

2004 AS Liberal Studies

Marking Criteria

Marking Criteria are provided for the reference of students and teachers only. They should not be treated as model answers.

(Note: In the assessment process, markers should first determine an appropriate grade for an answer based on 3 factors, viz. understanding of the question, content and approach, and then convert that grade into a corresponding mark according to the following table.)

Criteria	Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-balanced answer which shows a full understanding of the demands of the question. Analytical in approach and critical in the use of supporting evidence. Arguments are cogent and effectively supported. Free from major inaccuracies/inconsistencies and important omissions. <p><i>(Note: Answers in this category need NOT be 'perfect' – they may contain minor flaws in content or approach.)</i></p>	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptably balanced answer which shows a good understanding of the demands of the question. Predominantly analytical in approach. Arguments are mostly coherent and well substantiated. Contains occasional inaccuracies and minor omissions. 	B
	C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a general understanding of the demands of the question and a conscious effort to address the question, but the answer lacks balance. Shows some attempt to analyse the relevant issues, but the scope and depth of analysis are rather limited. Arguments tend to be inadequately sustained and exemplified. Marred by inaccuracies, omissions and inconsistencies. 	D
	E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows inadequate understanding of the question and/or a weak knowledge of the subject matter. Unduly narrative and weak in analysis. Arguments tend to be assertive and not substantiated. Containing fundamental errors/major inconsistencies/gross irrelevancies. 	E/F
	F
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a total misunderstanding of the question and a failure to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant material. Narrative in approach and lacking in analysis. Overwhelmingly assertive and fragmentary. Totally inadequate, containing little that is accurate, relevant or worthwhile. 	U

Effective Communication

- The criteria for awarding markings for effective communication are :
 - whether the argument is logically and systematically set out;
 - whether it is easy to understand the arguments relevant to the question; and
 - whether the language is effectively deployed in the communication of relevant idea and viewpoints.

(Note : Grammar and spelling are only important insofar as they enhance or hinder communication.)
- Markers are advised to use the following grade-mark equivalence scale when awarding marks for effective communication:

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	U
Mark	5	4	3	2	2	1	0

Candidates' Performance

Hong Kong Studies

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1	Compulsory	Satisfactory
2	Compulsory	Poor
3	Compulsory	Mediocre
4	16	Mediocre
5	17	Poor
6	5	Mediocre
7	62	Satisfactory

Candidates' performance on individual questions

Section 1

- Q.1 In answering part (a) question, many candidates had difficulties in comprehending the concept and meaning of reading literacy. Because of this, the answers provided by many candidates were on the problems of language policy, not on reading literacy itself. In part (b), many candidates were able to suggest ways of cultivating reading habit and literacy, but some of the suggestions were out of context and tended to stress the importance of granting additional resources to schools. Answers seldom touched upon the reforms in course design and delivery, or the adjustments in assessment requirement.
- Q.2 In general, candidates' performance in describing the values reflected by the behaviour and attitudes of the two different groups of people as shown in the question was poor, as was their ability to describe whether the two groups' value systems were in conflict or not. Candidates' answers tended to repeat what they had found in the question and offered little analysis. Many candidates failed to discuss the rationale behind the behaviour and attitude of the two groups of people. Candidates were not well equipped with political concepts and political events in Hong Kong and mainland China.
- Q.3 Many candidates approached part (a) from a professional and/or moral perspective, rather than from the required legal point of view. Their answers seldom commented on the arguments put forward by Next Magazine. Few candidates demonstrated their understanding of the role and function of the Press Council, or the rationale behind the Press Council's demand of granting "Qualified Privilege". As a result, their answers to part (b) were not thorough or well developed. Only a few candidates were able to list the pros and cons of granting "Qualified Privilege" to the Press Council before putting forward their own arguments.

