

# 2020 VCE Global Politics examination report

## General comments

In 2020 the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority produced an examination based on the *VCE Global Politics Adjusted Study Design for 2020 only*.

Overall, the examination was satisfactorily handled by most students; however, there appeared to be some confusion about elements in the study design with regard to specific examples/case studies that could be used to answer particular questions.

The majority of students completed the examination paper in the allotted two-hour time period. Time management remains a crucial skill that underpins examination success, and the best way for students to prepare is to practise writing responses under time constraints.

In Section A, students need to make effective use of their reading time by considering how they will respond to each of the questions. Students should also use this time to develop a detailed and specific plan for responding to one of the essay questions in Section B before they actually begin writing their essay. Good essay writing skills remain very important.

Students should respond directly to short-answer questions; for example, high-scoring responses to Questions 1, 4a. and 4b. needed no more than a few concise sentences to achieve full marks. Students are reminded that they do not need to restate the question they are responding to.

Definition-based questions are no longer a feature of VCE Global Politics examinations. While an understanding of the key terms is still needed, high-level responses show students' depth of understanding, which cannot be demonstrated by simply paraphrasing a definition. For example, Question 7 required students to analyse a unilateral response, and while many students defined/explained the concept of unilateralism, they were not able to analyse a response, in part because their chosen example was unsuitable or limited.

In Section B, students should ensure that they do not simply write out pre-learned or pre-planned essays with a couple of words adjusted in the introduction and/or conclusion. Instead, students are strongly encouraged to read all of the essay topics carefully and then develop an argument that they expand upon throughout their essay.

## Specific information

Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample responses, or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

# Section A

## Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	5	17	35	44	2.2

In this question, students were asked to explain one role of the state in global politics through the use of a specific example. Higher scoring responses were very clear and specific about the role of a state.

Some students did not meet the requirement of using a specific example to support the role they had identified. Some students provided responses that were general or vague, which restricted their ability to achieve full marks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The primary role of all states is the maintenance of sovereignty. Referring to the legitimate or widely recognised ability to apply effective control over an area with recognised borders, states maintain their sovereignty by preventing external and internal threats from challenging their defined territory. For example, China's naval parade in April 2018 consisting of 48 warships was preserving China's sovereignty claim in the South China Seas and thus preserving their role of the state to maintain their own sovereignty.*

## Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	13	7	25	34	21	2.4

Regional groupings can include the European Union (EU), African Union, Arab League, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) etc.

Many students offered a general explanation of a regional grouping and its challenges to a state's sovereignty, with many using the EU as an example. Fewer students, however, were able to provide details of a specific action that has challenged state sovereignty, which was critical to achieve full marks.

Higher scoring responses identified a specific action (e.g. Sovereign debt bailout – EU, Resolution 1973 – Libya/NATO 2011) that could be applied to a specific element of sovereignty: for example, fiscal sovereignty and or territorial/political sovereignty.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The European Union (EU) has enacted the Schengen borders code that applies to all of its members states, such as Germany. This code means their internal borders between member-states become 'soft borders' whereby citizens are able to freely move between member states. A loss of sovereignty is observed with this as a state such as Germany has voluntarily ceded part of its sovereignty of control over state policies and legislation, specifically those relating to border control. As the state has lost this monopoly, the EU is seen to have effectively challenged the sovereignty of the state member.*

### Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	13	87	0.9

This question asked students to identify one specific non-state actor from the category of legal organisations. Page 31 of the study design states that legal organisations include non-government organisations (NGOs) that pursue global objectives in relation to particular areas (for example, human rights, environmental protection), and/or organised religions that engage in international advocacy. A number of students nominated either an illegal organisation such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or an intergovernmental organisation such as the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the International Criminal Court (ICC), while other students selected a transnational corporation such as Royal Dutch Shell, Samsung or Facebook. Students and teachers need to clearly understand the various categories that actors are allocated to in the study design.

Those students that did not state a legal organisation were not able to be awarded any marks in Questions 3a., 3b. and 3c. Teachers need to make sure that students possess a clear understanding of the requirements of the study design.

### Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	16	84	0.8

Those students who did nominate a legal organisation such as Amnesty International, International Committee of the Red Cross, Greenpeace, Médecins Sans Frontières and Human Rights Watch in Question 3a. were also able to clearly state one specific aim of their nominated organisation.

### Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	14	2	8	15	26	22	13	3.5

Students needed to analyse the power of the non-state actor identified in Question 3a. For many students, the bulk of their response was an evaluation of the non-state actor's power. While this was generally enough to gain some marks, they could not achieve full marks as the question asked for an analysis (rather than evaluation). It is recommended that teachers encourage their students to engage with how or why a non-state actor is powerful or, conversely, lacks power. A non-state actor's power can come from aspects including its formal membership base, social media following, funding and resources.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*As a non-state actor, Amnesty International (AI) has significant power which is drawn from its large supporter base of 7 million supporters present in over 150 states. Through its role of mobilisation, AI can present an unprecedented challenge to the state sovereignty of actors that do not uphold the universality of human rights due to their ability to direct global condemnation to states that violate human rights standards. For example, in 2015 after receiving 800,000 signatures, Nigerian authorities were pressured enough to pardon Moses Akatugba a man sentenced with the death sentence over a confession obtained under torture. However, whilst AI can exert power by pressuring states through public opinion, like all non-state actors, AI lacks sovereignty and is thus limited in power as it cannot exert hard power and lacks an effective enforcement mechanism to ensure that international laws are upheld globally. For example, in response to allegations regarding the unjust treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang, a Chinese spokesman said that AI 'often*

made irresponsible comments based on rumors and hearsay'. Hence, AI is only powerful if states are willing to accept its advocacy, otherwise, the state remains the central actor in global politics.

## Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	15	28	57	1.4

In this question students were asked to describe the cultural power held by an Asia–Pacific state they had nominated from the following list: Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan or the United States of America. Students were required to provide more than just an example of cultural power. They also needed to describe the main element(s) of that cultural power (such as history, language, fashion, flora/fauna and iconography). While a definition of cultural power may be useful in ensuring understanding, it is not always needed in a response to all questions and was not required in this instance. Many students were able to give a specific example of cultural power, but some students appeared to confuse cultural power with soft power.

Some students were unable to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of power held and just gave an example.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Cultural power refers to the ability of a state to influence the actions of another global actor through the use of distinctive features of that state. China's cultural power is largely held within its language and history, in order to exert this power, china opened up 470 Confucius Institutes in 2014 that have the aim of 'popularising Chinese culture'.*

## Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	10	17	34	40	2.0

This question asked students to use a specific example to explain a factor that has shaped their nominated Asia–Pacific state's attempts to achieve its national security. Students were generally able to clearly identify a factor that has influenced attempts to achieve national security; this was acceptable provided the accompanying explanation was sound and coherent. Some students confused interpretations of national security with factors influencing national security. It is recommended that teachers focus on drawing a clear distinction between these concepts.

Students are encouraged to understand why a state has that particular national interest. That is, what has happened now or in the past, or what specific situation exists, that necessitates that interest being prioritised?

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*National security refers to the ability of a state to guard itself against internal and external threats. China's pursuit of national security is largely shaped by its desire to create a 'harmonious society'. This is because the only way the government can be overthrown is through another revolution and creating a 'harmonious society' reduces the likelihood of internal threats. To do this since Xi Jinping's inauguration in 2013, he had stated a poverty reduction 'solemn pledge' and successfully bought 800 million people out of poverty.*

## Question 4c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	3	6	8	11	12	15	14	14	9	4	5.6

This question asked students to evaluate the effectiveness of their nominated Asia–Pacific state’s use of two foreign policy instruments in pursuit of one national interest.

Students needed to ensure they specified two distinct Foreign Policy Instruments (FPIs). Students often confused FPIs (when they mention diplomacy, for example, they actually referenced trade or vice versa). Students are encouraged to develop their evaluation throughout their response, ensuring they ‘weigh up’ the effectiveness of one against the other or evaluate each FPI separately.

Some students offered examples of domestic policy; teachers should spend some time exploring the difference between foreign and domestic policy instruments.

