UNIT 2 Section A  OTQs

This year’s examination had a slightly higher overall facility (64%) than last year’s and is very close to the results for 2011 and 2012 as well. The mean mark was 19.1 out of 30 items (only 0.4 higher than last year’s) and different by less than 1 from 2011 and 2012. This shows a remarkable consistency over time. The discrimination was very good indeed – the mean point biserial was excellent (0.50 compared to the 0.38 and 0.39 in each of the previous 4 years) and the quartile marks were very close to those of last year.

There was better performance in the actual examination than in the pre-test (a rise of 2.65% on a slightly reduced population). The standard deviation dropped slightly, but has remained fairly constant for some years. The gender statistics showed a 1.44% higher facility for males.

All questions discriminated well except Question 18, which had a notable distractor, but the key is correct and it was a straightforward question finding average speed when given distance and time.

Several questions proved to be easy, especially 3 and 4 on punctuation and homophones. The pre-test information had suggested it would be, but the setting group wanted to retain it as an early 'lead-in' question on a topic worth testing. The discrimination was good for these questions.

The continuation of a good size pre-test population this year again helped to produce accurate forecasts. The assistance of schools in achieving a larger pre-test cohort is again highly appreciated.

The paper is deemed to have performed well and the overall results were satisfactory.

SECTION B (Written)

General Comments

Students generally appeared well prepared for this paper with very few rubric infringements noted. Time management appeared very good, with students utilising the printed mark indicators appropriately. Use of source material by candidates was encouraging. Responses to Question B4 were generally good, with answers similar to those within Section C, being well organised and detailed. Use of English, legibility and presentation were generally good, alongside some excellent examples of extended prose. A large number of well-constructed, detailed essays were presented.

Question B1

Overall, responses were encouraging, with the majority of students identifying the required answers.
**Question B2**

Question 2(a) was reasonably well answered with most candidates identifying problems facing independent high street shop. The three most popular noted were the rise in council rents alongside the pressure from online retailers and large scale businesses.

Responses to Question 2(b) were generally encouraging with the majority of candidates able to identify two strengths of independent retailers. Quality customer service, local knowledge and personal touch were those most commonly noted.

**Question B3**

The standard of responses varied. Question 3(a) was answered moderately well. Most candidates were able to interpret the relationship between the significant increase in predicted online sales of 15% and the subsequent effect on the high street shop vacancy rate of 40000, alongside the relatively low growth of 1.5%.

Responses to Question 3(b) were generally variable. The relative source indicated a shift in the possible usage of empty high street shops in the future, indicating a move away from retail into other areas. Unfortunately a significant number of candidates did not follow this ‘steer’ and responded with various alternative uses related to the retail trade, thus they did not gain marks. Others realised the significance of the source and developed suggestions such as social housing, community centres, hairdressers, gyms, nurseries etc.

**Question B4**

This was generally well answered with the majority of students appearing to identify with problems faced by independent retailers on the high street and possible future remedial coping strategies. All students attempted to respond to the question with a mixture of both source material and own knowledge, particularly the data regarding online sales growth. Lower level answers selected one or two relevant ways forward developed accordingly. The majority however, explained a variety of possible strategies; developing a Dukes online shop, free delivery and fitting service, frequent sales, increased advertising, staff review, product review to attract tourist footfall etc. Unfortunately some candidates did not appear to comprehend the difficulties faced by such retailers and viewed future developments in line with significant expansion in an attempt to compete with the major retailing organisations nationally. However some excellent responses were noted showing clear understanding and application to a growing area of concern.
SECTION C (Written)

Question 5

This was generally well answered. Within Qu5(a) the majority of students were able to identify four vaccinations that may be given to protect children. Most responded well to the demands of Question 5(b), which required them to explain four different ways technology may be used to treat a sick child whilst in hospital. Responses varied somewhat in terms of development. Unfortunately a minority of candidates simply identified the relevant treatments. Higher order candidates clearly identified four devices and explained how and why they may be used to help; MRI and CT scans, X rays, incubators, blood pressure and heart monitors, alongside a range of drug therapies etc, were the main ones offered. A significant number of excellent responses were noted. Question 5(c) elicited a range of responses, from those candidates who presented a very emotional and one sided attack on any aspect of animal testing to those who were able to systematically develop a balanced and detailed debate. The key areas examined were; animal rights, the effects on animals, the need for new drugs, alternative testing methods, pressure groups, public opinion etc. The majority of candidates sought to examine both sides of the debate and form an appropriate conclusion, albeit at times a somewhat emotional one. Some exceptional analytical answers were noted.

Question 6

This was the more popular choice within Section C, with good knowledge generally displayed. Within Question 6(a) the majority of students were able to clearly identify four charity organisations that raise funds for people in need. However, a minority wrote at length to explain each charity, rather than simply identifying them as required in the question. Responses to question 6(b) varied mainly in terms of the development required, with lower level answers simply identifying the method rather than explaining the how or the why of its delivery. The clear sense of involvement from a majority of candidates came through in terms of related TV programmes, advertisements, charity singles, sponsorship, live events etc. A significant number of excellent responses were noted. Responses to Question 6(c) which focused on the positives and the negatives of the Government increasing overseas aid were generally very encouraging. Lower order responses tended to focus entirely upon basic ideas of financial help in terms of ongoing problems or recent disasters and how these could be helped juxtaposed with dilemmas facing the UK Government in helping our own societal problems. Higher order responses extended the debate to examine the provision of different forms of aid and the relevant timings intended to help regeneration for the future rather than continued help. Reasons for political support were examined with a majority of candidates aware of future trading possibilities alongside growing political global issues. Most appeared very aware of the questionable use of financial aid to certain countries, with the higher order candidate being able to contextualise this concern. Some excellent, perceptive responses were noted, indicating widespread knowledge and interest in this area.

Overall, students performed well with the majority producing well written and reasonably articulate responses. Essay planning was evident within the higher order students. Preparation by centres for the examination was evident.
Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator