

# **Improving Performance at Intermediate 2 Modern Studies:**

## **A Summary of Advice in PA Reports giving Guidance to Centres**

The following comments are a distillation and development of the advice given in recent Principal Assessor's Reports. The full versions are posted on the Modern Studies Subject page of the SQA website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

### **Introduction**

It is important that students are familiar with the layout of the examination paper and know in advance the study themes that they should answer in the examination. In Section A, Political Issues in the United Kingdom, there is a choice of two study themes; Question 1 – Government and Decision Making in Scotland and Question 2 – Government and Decision Making in Central Government. In Section B, Social Issues in the United Kingdom, there is a choice of two study themes; Question 3 – Equality in Society: Wealth and Health in the United Kingdom and Question 4 – Crime and the Law in Society. In Section C, International Issues, there is a choice of five study themes; Question 5 – The Republic of South Africa, Question 6 – The People's Republic of China, Question 7 – The United States of America, Question 8 - The European Union and Question 9 – Development in Brazil.

Students should answer three questions – one from each section. Students should note that each question is divided into separate parts. One section will contain four parts while the other two sections will contain three parts. Always make sure that students attempt to answer all parts of each question. The instructions on the front cover of the examination paper will indicate in which section the questions are divided into four parts. Centres should ensure that students have seen examples of SQA past papers (2007 onwards) and are aware of the format of the examination. Prelim exams should follow the format of the examination paper and questions in one section should contain four parts.

Time management is important in achieving the best possible mark. The examination is two hours long and candidates should allocate approximately 40 minutes per question. Since individual questions towards the end of the paper can be worth as much as eight marks, candidates who omit questions or fail to complete the paper will find it difficult to gain a high grade or even pass the examination.

Having a structure to answer questions is good practice but formulaic and over-wordy formats, repeated in every question, can take up valuable time and gain little credit.

The exemplar answers throughout this paper are given to illustrate the guidance being given. It is recognised that centres will adopt different approaches in teaching these skills and that students will adopt a range of techniques in answering questions.

The exemplar answers given are based on responses to the 2007 examination. Details of these questions are indicated in the footnotes.

## LO1 (knowledge and understanding) Questions

The number of marks allocated to each question is an indication of how much candidates should write in their answers. LO1 (knowledge and understanding) questions can be worth 4, 6 or 8 marks. For 4 marks two points must be made in order to score full marks. Up to three marks can be awarded for a well developed, high quality point with supporting exemplification. It is recommended that in six mark questions, three points should be made and developed and in eight mark questions, candidates should attempt to make four points.

Candidates should read all questions carefully and must answer the question asked. They must ensure they have read and understood what the question is asking them to do and not attempt to give a pre-prepared answer which does not address the question asked.

At Intermediate 2, questions may address quite specific issues and candidates need to bring relevant and reasonably current knowledge to their answers. Centres should ensure that candidates have a range of knowledge which is relevant and contemporary. Some answers suffer, particularly in certain international topics, from being too historical. In the international section, in particular, knowledge demonstrated by candidates can often be one-dimensional and exaggerated.

There are two types of LO1 questions. LO1(a) questions require candidates to describe in some detail a political, social or international issue while LO1(b) questions require candidates to give explanations, show causation or give a balanced argument. In general, LO1(b) questions are more demanding and require candidates to show various factors interacting. LO1(b) answers which merely describe and provide no explanation will gain few marks.

MSPs can represent their constituents in the Scottish Parliament in a number of ways.

Describe, **in detail**, **two** ways MSPs can represent their constituents in the Scottish Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

**(4 marks)**

The first way an MSP can represent their constituents in the Scottish Parliament is by asking a question at First Minister's Question Time on behalf of his or her constituents (1). This usually takes place every Thursday when the Parliament is sitting (1). The MSP can ask the First Minister a question about schools in the area since this is a devolved matter (1).

A second way an MSP can represent their constituents is to try and bring in a new law (1) that the people in their area want, for example the Scottish Parliament banned fox hunting with dogs (1).

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<sup>1</sup> Intermediate 2, 2007 Paper; Question 1(a)

Centres may adopt various methods to encourage candidates to show detail and development in their answers e.g. PEE or SEE. Candidates should make a point (P), explain (E) the point further and provide a relevant example (E) to support the explanation given. Individual points made, without any explanation or development, no matter how accurate or numerous, will be treated as a list and awarded a maximum of two marks.

