



2009 International Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2009 International Studies examination was reasonably well handled by students and indicates a greater familiarity with the course content and the expectations of the examination. The majority of students completed the examination paper within the set time frame; this is a reflection of improved examination practice. Students generally coped well with the demands of the short answer questions but again need to be reminded that responses must fit within the specified limits of the questions. Students should always take note of the marks allocated to ensure that sufficient detail is provided to receive full marks.

The discriminating factor in determining student performance was again the extended response and essay questions. Many responses tended to focus towards the narrative without providing the required analysis and evaluation to achieve high marks; it appeared that many students simply chose to ignore the key instructional verbs, for example, providing a descriptive response to a question that asked students to 'evaluate'. Students who structured their extended responses and essay, referred to the question posed and provided clear and relevant evidence were able to score highly. It was disappointing that some students were unable to focus their responses within the specified time frame. Teachers and students are reminded that International Studies involves the study and analysis of current events. Where indicated in exam questions, studies needed to have focused on the post-2000 era, although an appreciation of events prior to this date was also expected to provide a context. Students who were able to show understanding and awareness of recent events in their analysis tended to perform well. Students are advised to be more careful in their selection of Essay question as a number wrote essays which did not correspond to the question selected but to another question offered and students missed out on some marks. This could have easily been avoided. Students are reminded that essay questions are not interchangeable and each question requires a specific and different response. Students using pre-prepared responses were unable to clearly relate to the question at hand and so were unable to score high marks.

On the whole, the examination was handled well by students and most demonstrated a sound understanding of the content. Teachers are reminded to refer constantly to the study design. A good way to prepare students for the examination 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 respond to essay 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

Global Conflict

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	31	62	1.6

To attain full marks, students needed to list two different terrorist attacks and provide some supporting detail; simply stating the name of a city did not receive a mark. No marks were awarded for listing attacks which had occurred prior to October 2001.

Common responses included:

- Bali bombings 2002 (or 2005)
- Jakarta hotel bombings 2003 (or 2009)
- London transport attacks 2005
- Madrid train bombings 2004
- Mumbai attacks 2008
- Fort Hood shooting 2009.



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Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	17	30	53	1.4

Students were awarded one mark for correctly identifying a limitation on the power of the United States and a further mark for an explanation of this limitation.

Common responses identified and explained one of:

- inability to fight asymmetrical conflicts
- overreliance on military power
- weakening diplomatic power
- economic deficits
- competing foreign policy interests
- rising Chinese power
- short-sighted US leadership.

The following is an example of a student response.

One limitation on US power is the rise of asymmetrical conflict, whereby the US military struggles to combat the decentralised, unconventional network of al-Qaeda. This was outlined by Benjamin and Simon who said that 'there is no land to take, no territory to occupy', and therefore the military power of the US is limited.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	10	17	31	42	2.1

To attain full marks students needed to do more than simply state one cause of a post-Cold War conflict. Explanation of the relationship between the cause and the conflict was required. Causes could be historical in nature as long as the conflict under discussion occurred (or was still occurring) after 1990. Students should always take note of the marks allocated to each question to ensure that sufficient detail is provided.

Common case studies selected included:

- Somalia Civil War 1992 (and the ongoing conflict)
- Rwanda genocide 1994
- Iraq invasion of Kuwait 1990
- Invasion of Afghanistan 2001
- Invasion of Iraq 2003.

The following is an example of a student response.

Chosen conflict: War in Afghanistan

The underlying cause of the war in Afghanistan was the US' natural antipathy towards the Taliban, founded on the belief that it was harbouring al-Qaeda terrorists and therefore should be classified as a terrorist organisation. Hence, the US entered Afghanistan primarily to remove Taliban forces on ideological grounds and to 'disrupt, dismantle and defeat' (Obama) terrorism in Afghanistan.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	12	18	32	38	2

This question was not as well handled as other questions on the paper. It was disappointing that many students did not explain the failure of a state or group in a conflict and simply choose to describe the failure. Students should be familiar with the key instructional verbs as part of their examination preparation. It may be useful for students to note these words during reading time and ensure their answer responds accordingly. Responses that were purely descriptive were unable to gain high marks.

The following is an example of a student response.

