text.

- In question 2, in order to gain full marks, the answer must identify the viewpoint of the anthropologist. Also, candidates should be encouraged to work on developing their analytical skills so that they can move beyond merely offering descriptive responses.
- In question 3, candidates should learn to present a comparative ethnography in terms of author, place, and historical context. It is quite unfortunate when candidates missed out on receiving more than 4 marks for this question because they seemed unaware of the need to present the ethnography in full detail.
- Try to use recent ethnographies, or if there is no choice but to use older studies (e.g. Fernea) then use them critically and acknowledge that they belong to an earlier and perhaps problematic period of anthropology. Encourage candidates to refer to the ethnographic present rather than the publication date. While documentary film can be used to support teaching it should not be a substitute for studying firmer ethnographic works, and journalistic material should be avoided unless supported with actual ethnographic work.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 6	7 - 12	13 - 16	17 – 21	22 - 26	27 - 31	32 - 44

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

As last year a small minority of candidates produced very short essays, just one essay, or a very short incomplete second essay on this component. The weaker scripts lacked a range of ethnographies and in some cases essays had no ethnographic material at all or repeated the same information in both essays and used only one ethnographic example for both essays. Some candidates showed little evidence of any anthropological study.

Weaker scripts lacked theoretical knowledge or used anthropological concepts in ways that were not best suited to the question or the ethnographic materials presented. In some cases candidates used the term “postmodern” to cover any point or approach that was made with little evidence of any understanding of what “postmodern” might mean.

Some candidates either failed to make clear which option they had chosen to answer on for the questions where alternatives were possible; or alternatively wrote essays that seemed to attempt to cover all the possible options in turn.

As ever the same key areas of the programme continues to prove difficult for some candidates and these relate to the definitions of central concepts and terms in questions; the ability to apply this knowledge to ethnographic data and to the question in a relevant manner; and the interweaving of relevant theory and ethnography. Some candidates answered

questions for which they seemed to be rather unprepared, for example on question 3 where many candidates appeared not to grasp what was meant by “classification systems”.

A small number of candidates used material by journalists rather than anthropologists or used their own knowledge of society (particularly for question 5 on modern media and new technology). However, in both cases candidates did not critically evaluate this material using appropriate anthropological conceptual and theoretical material.

- **Defining terms:** The central concepts appearing in questions were often undefined, poorly defined or only partially defined. These terms, such as "ethnicity", "gender", "place and space", "indigenous", “indigenous movement” and "social class", “classification system” were often not clearly defined and this left candidates struggling to make their answers relevant to the question. Often the terms are used in over general and commonsense ways rather than in the more specialized ways in which they are used by anthropologists.
- **Application of theory:** Centres varied widely in the ability shown by their candidates to carry out theoretically informed discussions with some candidates using no explicit theory and producing entirely descriptive answers.
- **Ability to answer all parts of a question:** Candidates sometimes ignored key words in a question or focused on one part of the question to the detriment of the rest. For example, in question 2, population movement was sometimes hardly mentioned in otherwise sound essays on exchange or kinship.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

Some candidates produced extremely good work demonstrating detailed levels of knowledge and skill in answering the questions. These candidates had a sound range and knowledge of anthropological theory, a keen ability to select and use relevant concepts and detailed knowledge of several ethnographies which they were able to draw on to produce detailed, reasoned, sound and thoughtful essays. A positive feature in this examination session was the knowledge some candidates demonstrated of aspects of the work of Foucault and in some cases of some more limited aspects of the theoretical work of Marilyn Strathern. Another feature that was positive in this examination session was the number of candidates who were explicitly making comparative points both ethnographically and also theoretically and conceptually.

At the other extreme, however, some candidates were only able to show very elementary knowledge of anthropological theory and sometimes there was little evidence of having studied the requisite number of ethnographies in sufficient detail to do well on the paper. There appeared to be a number of candidates who were able to answer one question on the paper quite well, but who then struggled to find a second question that they could answer to the same standard.

