



2007 International Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2007 International Studies paper gave students of all abilities a fair chance to demonstrate knowledge that they had learned. The discriminating factor, in terms of the examination marks, was in the longer questions, in which students were rewarded for demonstrating the ability to analyse and respond to the question with supporting evidence.

Overall the examination was handled well by students. The core of the course appears to have been generally well taught and most students demonstrated a sound understanding of the content. Teachers are reminded to refer constantly to the study design, as it is the knowledge and the key skills that are tested in the examination.

In the longer responses there was still a tendency for some students to give a knowledge-based narrative rather than apply some analysis and support their answer with evidence in the form of examples. Questions worth 10 marks will always require both knowledge and analysis. The essay for Section B was on Power in the Asia Pacific and the same tendency applied – that is, students tended to incorporate a lot of knowledge but not enough analysis. All essay questions asked students for some analysis or evaluation. This area should be worked on in 2008.

The 2008 examination essay question will be on global conflict. Teachers are advised that the best way to prepare students for this is to adapt the key knowledge and key skills components in the relevant section of the study design and turn them into questions. It is worth noting that four examination pages is a reasonable length for a student with average handwriting to be able to answer the questions and provide a strong argument and good supporting evidence.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

For each question, an outline answer (or answers) is provided. In some cases the answer given is not the only answer that could have been awarded marks.

Section A

Globalisation and internationalism

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	11	23	66	1.6

Internationalism stresses a common humanity beyond the concept of national identity, based on convictions about the need for cooperative solutions to common challenges and universal human rights. Responses should have included an emphasis on the similarities and links between people.

This question was relatively easy and was well done.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	9	23	35	33	1.9

The main role of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security, in accordance with the UN Charter. Its functions include:

- the peaceful settlement of disputes
- action to counteract threats to international peace.

Students were rewarded for showing specific and detailed knowledge of the working of the Security Council and how this contributed, or indeed hindered, the carrying out of its role.

Some students confused the Security Council and the General Assembly. Given that 2008 will be the third year for the current study design and exam format, teachers need to prepare students for specific questions coming out of the study design rather than just general ones.

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Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	8	41	51	1.4

Objectives of the International Monetary Fund include:

- to promote international monetary cooperation
- to facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of international trade
- to promote high employment and sustainable economic growth
- to reduce poverty (this is clearly stated through official IMF statements).

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	11	21	36	32	1.9

Criticisms of the way the International Monetary Fund operates include:

- mismanagement of the global economy
- the IMF's structural adjustments policy has left agriculture and small business without adequate safety nets
- there is a lack of transparency, accountability and democratic processes.

A huge range of examples could be used to support the answer and many were used well. A student could get full marks for this even if they had not received any marks for Question 3a.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	2	2	4	7	11	17	18	17	12	6	4	5.7

This was a fairly general question that asked students to demonstrate a broad understanding of globalisation and provide some specific examples. Students could evaluate by analysing some of the positives and the negatives of globalisation or they could 'evaluate the extent' by providing a more thorough analysis of the positive influences.

Good answers could have highlighted positive impacts of globalisation such as:

- development of free trade
- possible improved living standards
- improved health
- increased job opportunities
- increased cultural links between groups
- improved communications.

It was possible for a student to argue that globalisation has not had a positive influence on states, and several students wrote very good responses in this way. Students who simply went through the positives and negatives of globalisation without any evaluation or analysis were not able to get full marks.

Students were able to refer a broad example to a range of states or give some very specific examples that highlighted how individual states had been affected by globalisation.

Global Conflicts

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	5	26	69	1.7

Terrorism involves threats or attacks against innocent civilians to achieve a political objective. It can be perpetrated by groups or states.

The concept of civilians being attacked needed to be included in the definition of terrorism.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	9	25	27	34	2.8

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The following examples were commonly used in response to this question.

- The creation of terror which has an impact on the way people live their lives: An example of this is people's reluctance to travel.
- Legal and human rights impact: An example of this is the US Patriot Act, which allows indefinite detention of non-deportable, non US citizens if the Attorney General has 'reasonable grounds' to believe they are a danger to national security.
- Economic impact: An example of this is September 11, which cost the US government upwards of US\$50 billion dollars. Since the September 11 and Bali attacks, there has been a massive increase in Australian intelligence and defence spending.
- US response has increased anti-US sentiment: An example of this is that, although the US initially had much sympathy, the invasion of Iraq and publicity about human rights abuses have generated significant anti-US sentiment.