Chosen conflict: The Iraq War



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The failure of the US to properly achieve its goals in Iraq after the initial invasion period are due to its inability to employ its advanced (albeit conventional) military in what has become as asymmetrical conflict against sectarian militias and insurgents. As a result, the US has struggled to bring stability to Iraq with 4, 328 US deaths and over 100,000 Iraqi civilian deaths.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	3	7	9	12	13	15	14	12	7	4	5.5

Students needed to evaluate one effect of international terrorism and assess the importance of this effect to attain high marks. Descriptive responses could not attain high marks. It was disappointing that many students chose to adopt a simplistic approach to this question. More detailed responses chose to examine more complex effects, such as the weakening power of the United States. Almost all students chose the September 11, 2001 attacks as their example of international terrorism.

Common responses evaluated the effect of one of the following as a result of the September 11, 2001 attacks:

- changed perception of the US by the international community
- de-stabilising situation in Pakistan
- reduced civil liberties
- military effect – invasion of Afghanistan, invasion of Iraq
- weakening power of the US
- economic impact.

Power in the Asia-Pacific region

Question 6a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	21	24	55	1.4

Responses could either refer to the pressure generated from people/citizens onto the government for policy change, pressure exercised by a government on its people, or the people of another state to elicit a certain reaction. A concerning number of students were unable to gain any marks for this question. The preparation of all key definitions with examples should be included as part of students' examination preparation.

The following is an example of a student response.

The pressure exerted by a population on its government for social, economic or political change, or alternatively the pressure exerted by a government on a population in an attempt to coerce. These often take the form of civilian riots, or government military gestures.

Question 6b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	39	61	0.6

This question was generally well done. It was pleasing to note that the majority of students avoided using Australia as an example in this section of the paper.

Common responses included:

- Burmese monks protesting for greater freedom in 2007
- Tibetan monks protesting for greater autonomy in 2008
- Uighurs protesting for greater autonomy in 2009.

Question 7a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	41	59	0.6

To attain full marks either the donor or recipient of the economic policy instrument needed to be in the Asia-Pacific region and its use could be internal or external. The example needed to be specific, simply stating 'chequebook diplomacy' received no marks.

The following is an example of a student response.



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Between 2006 and 2008 the PRC invested US\$10.2 billion in 180 infrastructure projects in Tibet.

Question 7b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	28	21	51	1.3

Students had to provide an explanation as to why the economic instrument discussed in Question 7a. was used, but no discussion of its success was required to gain full marks. The response had to be linked to Question 7a. It was unfortunate that some students chose to discuss a different use of an economic instrument and missed out on marks.

The following is an example of a student response.

The PRC utilised their economic power to try and appease the people and as an attempt to stop them in their pursuit of separatist claims, in turn maintaining the 'One China' policy.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	21	11	23	19	27	2.2

To gain full marks, students had to outline two different interpretations of national interest within one state in the Asia-Pacific. Students who stated two different interpretations but did not give an explanation received half marks at best. Students are advised to examine the marking allocation during reading time and use this as a guide as to the level of detail required in each question. Responses that referred to Indonesia-East Timor perceptions of autonomy did not fit into the specified time frame and so received no marks.

Common case studies included:

- Indonesia and the separatist regions of Aceh and West Papua
- China and the separatist regions of Tibet, Xinjiang and Taiwan
- the Korea peninsula, views of the governments in the North and South
- Taiwan, views of reunification, independence and separatist political parties.

The following is an example of a student response.

The pan-green party in Taiwan pushes for independence from mainland China and is constituted by the Democratic Progressive Party and Taiwan Solidarity Union. Alternatively, the pan-blue coalition made up of the Kuomintang and People First Party believe that reunification (albeit on Taipei rather than Beijing's terms) is in Taiwan's national interests.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	3	7	9	12	13	15	14	12	7	4	5.3

Good responses to this question demonstrated both the positive and negative aspects of military power to evaluate its effectiveness. Some students sought to evaluate the effectiveness of military power through comparison with another form of power and this was also acceptable. It was disappointing that many students chose to use pre-2000 examples, for example, the 1995–96 Taiwanese missile crisis and East Timor 1999. Students who were able to show understanding and awareness of recent events in their analysis tended to perform well.

Common case studies selected included:

- North Korea missile and nuclear weapons testing (and threat of)
- China's placement of missiles, 2005 anti-secession law, response to riots in 2008 and 2009
- Indonesia and Aceh.

Australian foreign policy

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	6	38	55	1.5

Many students chose to respond to this question through discussing security as the maintenance of sovereignty and border security. Some stronger students chose to expand the definition to include softer notions of security such a global warming or economic objectives. Responses that simply referred to security as the 'ability to protect' received half marks at best.



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The following is an example of a student response.