By comparison with last year’s examination, however, it was very pleasing to note how many candidates are now including more recent ethnographic studies and more contemporary

approaches to both theory and method. Some candidates were also able to compare the work of two ethnographers who had worked with the same societies to evaluate the differences in the ethnographies, in terms of theoretical assumptions, method and conclusions in a reasoned and critical fashion. This is encouraging and shows that candidates, when introduced to complex materials as part of their study in social and cultural anthropology, are capable of understanding social complexity and also how to analyse and evaluate different accounts of societies by ethnographers who draw on a range of theoretical materials and methods.

In this examination session it was clear that more candidates are now aware of and attempting to meet assessment criteria D and E (demonstrating knowledge of processes of change and transformation within and across cultures and societies and breadth of knowledge of societies).

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

This was by far the most popular question on the paper and most candidates appeared to have chosen this as one of their questions with gender and globalization the most popular options. While most candidates chose to provide examples of how globalization or gender or religion were implicated in some form of social conflict a small number chose to provide one example of conflict and one where gender \ globalization \ religion was not best viewed in terms of conflict. Most candidates also defined the terms they used with globalization and gender best defined. Religion was more often taken as given and a surprising number of candidates did not consider it necessary to explain what they understood by conflict. For globalization, candidates were able to draw on the work of Appadurai, Hannerz and others as a theoretical framework and some used Scott to ground their discussion of conflict. On gender, candidates often seemed well informed on the work of Rosaldo, Ortner and others. For conflict Marxist or Marxist derived theories and perspectives were the most cited.

Question 2

For this popular question candidates selected from a range of appropriate ethnographies including Bourgois (*In Search of Respect*) or material on Chinese rural to urban factory women (P. Ngai *Made in China*), or *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (Ehrenreich) and many wrote sound and sometimes extremely good essays using these texts. Kinship was, however, often reduced to gender issues and sometimes candidates seemed unclear if the focus of their script was labour/exchange or labour/kinship. Those who wrote on exchange were often able to draw on anthropological work on reciprocity, but those who wrote on either kinship or labour tended to produce more descriptive scripts with fewer links to either theory or concepts focusing more on perspectives such as conflict or cohesion.

A common issue in this question included putting “population movement” to one side while the candidate wrote on kinship or exchange or labour and then a quick reference to population movement in a concluding sentence. This sometimes read as though candidates were reproducing class essays to which they added a comment about population movement.

Question 3

This question produced sound answers in the cases where candidates knew what was meant by classification systems, and were able to demonstrate how a classification system was used in a social context, often using the example of the traveller gypsies studied by Okely. Many of these candidates were able to draw on the work of Lévi-Strauss and to discuss structuralist studies in their answers. Weaker essays did not discuss classification systems at all but rather tended to describe a single binary division in a social context, for example an ethnic divide in a high school. These latter scripts also tended to cite no or inappropriate anthropological theory and theorists.

Question 4

This question produced answers that at one extreme were very good with sound understandings of ideology and explanations of what hegemony might mean (often citing Gramsci) and how hegemonic systems work with examples drawn from a range of ethnographies and, at the other extreme, some much weaker scripts with little understanding of ideology but usually some knowledge of inequality. Inequality was not always well handled in the weaker scripts with any social difference assumed to mean inequality. Ethnographies used to answer this question were very varied ranging from Bourgois’ work on violence in El Salvador, to Nash (*We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: dependency and exploitation in Bolivian tin mines*), Ortner’s ethnography on Mount Everest, and some older materials such as ethnographies on the Tiwi and material on women in 1950s village Iran.

Question 5

This question divided candidates between those who produced very good answers and those who produced some of the weakest scripts in this examination session. The weakest scripts were no more than lists of the technologies candidates themselves appeared to be familiar with (Facebook *etc.*) discussed in terms of superficial and generalized stereotypical statements of the loss of human interaction and moralistic warnings about the social consequences of such media and technologies. These scripts usually had no reference to any ethnographic work or to any anthropological theory. The sound answers to this question were those which cited the work of anthropologists such as Boellstorf (*Coming of age in second life*) or Carter’s work on living in virtual communities for candidates answering on western societies. For those who chose to write on modern media or new technologies in indigenous societies the work of Turner with the Kayapo was a popular choice. The very best answers, however, were not simply those that demonstrated sound knowledge of relevant ethnography and understanding of modern media and new

technologies but also linked this clearly and explicitly to changes in or a rethinking of social relations.