Section 2

- Q.4 Candidates managed to describe the message communicated in the cartoon. However, many of them related the message to the discussion of business opportunity, rather than the direction of economic development required in part (a). In general, candidates were able to suggest measures to complement the business opportunities as implied in the cartoon, but some of these suggestions were out of context and not feasible.
- Q.5 In answering part (a), candidates usually cited the related stipulations in the Basic Law and described the position of each concerned party. However, they failed to discuss the difficulties of arriving at a consensus among different sectors in Hong Kong society and the Central Government on political reforms, and the pace of developing democracy in Hong Kong. Candidates' articulation of their views on the direction of political reform that would have the support of the Central Government and the Hong Kong people was weak.

- Q.6 Candidates were able to describe the basic trend of the number of corruption reports received by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) between 1974 and 2002, but their descriptions were far from comprehensive. Candidates seemed to have difficulties in digesting figures and numbers. For part (b), some candidates performed well by assessing the work of the ICAC from both the positive and negative points of view, but some candidates wrongly related the number of corruption reports received with the successfulness of the work of the ICAC.
- Q.7 Candidates generally commented on the effectiveness of the policy of medium of instruction by assessing the performance of each type of school in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). Some candidates overlooked the presence of the third type of school and its performance in the HKCEE, i.e. CMI schools (those using Chinese as the medium of instruction) that switched to EMI (those using English as the medium of instruction) in Forms Four and Five. For part (b), some candidates confused the policy of the medium of instruction with the learning of English when proposing ways of improving the former.

General comments

In general, candidates' ability to answer questions of a political and legal nature was weak. They also failed to demonstrate a sufficient grasp of numbers and figures. Candidates tended to recite the information and data provided by the questions concerned in their answers without much digestion and deliberation. The writing and presentation skills of the candidates have improved over the years. However, there is still room for further improvement.

Environmental Studies

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1	Compulsory	Fair
2	Compulsory	Poor
3	Compulsory	Fair
4	4	Fair
5	61	Satisfactory
6	11	Fair
7	25	Satisfactory

Candidates' performance on individual questions

Section 1

- Q.1 (a) Many candidates simply provided a description comparing the rates of recovery of recyclable plastic waste, thus failing to augment their discussion with a critical evaluation of the performance of Hong Kong in this regard from the larger international perspective and within the local institutional context. Moreover, some candidates misinterpreted the data provided in Source 1. This reflected perhaps a weakness on their part in deciphering the meaning of percentage figures. Furthermore, while most candidates discussed the possible reasons accounting for the differences in the recovery rate of recyclable plastics among different economies, they failed to explain why some countries share similar patterns.
- (b) Most candidates were not able to identify the primary issue emanating from the proposed project and quite a number of them misunderstood the engineering specifics relating to the project. Many candidates stopped at explaining how the proposed technology, in narrowly defined technical terms, could help reduce the ecological impact of the construction industry on forests, without elaborating on the larger question of how the proposal would complement and contribute to the idea of an ecologically sustainable future.
- Q.2 (a) This question was poorly handled by most candidates. Many candidates did not make full use of the data provided; for example, no one referred to the error bars. Moreover, candidates only pointed out the overall trend of depletion of the ozone layer without a detailed discussion of the characteristics of such a thinning over time. In general, their answers reflected a poor command of the concept of ozone depletion. Many confused ozone depletion with the problem of greenhouse gases in delineating the causes of the former.
- (b) Given that most candidates did not have a good command of the concept of ozone depletion to begin with, it was not surprising to see that they also failed to identify relevant and appropriate measures introduced by international organisations to address the problem. Some candidates were able to highlight the limitations of international accords in general terms, without necessarily pointing to the most relevant set of agreements pertaining to the specific problem of ozone depletion.
- Q.3 (a) Many candidates provided an unnecessarily lengthy discussion in reiterating the specifics of the problem of contaminated seafood *per se* in the first part of their answers and perhaps subsequently failed to find time to identify and elaborate on the nature of the problem as well as to account for the underlying causes of the problem.

