

N5 Economics - Question Paper Presentation Transcript

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Hello, my name is Karin Coltart, the subject implementation manager for Business and Economics. In this presentation, I'm going to talk about the structure of an SQA National 5 Economics Question Paper.

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This presentation will take you through what factors are considered when making up an SQA National 5 Economics Question Paper in terms of duration, structure, content, command words and level of demand.

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The SQA National 5 Economics paper is 2 hours long and asks 90 marks worth of questions. If a centre uses a question paper less than 90 marks for an in-house assessment. The time allowed should be altered. If a centre using an assessment of less than 90 marks or if a 90 mark assessment is being split over several occasions, the overall level of difficulty may become easier as the candidates have less material to revise. On a purely arithmetic model, the SQA National 5 Economics paper works out at just less than one and a half minutes per mark.

However, not all questions will take the same amount of time to answer. For example, a 1 mark 'identify a UK export' question takes less time to answer than 1 mark for 'explain the effect of imposing a tariff on imports into the UK'. In addition, candidates will spend some time reading the stimulus material and thinking rather than writing answers.

These factors should be taken into account when considering an appropriate length of time for an in-house assessment.

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An SQA National 5 Economics Question Paper covers all three areas of study, namely economics of the market, UK economic activity and global economic activity.

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An SQA National 5 Economics Question Paper is made up of two sections. The first section has two items of stimulus material. Normally, one is based on a graph and one is based on text. Each with 20 marks worth of questions which can be on any of the three areas of study. Questions in section one can range from 1 to a maximum of 6 marks. The second section contains five, 10 mark questions, each of which can cover a single area of study or can be integrated across two or three areas. Questions in section two range from 1 mark to a maximum of 4 marks.

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In an SQA National 5 economics paper. Candidates can be asked to draw and/or explain a variety of diagrams from the following choices: cost revenue and profit, demand, supply, markets, excess demand, excess supply and the circular flow.

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There is no definitive list of command words that can be used in an SQA National 5 Economics Question Paper. The words listed in the table are the ones that are used most commonly.

Words listed in the table: Identify, State, Name, Suggest, Give, Outline, Complete, Label, Draw, Calculate, Describe, Define, Discuss, Justify, Compare, Distinguish, Explain.

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An SQA National 5 Economics Question Paper aims to have a range of questions that cover different levels of demand so that some questions are accessible to all candidates and some are difficult enough to only be accessible to candidates who are expected to get an A-grade pass.

The table shows targets so a candidate would expect to be awarded a C-grade pass, should be able to answer about half the marks in the paper. About a third of the marks should be challenging enough so the only candidates who would expect to get an A-grade pass should be able to get those marks.

Information found in the table: Level of demand.

Accessibility: A-type candidate. Approximate percentage of marks: 30%. Approximate number of marks: 27 marks.

Accessibility: B-type candidate. Approximate percentage of marks: 20%. Approximate number of marks: 18 marks.

Accessibility: C-type candidate. Approximate percentage of marks: 50%. Approximate number of marks: 45 marks.

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The level of demand of a question can change depending on a variety of factors, such as the wording of the question, the command word being used, the number of marks the question is out of, how specific or general a question is, the topic the question is about, and the number of possible answers that there could be for a question.

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Candidates need to read each question carefully, as a given number, the use of the plural, or the use of the singular in the question can indicate how many original points are needed, or how many developments can be given.

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In a 'draw' question all that is required is the labelled diagram itself. In an 'explain' question the candidate must give a written reason for the change in addition to the labelled diagram, which makes it harder.

Top tip when drawing diagrams. Candidates should take about a third of a page for a diagram so that the person marking it can clearly see all the lines and labels.

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In this example, the command word changes. In the 'describe' version, a C-grade candidate might give two descriptions and a B-grade candidate would be expected to get all 3 marks. In the 'explain' version, the C-grade candidate might not access any marks, whilst a B-grade candidate might get 1 out of 3 and an A-grade candidate would get 3 out of 3.

In the 'name' version, a C-grade candidate might be able to name three barriers and therefore it follows that all candidates would be able to access all the marks available.

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In this example, the command word stays the same, but the number of marks available for the question changes. Often the more marks a question is out of the more difficult the question is, as candidates need to have more knowledge to be able to give a full answer. Similarly, fewer marks in a question can make it easier as less knowledge is required for full marks.

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In this example, the specificity of the question changes. In the first version of the slightly harder question the question has been tightened to advantages only, which narrows the possible pool of answers. In the second version of the slightly harder question, a specific number of advantages is required, which takes away the opportunity for candidates to give development answers. If only three advantages are given even though a lot of information is given about one of them, only 3 out of 4 marks can be awarded. Whereas in the starting question, the candidate could have developed a point about an advantage and/or a disadvantage and gained full marks.

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In this example, the topic of the question has changed. Some topics are considered to be harder than others. For example, candidates often find 'increasing growth' a harder topic than 'causes of unemployment'. Therefore, the number of marks that might be accessible to a C-grade candidate would be fewer in the harder topic.

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In this example, the possible number of answers for each question has changed. There are a great many determinants of demand for a candidate to choose from (eg changes in income, price of substitutes, price of complementary goods, taste, advertising, population, etc) for a 2 mark question whereas there are basically three determinants of supply to choose from (ie changes in production costs, changes in methods of production and external factors such as weather) for 2 marks.

This makes answering a question that has a wide choice of answers easier than one which has a limited number of correct answers.

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If you want to have a look at examples of marked candidate work and commentaries, you can use this link to go to the SQA Understanding Standards website.

<https://www.understandingstandards.org.uk/Subjects/Economics>

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Thank you for listening. I hope that this presentation has been useful for you.