Question 6

While there were some good scripts for this question some candidates who wrote on either political organization (by far the more popular of the two options) or human rights (which relatively few candidates chose as the option) failed to link their knowledge of political organization/human rights to an indigenous movement and so did not fully answer the question. These candidates either cited a social group that was not indigenous or, if indigenous did not demonstrate that the group was, or was part of, an indigenous movement. As with question 5 Turner's work on the Kayapo was often used to good effect and the best answers were able to show how the Kayapo themselves are internally differentiated and respond in different ways and organize for different ends both internally and in relation to outside groups. A fair proportion of candidates also used recently published work on Native American societies such as Searle's' *An Era of Inuit Empowerment* 2006 and Stern & Stevenson's, (eds), 2006 *Critical Inuit Studies: An Anthology of Contemporary Arctic Ethnography*.

Question 7

This was a reasonably popular question with most of the answers divided between two options, ethnicity and social class. The candidates who wrote on ethnicity often chose Bourgois (*In Search of Respect*) as a key ethnography and many produced reasonable answers particularly when they were able to link economic organization to institutionalized ethnic discrimination and changes in labour force participation. Weaker responses were those on social class where it was clear that class was not well understood (with a few exceptions), often not linked convincingly to economic organization and used simply to state that poorer people in the USA (usually) were more likely to be Black or Hispanic. Some poor scripts discussed the women in a given society (sometimes the Na or the Tiwi) as belonging to one class and the men in their families as belonging to another class and this was rather problematic.

Question 8

As with question 5 this one was answered well or reasonably well by some candidates who had suitable ethnographic material and relevant concepts/theories to bring to the question and very poorly by those candidates who had nothing other than superficial general knowledge, usually moralistic, and wrote on the assumed the decline of social values and traditions in modern western society. These latter candidates demonstrated no anthropological knowledge, a very limited understanding of consumption and consumption practices and mostly wrote brief repetitive scripts.

The better scripts while sometimes focusing a little too heavily on production rather than consumption did nonetheless utilize relevant theoretical materials, such as world systems theory, dependency theory *etc.*, to contextualize their work. Interesting ethnographic material included work on the second-hand clothing trade and films with

ethnographic content about the Zambian market in second-hand clothing imported from western nations.

Question 9

This question produced some very good answers when candidates were able clearly to define personhood and then move from this to considering personhood in two distinct societies. Relations between people, rituals to acknowledge partial and full personhood and modern western assumptions of personhood as an aspect of all individuals were discussed across the scripts. Stronger answers were also able to make clear that personhood is a social construct and therefore is variable and may change over time in any given society. The limits of personhood were discussed in relation to caste systems, though this did not always produce convincing responses, and the agentive capacities of some people in some places to define or alter personhood were sometimes described and discussed.

A key weakness with the answers to this question tended to be the lack of a reasonable understanding of personhood which meant that some candidates wrote in general terms about people or individuality and were thus not focused sufficiently on the question.

Question 10

The most popular option was to consider ritual in relation to tourism and here Danforth's *Firewalking and Religious Healing: The Anastenaria of Greece and the American Firewalking Movement* was often used to good effect. Other popular ethnographies included material on the San or the Masai where ritual dances, for example, are now part of tourist performance designed to attract spectators who will pay to see "traditional spectacles". These candidates were sometimes able to discuss the materials they used in terms of the commodification of culture and/or the exploitation of some groups of people by others for economic gain in a tourism context. Candidates who were able to define ritual, often in terms of rites of passage, tended to remain more focused on the question and so do better overall in terms of the assessment criteria. Some candidates wrote on tourism in general or how work patterns have changed because of tourism but did not discuss either in relation to ritual and so did not fully answer the question. For example, some interesting material on tourism and the Na by Walsh was cited but with no reference to ritual.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should be reminded that key terms used in questions must be defined, and applied to the ethnographies discussed in the essay.
- When a question has options to choose from it is in the best interest of the candidate to make clear which option is chosen and for the candidate to stick to this and not be tempted also to write on the other options given for a particular question.

