

2017 VCE Global Politics examination report

General comments

The 2017 Global Politics examination was the final examination based on the revised *VCE Global Politics Study Design 2016–2017*. Overall, the examination was completed to a very satisfactory standard by a majority of students; however, there was some student confusion in regard to precise requirements in several of the Areas of Study – for example, confusion over what kind of entity constitutes a non-state actor.

A majority of students completed the examination in the allotted two-hour time period. Several students appeared to have misjudged their writing time and failed to fully complete the examination. All students should fully appreciate that time management is a critical skill that needs to be practised on a regular basis. Students can make best use of the reading time by considering how they will respond to each of the questions in Section A, as well as focusing on developing a specific but brief plan for responding to the essay question they want to write on in Section B.

Students who excelled in the examination did so because they developed a very effective examination technique. Many students, however, appeared to be confused about what the protocol is in regard to continuing on with a written response beyond the allocated lines in the examination booklet. Where a student has elected to continue their answers on the extra pages at the end of the examination booklet, they must clearly indicate/highlight/signal this on the question page as well as on the extra page(s).

Students should respond directly to short-answer questions; for example, good answers to Questions 1a., 2a. and 7 needed only a few concise words/sentences. Students are not required to rewrite the question in their response.

The questions that students found most challenging were Questions 3, 6 and 11b. in Section A, and the essay question in Section B. However, some students used prepared responses, especially in Section B. This strategy consistently fails to directly address the requirements of the essay question. On the other hand, students who were well prepared for the examination were able to clearly structure their responses more thoroughly, make explicit reference to the specific question asked and write in a cogent style, using the specific language of the study and including relevant and accurate evidence to support their answer.

Most students appeared to have understood the underlying concepts of the study and demonstrated a sound grasp of the content; however, some students did not appear to have read the instructions carefully, particularly the short-answer questions on Power in the Asia-Pacific region. For example, despite this section of the examination commencing with the phrase ‘the types of power used by a specific Asia-Pacific state must be within the Asia-Pacific region’, in Question 5, for example, some students included examples from outside the Asia-Pacific region, such as China’s trade or aid initiatives in Africa and Australia’s trade relationship with India or the European Union.

Students are reminded that in Unit 4, Area of Study 1, they are expected to answer questions on two different global crises (see Questions 11 and 12). If a student wrote about the same crisis in Questions 11 and 12, no marks were awarded for their response to Question 12.

Specific information

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

This report provides sample answers 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 errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

Section A

Global actors

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	6	94	1

The word bubble contained words that relate to international trade, trade negotiations, multilateralism, protectionism and trade agreements. The organisation in question was the World Trade Organization (WTO).

This question was well answered by the majority of students.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	28	72	0.7

This question asked students to identify one role of the intergovernmental organisation identified in part a., namely the World Trade Organization. No explanation or specific level of detail was required in the response, but students needed to ensure that the 'role' of the WTO was adequately identified, for example:

- establish systems for international trade in goods and services
- encourage smooth, free and predictable movement of trade between WTO member states
- resolve trade disputes between member states.

It was essential that students used 'action words' and not aims in their answer. Other responses were also accepted if responses were worded with sufficient clarity.

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	18	23	32	28	1.7

A limitation of the World Trade Organization could include:

- issues surrounding its decision-making processes such as a lack of transparency in its decision-making process
- the WTO is regarded by its many opponents as being an agency of 'capitalistic imperialism'

- the inability to successfully conclude the Doha trade agreement.

Limitations of the World Trade Organization that examined the impact of the organisation could also have been used, for example:

- diminishing national sovereignty – in joining the WTO a state must ratify rules of the WTO within their states, and WTO rules need to become part of a state’s domestic legal system
- the removal of economic ‘protection measures’ (subsidies, tariffs, quotas, etc.), which can affect domestic employment and price levels
- higher costs for some goods/services to the disadvantage of people in weaker/poorer states – for example, intellectual property rights and patented pharmaceutical drugs.

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

WTO decisions are made by consensus of all member states, severely limiting the organisation’s capacity to negotiate global trading agreements. For example, the DOHA Round of talks aimed to reduce agricultural tariffs in developed states. It was scheduled to run from 2001 to 2005, but as all states could not agree, they had to be extended beyond 2006, broke down in 2008, and finally abandoned in 2015.