Reducing poverty in the United Kingdom is an important government policy.

Explain, **in detail**, why reducing poverty in the United Kingdom is an important government policy.<sup>2</sup>

(8 marks)

Reducing poverty is an important government policy as poverty causes ill health, people who live in poverty are more likely to suffer illness and have lower life expectancy than people who are not poor. This may be because they have worse housing which is damp and causes breathing problems. (3 marks awarded)

Governments may also wish to reduce poverty because people who are poor often rely on benefits, this costs the government a lot of money and they will be able to spend less on benefits and cut taxes if poverty is reduced. (2 marks awarded)

*Candidates should aim to make two additional points to complete this answer although a further well developed and exemplified point could be awarded 3 marks and would achieve full marks for the question.*

As is stated in the Intermediate 2 course specification when referring to the rationale of the Modern Studies course: -

‘The aim of this Course is to develop, within a balanced structure, the candidate’s knowledge and understanding of Modern Studies relating to contemporary political, social and international issues and the skill of evaluating.’

In the International Issues section of the examination, candidates will not be credited for knowledge which is too historical. Specifically, in the Study Theme 3A: The Republic of South Africa, descriptions of life under Apartheid will not gain marks; in Study Theme 3B: The People’s Republic of China, references to the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 will not gain marks.

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<sup>2</sup> Intermediate 2, 2007 Paper; Question 3(b)

It is expected that candidates will be able to show a knowledge and understanding of recent social, political and economic issues in the countries they have studied.

The Government of South Africa faces political opposition from various groups.

Explain, **in detail**, why the Government of South Africa faces political opposition from various groups.<sup>3</sup>

(6 marks)

The government of South Africa is facing opposition from some people in the trade union movement, even although the trade union movement led by COSATU generally supports the ANC, they are not happy with the slow progress in improving the position of their members. The trade unions think that while rich people in South Africa are getting much richer, workers are not making enough progress and there is still a lot of unemployment. (3 marks)

Students must also be prepared to answer a range of questions and be careful not to adopt a one-sided and possibly stereotypical approach to the topic studied. Candidates will not gain marks if they attempt to 'turn' the question set to the one they wish to answer, it is also important to read the question carefully in order to understand what the question is asking.

There are opportunities for political participation and representation in China.

Describe, **in detail**, the opportunities for political participation and representation in China.<sup>4</sup>

(6 marks)

Some candidates may assume that any question about political participation and representation in China would focus on the limitations and restrictions in place but this question asks about opportunities for political participation and representation. Turning the question to list restrictions would not gain marks.

There are a small number of legal political parties in China. The main political party is the Communist Party. People in China can work hard and prove themselves to be worthy of membership. Young people may join the Young Communist Youth League to improve their chances of joining the CPC when they are older. (3 marks)

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<sup>3</sup> Intermediate 2, 2007 Paper; Question 5(b)

<sup>4</sup> Intermediate 2, 2007 Paper; Question 6(a)

## LO2 (evaluating) Questions

LO2 questions are source based questions where candidates are able to show their skill in using the information in the sources to draw conclusions, make decisions, support or oppose a point of view and explain selectivity in the use of facts. These questions are generally worth eight marks although the decision making task in Section B - Social Issues in the United Kingdom is worth ten marks.

Questions generally consist of three sources, which may be written, statistical in the form of tables, graphs or charts and factfiles. In order to gain full marks, all sources must be used in the answer. High quality answers will link information across the sources and gain high marks.

- **Reasons to Support and Oppose**

In this type of question a viewpoint is given and candidates must use the evidence to give two reasons to support and two reasons to oppose the viewpoint. It is essential that candidates refer clearly and explicitly to the viewpoint in their answer. It is sometimes impossible to award any marks if a candidate immediately begins the answer by using information from the sources without indicating whether the evidence is supporting or opposing the view.

The first reason to support the view of Bob Ure when he says 'pressure groups can only achieve their aims if they use direct action and illegal methods' is ...<sup>5</sup>

Candidates must make full use of the sources in their answer; in order to score high marks it is not enough to take one point from any source without linking it to another point or explaining its importance or relevance.