- Teachers need to help candidates achieve a balance between conceptual development and theoretical exposition and analysis. This works best when the concepts are closely linked to ethnographic material so that candidates can see how the concepts help to explain the descriptive materials they read.
- Candidates should be discouraged from attempting to answer a question on a topic that they have not studied or which is similar to, but not quite the same, as a class essay they have already prepared unless they are able to adapt this to answer the question that is set on the paper. Candidates who write from their own personal knowledge of social life and who have no relevant concepts or theories that they can use to evaluate their descriptions of society are very unlikely to do well. This was a particular problem for questions 5 and 8 in this session.
- Candidates need to be introduced to a broad range of anthropological theories and concepts as well as to ethnographies which serve to link with or exemplify the theories candidates are taught. In particular, centres should endeavour to ensure that candidates are given sufficient time during the course of their studies to become familiar with some more contemporary ethnographies and some of the more recent theoretical developments in the discipline.
- Candidates should be strongly encouraged to answer all parts of a question and not to only write on the one part that they know more about.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 2	3 – 4	5 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 – 15	16 - 20

General comments

Overall, the range of responses was very impressive this year. Many candidates were successful in linking theory to theoretical perspectives and ethnography. This kind of “triangulation” is challenging and it is wonderful to see that candidates are increasingly successful in presenting analyses that accomplish this. In addition, the range of ethnographic and theoretical sources continues to improve, which has allowed the candidates greater flexibility in providing creative and intelligent responses. There were a few exceptions to this, as some candidates seemed to have learned theory that was not clearly relevant to the ethnographies they studied.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Perhaps the most notable weakness was the cases in which candidates struggled to make relevant links between theory and ethnography. These essays often represented a forcing of a theory into an ethnography that did not logically fit together. For example, candidates tried to apply Morgan's ideas of social evolutionism to Anne Alison's *Nightwork*; some also discussed Malinowski's functionalism in relation to Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*. While creativity is encouraged, candidates should also be encouraged to use theory and theoretical issues that are clearly linked to the ethnography in question.

A second notable weakness was that some essays were not clearly relevant to the question. These essays often consisted of lists of (seemingly memorized) information presented in a very descriptive manner. In some cases, candidates did not even identify the question being answered.

Finally, some candidates seemed to be relying primarily on short summaries from textbooks in understanding both ethnography and theory. In terms of ethnography this is not in the spirit of the subject guide, which asks for *detailed* study. In terms of theory, summaries can be quite useful. However, we also need to be cautious of providing candidates with simple lists of characteristics of a theory that then hinder their ability to be able to apply or discuss theory in any critical way.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Many candidates have clearly been discussing and practising linking theory to ethnography and to theoretical perspectives. In the strongest cases it was evident that the candidates were presenting essays which included creative, independent thinking – a skill that will serve them well in their future endeavours. Some candidates were also able to present essays that showed how their understanding of theory had enhanced their ability to understand contemporary social issues. While not required, this was inspiring.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

This was a relatively popular question. Common ethnographies used included Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*, Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and Okely's *Traveller Gypsies*. There were many excellent responses here. The weaker responses often confused structure-centred perspectives with structuralism and structural-functionalism. While structure-centred perspectives overlap with both theories mentioned, they are not one and the same.

Question 2

The range of responses to this question was impressive as essays represented responses to all three schools of thought listed in the question. Many candidates were able to connect their chosen school of thought to one or more relevant ethnographies. The strongest essays also wove theoretical perspectives into their responses, using these to help highlight their arguments. Some of the weaker responses neglected theoretical perspectives, limiting the marks they received on criterion A.