Specific details of foreign policy actions/initiatives were rewarded. Some students gave evidence of results/consequences of foreign policy actions/initiatives in relation to the national interest specified, and they were duly awarded marks for this.

It was important to distinguish between general analysis and evaluation of effectiveness in relation to a specific national interest; though many offered it, the question did not require students to undertake analysis of how/why the pursuit of one national interest damaged another.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

### *(1) National Security – Aid FPI*

*The foreign policy instrument of aid has been effective in achieving national security for china to some extent. In China’s use of chequebook diplomacy to promote its ‘One China’ policy, such as funding a new passenger plane and 2 cargo ships to Vanuatu and a new sports stadium in Papua New Guinea. China has ensured the ‘suppression of Taiwan’s international space’ (President Tsai) to prevent potential separatism, with the Solomon Islands and Kiribati withdrawing support from Taiwan in 2019 due to China’s aid.*

*However, this has drawn consternation from Taiwan, accusing China of using ‘dollar diplomacy’ (President Tsai) against Taiwan which weakens national security over the region by exacerbating tensions with other states due to the use of aid.*

### *(2) National Security –Military FPI*

*The foreign policy instrument of the military has been effective in China maintaining national security to a strong extent. Aiming to maintain national security over the Nine-Dash Line. China regularly uses its military might to defend potential threats to its sovereignty, such as militarising 29 hectares of disputed islands and engaging in low level skirmishes with The Philippines in 2012 and Vietnam in 2014. Although China’s national security claims over the Nine-Dash line were somewhat weakened by the ruling by The Hague tribunal in 2016. Clearly China had violated The Philippines’ sovereignty, its use of military FPIs has ensured China’s strict control over its features within the South China Sea maintains national security.*

## Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	5	8	16	26	28	17	3.1

In this question, students were required to explain how cosmopolitanism promotes international law. Again, providing only a definition of cosmopolitanism was inadequate as it did not answer the question; however, demonstrating an understanding of cosmopolitanism was important. Many students were able to explain the concept of cosmopolitanism and link it to the idea of international law that transcends state borders. Specific examples of international law were also relevant, as were precise examples of instances of cosmopolitanism in the world insofar as they were directly linked to adherence to or support for their nominated international law.

Some students wrote about cooperation between global actors (multilateralism), but did not demonstrate specific understanding of international law, which is a key term.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Cosmopolitanism reflects a desire among global actors to collaborate to achieve common goals and meet challenges presented to the international community. Cosmopolitanism, involves the idea of a common humanity often equated with it, underpins the creation and application of international law as international law, in particular customary international law is a body of rules that are accepted as binding upon all global actors. For example, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) which bans chemical weapons, is underpinned by cosmopolitanism, as its enforcement requires all parties that these weapons are inhumane and to ban their use so that all global citizens can avoid the barbarity on non-discriminatory weapons. For example, Russia played a key role in forcing Syria to accede to the CWC in 2013, showing how even if states are allies, they will hold each other to account in the name of global equality when it comes to certain laws. In this case, cosmopolitanism maintained Russia's upholding of the CWC and demonstrated how law is often reliant on moral frameworks, ethics that guide states*

## Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	8	2	5	9	14	18	22	14	7	4.7

Students were asked to compare the effectiveness of two global actors' responses to one ethical issue. Some students wrote about a global crisis (Unit 4 AOS 2) instead of an ethical issue (Unit 4 AOS 1), but the majority of students responded correctly in relation to this question. Similarly, some students neglected to actually answer the question and make a comparison, instead only providing an outline of two different global actors' responses to the nominated ethical issue.

It is recommended that evaluations of effectiveness be made in terms of solving the ethical issue or adhering to international law; evaluations of effectiveness based only on the achievement of a state's national interest are limiting.

Those students who achieved full marks were effectively able to compare the degree to which each global actor's response upheld the key principles of international law.



