

N5

National 5
Coursework
Assessment Task



National 5 Modern Studies Assignment Assessment task

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Introduction

This document contains instructions for teachers and lecturers, marking instructions, and instructions for candidates for the National 5 Modern Studies assignment. It must be read in conjunction with the course specification.

This assignment is worth 20 marks. The marks contribute 20% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

This is one of two course assessment components. The other component is a question paper.

Instructions for teachers and lecturers

Specified resources to be taken into assessment

During the final production of evidence stage candidates should only have access to their Modern Studies research sheet. The research sheet must be submitted to SQA with the evidence produced during the final production of evidence stage. The research sheet must consist of no more than two single-sided sheets of A4.

The Modern Studies research sheet taken into the production of evidence stage should show evidence of primary or secondary research carried out by the candidate and may include, for example:

- ◆ statistical, graphical or numerical data
- ◆ survey results
- ◆ interview questions and/or answers
- ◆ questionnaire and/or results
- ◆ list of internet search results
- ◆ newspaper article or extracts
- ◆ notes taken from a visit or talk
- ◆ notes taken from a written or audio visual source

Candidates can receive guidance from their teacher or lecturer on the types of research methods which would be appropriate for the Modern Studies assignment.

The purpose of the Modern Studies research sheet is to help candidates present the findings of their research and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding.

In the sections on research methods and research findings, candidates must make reference to the results of their research contained in the research sheet, otherwise they will not be able to achieve all the marks available. No marks are awarded for the research evidence taken into the assessment.

The research sheet should provide evidence of the candidate's own research. The sheet should not take the form of a 'plan' as this is likely to encourage direct copying, which will gain no credit.

SQA will provide a template for the production of evidence stage of the Modern Studies report. This template will allow for structured responses. Additional sheets may be used, if necessary.

Total marks available	20
Skills	14
Knowledge and understanding	6

Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

Candidate evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

General marking principles

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles that must be applied when marking candidate responses in this assignment. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- a Marks for each candidate response must **always** be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed marking instructions for this assessment.
- b Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- c If a specific candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, or where the candidate has researched an area in which you are unable to verify the knowledge they have presented and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- d No marks are awarded where information is directly copied from the research sheet.

The research sheet is not marked. Markers may, however, refer to the research sheet in order to clarify points the candidate has made in the presentation of their evidence, and to gain an insight into what the candidate intended.

Detailed marking instructions

In presenting their findings, candidates should show the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate Modern Studies topic or issue
- ◆ evaluating the effectiveness of two research methods used, commenting on their strengths and weaknesses where appropriate
- ◆ drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue
- ◆ reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence, about the topic or issue

A Choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate Modern Studies topic or issue

While no marks are specifically awarded for this section, an appropriate Modern Studies topic is essential if candidates are to access the full range of available marks in sections B, C and D.

B Evaluating the effectiveness of two research methods used, commenting on their strengths and weaknesses where appropriate

Candidates may gain credit in a number of ways up to a maximum of 10 marks. For full marks they must make reference to two research methods. Award up to 6 marks for the evaluation of one research method. Do not award marks if the candidate has not made reference to the research evidence brought into the assessment. Furthermore, do not award marks if the candidate simply gives a generic description of research methods, rather than making specific reference to their actual methods used, shown on their research sheet.

C Drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue

Candidates may gain credit in a number of ways up to a maximum of 6 marks. Candidates must make at least one direct reference to the research evidence brought into the assessment, otherwise award a maximum of 4 marks.

D Reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence, about the topic or issue

Candidates may gain credit in a number of ways up to a maximum of 4 marks. Candidates should demonstrate modern studies skills of making decisions, recommendations, or reaching conclusions based upon evidence they have provided. Do not award marks for repetition of findings.

These have also been presented in tabular form to assist markers in developing an overview of how the marking principles should be applied.

These detailed marking instructions provide the basis on which the marking principles should be applied.

Skills	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
A	<p>Choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate modern studies topic or issue</p>	0	<p>While no marks are specifically awarded for this section, an appropriate Modern Studies topic is essential if candidates are to access the full range of available marks in sections B, C and D.</p> <p>Research topic/issue The research topic/issue will allow candidates to access the full range of marks dependent upon factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ relevance of question to research topic ◆ level of detail ◆ degree of insight ◆ extent of focus <p>Candidates can present their research question in the form of a hypothesis or aims, although this is not essential.</p>

Skills	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
B	Evaluating the effectiveness of two research methods used, commenting on their strengths and weaknesses where appropriate	10	<p>Candidates may gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 10 marks.</p> <p>No marks are available for identification of research methods or a description of the process.</p> <p>Research methods For full marks, reference must be made to two research methods. Up to 6 marks are available for each research method, dependent upon factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the research sheet taken into the production of evidence stage should contain information relating to each of the research methods. No marks should be awarded if there is no evidence of the research undertaken. ◆ evaluation of research methods, including why each method was appropriate for chosen research question ◆ strengths and/or weaknesses of research methods ◆ improvements/alternative approaches suggested ◆ links with resources/information taken into assessment <p>No marks should be awarded if the candidate's information is directly copied from their research sheet, or if the candidate has simply given a generic description of the research method without any clear link to their own research evidence.</p>