Question 3

This question solicited the full range of responses. The best essays offered clear explanations of a “conflict-centred perspective” linked it to relevant and well-detailed ethnography. These essays used both the perspective and theory to help explain why and how an ethnographer presented society. Weaker essays had difficulty defining what a conflict-centred perspective was, or did not include any theoretical schools at all.

Question 4

Again, the range of responses to this question was impressive as essays represented all three perspectives included in the question. There were some excellent responses comparing ethnographers’ use of agency - notably (although not exclusively) drawing on Bourgois, Okely, Fernea and Abu-Lughod. The most successful candidates used the perspectives to focus their comparison and theory to help explain their arguments. Some candidates were partially successful in effectively drawing on the perspective that formed the focus of their response, but neglected theoretical schools, reducing their marks on criterion B.

Question 5

Some candidates clearly relished this question as it gave them great freedom in selecting the material they used in their essays. The structure of the question also guided candidates to include all three key aspects (theory, perspectives and ethnography) which helped candidates succeed.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- It is useful for teachers to spend time helping candidates develop skills that will enable them to respond to different styles of questions. Some questions guide candidates towards specific schools of thought or perspectives quite directly. Others leave more room for choice. In all cases, candidates need to be prepared to weave theoretical perspectives, theoretical schools and ethnography into their responses in meaningful ways.
- Teachers should give careful thought to the ethnographies they select for their courses in light of the need to teach theory. These need to be learned in conjunction with one another. For example, Bourgois’ ethnography lends itself well to studies of political economy, Bourdieu, Scott’s resistance theory, gender theory and post-

modernism. It is not well connected to social evolutionism. Teachers need not teach all theories or theoretical perspectives. They should select a good range from the subject guide according to its guidelines. Reading the subject guide, support materials, Online Curriculum Centre (OCC), past examinations, and subject reports also help to guide teachers toward a breadth of material for study.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 21	22 - 27	28 - 33	34 - 44

General Comments

This year saw a significant increase of approximately 30% in the number of candidates, and the performance of some new centres was quite encouraging, suggesting that sound teaching programmes are in place. However this was not always the case and the number of candidates performing at the lower end of the range also increased. Consequently the quality of anthropological knowledge, understanding and skills in evidence this year varied enormously, from excellent to all but minimal, and with a wide range in between. Where some scripts showed strong evidence of anthropological knowledge and understanding and good analytical and comparative skills, others were limited to rather general, common sense or even personal responses, with little evidence of anything anthropological at all.

As was the case last year, examiners continued to comment on the overall lack of specific and explicit knowledge of core anthropological concepts and thus more analytical skills. As a result, many answers were more descriptive than analytical. While a good many candidates demonstrated quite detailed knowledge of ethnographic materials and some comparative skills, they often failed to demonstrate anthropological knowledge and understanding in terms of definitions or discussion of relevant core concepts. Linked to this, there was little effort to evaluate or question anthropological materials. In terms of ethnography, although many candidates appeared to have quite detailed ethnographic knowledge across a range of societies or groups, some seemed limited in their choices: descriptive materials were rather similar, restricted to one region, did not address all aspects of the programme or were not ethnographic but documentary and/or journalistic, requiring different treatment. In particular this year, all examiners noted with some concern an increase of these kinds of non-ethnographic materials, and usually these responses were less successful in establishing the relevance of their materials (see recommendations below).

Overall the difference between stronger and weaker scripts was not only the range of ethnographic knowledge demonstrated (now assessed in Criterion E as well as Criterion B) but most critically the ability to discuss and apply specifically anthropological concepts and approaches, to develop answers that were analytical and anthropologically informed (assessed in criterion A). Criterion D, assessing overall knowledge and understanding of

processes of change and transformation as evidenced across both essays, continued to pose problems for some candidates (see recommendations below).