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	4	25	70	1.7

Students were asked to define the term ‘sovereignty’ as it relates to the study of global politics. Students needed to ensure several of the following elements were included in their answer:

- establish executive control – governmental agencies, police, communications
- independent (relatively) of other states
- possess control over internationally accepted borders
- are viewed as being ‘legitimate’ by other states/organisations.

Students were not required to include a specific example in their response.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	5	19	38	38	2.1

Students were required to identify an issue or a crisis that requires multilateral resolution and explain how attempts at resolution have challenged state sovereignty. Students were not required to explain the concept of multilateralism, nor were they required to explain why a multilateral response was required.

Issues or crises requiring multilateral response include international crime, drug trafficking, illegal arms trade, piracy, slavery, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, climate change, conflict and economic instability.

Students were then required to explain how responses to an issue or a crisis challenged state sovereignty – for example, the imposition of domestic policies can limit a state’s ability to guarantee independent executive authority. Responses that were theoretical in explanation were acceptable.

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

The conflict in Syria requires a multilateral resolution. The United Nations (UN) has attempted to facilitate this several times through the Geneva peace talks (2012-2017). These talks aimed at stopping the conflict and providing safety for civilians have challenged the sovereignty of Assad and his government, by formally recognising Syrian opposition forces such as the Syrian

National Council. This impacts the effective control of Assad as the sole sovereign ruler. Further by requesting for a transitional government the talks further challenge Assad's legitimate sovereignty over the state.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	18	4	15	30	25	8	2.7

Students needed to identify a specific non-state actor (NSA) that was a legal organisation and then explain clearly the extent to which this organisation was able to use public opinion to achieve some of its aims.

Students needed to first identify a specific legal non-state actor. This excluded all terrorist organisations. The study design mentions the following type of organisations: human rights non-government organisations (NGOs) (for example, Amnesty International, Reprieve), environmental NGOs (Sea Shepherd, Greenpeace) and/or organised religions (Catholic Church).

Students also needed to explain how the identified NSA used public opinion – for example, through publicity, propaganda, protests, campaigns and mass participation events – and finally, to explain to what extent the NSA was able to achieve some of its aims (more than one) in mobilising public opinion. If a student stated that it did 'to a considerable extent', then the answer needed to specify exactly how the mobilisation of public opinion led to or did not lead to achievement of the NSA's aims; however, if the student said 'not very much' then their answer ideally needed to discuss why the mobilisation of public opinion was less useful and what other techniques were used.

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

One non-state actor includes Amnesty International. Public opinion refers to sentiment of the people and can often be used to justify government actions and foreign policy decisions. As they aim to defend and promote human rights, Amnesty uses the influence of its 7 million members to influence governments. This can be seen through the 'Will I Be Next?' campaign featuring Nabeela ur Reham, whose grandmother was killed as a result of US drone strike in Pakistan in 2014. Their use of power through public opinion exerted upon the US government can be seen through then President Obama issuing executive order #13731, which aimed to restore public confidence and address those casualties by the US military.

However, Amnesty can be limited in its use of public opinion as if there is no longer sufficient support from its members then influencing government decision, they no longer have sufficient influence.

Power in the Asia-Pacific region

Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	33	67	0.7

Students were required to provide one example of the use of diplomatic power. No explanation was needed; however, the example given needed to be specific in its context. General terms such as panda, chequebook or koala diplomacy were not accepted because of a lack of specificity. Actions (use of power) could have been any bilateral or multilateral action/event where the selected state engages in specific diplomatic action – visits, talks, exchange of letters or insults, etc. – or makes an agreement or works to an agreement with another or others. For Australia, these could include Australia's work on the UN Security Council (2013–14) or the work of Natasha Stott Despoja as the Ambassador for Women and Girls.

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	4	6	16	30	27	17	3.2

Students needed to explain how the use of military power within the Asia-Pacific region has shaped the state's regional relationships. This required the student to identify a specific example, including who, what and when and a specific description of the action. Possible examples included:

- Australia – specific joint exercises, including allowing US troops to be based in Darwin; Operation Sovereign Borders
- USA – war games with South Korea
- People's Republic of China – military activities in the South China Sea; building islands and airfields
- Japan – joint military exercises off the North Korean coast in 2017.
- Indonesia – joint military exercises with Singapore.