Skills	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
C	Drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue	6	<p>Candidates can gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 6 marks.</p> <p>Research findings For full marks, reference must be made to the results of their research, as shown in the research evidence taken into the production of evidence stage. Award a maximum of 4 marks if candidates do not make any reference to their research.</p> <p>Award up to 6 marks dependent upon factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ relevant, factual information ◆ level of detail and explanation ◆ identification of a variety of viewpoints ◆ links with resources/information taken into assessment <p>No marks should be awarded if the candidate’s information is directly copied from their research sheet.</p>

Skills	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
D	Reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence, about the topic or issue	4	<p>Candidates can gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 4 marks.</p> <p>Research conclusions Award up to 4 marks dependent upon factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ relevance of conclusions to topic or issue researched ◆ level of detail ◆ quality of explanation ◆ clarity of conclusion/decision/recommendation <p>No marks should be awarded if the candidate's information is directly copied from their research evidence.</p>

Overview of marking instructions

Skills	0 marks	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks
<p>Choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate Modern Studies topic or issue</p>	<p>An appropriate, contemporary social research topic is chosen. It may be presented in the form of a hypothesis and/or aims. The best research topics will be detailed and focused and will allow candidates to access the full range of marks in sections B, C and D.</p>						
<p>Evaluating the effectiveness of two research methods used, commenting on their strengths and weaknesses where appropriate</p> <p>Award 10 marks overall and up to 6 marks for any one research method. For full marks candidates must refer to two research methods.</p>	<p>Identification and/or description of research method. Information directly copied from research evidence.</p>	<p>Appropriateness of research method used for specific topic or issue is indicated.</p>	<p>In addition, strengths of research method are given.</p>	<p>In addition, reference is made to research evidence to support evaluation of strengths of research methods.</p>	<p>In addition, weaknesses of research method are given.</p>	<p>In addition, reference is made to research evidence to support evaluation of weaknesses of research methods.</p>	<p>In addition, improvements and/or alternative approaches to research are suggested.</p>

Skills	0 marks	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks
Drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue Award up to 6 marks	No knowledge of the topic or issue is demonstrated. Information directly copied from research evidence.	Key feature of topic or issue is described with minimal detail or exemplification.	Key feature of topic or issue is described with some detail or exemplification.	Key feature of topic or issue is explained with supporting detail and reference to research evidence.	Additional key features are given and are linked to initial point.	Additional key features are developed with reference made to research evidence and key features are linked.	Alternative viewpoints are identified.
Reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence, about the topic or issue Award up to 4 marks	Summary or repetition of previously made points. Information directly copied from research evidence.	A basic or limited conclusion is reached which relates to research topic or issue.	A clear conclusion is reached and is supported by the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the topic or issue.	A clear conclusion is reached and is supported in detail by the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the topic or issue.	An original and insightful conclusion is reached which is clearly linked to the research question and is supported in detail by the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the topic or issue.		

Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the assignment for National 5 Modern Studies.

This assignment is worth 20 marks. The marks contribute 20% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ choose, with minimum support, an appropriate modern studies topic or issue
- ◆ collect relevant evidence from at least two sources of different types
- ◆ evaluate the effectiveness of two research methods used, commenting on their strengths and weaknesses where appropriate
- ◆ apply modern studies skills to the evidence collected
- ◆ draw on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue
- ◆ reach a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence, about the topic or issue

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know how the assessment will be carried out and any required conditions for doing it.

The assignment has two stages:

- ◆ research
- ◆ production of evidence: writing a report of your findings (under supervision within 1 hour, and in one sitting)

In the research stage you should choose a topic or issue which allows you to analyse a contemporary modern studies issue. This may be related to areas you have studied in class, or you may choose to research any relevant topic or issue.

In the research stage you complete the Modern Studies research sheet to help you during the next stage – writing a report of your findings. This must consist of no more than two single-sided sheets of A4. The evidence that you take in should show two different research methods you have carried out.

Some examples of the sort of evidence you can include on your research sheet are:

- ◆ a statistical table or graph from a report on the internet showing figures about your topic or issue
- ◆ a list of questions created for an interview with the manager of a sheltered housing complex
- ◆ a letter, with questions, you sent to your local MSP asking about the topic or issue you researched
- ◆ a reply to a letter you sent showing information you have received in response to the questions you asked

- ◆ a screenshot of a list of websites you found using an internet search, with the most useful ones highlighted
- ◆ a newspaper article with the key points related to your topic or issue marked
- ◆ the results of a survey you carried out into your topic or issue with a note of how many people you surveyed, and where and when you carried it out
- ◆ a copy of notes you made from watching a television programme on your topic or issue, including the name of the programme, station and date of broadcast
- ◆ notes on a visit you made as part of a Modern Studies class trip, eg to the Scottish Parliament

In the production of evidence stage you complete your report on the Modern Studies report template. You must not copy your report directly from your research sheet. You will not be awarded marks for direct copying. However, you may copy quotations in full, provided you acknowledge the sources.