... Source 2 shows that dozens of protestors disrupted traffic across Scotland and blocked railway lines and later a few hundred protestors tried to break down the steel fencing surrounding the hotel at Gleneagles. These actions gained a lot of publicity in the media so they did achieve their aims of being noticed. (2 marks)

Good answers will synthesise information within and between sources. This involves linking information to give added weight to the reasons being given or making comparisons.

The point above can be strengthened by giving supporting information from Source 1.

Source 1 also states that in spite of a very large, peaceful demonstration being held in Edinburgh, many of the reports the next day focussed upon the small group of protesters who

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<sup>5</sup> Intermediate 2, 2007 Paper; Question 1(c)

threatened to break away from the official demonstration and cause violence and damage. (additional mark awarded)

It is important to use the statistical information accurately and quote the figures given in the source to support the answer. Since statistics can often be used to both support or oppose a point of view it is important that the relevance of the statistics is explained and how they support the reasons being given.

A reason to oppose the view of Bob Ure who states that 'pressure groups can only achieve their aims if they use direct action and illegal methods' is that Source 3 shows that a large percentage of people are prepared to take part in legal and peaceful forms of action e.g. 67% have donated money to an organisation in the last twelve months and 50% signed a petition however only a small percentage (2%) participated in illegal protest activities so pressure groups do not have to use illegal methods to attract a lot of support. (3 marks)

High quality answers will synthesise information across the sources.

A second reason to support the view of Bob Ure when he says pressure groups can only achieve their aims when they use direct action is shown in Source 2 and Source 3. Source 2 says that groups such as Dissent, the Wombles felt they were successful in forcing the leaders of rich countries to listen and urged the public to continue forms of direct action such as boycotting products to put pressure on rich countries. Source 3 shows us that 41% of the public had boycotted certain products in the last twelve months which is one of the highest figures in the forms of action taken. (2 marks)

- **The Decision Making Task**

This question type is part of Section B – Social Issues in the United Kingdom and is worth 10 marks. Candidates are required to use the evidence to justify the choice of a particular policy option. Evidence in the sources will be a mixture of written, in the form of a factfile or contrasting viewpoints and statistical information. Candidates must also, for full marks, say why they did not choose the other option.

The questions are designed to contain sufficient evidence which will allow candidates to choose either of the options given. Although candidates may have knowledge and understanding of the policy options which they must recommend, this exercise is one which involves the use of the evidence in the sources to support a decision. Their own knowledge and understanding will assist candidates in putting the information into context, however no marks will be awarded for candidate's use of background knowledge. Note that this is different from the Decision Making Exercise at Higher

and may cause confusion for candidates who have ‘dropped down’ from higher or are being taught in composite classes.

As is the case with the Higher DME, a report style is a good way to organise and present the large amount of information available in this type of question. It should be noted, however, that all aspects of the higher decision making exercise are not replicated in the decision making task at Intermediate level. Candidates should give a recommendation at the start of their answer. They should give reasons to support their choice of option. They are not required to give reasons to oppose the option they have chosen as at Higher, candidates who do this will be using valuable time without gaining any additional marks. Candidates do however, have to explain why they did not make the other choice, failure to do this will result in a maximum of eight marks being awarded. This explanation does not have to come at the end of the answer although it is clearer to markers if it is included as a brief section at the end of the report style answer.

As is the case in other LO2 type questions, all sources must be used in the answer for full marks.

To answer this type of question successfully, candidates should state clearly which option they recommend: -

### Recommendation

I am an adviser to the UK Government. I have been asked to recommend whether the police should be given additional powers to detain terrorist suspects for up to 90 days without charge. I choose Option 1 - the police should be given additional powers.<sup>6</sup>

In a new section, with a heading, the candidate should give reasons from the sources to support their choice: -

### Reasons to support Option 1

The first reason comes from Source 1 where it says the police need increased powers because of the increased threat from international terrorism.

This is a basic point without any development taken from bullet point 3 in Source 1 and would gain only one mark.