Students then needed to clearly explain how this specific use of military power affected the regional relationships for the state. This impact could have been positive, such as Australia's role in the RAMSI mission in the Solomon Islands, or negative, such as how China's claims in the South China Sea challenges its relationship with Australia.

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

China's militarisation efforts in the South China Sea, constructing over 3200 acres of artificial islands since 2014, which are home to aircraft hangers, missile systems and even stationed troops, have shaped its regional relationships. They have done so by creating territorial disputes with other states which claim sovereignty over the newly militarised areas. A Pew Research survey showed 90% of South Korean, Vietnamese and Japanese citizens have a negative view of China's military developments.

In June 2017, US Defence Secretary James Mattis criticised China's "contempt for other nation's interests", illustrating how this use of military power negatively shaped China's regional relationships.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	8	22	33	32	2.8

Foreign policy instruments involve specific actions by a government interacting with another sovereign state(s) to help achieve elements of its national interests. Students with higher-scoring responses were able to identify a specific national interest – for example, national security or economic prosperity – and link this element of national interest to a specific aid or trade measure (by definition this is external to the state).

Finally, students needed to describe how the achievement of their selected foreign policy instrument assisted the state's national interests – it was critical that students made clear links between the two.

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

Australia uses trade as a foreign policy instrument to achieve economic prosperity. Trade in Australia makes up 42% of its GDP, making it of key importance. Through maintaining strong trade with countries like China, signing a Free Trade Agreement in 2015, Australia has been able to see its economic prosperity. Australia has also been very active in signing free trade agreements with Chile, South Korea and Japan in the last few years too. This has helped Australia become the 12th largest economy in the world and the 5th largest in real GDP per capita.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	12	7	15	29	23	14	2.9

Students needed to initially identify one ‘factor’ – this factor needed to be clear, plausible and linked to the state’s national interest. In the study design several factors are listed – for example, state formation, cultural and ethnic identity, ideology, historical links and relationships to foreign powers. Students did not have to use one of these factors – for example, some students who focused on China chose the factor ‘territorial integrity’ – but using a factor listed in the study design allowed students to better explain how the factor shaped the first interpretation of the specific national interest (this could have been primarily internally based, but not only). Finally, students were required to explain how the factor shaped a different interpretation of the same national interest that the student had previously used. This could be internally based, but it was not mandatory.

Higher-scoring responses explained the ‘interpretation’ – who, what and when. They also stated how the position related to the ‘factor’ and national interests.

Pre twenty-first century factors that have shaped a state’s current national interest could have been included but needed to demonstrate a clear relevance/topicality to the twenty-first century.

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

One factor shaping China’s national interest of international standing is its desire to be viewed as a benevolent hegemon. China has sought to achieve this through popularity of its culture. Through Confucius Institutes (CI), China has established 480 institutes as of 2014, (New York Times) under the interpretation the institutes will help to frame China as a ‘builder of world peace’ (Xi Jiping).

On the other hand, a differing interpretation is that CIs are simply propaganda machines for the state. This view centered on the actions of Penn State university and the University of Chicago who both closed their CIs due to a ‘lack of transparency’. This view is supported by the Australian Greens who view CIs as being ‘Trojan horses’ used to indoctrinate.

Ethical issues and debates**Question 7**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	10	24	66	1.6

Students were asked to define the term ‘justice’ as it relates to the study of global politics. Students needed to ensure the following elements were included in their answer:

- applying a sense of ‘moral rightness’
- attempts to apply punishment/retribution where ‘wrongness’ applies, and deter violations
- justice operates through the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

Students were not required to include a specific example in their response.

Question 8a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	16	84	0.9

To access full marks, the selected treaty needed to be accurately named – for example, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on Refugees, Ottawa Convention on Landmines or The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Students did not have to date their selected treaty but if they chose to do so, then they needed to be relatively accurate. The treaty need not have been from the twenty-first century.