Security is a concept that incorporates the safety of a state or its ability to defend its borders. Thus security is traditionally associated with military protection. However in recent years, the concept of security has evolved to incorporate third-agenda issues and the protection from global phenomena. Hence security may also be defined as 'environmental security' or 'economic security', particularly in the face of threats such as climate change.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	13	24	28	28	2.6

This question was generally well answered with many students choosing to respond by identifying a security threat to Australia and then describing the response to this. Many students chose to examine Australia's alliance with the US via the ANZUS treaty but were generally able to move beyond the post-1999 time frame specified in the question.

The following is an example of a student response.

The authorisation of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in 2003 was aimed at preventing the creation of a failed Solomon Island state in Australia's immediate region that could pose a potential security risk. 2225 military, development and police personnel were used to reduce internal instability, corruption and violence.

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	11	15	29	24	22	2.3

To attain full marks to this question, students needed to move beyond a narrative statement about Australia's relationship with one state and focus on the challenges in maintaining or pursuing that relationship. Students needed to discuss more than one challenge to receive full marks.

Common responses included:

- China and challenges of human rights, Australia's alliance with the US, trading dependence, security, the detention of Steven Hu
- Indonesia and challenges of human rights, Australia's participation in the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, terrorism, refugees
- various Pacific Island states and the fear of failed states, spectre of refugees, breeding ground for terrorists
- India and challenges of the sale of uranium, attacks on international students.

The following is an example of a student response.

Australia's relationship with China is, as Kevin Rudd has admitted, one 'full of challenges'. Economically the Sino-Australian relationship is prospering with the mid-2009 \$50 billion Gorgon Gas project and China considering a Free Trade Agreement. However, the political aspects have been strained with the Chinese arrest of Stern Hu and with Australia issuing rebel leader Rebiya Kadeer with a visa. As a result, the challenge of the Sino-Australian relationship will be in separating trade and economy with politics and ideology, something that is likely to clash.

Question 13

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	3	5	7	10	11	15	16	13	9	5	5.7

This question had the highest mean of the three ten-mark questions, which was a pleasant change from past examinations. Simple responses stated examples of changes under the Rudd Government from the Howard administration, such as the signing of the Kyoto Protocol, removal of troops from Iraq and the sale of uranium to India. Many students attempted to discuss the increased role of idealism in Australian foreign policy. Stronger responses looked for changes but also acknowledged that there were some continuities, such as the approach to the Asia-Pacific region, and attempted to account for them.

Following are examples of common responses.

Changes

- Rudd's increasing emphasis on internationalism and proactive multilateral approach
- changed approach to achieving trading interests



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- greater independence in foreign policy
- immigration policy

Continuity

- environmental policy
- role in Afghanistan
- relations with the Asia-Pacific region
- role in Pacific Islands

Section B – Essay

Globalisation and Internationalism

Essay	None	1	2	3
%	1	45	7	47

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	1	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	5	4	6	6	8	8	10	9	9	7	7	4	2	12.4

Question 1

To respond successfully to this question, students had to address both the positive and negatives effects of globalisation on a state(s) and form an argument about the effect of globalisation. Students could agree or disagree with the question. Examples had to refer to a specific state(s) or groups of states (developed/developing) but purely narrative responses could not attain high marks. In the same way, general responses which failed to link to a specific case study, state or group of states and simply stated positive and negative arguments of globalisation, found it difficult to achieve high marks. The more impressive responses examined the changed role of the state and the concept of state sovereignty.

Question 2

This was the least popular of the essay questions and students who chose to tackle this question tended to perform well. Good responses developed an argument about whether they agreed or disagreed with the question and had to address both sides of the argument. Students were expected to use case studies to illustrate and support their argument.

Common case studies discussed included:

- the United Nations and its inability/ability to achieve its aims, the liberation of Kuwait 1990, the limited success of the Kyoto Protocol, sanctions against Sudan and Zimbabwe, the International Criminal Court and Rome Statute, the 2003 invasion of Iraq
- failure of World Trade Organisation Doha round of talks
- European Union and faltering Lisbon treaty discussions.

Question 3

Students could address globalisation and/or internationalism's impact on one or more global issues to respond to this question. The level of effect that the concept(s) have had on the global issue had to be examined to score high marks. Better responses did not generally talk about the effects of globalisation or internationalism but referred specifically to one or more of the issues and this was ideally outlined in the introduction. Weaker responses attempted to analyse the impact of the concept(s) on all of the global issues. This approach is not advised as it results in a rather superficial discussion. Students are reminded that human rights as a global issue must be discussed alongside refugees. Essays that chose to discuss internationalism's impact on the environment were expected to go beyond the Kyoto Protocol.