My second reason to support Option 1 is that it states in Source 1 that the complexity of a terrorist investigation means that police need more time to investigate before charges are brought (1 mark), this is supported by the Police Spokesperson in Source 3 who says

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<sup>6</sup> Intermediate 2, 2007 Paper; Question 4(c)

that the investigations into the London bombings in July 2005 produced 80,000 videos of CCTV footage and 1,400 sets of fingerprints at 160 suspected crime scenes (1 mark), therefore 90 days may be necessary to study all of this evidence (1 mark).

This is a much more sophisticated point which synthesises information from Source 1 and Source 3 and puts the evidence into context with some explanation. This point on its own would be worth three marks.

Written information is usually more obviously linked to one or other of the options, statistical evidence may be less so and requires explanation. Information which is included, especially statistical information and the significance of it is not explained may gain no marks. In the same question as above, Source 2 contains information about 'Arrests in the UK under the Terrorism Act 200, September 2001 to September 2005'. The evidence could be used to support either Option depending upon the arguments used: -

The information in Source 2 supports Option 1. Only 23 people were convicted under the Terrorism Act between September 2001 and September 2005 out of a total of 895 arrests. This is a very small proportion and shows that the police do need more powers to detain terrorist suspects for up to 90 days in order to get more convictions. (2 marks)

Or

The information in Source 2 supports Option 2. Only 23 people were convicted under the Terrorism Act between September 2001 and September 2005 out of a total of 895 arrests. This shows that it would be wrong to give the police the power to detain suspects for up to 90 days because a very large number of people would be detained for a long time without being convicted. (2 marks)

Each of the points above use the same information but draw different and valid conclusions.

In order to gain full marks in the Decision Making Task candidates must explain why they did not make the other choice. Candidates should not repeat arguments already used in the reasons to support the Option chosen. One approach would be to use new information not already used. Another approach would be to recognise evidence which could be used to support the other option and use evidence to refute this evidence: -



### Reason for not recommending Option 2

Although Source 1 says detention for 90 days is against civil liberties and would be against the UK's international human rights responsibilities the YouGov Poll shows that a majority of people think it may be necessary to restrict the civil liberties of suspected terrorists and that the percentage has increased from 58% to 70% between February 2005 and October in 2005, therefore I do not support Option 2. (achieves 2 marks available)

A reason to explain why the other Option was not chosen such as “I did not choose the other option because there did not seem to be enough evidence to support the other option.”, would gain no marks, Further evidence from the sources must be used and it is important that if statistical sources are being used, that the relevant figures are given accurately.

Students often spend a long time on this question, sometimes to little effect as they do not interpret the information used or have a structured approach to their answer. Teaching these skills could ensure that students score full marks and have more time to complete other sections of the paper.

- **Selective Use of Facts**

In this type of question, candidates are required to explain why a given viewpoint is being selective in the use of facts. Selectivity means that some facts have been chosen (selected) from the sources which are supportive of the view while others have been omitted (not selected) since they do not support the view. While there are degrees of selectivity both within the individual sources and overall, at Intermediate level it is not necessary for candidates to indicate the degree of selectivity in their answer, in order to score full marks, although candidates who do this are showing good practice.

It is important that the candidate makes reference to the viewpoint in the answer; this should help to keep the answer to the point and show the relevance of the evidence being used. Answers which immediately give evidence from the sources and require markers to assume the argument of the candidate often lose marks since it may not be possible to decide whether the evidence is being used to demonstrate selectivity or not.

For full marks, candidates must show balance in their answer i.e. they should show evidence that has been omitted since it disagrees with the viewpoint but they must also indicate examples of evidence that has been chosen since it supports the viewpoint. Balance does not have to be 50:50 and it is perfectly acceptable for most of the evidence to not support the view while only one developed point makes reference to the evidence that has been selected because it supports the view.

In the following question<sup>7</sup> from the Study Theme on the United States of America the view is given: -

Compared to White Americans, all ethnic minorities in the USA suffer poorer health and have less access to health care.

View of an American Doctor

Using Sources 1, 2 and 3, explain why the American doctor is being **selective in the use of facts**.

In the answer to this question, it would be advisable to split the view into two parts – the section which refers to poorer health would make more use of Sources 2 and 3 while the section on access to health care will make more reference to the evidence in Source 1.