The question was done quite well, although some students focused exclusively on the impact on individual lives, which was too narrow.

Question 7a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	3	97	1.0

The correct response was military or economic.

Question 7b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	10	19	34	37	2.0

Military

- over-reliance on hi-tech equipment
- inability to understand regional complexities
- difficulties of diplomacy
- perceived US hypocrisy

Economic

- needs resources and markets
- heavy reliance on developing Chinese markets
- difficulties of ongoing budget deficit

The question was done well and a broad range of responses were accepted.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	2	4	8	11	13	16	18	12	7	5	5.7

Most students chose a terrorism-related conflict, although this was not necessary for this question.

Students needed to be specific about the state or group and to give a solid analysis of how successful they have been in achieving their objectives. There were a number of answers which gave considerable detail about the 'war on terrorism' without identifying a specific state or group or its objectives. It is important for students to carefully read each question and ensure that all components are covered.

Students needed to show a combination of knowledge (outline the involvement and knowledge of objectives) and analysis (degree to which objectives have been achieved). Purely knowledge-based responses could not receive high marks.

Australian Foreign Policy

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	10	11	28	52	2.2

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There were a significant number of policy decisions which could have been chosen for this question, including:

- involvement in East Timor
- sending troops to Afghanistan
- sending troops to Iraq
- involvement in the 'war on terror'
- the decision not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol
- refugee/immigration policy.

Students had to provide a clear explanation of the policy and the debate. As this question caused some problems, it is worth noting that it is one of the key knowledge components of the study design.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	3	18	41	38	2.2

Students had to be specific about one country, rather than give a general response about the region. High-scoring answers clearly outlined the significance in relation to Australia. It was possible to get full marks by mentioning multiple reasons or by discussing one good reason in more detail.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	8	21	38	23	10	2.1

There are multiple reasons for ANZUS still being relevant, including:

- having a great and powerful friend
- the 'war on terror'
- the desire for support in case of regional instability
- fear of growing China
- links with the FTA.

Following is an example of a good answer provided by a student.

ANZUS, agreed upon on September 1 1951 is still a relevant factor as it epitomises US and Australian relations. Invoked for the first time following the September 11 attacks, ANZUS is considered the cornerstone of Australian Foreign Policy and has indeed provided the basis for the Howard Doctrine – Australia's willingness to follow the US pre-emptive strategy lead. Furthermore ANZUS to some extent assures US intervention should Australia's sovereignty be compromised and also acts as a deterrent for possible invasion or threat.

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	8	5	7	9	12	14	14	14	9	6	3	5.0

This question had the lowest mean of the three 10-mark questions, which reinforces the need for students to read the questions carefully and respond to the question asked, rather than just giving broad knowledge. A significant number of students wrote exclusively about the US alliance as if it was the only component of 'security' for Australia. It is important that students understand the concept of security in much broader terms. Some students also gave a list of security-related events but did not analyse the extent to which this meant that security has dominated Australian foreign policy.

The good answers all provided analysis on 'the extent' to which security has dominated. Most did this through highlighting that economics have also been important. Some strong students challenged the word dominated.

Appropriate examples included Australian responses to East Timor, September 11, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Bali bombings and the Jakarta embassy bombing. However, security could also be related to refugees, and some outstanding answers also addressed the issue of economic security.

Section B – Essay

Essay	None	1	2	3
%	2	7	60	32

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Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	4	6	5	6	6	8	8	10	10	8	6	4	2	1	11.4

Teachers and students should carefully study the key knowledge and key skills in the study design. Converting these into questions for essay responses is the best way to prepare for the essay component (Section B) on the examination.

Question 1

This question provided students with an opportunity to look at power and the constraints on its use. The question asked for a state, not a group. Good answers needed to be clear about:

- the state involved
- the objectives
- the range of factors that make it difficult to attain the objectives.

This question was a useful one to discuss China. It was not a popular question.

Question 2

This was by far the most popular question in Section B. The dot points provided a clear guide as to what needed to be done. Students who wrote on China/Taiwan often did not put their response into the context of regional relationships. A significant number of students gave solid answers to the first part of the question but completely ignored the second component. Regional could be taken in the broader context of the Asia-Pacific region, or students could define it in a tighter sense, such as just Southeast Asia. National interest objectives and the forms of power used to try to achieve them had to be incorporated, and this part of the question was done well.

Question 3

This was a tightly-phrased question about a specific relationship or situation. Many students had a good understanding of the knowledge required to answer this question well. The determining factor was how well they assessed the extent of the success in achieving the objectives.