



# Webinar Question & Answer document

Modern Studies (Higher) 14 February 2017

## The research sheet

### Q 1

**Will candidates be awarded a mark if a quote etc. is followed by an evaluative comment?**

### A1

That could be creditworthy provided the candidate does something with the quote in terms of interpretation, analysis, evaluation or synthesis with other material/information

### Q 2

**For clarification - the Research Sheet can be a mixture of graphical and text based sources. The key to the assignment is how they use the sources - is that correct?**

### A2

Yes, the Research Sheet can be a mixture of graphical and text based sources. It is what candidates do with the information on the sheet that is creditworthy.

### Q 3

**Examples within the presentation had varying amounts of sources. What would you suggest is average amount of sources used by candidates? I have suggested six to my candidates. Would that be OK?**

### A3

There is no optimum amount of sources. In my classes, I tend to get them to aim for around 5 or 6 sources.

#### **Q4**

**Is it the case that the information does not need to be put into a candidates own words, or data put in another way. It can be lifted straight from the source sheet as is and the marks come from the analysis so followed by this shows, or means etc to get marks. How many marks could be given for a lengthy evaluation of a quote or statistic?**

#### **A4**

A quote or a number can be lifted from the Research Sheet but in itself will gain no credit unless it is followed by analysis or evaluation The allocation of marks awarded then depends on the quality of the candidate's response.

#### **Q 5**

**My pupils have started to write their assignments and are using sources to compliment what they are saying. Will they lose marks for not forming links between sources?**

#### **A5**

One of the skills that is creditworthy within the Assignment is the integration and synthesis of source evidence and background knowledge in support of the source evidence. Candidates who synthesise well will be credited for this synthesis.

#### **Q6**

**Is there a maximum mark allocation per piece of evidence?**

#### **A6**

No. Again, it is what the candidate does with the source evidence that will be creditworthy. There is a ceiling on the knowledge and analysis marks- 10 marks for each section with a 5 / 5 split on knowledge - 5 marks for framing the issue and 5 marks for knowledge in support of analysis.

## **Knowledge & understanding**

### **Q7**

**Is it the case that the 5 KU marks for framing the issue include marks for explaining the 3 options in detail? I had told my pupils to put this in a separate option section as background knowledge. Is this wrong please?**

### **A7**

The discussion of the various options available can occur at any point of the report. Some include them in the framing the issue intro section. Others discuss them elsewhere.

### **Q8**

**The political/social/economic factors that the marking instructions refer to in relation to 'Background Knowledge: framing the issue' are just examples of approaches, aren't they?**

### **A8**

Yes. These approaches come from the marking grid for the assignment.

## **Assignment structure**

### **Q9**

**At previous SQA training I was told that using the old DME (Decision Making Exercise) approach was advised. For example - should the USA limit immigration? In the intro they frame, suggest three options and then make a clear recommendation. Learners then go on and organise their assignment into arguments for and against their recommendation, using sub-headings. Is this correct?**

### **A9**

The DME structure was never advised. It is certainly acceptable but so are other structures. This is just one way of approaching the Assignment report. Some candidates make their decision at the start of the report; others discuss the evidence linked to the options and then make a decision at the end. Either approach would be acceptable.

## **Q10**

**Could a 'third' option be explored in a conclusion? i.e. a compromise?**

## **A10**

A third option could be introduced at any point in the report. There is no singular approach. The two option approach often works well for poorer candidates. Remember if the two option approach is taken, 29 out of 30 marks is the maximum a candidate can score.

## **Evaluating usefulness and reliability of sources of information**

## **Q11**

**Is it good practice for candidates to compare their best and worst sources when completing the 'evaluation of sources' section?**

## **A11**

If done effectively, it can be a creditworthy approach. In terms of source evaluation, I get my students to compare two sources discussing which of the sources are more useful and reliable.

## **Q12**

**Just a suggestion- a weak unreliable/ biased source linked to a rejected option, can be compared to a reliable, robust source supporting the option recommended, which allows comparative evaluation and another reason why candidate supported that option over the other one, as the evidence is more compelling and reliable.**

## **A12**

Yes. This is an effective way of approaching the source evaluation section.

## **Q13**

**Is it common practice for candidates to highlight where they are using background knowledge by writing BK in the margin?**

## **A13**

Some candidates do this or may even say in the report, "*from my own knowledge ...*" Some candidates also put the source at the appropriate point in the margin.

**Q14**

**Earlier on there was an exemplar Research Sheet with an entire article extracted from the Huffington post -are the sources scrutinised by the marking team etc as I wouldn't have thought Huffington post would have been a good source to use?**

**A14**

The research sheets themselves receive no marks. However, they are instructive in allowing markers to determine knowledge and understanding, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Using entire articles may not be advisable as it could restrict allocation of knowledge marks. However, using an article from the Huffington Post for example may give the candidate the opportunity to discuss whether it is useful or reliable.