

The anatomy of a mark scheme

Annotated documents

Sample assessment materials

Version 1.0: Summer 2019



Contents

Introduction	4
A-level Media Studies 7572/2: Paper 2 question 01	8
GCSE Computer Science 8520/2: Paper 2 question 01.6	13
GCSE Geography 8035/1: Paper 1 question 02.3	15
GCSE Mathematics 8300/1F: Paper 1 question 22(a)	17

There are several different parts to a mark scheme

We will look at each of these sections in turn and in detail to give you insight into how mark schemes are written.

This information is generally found at the beginning of an AQA mark scheme.

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

Questions and mark schemes are always written at the same time. It's considered good practice to first think about what you want the students to write in the 'outcome space' and then work backwards to what the question is. If you don't, you can sometimes end up with a question and mark scheme that don't necessarily match. We put a lot of emphasis on ensuring that the mark scheme is valid, comprehensive and as clear as possible so that we only need to make minimal changes at standardisation.

Subject teachers work with us throughout the question paper process and are able to comment on the questions and mark schemes at draft stages.

Examiners come to the standardisation meeting having already looked at a number of students' scripts across a range of centres. This means that we can be as certain as possible that the mark scheme fairly credits all valid answers. This doesn't mean that we can always include every single possible answer. What the mark scheme aims to do is give enough information to allow examiners to make judgements on different types of answers.

Level of response mark schemes

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and **not look to pick holes** in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a **best fit** approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

This type of mark scheme tends to be used when students have to write in continuous prose. The question is usually worth 6 marks or more.

This is very important in levels of response marking. Student responses can often address several descriptors that are in different levels. We use a best fit approach so that we can fairly reward what students know and can do.

AQA has a positive marking policy. Full marks does not always mean students have to write a 'perfect' answer. Students are required to fulfil the requirements of the mark scheme to be awarded full marks.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The **example materials** used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. **It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.**

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

When deciding upon a mark in the level, **examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the assessment objectives and be careful not to over or under reward a particular skill.**

These materials are very important. You will see that we use terminology in the descriptors in a level of response mark scheme such as 'level 3 - excellent', 'level 2 – satisfactory', 'level 1 – minimal'. The materials we provide exemplify what excellent/satisfactory/minimal looks like in a student response. Examiners are trained using these materials and then use them in conjunction with the mark scheme to mark students answers.

As mentioned previously, the mark scheme cannot always contain every single possible answer. What the mark scheme aims to do is to give sufficient information to allow examiners to make judgements on different types of answers.

For example, you may have a 25 mark question with 10 marks allocated to AO1, 10 marks to AO2 and 5 marks to AO3.

A level

MEDIA STUDIES

7572/2

MEDIA TWO

Mark scheme

SAMs

V1.0

All examiners work from exactly the same mark scheme to ensure consistency of marking.

7572/2 SAMs A-level Media Studies question 01

0 1

Analyse **Figure 1** using the following postmodern ideas:

- simulacra
- simulation
- hyperreality.

[9 marks]

‘Analyse/analysis’ is used here as this question is allocated to AO2 strand 1. It’s also the command word of the question. It’s extremely important that the command word of the question and the language/expectations of the mark scheme are aligned.

7572/2 SAMs A-level Media Studies question 01 mark scheme

Qu	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks						
01		<p>Assessment Objectives – AO2 1</p> <p>Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media studies to analyse media products through the use of academic theories</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level</th> <th>Mark range</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>7-9</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent and judicious application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the unseen source. Excellent, detailed and accurate use of postmodern ideas to analyse the unseen source. Analysis is detailed and critically engages with the nuanced aspects of simulacra, simulation and hyperreality on the magazine cover. Consistently appropriate and effective use of subject specific terminology throughout. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Level	Mark range	Description	3	7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent and judicious application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the unseen source. Excellent, detailed and accurate use of postmodern ideas to analyse the unseen source. Analysis is detailed and critically engages with the nuanced aspects of simulacra, simulation and hyperreality on the magazine cover. Consistently appropriate and effective use of subject specific terminology throughout. 	9
Level	Mark range	Description							
3	7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent and judicious application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the unseen source. Excellent, detailed and accurate use of postmodern ideas to analyse the unseen source. Analysis is detailed and critically engages with the nuanced aspects of simulacra, simulation and hyperreality on the magazine cover. Consistently appropriate and effective use of subject specific terminology throughout. 							