Question 8b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	10	36	55	1.5

The reason provided by students may have focused on why a specific state has adopted the treaty or a more general reason for why the treaty was originally created. No marks were awarded for implausible or imagined reasons regarding the actions of a specific state.

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

One reason for the Convention of the Rights of the Child, is to provide member states with a legal framework to uphold and protect the rights of children within their own domestic legal systems. As demonstrated by the Costa Rican government who instigated a social rights audit in 2009 to ensure the rights in the Convention was being upheld in their jurisdiction.

Question 8c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	13	33	53	1.4

Students were required to outline one specific difficulty based on the treaty identified in part a. Higher-scoring responses focused on issues related to enforcement, not on other factors such as certain states not signing or ratifying a treaty.

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

One difficulty is the lack of an effective enforcement mechanism to ensure states uphold the provisions of the convention. This was highlighted by the lack of punishment for Australia breaking several articles of the Convention through its detention of children under the offshore detention of refugees as a part of Operation Sovereign Borders policy.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	9	7	21	35	28	2.7

To answer this question, students needed to explain how a specific response by a global actor to their nominated ethical issue is a realist response to the issue. Students needed to focus on the meaning of the term 'realism' as well as on explaining a specific 'realist' response. The selected global actor need not have been a state; any category of global actors was accepted, such as intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), non-state actors (NSAs) and transnational corporations (TNCs). Their response, however, needed to be correctly identified and specific.

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

Through Resolution 2118 (2013), Syria was required to give up 100% of its chemical weapons stockpile. But under threat of an uprising from its own population, the Assad regime has continued to maintain and use chemical weapons even though it contravenes Resolution 2118. Through attacks such as in Idlib province which killed 74 people, Syria chose to act in a realist manner as the OPCW confirmed the use of sarin gas. Thus through having little consideration for morality and ethics, Syria can be seen as trying to advance its own interests, through its continued maintenance of a chemical weapons stockpile.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	9	7	22	32	31	2.7

Students needed to select a different ethical issue from the one they wrote about in Question 9; if they wrote about the exact same issue, then no marks were awarded. Students were required to explain two different perspectives of the debate related to their selected ethical issue.

Higher-scoring responses to this question not only identified two distinct 'sides' to a debate but also did so in a specific way that examined the debate in a clear and precise manner. One approach to assist students in future would be to construct ethical debates around the concepts of realism and cosmopolitanism, which may allow students to develop their understanding using terms they are perhaps more familiar with.

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

In the debate over justification for intervention to protect human rights, supporters of intervention claim that the global community does have a duty to intervene so as to prevent grave human rights abuses, exemplified by the UN-authorized 'no-fly zone' over Libya in March 2011 in response to 'grave and systemic human rights abuses' (Robinson). Conversely, in July 2012 Russia vetoed a United Nations Security Council Resolution regarding the Syrian Civil War that would demand the Assad regime stop firing upon its own population who were protesting against the government. Russia said such a resolution diminished the sovereignty of Syria.

Global crises

Question 11a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	2	8	24	29	36	2.9

For this question students needed to explain two causes of a selected global crisis. This question posed a challenge for those students who could not provide two clearly separated causes related to their nominated crisis. For example, some students noted that climate change was caused by 'global warming' and by 'rising greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere'. The causes, however, could have been more theoretical in nature, rather than linked to a specific case study.

Students were unable to access full marks if their explanation of the two causes was not substantive.

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

Economic Instability

1. Greece's under-taxing was a cause of its instability. In 2010 it was reported that nearly two-thirds of taxpayers did not pay what they owed, which impacted the revenue collected by the Greek government.

2. *The shifting global market. The Global Financial Crisis cut Greece out from being able to 'borrow in international financial markets' [New York Times], which meant it could not access the capital needed to repay its creditors.'*

Question 11b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	6	7	14	29	29	16	3.2

Using the same crisis selected in Question 11a., students were required to analyse the effectiveness of one proposed solution to this global crisis. If students wrote about a different crisis from the one used in Question 11a., then no marks were awarded. Also, the proposed solution being analysed needed to be an actual proposed solution and not a non-existent one or a solution the student wished for.