- (b) While most candidates were able to identify and discuss some immediate, short-term solutions of a technical nature to address the problem of seawater pollution, many of them were not able to grasp the meaning of “long-term remedies” and failed to conjure up solutions that would have taken into consideration the broader institutional issues pertaining to the resolution of the problem of pollution of large water bodies.

Section 2

- Q.4 (a) Only a small number of candidates answered this question. Some candidates were mistaken about the time-frame of the information provided and inadvertently focused their discussion on the period after China’s entry into the World Trade Organisation. The answers to this question showed that candidates had a poor knowledge of China’s economic development issues in general.
- (b) Many candidates had problems in explaining and articulating their understanding of the term of “materialistic” in relation to Hong Kong’s culture.
- Q.5 (a) This was the most popular question chosen by the candidates in Section 2. Almost all the candidates who answered this question were able to lay out the respective arguments of the proponents and opponents of the reclamation project. However, many of them were not able to relate such arguments to the concept of environmental value. They either omitted this part of the question or sometimes mistook the meaning of environmental values for environmental impacts.
- (b) Alternative solutions provided by many candidates did not always focus on the specific question of how the transport problems would be alleviated. In addressing the question on the extent to which such alternatives would affect the harbour environment, many candidates followed perhaps too narrow a view of the meaning of “harbour environment” and failed to understand that this term could be and should be broadly interpreted as included a host of other dimensions such as visual impact and air quality.
- Q.6 (a) This question, compared with the other questions in this section, was attempted by a much smaller number of candidates. While most of them were able to identify and discuss the economic and ecological concerns, they were not able to ascertain and elaborate on the tensions that may arise between these two attitudes.
- (b) Most answers to this part of question reflected a poor understanding of the nature of and requirements for the successful practice of organic farming in general. Candidates also demonstrated a poor understanding of the major differences in specific local economic and physical conditions in the Pearl River Delta region and those in Hong Kong pertaining to the issue of feasibility of adopting the practice of organic farming in both jurisdictions.
- Q.7 (a) This question was attempted by many candidates. These candidates were able to handle this question quite well and were able to describe and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of geothermal energy as a source of “green” energy. Some candidates, however, did not fully understand the mechanism of tapping into this form of energy and therefore failed to fully account for the nature of its disadvantages in particular.
- (b) While many candidates were able to identify some other forms of “green” energy and then discussed their respective advantages and disadvantages, they failed to focus on the issue of viability of developing such energy sources within the context of Hong Kong. Quite a number of candidates have incorrectly identified tidal energy as a viable source of “green” energy in Hong Kong.

General comments

The overall performance fell between fair to satisfactory. Many candidates were not able to extend their discussion of the raw data provided in the questions from a descriptive mode into an analytical form, which requires them to exercise their interpretative and evaluative skills. Moreover, some of the answers showed that they did not fully understand the meaning of some of the key words or key phrases stated in the questions and that a few could not decipher correctly the meaning of seemingly straightforward numerical and graphic information. Furthermore, quite a sizeable proportion of the candidates were confused with even some basic facts and concepts pertaining to some generally well-known environmental problems. The candidates should, generally speaking, polish their writing skills as many were not able to articulate their arguments in a clear, concise and organised manner.

Human Relationships

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1	Compulsory	Quite good
2	Compulsory	Not satisfactory
3	Compulsory	Good
4	15	Satisfactory
5	8	Satisfactory
6	44	Good
7	33	Quite good

Candidates' performance on individual questions

Section I

- Q.1 (a) Most candidates were able to suggest reasons why SARS might have brought about the effects stated in the extract. Some candidates used their own experiences and knowledge when suggesting such reasons. A few candidates merely stated a few relevant reasons, without giving enough elaborations on the causal relationships between such reasons and the changes stated in the extract. Some candidates described in great length how new idols emerged among secondary students, but failed to explain why such idols made the students re-assess their goals in life. A few candidates were unable to make reference to Hong Kong people's experience in 2003 such as class suspension for weeks and extensive mass media reports on SARS.
- (b) Despite a few persuasive answers, most candidates failed to explain why the method they chose "can better address the teacher's demand". Some candidates tried hard to compare the two methods and suggested their pros and cons. Some candidates misread the information given in the extract, resulting in the following errors: treating Effects A, B and C as Students A, B and C, mistreating the two methods as if they had been chosen or designed by the teachers, misreading Effects A, B and C as those on all people in Hong Kong or those specifically to SARS patients.
- Q.2 (a) This part was poorly answered. Some candidates merely described what happened in the two cartoons, instead of identifying the features of the personality traits of each member of the couples in the cartoons. Some candidates gave a number of suggestions without explaining or relating them to what happened in the two cartoons. A few candidates tried to make up 'romantic' stories with their own imagination and conjectures. Some candidates merely described the gender stereotypes shown in the two cartoons instead of answering the question.
- (b) Most candidates interpreted this part of the question wrongly. Some candidates merely discussed what a healthy marriage should be like. Some candidates commented on whether the marriages shown in the cartoons were successful, and quite a few candidates described the problems seen in the marriages. Some elaborated on the importance of communication in marriages. Some of those who managed to pinpoint the features of the personality traits in part (a) failed to discuss logically whether such features were favourable to the success of marriages in general.

- Q.3 (a) Most candidates were able to match correctly the stages of Tai-yuet's family experience with the categories of family adaptability. However, some failed to explain the answer with the information given in the extract. A few candidates spent a lot of time on a certain stage and wrote little on the others. Some candidates identified Stage C as the 'Flexible' category of family adaptability and made up stories for their choice.
- (b) This question was poorly answered. Most candidates failed to focus on how Tai Yuet's family should negotiate their roles and family rules in relation to enabling them to respond more effectively to future adversity. Some merely wrote about the importance of communication in helping family members to respond to future adversity, without making reference to each member's role and the family rules. A few candidates wrote about the importance of sharing leadership among family members. Some focused too much on the changes in each member's roles when Tai-yuet's mother returned home without valid explanation.

Section 2

- Q.4 (a) Most candidates were unable to relate the changes in Yat Chung's interpersonal relationships after the camp with what he had experienced in the camp and the understanding he developed in it. Some candidates mentioned the activities or programmes in the camp, but failed to show the causal relationship between them and the changes in Yat Chung's interpersonal relationships. A few candidates failed to use the activities mentioned in the extract and instead wrongly focused on describing interpersonal relationships in the camp and possible changes in Yat Chung. There were a few good answers, in which candidates related the relevant activities to changes in Yat Chung in terms of his values, attitudes, behaviour as well as knowledge.
- (b) Most candidates had no difficulty in naming an activity. However, the activities they mentioned were mostly either too general or too large-scale to be manageable for a small group of people with a limited time span, while some others were unlikely to be helpful in resolving conflicts among a class of S7 students. Some candidates spent too much time on describing the details of the activity they suggested, and failed to state how it could help strengthen the spirit of cooperation and to make a class of S7 students accept each other better. Nonetheless, a few candidates were able to suggest activities with explanations on how they could be organised and how they would help solve conflicts and promote cooperation.
- Q.5 This was not a popular question. A few candidates were very careless and they wrongly used information in 2003 and 2004, such as events related to SARS and Article 23 of the Basic Law, to support their discussions. Most candidates were able to comment on the opinions of the two scholars about the voting behaviour of young people. However, they were unable to use fully and wisely the information given in the introduction, the table and the two extracts of scholar opinions to support their viewpoints. So they failed to offer logical and convincing views when discussing which comment was more acceptable to them. Those who were able to cite relevant information from the given data (such as the fact that all the three elections were held on Sundays and the way that the government gave out cards) and use them in their elaborations certainly scored higher marks than the others.
- Q.6 (a) There were good answers produced to this part. Some candidates merely focused on how the tactics they selected would enable the young person to be promoted, without considering why they would have the least harmful effects on the young person's relationships with colleagues. Some candidates failed to give persuasive and valid explanations. A few candidates gave far-fetched answers, using exaggerated and unrealistic analogies in their explanations.