Higher tariff and extended response/essay based questions often require a significant amount of subjectivity when it comes to marking. The mark scheme and example material aims to provide as much clarity as possible about how marks are awarded.

All 9 marks of this question are allocated to AO2 'application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media'.

Within AO2 there are 3 strands:

- 1 analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories
- 2 evaluate academic theories
- 3 make judgements and draw conclusions.

This particular question is testing strand 1.

Marking is intended to 'rank order' all the students in a particular cohort. It's important that we use all the levels in a mark scheme to make sure that we are able to differentiate between individual students performance.

This is a typical 'level of response' marking grid. It contains statements that describe the quality of the answer. It's used in conjunction with the indicative content below.

'Analyse/analysis' is used here as this question is allocated to AO2 strand 1. It's also the command word of the question. It's extremely important that the command word of the question and the language/expectations of the mark scheme are aligned.

7572/2 SAMs A-level Media Studies question 01 mark scheme

2	4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the unseen source though this may, in places, be more descriptive than analytical. • Satisfactory, generally accurate use of postmodern ideas to analyse the unseen source. • Analysis is generally sound and engages with the straightforward aspects of simulacra, simulation and/or hyperreality on the magazine cover – answers in this band may not attempt to consider all the ideas. • Occasional appropriate use of subject specific terminology.
1	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the unseen source. • Minimal, if any, use of postmodern ideas to analyse the unseen source. • Analysis contains multiple inaccuracies or irrelevant points and is almost always descriptive. • Minimal, if any, use of subject specific terminology.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit

‘Analyse/analysis’ is used here as this question is allocated to AO2 strand 1. It’s also the command word of the question. It’s extremely important that the command word of the question and the language/ expectations of the mark scheme are aligned.

7572/2 SAMs A-level Media Studies question 01 mark scheme

	<p>Indicative content:</p> <p>This question assesses the ability to apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media language to analyse media products particularly focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Postmodernism <p>In the analysis of the cover of Grazia magazine, students are expected</p>	
	<p>to apply the key postmodern ideas of simulacra, simulation hyperreality to the product. Both of these ideas address the nature of reality in a media-saturated contemporary culture.</p> <p>Answers in the higher bands are likely to deal critically with the ideas in the question whereas answers in the lower bands are likely to only offer examples from the product.</p> <p>The content below is not prescriptive and all valid points should be credited. It is not expected that responses will include all of the points listed.</p>	

The indicative content is the subject specific content that students may have provided in response to the question. It's written factually using correct terminology, but we accept and credit the language that students may be more likely to use (as long as it's also correct). The example materials used at standardisation which we referred to earlier, helps examiners to see the type of language that students may have used that should be awarded marks.

As mentioned previously, examiners are expected to use their professional judgment when marking as the mark scheme can't always contain all possible answers.

In their **analysis** students should consider:

- Postmodern understanding of the postmodern world as an increasingly simulated reality.
- The ideas of **simulacra** and **simulation** explore the implications of media saturation where more and more of our experience is simulated.
- In the postmodern world the simulated image becomes more 'influential' than lived experience thus creating a **hyperreality**.
- In this way we lose any sense that there is a distinction between what is real and what is artificial or simulated'.
- The representations of reality – simulacra – create a 'reality' which would not otherwise have existed. For example celebrity and fashion appear to be real, but they have no independent existence outside their media representations. The simulacra come first; they *precede* and *determine* reality.

In their analysis of the Grazia cover, students may discuss:

- *Grazia* front cover (along with a range of other celebrity/fashion magazines) is an example of media saturation (the details of celebrity lives as news, the representation of clothes fashion as urgent).
- The composition and layout of the cover suggests the rush and speed of contemporary life as it is simulated by the media – this may not have any relation to reality.
- The construction of celebrity personas is a simulacra; a representation of something with no reference to reality.
- The concept of celebrity raises postmodern ideas about the problem of distinguishing between reality and fiction (the impossibility of distinguishing between the celebrity and the real person).
- The construction of celebrity simulates the everyday to convince the audience of its reality (references to universal experiences of love, relationships, conflict, divorce etc.).
- The simulacra of celebrity and fashion creates a hyperreality full of people and things which has every appearance of being real. These simulations replace the reality of lived experience.
- The address of the magazine (its direct, personal language, covert, personal images) convinces the audience of the reality of the simulacra.
- The magazine communicates personal confessions and details of the personal lives of celebrities, creating the illusion that they are intimate friends of the reader. The world of celebrity may seem more real than the readers' own lives: a hyperreality.