The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The overriding difference between the UN and the IMF's approach to development is how actors consider addressing development sustainably compared to economically as effective.*

*The UN adopts a cosmopolitan/human right-based approach that considers poverty as being multifaceted and hence attempts to address its root causes sustainably so as to prevent the issue in the long run. This is typified by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals which the UN promote through their 2030 Agenda. For example, through addressing issues such as 'gender equality' and 'clean water' the UN effectively aims to prevent the issue from being elongated, whilst ensuring resources for future generations are not exploited.*

*By contrast the IMF applies a neo-liberal market-based approach considering the material wealth of a state above the underlying issues that assist development. This is typified by the conditions attributed to loans such as the reduction of welfare payments and an increase in trade liberalisation policies which were both implemented in Senegal in 2011. The IMF deems this approach more effective through using the measure of GDP to assess the achievement of their aim. For example, Senegal's GDP rose from \$17.88 billion USD in 2011 to \$24.13 billion USD after the IMF's intervention.*

*However, this approach does not effectively address the causes of inequality. Furthermore, though conditions that prioritise the states economic progress over the people's actual welfare, this issue will be elongated and causes much distress.*

*In turn, the crux of the debate lies between how much states are willing to sacrifice sustainability for increasing economic growth.*

## Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	21	11	12	20	22	13	2.5

Analysing one unilateral response by a global actor to one global crisis was an issue for a number of students. Unilateralism is a key term in the study design and is defined as 'the policy of a state acting alone in regard to upholding/defending their national interest, with little or no regard for the views or interests of other global actors'.

While many students commenced their response with a definition, they did not explain the term, choosing instead to focus on providing an example to demonstrate their understanding. Many students were unable to demonstrate an understanding of what an actual unilateral response is. It is very important that teachers select a genuinely accurate example of a unilateral response for their students, regardless of which global crises they are studying. Several students used examples that were either bilateral (Russia assisting Syria in the Syrian Civil War) or multilateral (Operation Inherent Resolve) in nature, thereby limiting their ability to achieve full marks. Where the student's response lacked specific details (for example, US missile launches against Syria), full marks could not be awarded.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The USA has responded unilaterally (as an individual state without international negotiation) to the global crisis of Climate Change through the Trump administration's 2017 announcement that the US would withdraw from the 2015 Paris Climate Accord. This unilateral withdrawal was justified by Mike Pompeo the US Secretary of State, who said the Accord imposed an 'unfair economic burden' on America and was thus incompatible with the Trump Administration's 'America First' strategy.*

*While this response has arguably been economically beneficial with the US becoming a net exporter of oil of the fossil fuel derivative petroleum for the first time ever in September 2019, it has failed to effectively respond to the global crisis of climate change, as US greenhouse gas emissions have been rising since 2018, making the US the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest global emitter, accounting for 15% of global emissions. Therefore, the USA's unilateral response has been ineffective in responding to climate change.*

## Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	4	10	18	26	21	18	4.0

For this question students were required to explain two causes of a nominated global crisis they had studied. Students needed to identify the causes very clearly (such as political oppression, rising CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the atmosphere, sectarian tensions and profligate government spending) and then demonstrate how these causes directly led to the crisis occurring or being exacerbated. Some responses were too brief and therefore unable to provide enough detail about how their causes directly led to the global crisis. Relevant examples were of great assistance where the example made a clear connection between the identified causes and how it caused the crisis.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*One cause of the Yemen armed conflict is the Arab Spring of 2010–11, which refers to a time when many long serving authoritarian leaders across the Middle East were toppled. This wave of political destabilisation swept into Yemen, when President Saleh had been in power since 1990, causing mass demonstrations and galvanising support for the anti-government Houthi rebels, elevating the level of violence between the Houthis and the government, which essentially escalated into the civil war between the subsequent Hadi government and the Houthi rebels.*

*Another cause of this armed conflict is sectarian divides, as the Houthi rebels are Shia Muslims and are allegedly backed by Iran, predominantly Shia, whereby Saudi Arabia is predominantly Sunni Muslim. As a result, in response to the Houthi's capturing Yemen's capital Sana'a in February 2015, Saudi Arabia's fear of spreading Iranian/Shia influence was a reason behind its military intervention in Yemen in March 2015 under 'Operation Decisive Storm'. This intervention provoked by sectarian divide has exacerbated the crisis and allegedly led to many war crimes occurring, including failing to distinguish between combatants and civilians.*

## Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	10	6	13	20	24	17	11	3.4

In this final question in Section A, students needed to analyse a nominated key aspect related to a different global crisis. Unfortunately, some students wrote about the same crisis they selected in the previous question, which meant they could not receive any marks. High-scoring responses were able to clearly explain the relevant key aspect and then demonstrate the contribution that this aspect made to the crisis. These responses included both analysis and judgment. Some responses, however, were composed of just an example and lacked a clear understanding of the actual aspect that was the basis of the question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Terrorism → the role of asymmetric warfare*

*Asymmetric warfare involves state organised military (conventional forms of warfare) being exposed to unconventional forms of warfare used by terrorist organisations. This means that opposing groups are unequal in resources and capabilities, demonstrating the perceived effectiveness of asymmetric warfare and the challenges to an effective response to terrorism. The role of asymmetric warfare was seen in April 2014, when Boko Haram kidnapped 276 Chibok schoolgirls. The Guardian later reported that 'the Nigerian military is trained for conventional warfare ... hostage rescue are not its forte' and as a consequence, 112 of the girls remain missing today. Asymmetric warfare now also challenged the United Nations (UN) to respond to the global crisis. This is because the UN is involved in diplomatic intervention, however, terrorist organisations such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have demonstrated their constant resistance to engage in*



diplomatic and humanitarian terms. This is demonstrated by its acts of public executions such as James Foley's in August 2014. Therefore a 2015 report by the UN calculated that 'due to its composition and character the UN is not fit for counterterrorism projects'. That is, the asymmetric nature of terrorism limits the UN's ability to effectively respond.

## Section B

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	2	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	5	5	7	9	9	8	10	10	7	5	4	1	1	11.6

Many students demonstrated proven essay-writing techniques. For example, using a brief essay plan assists students to better structure their essay, coherently order their thoughts and ideas, and identify the specific evidence they want to include. This process helps students to clearly identify the key knowledge elements they want to discuss in each paragraph. It also gives students a better opportunity to highlight the key terms in the essay topic and ensures that these terms form the central theme/focus of their essay.

Other points students should keep in mind are to:

- think about how they can best link their body paragraphs – what is the common thread?
- ensure they directly address the given essay topic
- ensure an evaluation has a comparative analysis of power/relative importance. Therefore, they need to make references in all of their body paragraphs that attempt to highlight this comparative analysis and draw clear conclusions
- use specific but concise examples to prove their points
- ensure that their concise examples and quotes are accurate and genuine.

Lower scoring essays were characterised by poor or absent paragraphing, introductions that did not clearly engage with the selected topic, a failure to include the specific language of the coursework and a lack of specific detail and relevant facts. Students who presented these essays usually wrote about what they knew rather than what the actual essay topic was asking for.

Overall success in this section of the examination required students to state a clear position, whether broadly agreeing or disagreeing with the prompt. Students then needed to delve into the subject matter and finally arrive at a measured conclusion.

### Question 1

This was the least popular of the four essay topics. This topic asked students to evaluate the power of the ICC in relation to other global actors. Some students were unable to sustain a strong response to this question. It was very limiting for students to just analyse the power of the ICC in isolation: that is, just what the ICC can and cannot do based on the use of case studies.

Another issue was that students did not fully engage with the instruction to 'evaluate the power of the ICC in relation to other global actors'. Where students did offer comparative evaluation, it was somewhat brief. Those students who incorporated more substantial consideration of the relative power of global actors in their essays were able to achieve more marks.

The following is an introductory paragraph from a high-scoring response.

*Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) as merely 'a mosquito in the ear of an elephant'. Whilst the ICC has some abilities to influence the actions of other global actors, in relation to other global actors, its power is limited. The ICC is challenged in achieving its aims due to its lack of power. However, in contrast both the global terrorist organisation of Islamic State (IS) and transnational corporations such as Apple Inc have considerably greater power as they are able to challenge state sovereignty in ways that the ICC cannot.*

## Question 2

This was the second-most popular of the four essay topics. Students were asked to evaluate the relative importance of three different types of power held by one Asia–Pacific state. The key focus here was the phrase ‘relative importance’. Many students, however, simply offered an evaluation of the effectiveness of different types of power. Those students who did fully engage with the question and discuss the relative importance of three different types of power were able to achieve high scores.