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

As already suggested, in terms of both programme and examination, many scripts continued to demonstrate very limited knowledge of relevant anthropological terms, concepts and arguments. In particular, several themes seemed to present difficulties – 2.6 Systems of knowledge, 2.7 Belief systems and practices and 2.8 Moral systems – leaving questions 3, 4, 6 and 9 infrequently chosen and often poorly answered. Generally, more often than not there was little or no definition or discussion of relevant key terms which were quite often either used incorrectly or presented as if self-evident, suggesting little understanding of ways in which anthropological approaches are different from commonsense ones. This was particularly the case in question 5 (modern media/new technologies and social relations) and question 8 (modern consumption practices effect on society) which elicited some responses that evidenced no anthropology or ethnography of any kind. In other questions where some ethnographic materials were presented, responses rather often addressed only one part of the question effectively, or left key terms unexamined or implicit (questions 1, 5, 7 and 10). Thus many answers were more descriptive than analytical and did not provide any contextualization of ethnographic materials leading, in many cases, to limited arguments and rather superficial comparisons. Further, a good many candidates seemed not to understand the importance of careful identification of the descriptive materials they presented, or to comprehend that what was described in a particular ethnography was the product of a particular ethnographer in a particular place at a particular time. And in a good number of cases, as already noted but it worth repeating, other kinds of accounts – journalistic, digital, or documentary – were presented without any recognition or discussion of ways in which these might differ from ethnography. Such materials, if relevant and they sometimes are, may support but cannot substitute for ethnography. In several centres, it seemed that almost all of the materials they had studied were of this nature.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Some candidates showed very good conceptual knowledge and strong comparative skills, and were able to develop informed and well-supported answers with relevant use of very detailed ethnographic materials across all themes, but this was unusual. These candidates were able to offer clear anthropological definitions of relevant concepts, full identification of ethnographies and focused, relevant and detailed examples, demonstrating the high quality of work that can be achieved at this level. More generally, it seemed that themes 2.1 through 2.5 were quite well understood and a good many candidates were able to use ethnographic materials that were generally relevant and showed quite detailed ethnographic knowledge of several societies or groups. The majority of candidates, though not all, made reference to specific ethnography and were able to identify it if not always completely. Many were able to provide the name of the anthropologist and the title of the study, and sometimes the ethnographic present. Most were able to offer specific details, and show how and why these were relevant in terms of the question. Candidates were also fairly well equipped to offer

comparisons, although these quite often needed to be more explicit, and to identify if not to discuss or analyse processes of change. A few candidates demonstrated excellent conceptual knowledge and understanding of processes of change and transformation and even where accounts were more superficial many were able to provide relevant ethnography and examples.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

This was the most popular question, usually focused on globalization or gender, but also on religion if less frequently. Responses varied hugely across all three categories, from closely focused, anthropologically informed and clearly analytical essays to others that presented some generally relevant ethnographic description of globalization, gender or religion but lacked any conceptualization, and frequently left the relation to conflict implicit or even missing. In terms of conceptualization, *globalization* was rather often treated very generally, as incorporating any kind of change, and references to localization were very infrequent which was disappointing; however some candidates were able to provide more informed discussions and link these effectively to clearly relevant cases. Rather fewer responses provided any discussion of gender although there was occasional explicit recognition that this was a socially and culturally constructed category in stronger answers. Religion too was very rarely defined and generally led to weaker responses overall. Candidates often drew on the same range of materials, including Bourgois, Fernea (though somewhat misrepresented in some responses), Lee, Chagnon, Nanda, and Safa. In terms of religion, many used Kraybill's Amish materials or Brooks and Bullock – although while generally relevant, the latter are problematic as they lack any specific ethnographic context and often need to be presented more critically.

Question 2

This was also quite a popular question usually focused on kinship or labour and sometimes very well done, where key terms were discussed anthropologically and linked to well-detailed relevant ethnography such as Bourgois, Chavez, Safa and Holmes Eber. Less effective responses quite often misunderstood population movement and/or provided very general and purely descriptive answers. There were fewer responses addressing exchange but some of these were quite effective in linking anthropological concepts to relevant ethnographic materials using either Lee or Holmes Eber.