Your research sheet must be submitted with your report to SQA. The research sheet is not marked.

Working with others

While you should choose your own topic to research, others in your class may have chosen a similar topic. You might want to work with others for part of the time, when you are collecting information.

If you choose to do this, it is important that you are able to show what you have contributed to this part of your assignment, and that the evidence you take into the assessment is your own work.

In this assessment you will:	How you can do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ choose a modern studies topic or issue 	<p>The Modern Studies topic or issue you choose should allow you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ carry out research on a contemporary issue ◆ use your modern studies skills <p>You will have a very wide choice of topics or issues to research. You can research further something you have studied in class, or choose a topic or issue you are personally interested in finding more about.</p> <p>The best topics or issues to choose are ones about which there are different opinions and where you can use your modern studies skills such as supporting and opposing views, drawing conclusions or making decisions.</p> <p>It is important that you have a clear idea of the topic or issue you are going to research before you start your assignment, in order to focus your research and come to a conclusion.</p> <p>This can be in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a clear description of the topic or issue ◆ a question or questions which will help you to focus your research by finding answers ◆ a hypothesis where you try to prove or disprove a statement about the issue <p>Your teacher or lecturer may support you by commenting upon the suitability of the topic or issue you have chosen, and advise on the likely availability of resources.</p>

In this assessment you will:	How you can do this
<p>◆ collect information from at least two sources</p>	<p>Once you are clear about the topic or issue you are going to research you can begin to collect information. You must use at least two different methods of collecting information.</p> <p>Depending on the topic or issue you have chosen, some methods will be more suitable than others so you should plan where you are likely to find the most suitable sources for your particular topic.</p> <p>Your research methods may be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ primary research where the evidence you collect is original to you, or ◆ secondary research where the information you use has been produced by someone else <p>Whichever type of evidence you collect you must make sure you keep a note of the source of the information.</p> <p>The sorts of methods you could use are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ interviews ◆ surveys/questionnaires ◆ letters ◆ websites ◆ newspapers/magazines/books (print or electronic) ◆ visits or fieldtrips ◆ television/video ◆ radio/podcasts ◆ books
<p>◆ evaluate two research methods used</p>	<p>As you collect information during your assignment you should consider how suitable the methods you used were for your topic or issue. What were the advantages of using this method for your research, and were there any disadvantages? If you were to do this sort of research again, what could you do differently?</p> <p>In your assignment report you should write about two of the research methods you have used during your assignment, which you have noted on your research sheet.</p>

In this assessment you will:	How you can do this
<p>◆ apply modern studies skills to the evidence you have collected</p>	<p>As you carry out your research, you will collect a lot of information about your topic or issue. Some of the evidence will be very useful, other information you collect will not be as useful.</p> <p>This is where you can use your modern studies skills to decide what will be most useful. This will be easier if you have made a clear choice of topic or issue. As you look at the information you have collected you will be able to see how it helps you with your topic or issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Does the information you have collected support or oppose your viewpoint or the viewpoint of others? ◆ Does it help you to reach a decision about the topic or issue? ◆ What conclusions can you draw from the information you have collected?
<p>◆ draw on knowledge and understanding of the topic or issue to explain the topic or issue</p>	<p>As you carry out your assignment and research you will learn a lot about your topic or issue. In the assignment report you will have a chance to show some of what you have learned.</p> <p>You will not be able to include everything you know, so keep your explanation brief and include only the main points you have found out.</p>
<p>◆ reach a well-supported conclusion about the topic or issue</p>	<p>The final part of your assignment is to come to a conclusion about the topic or issue you have researched. This is where a wise choice of topic or issue will pay off.</p> <p>If you chose an issue about which there are different opinions, you can say which opinion you agree most strongly with.</p> <p>If you chose an issue about which a decision has to be made, you can give the decision you would recommend and say why.</p> <p>If you have collected a lot of information about a topic, you can say what you think is the most important information, the most trustworthy, or show how things have changed over time.</p> <p>In every case, you must use your research evidence to back up your conclusions.</p> <p>Remember, a conclusion is a judgement or decision you have reached by your own reasoning, not a summary of what you have already written.</p>

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.0	This document replaces the previous version dated September 2016. Document formatted to match latest template and writing style. Changes to Marking Instructions for Part B to provide clarification. No other content changes.	September 2017
2.0	Penalty for non-submission of research sheet added to 'Instructions for teachers and lecturers' and 'Instructions for candidates' section.	August 2019
3.0	Penalty for non-submission of research sheet removed from 'Instructions for teachers and lecturers' and 'Instructions for candidates' section. Tables amended for accessibility.	September 2024

Security and confidentiality

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