Higher-scoring responses had a depth of knowledge in their analysis regarding the evaluation of the proposed solution and how well it dealt with the nominated crisis.

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

The TROIKA's response has seen limited effectiveness in resolving Greece's economic instability. The TROIKA through three economic bailouts totalling over €300 billion, combined with many austerity measures hoped it would put Greece on the right path to positive growth. This was not the case with Greece missing payment deadlines in 2013. Further the predicted debt of Greece is still going to be around 150% of GDP by 2010 bringing it no closer to sustainable stability. However, in 2016 Greece saw some limited success with GDP rising to 1.7%, and this is expected to be reproduced in 2017.

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	3	9	19	32	22	10	3.8

Students had to use a different global crisis than the one they used in Question 11. If students wrote about the exact same crisis they used in Questions 11a. and 11b., then no marks were awarded for this question. Students needed to compare the responses of two global actors to one example of this global crisis. Once two different actors were identified, students needed to clearly explain the responses by the actors and then clearly compare the responses, highlighting similarities and, where appropriate, differences.

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

In response to terrorism and the threat of Islamic State (IS) in the global political arena, there have been a number of responses. One response, by Russia, who conducted airstrikes in March 2015 targeting the city of Homs. Whilst this was seen as their attempt to help Syria fight IS and terrorism, Russia instead targeted Syrian rebels, which led to accusations that Russia was really trying to just help the Syrian regime.

Another response in 2015 was when The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 2253 which aimed to take effective measures to combat IS, highlighting this as a global unprecedented threat.

Hence, these responses differed in that the Russian action was a 'counter-terrorism' response involving forces whereas the UNSC resolution was more 'anti-terrorism' using diplomatic and lawful means to combat IS.

Overall these two responses were similar in that they both aimed to combat and eradicate the threat posed by IS.

Section B

Question chosen	none	1	2	3	4
%	1	17	45	17	19

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	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	5	7	8	10	10	13	11	8	7	4	2	1	12.5

Many students composed brief essay plans and this definitely assisted them to better structure their essay and identify specific evidence to include. The preparation of a clear but brief plan may help students to clearly identify the key knowledge elements they want to discuss in each paragraph.

Lower-scoring essays were characterised by poor structure, an introduction that did not clearly identify the approach the student had constructed and a dearth of specific detail and relevant facts to clearly address the essay question.

Other students were able to write higher-scoring essays that addressed the topic directly in their introduction, including cogent and precise sentences, and used subject-based language throughout. These essays were also supported by insightful analysis and detailed discussion with relevant evidence.

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 demonstrate a specific level of understanding that incorporated a nuanced use of specific terminology and finally, arrive at a measured conclusion.

Question 1

This topic asked students to discuss the power of transnational corporations as a global actor in the twenty-first century.

A discussion question requires students to engage critically and analytically with the prompt, examining its various dimensions, and then arrive at a reasoned argument that is directly relevant to the topic. Higher-scoring answers were more likely to be relevant and sophisticated in terms of conceptual language, academic positioning and detail, and demonstrate a considered and justified position. Students needed to engage critically in the meaning, nature and power of transnational corporations in relation to other global actors. Whatever position taken, responses needed to engage critically with the issue of the nature and limits of power of TNCs in relation to other global actors.

The majority of students responded in terms of an evaluative contrast between a TNC and other specific global actors. However, a number of students appeared to have written a prepared response in which they chose to examine a number of different global actors, but they did not place a discussion of the power of transnational corporations at the centre of their essays. These essays were not awarded high marks.

To gain a high score, responses needed to state a position and broadly agree or disagree with the prompt. Students needed to come to a reasoned conclusion through discussing both sides of the prompt.

The following is an example of a high-scoring introductory paragraph.

Whilst the rise of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) in the 21st century have cemented their power within the global political arena, such a global actor can only be considered powerful when dealing with states that have minimal power and therefore cannot be considered to be the

most powerful actor in the modern age. Alternatively, another notion is the power that strong states withhold within global politics, due to the inability of intergovernmental organisations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), to challenge such clout with their comparative lacklustre power. Thus whilst TNCs do prove to be significantly powerful against weaker states, the presence of stronger states within the global political arena will invariably ensure that the state remains the most powerful actor in the 21st century.