Question 3

This was not a popular question but generally produced responses at either end of the spectrum with not much in between, reflecting the extent of the candidate's knowledge and understanding of classification systems and relevant ethnography (including Abu-Lughod, Fernea, Lee and Bohannan) as well as the ability to maintain a close focus on the option chosen. The best essays were both comparative and

analytical, but many were descriptive, rather general and often suggested a very limited understanding of the topic.

Question 4

There were some informed and thoughtful answers to this question but also a good many that struggled with conceptualization and/or relevant ethnography; thus more answers were descriptive than analytical. Better answers most often linked ideology to gender or class inequality in capitalist societies; others, drawing from Lee's materials, produced quite good if largely descriptive answers about egalitarian ideology among foragers. Lee, Bourgois, Chavez, Chagnon (sometimes somewhat misrepresented), Safa, Weiner, Kray and Foley were common ethnographic references.

Question 5

This was a popular question and produced some anthropologically informed and well-developed responses to both options, the best of which were contextualized in terms of globalization and location and provided specific, detailed and relevant examples, including Abu-Lughod, Lee and Kraybill. Others, interpreting "new technologies" in locally relative terms, were sometimes also more or less effective in terms of showing the effect of new tools on social relations, for example using Sharp and Chagnon. However many other responses were more limited, in some cases presented entirely in "common sense" terms or even simply as personal experience with no context or evidence of anything anthropological at all.

Question 6

This question was rarely chosen, and few responses demonstrated any clear understanding of the key term "indigenous movements", with several answers simply ignoring this aspect of the question.

Question 7

This was quite a popular question but not often well answered: economic organization was rarely defined or discussed and *social class* - the option usually chosen - was quite often misrepresented as social status, leading to some inappropriate choices in terms of ethnography. However some made good use of the contrast between non-class societies such as foragers using Lee's account, to clarify the nature of social class and its relation to economic organization quite effectively. Other more successful responses not only defined and discussed the concept of social class correctly, but also identified relevant related concepts (for example, production, distribution and consumption, or specialization, surplus and mobility) and/or context (for example capitalism or a market economy) and were able to apply these to relevant ethnographies – for example, Bourgois, Foley, Chavez and Safa were used quite effectively. Age or ethnicity were only very occasionally selected and usually resulted in descriptive rather than analytical answers: ethnicity in this context seemed quite poorly understood.

Question 8

Rather like question 5 this question was quite popular, but seemed to encourage answers that rather often relied almost entirely on the candidates' own personal knowledge and experience presented in rather general terms with little anthropological support. However many responses were more successful, both in terms of relevant ethnographic knowledge; for example Watson's work on McDonalds was quite often used well here; and more informed anthropologically in terms of related concepts – such as subsistence as contrasted to market economies. And a very few candidates, including some writing in Spanish and using most often Mexican ethnography, were able to present quite sophisticated argument and analysis supported by well-detailed ethnographic materials.

Question 9

This was rarely selected and it seemed that only a very few candidates had some understanding of the central concept of personhood. Nonetheless, other responses were sometimes more or less effective if only at the level of description rather than analysis, most often using Turnbull, Kraybill and Bourgois as ethnographic references.

Question 10

This was not very often chosen with the more successful answers usually focused on ritual and tourism rather than ritual and work. In either case ritual was too often treated very generically and so generally as to apply to almost any set of repeated activities: this was particularly the case linking ritual to work and these responses were rarely successful. Where candidates were familiar with relevant ethnography, for example, a range of accounts of the Toraja, or an earlier Paper 1 text on Fiji, candidates were more successful in discussing the role of ritual and tourism.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Conceptualization

The standard level course incorporates three fundamental components: anthropological concepts and approaches (assessed in criterion A), detailed ethnographic knowledge (assessed in criterion B) and comparisons (assessed in criterion C). As was the case in previous years, while many candidates are quite well prepared in terms of their ethnographic knowledge and most demonstrate some comparative skills (although these often need to be more explicit and systematic), many demonstrate quite limited knowledge and understanding of anthropological concepts and approaches. Yet these need to be at the centre of any and every course, class and exam response. As one examiner wrote, "Candidates need to be encouraged to develop a more conceptual understanding of the ethnographic materials they read. It is this conceptual framework that will enable them to discuss the ethnographic materials more effectively and critically. Many candidates seem to

be familiar with enough ethnographic material but merely describe it rather than using it to support an argument.” If they are to be able to construct an argument these key concepts must be taught, discussed and constantly used in relation to different ethnographic materials to ensure their correct and appropriate application.