Accept any other valid analytical responses. Answers must link to the postmodernist ideas in the question.

'Analysis' is used here as this question is allocated to AO2 strand 1. It's also the command word of the question. It's extremely important that the command word of the question and the language/expectations of the mark scheme are aligned.

As mentioned previously, examiners are expected to use their judgment when marking as the mark scheme can't always contain all possible answers.

Point-based mark schemes

GCSE COMPUTER SCIENCE 8520/2 PAPER 2

Mark scheme

Specimen 2015

Point based mark schemes tend to be used on questions that can be worth up to 6 marks. There is often a range of answers that students can give in response to the question.

8520/2 SAMs GCSE Computer Science question 01.6

0 1 . **6** Unicode is an alternative to the ASCII coding system.

Describe **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of using Unicode to represent characters instead of using ASCII.

[2 marks]

8520/2 SAMs GCSE Computer Science question 01.6 mark scheme

01	6	<p>All marks AO1 (understanding)</p> <p>Advantages: Can represent a wider range of characters; Can represent characters from a wider range of languages; Can represent characters used in scientific/mathematical/technical/specialist documents;</p> <p>Disadvantages: (It is likely that Unicode) uses more bits to represent each character; Requires more storage space; Longer transmission time; NE Unicode uses 16/32 bits</p> <p>Mark as follows: 1 mark: correct advantage of Unicode given 1 mark: correct disadvantage of Unicode given</p>	2
----	---	--	---

This question is worth 2 marks and both of those marks are allocated to AO1 1b 'demonstrate understanding of the key concepts and principles of computer science.' This question requires students to understand characteristics of coding. Pure knowledge marks are generally considered to be 'recall' type questions such as 'Name the capital city of.....' or 'Define the term.....'

The question asks for advantages and disadvantages and it's worth 2 marks. In order to fulfil the requirements of this question students are expected to give one advantage for one mark and one disadvantage for one mark as per this instruction.

NE means not enough.

This list may or may not be exhaustive. In some cases these may be the only viable answers that can be given. In some cases there may be other acceptable answers. Examiners are expected to use their judgment when marking as the mark scheme can't always contain all possible answers.

GCSE GEOGRAPHY

PAPER 1 LIVING WITH THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Mark scheme

Specimen

8035/1 SAMs GCSE Geography question 02.3

0 2 . **3** Which **one** of the following statements describes the climate of a tropical rainforest?

Shade **one** circle only.

- A** Mild temperatures (10–18 °C), rainfall all year (approximately 1000 mm)
- B** High temperatures all year (over 30 °C), very dry (250 mm of rainfall per year)
- C** High temperatures all year (25–27 °C), rainfall in every month (1800–2000 mm per year)
- D** Wide range of temperatures (15–30 °C), seasonal rainfall (approximately 750 mm)

[1 mark]

8035/1 SAMs GCSE Geography question 02.3 mark scheme

02	3	One mark for the correct answer: C High temperatures all year (25–27 °C), rainfall in every month (1800–2000 mm per year). No credit if two or more statements are shaded. AO1 = 1 mark	1
----	---	--	---

There is only one correct answer here. C.

This instruction exists so that examiners know what to do if students haven't followed the rubric 'Shade one circle only'.

GCSE MATHEMATICS

New Specimen Papers published June 2015
Paper 1 Foundation - Mark Scheme

8300/1F

Version 1.0

8300/1F SAMs GCSE Mathematics question 22(a)

22 (a) A student is chosen at random from Class 3A.

Work out the probability that the student's score was the **mode** for the class.

[3 marks]

8300/1F SAMs GCSE Mathematics question 22(a) mark scheme

22(a)	mode = 8	B1	May be implied from answer $\frac{8}{27}$
	$2 + 3 + 6 + 7 + 9$ or 27	M1	Allow one error or omission if working shown
	$\frac{9}{27}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$	A1ft	oe ft their mode

Students can still be awarded 2 out of 3 marks, if the method is correct and the final answer is wrong because of an error in the calculation.

oe means 'or equivalent. Accept answers that are equivalent.'

ft means 'follow through marks'. Marks awarded for correct working following a mistake in an earlier step.

This means that we can make sure that students aren't penalised twice for the same error.

Contact us

T: 0800 197 7162

E: teacherservices@aqa.org.uk