Students were encouraged to consider which type of power is really most important to states. While assessors did not have a particular type of power in mind as being the ‘right’ answer, it was difficult for students to build the case that cultural power, for example, is the most important for any state. On the other hand, some students just described how Foreign Policy Instruments have been used to pursue national interest.

The following is an introductory paragraph from a high-scoring response.

*The United States holds tremendous military, diplomatic and economic power due to its vast array of alliances with many states. This allows the US to exercise their power in order to achieve their national interests of national security, economic prosperity, regional relationships, and international standing. However, economic power is the most important type of power for the US to possess due to the uncoercive or coercive means of utilising it, allowing the US to apply different facets of their economic power. In contrast, military power often incites more conflict and diplomatic power is too weak to achieve national interests.*

## Question 3

This was the third-most popular essay topic. An ‘analyse’ question requires students to study the parts of an idea in detail to determine how they relate. Students needed to address at least two different perspectives within two debates relating to one ethical issue. Perspectives do not have to be diametrically opposed, but they do need to have clear differences. The analysis should also have included an explanation of why different sides hold the perspective they do, whether or not the perspective is justifiable and its impact upon the issues being examined. If a debate is included but only the perspective is analysed, then the student is not addressing the topic.

Specific ethical debates are listed in the study design on page 35; students must be very familiar with these. Students can use other debates, but they need to be clearly explained. Students should also move beyond oversimplifying all ethical debates as being framed in terms of ‘realism’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’; an over-reliance on these two key terms was problematic. Students should consider that the different sides to the debate often stem from different ethical standpoints. Students need to fully explore philosophical frameworks (such as utilitarianism) that underpin, for example, many of the challenges to the universality of human rights.

The following is an introductory paragraph from a high-scoring response.

*While realism often promotes successful short term responses to the ethical debates within arms control, the cosmopolitan perspective in these debates which prioritises global nuclear disarmament, provide the most effective long term framework for responding to the ethical issue of arms control. Indeed, while the realist perspective of arms control as opposed to disarmament has been effective for states such as the US’s national security, it does not offer a long term resolution to this ethical debate. In contrast, while the cosmopolitan disarmament perspective has had limited success thus far, it promotes long term security and stability in the global political arena and is thus the better framework for responding to this ethical debate. Similarly, the threat to global security posed by ‘rogue states’ realist pursuit of state security highlights the need for cosmopolitan international security through nuclear disarmament in the debate between state and international security. Thus, while realist perspectives in ethical debates within arms control offer effective immediate solutions to ethical issues, the cosmopolitan ideal of nuclear disarmament is the best long term framework for responding to the ethical issue of arms control.*

## Question 4

This was the most popular essay topic. Students were asked to analyse the challenges of achieving an effective resolution to one global crisis. One key focus here was to not simply describe a range of challenges.

In this essay topic, students needed to thoroughly examine how the challenges of one global crisis have impacted upon the crisis in a detrimental way. Some students offered a straightforward evaluation of the effectiveness of global actors' responses to a global crisis, which was not what the question asked for.

Students scored highly when they engaged fully with the actual question, offering a detailed explanation of what the challenges are, what they look like in the world, where and how challenges have been addressed, and how and why the challenges persist today.

The following is an introductory paragraph from a high-scoring response.

*Effective resolutions to climate change are challenged by the unilateral agendas of states, which results in ineffective multilateral agreements and the exploitation of natural resources that exacerbates the issue. However, when states do perceive climate action to be in their interest then unilateral actions and policies will cease to be a challenge. Yet, currently only minor emitters have acknowledged the direct threat to sovereignty posed by climate change and there exists a global apathy toward the need for dramatic action on an issue that UN science advisor, Sir David King, has described as 'not the greatest challenge of our time but the greatest challenge of all time.'*