Question 2

This was the most popular essay topic on the examination. This question asked students to evaluate the success of a nominated Asia-Pacific state in achieving at least three of its national interests.

This essay topic asked students to evaluate. This required students to determine the net worth of the selected state, taking into account both positive and negative elements.

Higher-scoring essays clearly identified three different national interests – for example, national security, economic prosperity, regional relationships or international standing. Each national interest element needed to be separately examined and its successful achievement (or lack of success) keenly evaluated. It was critical that the evaluation be within the Asia-Pacific region and with a twenty-first century focus.

While some students chose to include an overall evaluation of the general success of the state, this was not the primary focus of the topic.

The following is an example of a high-scoring introductory paragraph.

In the 21st century, China has had considerable success in achieving its national interest of national security, economic prosperity, regional relationships and international standing. The use of economic and diplomatic power has had short term success in achieving China's national security interests in the South China Sea and Taiwan, however have potentially undermined some of these objectives in the long term. China's use of economic power has been both beneficial to its international standing in regards to its One Belt One Road Initiative and detrimental to regional relationships in regards to the South China Seas dispute.

Question 3

Some students who wrote on this topic found it difficult to respond to it in a detailed and precise manner. They struggled to successfully incorporate the concept of an 'effective framework for responding to ethical issues' into their essay.

A discussion question requires students to engage critically and analytically with the prompt, examining its various dimensions and then arriving at a reasoned argument that is directly relevant to the topic. Higher-scoring answers were relevant and sophisticated in terms of conceptual language, academic positioning and detail, and demonstrate a considered and justified position. Students needed to engage critically with the meaning of 'effective framework', by examining the extent to which 'cosmopolitanism' can be or is effective in responding to ethical issues. Students could have used similar material already used for Questions 9 and 10, without penalty.

To gain a high score, responses needed to state a position and broadly agree or disagree with the prompt. Students needed to come to a reasoned conclusion through discussing both sides of the prompt.

The following is an example of a high-scoring introductory paragraph.

Cosmopolitan views in the ethical issue of human rights are upheld in international laws and treaties such as United Nations conventions. These rights are viewed to be inherit to all human beings no matter whatever race, gender or religion they are. Cosmopolitanism works on the basis that all humans belong to a single community and must work together to uphold their rights. Cosmopolitan frameworks have been successful in some isolated instances around the world. However, overall they have been limited by many state's adopting realist approaches.

Cosmopolitanism values have been successfully upheld in states such as Costa Rica and Somalia through their ratification of international laws. But realist actions taken in states such as Australia and the USA, have diminished the principles of cosmopolitanism.

Question 4

This question was the second-most popular of the four essay topics. This topic asked students to discuss two global crises, as per the study design's definition of global crisis – for example, a response that discussed two cases of 'armed conflict' (Syria and Libya) would be considered to cover only one crisis.

Higher-scoring essays engaged with the key terms of the question – 'unilateralism', 'international cooperation' and 'effective' – and provided a coherent justified response that directly responded to the key aspect, 'more effective'. This was done through an evaluative comparison of 'unilateralism' and 'international cooperation' (for these purposes international cooperation can be considered to include 'bilateralism' and 'multilateralism', as well as the concept of 'international cooperation').

To gain a high score, responses needed to state a position and broadly agree or disagree with the prompt. Students needed to come to a reasoned conclusion through discussing both sides of the prompt.

The following is an example of a high-scoring introductory paragraph.

The fundamental difference between unilateral and multilateral action is that unilateralism when a global actor acts by itself, whilst multilateralism and international cooperation requires three or more actors to be considered. As seen through the relative success of Australia during the Global Financial Crisis, in resolving economic instability and the United States in resolving state terrorism, there unintended actions are far more effective than actions taken that are of a multilateral nature, as seen in the European Union's response through the actions of the TROIKA to the Eurozone Sovereign Debt Crisis and the UNs response to state terrorism. Overall, the effectiveness of unilateral action is that a global actor can act in any way it believes it should, as it only considers its own interests, while international cooperation and multilateral action requires a consideration of potentially differing interests which often can conflict and inhibit progress in the resolution of global crises.