Ethnographic materials

While many candidates demonstrate quite a good knowledge of appropriate ethnographic materials that were usually quite varied, this year as last more candidates are presenting journalistic and documentary sources – and in one or two cases even novels – uncritically, as if they were ethnography. Examples seen this year include Fadiman’s account of the Hmong; Geraldine Brooks’ and Sandra Bullock’s discussion of women and Islam; Cheever’s account of nannies in New York City; Fonseca’s account of Gypsies in Spain and Shachtman’s account of the Amish, along with a range of films made for television. While these may be valuable as supplementary materials, they should be used in support of ethnography not as a substitute for it which was rather often the case this year. Such materials also need to be treated somewhat differently than ethnography and teachers need to help candidates recognize how and why they differ, the implications of this and how to reference/discuss this in the examination context. Examiners also suggested that in some cases ethnography needs to be updated to ensure that candidates are familiar with some more contemporary materials. Finally, complete identification remains an issue for many: minimally, this requires the names of the society or group as well as the anthropologist/author, the place and some context as well as the ethnographic present. Ideally, this would also include the title and date of publication but this is not essential. And although more candidates were successful in meeting the new Criterion E which takes account of the range and depth of knowledge of different societies demonstrated over the paper as a whole (2/44 marks), this remains an issue for others and deserves some classroom discussion. As one examiner noted, “Candidates who have depth of knowledge about fewer societies seemed to do better than those who presented bits and pieces about many societies.” The same examiner also offered some good advice worth following, noting that “the exam does not ask that candidates detail everything they know about a particular ethnography, but rather that they need to use that knowledge selectively to shape their responses in relation to the concepts given in the question.”

Themes

This year more candidates appeared to be better versed in contemporary themes such as globalization, modern consumption practices, migration and different forms of inequality which is encouraging. However there are still some centres/candidates who seem limited by the ethnographies they have studied: in such cases ethnography needs to be updated to ensure that candidates are familiar with some more contemporary issues. Teachers are also reminded to address processes of change and social transformation more consistently and critically so that candidates become more aware of their implications: rather often this year discussion of globalization was reduced to “good” and “bad” and was much too often used as if it represented any kind of change. Knowledge and understanding of different processes of change is now

assessed across the paper as a whole in criterion D (4/44 marks) and remains a limitation for a good many candidates.

Exam preparation and essay writing skills

Finally, several examiners commented on the apparent lack of sound essay writing and comparative skills, apparent in a good number of candidates. Teachers need to spend time preparing candidates with exam practice and essay writing skills, which should be developed and reinforced through frequent classroom practice and critique. Candidates are sometimes so focused on demonstrating what they know about an ethnography they forget to answer the question. In particular, teachers need to move the candidates away from describing ethnographies towards more systematic analysis and comparison. It is also critical that candidates understand that answers must be based on detailed ethnographic materials and not their own generalized experience: this was a larger problem than usual this year. Obviously, but worth restating, all candidates should be very familiar with the assessment criteria and it is strongly recommended that teachers use the exam criteria in their own ongoing assessment process.

It was noted that there were more instances than usual of inappropriate ethnocentrism in some scripts this session, sometimes in the language used to discuss or describe other societies and cultures but more often in the assumptions made in terms of a candidate's own society, using the terms "we" and "our" as well as giving locations as if these were self-evident and needed no further identification. Making candidates more aware of their own assumptions and biases is one of the goals of any anthropology course and this kind of writing needs to be consistently monitored and discussed.