The explanation of selectivity can be included throughout the answer: -

The American doctor is being selective in the use of facts when she states that 'compared to White Americans all ethnic minorities in the USA suffer poorer health'; Source 2 shows us figures for life expectancy. White males have a higher figure for life expectancy, at 74.7 years, compared with the US average of 74.1 years and it is also true that life expectancy for white males is higher than for both Blacks who are only expected to live to 68.4 years and American Indian and Alaskan Natives whose life expectancy is 72.9 years. However both Asian male life expectancy which is 80.9 years and male Hispanic life expectancy at 77.2 years are higher than White males. Therefore the American doctor is being selective since some ethnic minorities suffer poorer health, as measured by life expectancy, compared to White Americans but not all of them. (3 marks)

In the paragraph above, the candidate demonstrates selectivity without needing to make a statement as to the extent of the selectivity, although the last sentence could be amended slightly and gain an additional mark by including such a statement: -

Therefore the American doctor is being *fairly* selective since some ethnic minorities suffer poorer health, as measured by life expectancy, compared to White Americans but not all of them.

When looking at the second part of the viewpoint, the evidence to explain selectivity in the use of facts will largely come from Source 1: -

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<sup>7</sup> Intermediate 2, 2007 Paper; Question 7(c)

The American Doctor is not being selective when she says that 'compared to White Americans, all ethnic minorities in the USA, have less access to health care' since Source 1 shows us that of all the ethnic groups mentioned, Whites do have the lowest percentage of people without health insurance. Only 11.1% of Whites are without health insurance while for Black Americans it is 20%, for Asian Americans it is 19% without health insurance, 33% of Hispanics do not have health insurance and 27.5% of American Indians do not have health insurance. Therefore when she says all ethnic minorities have less access to health care she is not being selective in the use of evidence. (3 marks)

- **Conclusions**

In this type of question candidates are required to come to a judgement based upon the evidence. Some candidates write large amounts in this type of question but merely repeat or paraphrase the evidence given without actually coming to a judgement about the significance of the evidence.

Conclusions can be varied and may refer to considered and evidence based judgements such as: -

- The extent to which something has changed or remained the same
- Biggest, smallest etc
- Trends over time
- Comparisons between different groups
- How successful ...
- How effective ...

Since a large amount of information is given in the sources and since many and varied conclusions can be drawn, it is essential that students use the bullet pointed prompts in the questions to organise their answers. Students must attempt to draw conclusions about at least three of the given prompts.

Using Sources 1, 2 and 3 above and opposite, what **conclusions** can be drawn about turnout in elections in Britain?<sup>8</sup>

You should reach conclusions about at least **three** of the following:

- changes over time
- age of voters
- the parliament or council being elected
- area of the UK.

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<sup>8</sup> Intermediate 2, 2007 paper; Question 2(d)

You must use information from all the Sources. You should compare information within and between the Sources.

It is good practice for candidates to use the prompts as headings before using the evidence to draw conclusions. The candidate's conclusions do not need to appear at the end of the evidence although this is a perfectly acceptable approach: -

### The Parliament or Council being elected

Source 2 shows me that turnout for the UK Parliament General Election was 61.5% in 2005, for the Scottish Parliament in 2003 it was 49.4% and for the European Parliament it was only 38.4%. The turnout in local council elections in England, Scotland and Wales was between 40.1% and 49.2%. Source 3 says that how powerful and important the parliament or council is will affect turnout. My conclusion is that turnout is different for different parliaments and councils and the UK Parliament has the highest turnout while the European Parliament has the lowest turnout because voters think the UK Parliament is the most important and powerful while the European Parliament is less important. (3 marks)

Alternatively, a candidate may reach a judgement at the beginning of the section and then go on to use the evidence, drawn from two sources, to provide support for the conclusion reached: -

### Age of Voters

I conclude that older age groups are more likely to vote than younger age groups. The evidence for this conclusion is shown in Source 1 where only 37% of the 18-24 age group voted in the 2005 General Election while 65% of the age group 45-54 voted and the highest figure of 75% turnout was for the 65+ age group. In Source 3 it also says that 'younger voters seem to be less interested in voting than those in older age groups'. (3 marks)

### **Further reference**

The full marking schemes for the 2003 papers onwards are available on the SQA website.

Principal Assessors' Reports from 2002 are available on the SQA website.

The best means of becoming aware of national standards is to mark for SQA. Individuals interested should contact the Qualifications Manager directly.