- (b) Some candidates produced very sensible answers with logical explanations. However, a few candidates focused on describing gender stereotypes instead of addressing what the question asked for.
- Q.7 (a) Some candidates mentioned irrelevant factors and gave wrong information when trying to support their answers. A few candidates gave some feasible reasons, but were unable to explain the significant decrease in the amount of rubbish collected in the year. Some showed their ignorance of what was in the mass media, and did not know how much in the past and at present the government fined people for littering.
- (b) Some candidates merely elaborated on the effects of peer pressure on youngsters' behaviour in general. Most candidates failed to make reference to specific situations in their discussion. However, a few candidates did well in this part by using extensive examples to illustrate their points and by providing in-depth discussion.

General comments

Candidates were often able to offer quite good answers when they attempted questions related to experiences that they would have had in their own lives. This year, most candidates handled textual information satisfactorily. However, candidates should be more careful in interpreting the meanings of key words and key phrases in the questions. Compared to last year, it appeared that more candidates were able to discuss their answers with sound arguments.

The Modern World

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1	Compulsory	Good
2	Compulsory	Fair
3	Compulsory	Satisfactory
4	35	Fair
5	28	Satisfactory
6	11	Fair
7	26	Good

Candidates' performance on individual questions

Section 1

- Q.1 Most candidates were able to identify with graphs or charts the trends relating to the poverty situation between the period specified in the two regions they selected. However, a few candidates failed to draw graphs or charts to illustrate the trends. A few other candidates ignored the phrase 'from A to E' in the question and wrongly selected 'All developing countries' (Region F) when answering the question.
- Q.2 In general, candidates were able to make use of the data provided to discuss the spread of nuclear weapons. Some good candidates discussed the implications of the possession of nuclear weapons by countries located in the troubled regions of the world, such as the Middle East, East Asia, and South Asia.
- Q.3 Most candidates offered a reasonable elaboration of the US perceptions of the effectiveness of the United Nations. However, some candidates failed to discuss in detail the impacts of the US perceptions of UN effectiveness on world peace and stability, such as the emergence of a uni-polar world dominated by the United States.

Section 2

- Q.4 Most candidates were able to explain the relative position of their selected country in the globalisation index by making reference to the criteria given. However, some candidates put too much emphasis on the changes in relative positions from 2002 to 2003, rather than focusing on explaining the country's relative position in the globalisation index.
- Q.5 Most candidates were able to apply the principles of 'just wars' to their discussion on the US – Iraq war in 2003. Many candidates demonstrated in their answers that they understood the principles, and their thinking on the issue was independent and critical.
- Q.6 Most candidates were able to identify the areas of international integration in the modern world. However, some candidates failed to discuss the limitations and difficulties of international integration under the preconditions mentioned in the extract.
- Q.7 Most candidates rightly identified the contributions of non-governmental organisations to humanitarian development. Good candidates took a step further to evaluate the extent to which the goals of humanitarian development were achieved by non-governmental organisations.

General comments

Most candidates possessed a global perspective in understanding issues facing the modern world. Candidates in general understood the causes of such issues, and their impacts on world stability and development.

Candidates are advised to look at the questions carefully, so as to avoid misunderstanding the demand of the questions. Only by grasping the gist of a question will candidates be able to address the question properly. Candidates are also advised to interpret the data provided by the questions, rather than merely copying them into their answers.

Science, Technology & Society

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1	Compulsory	Good
2	Compulsory	Unsatisfactory
3	Compulsory	Very good
4	5	Good
5	13	Satisfactory
6	46	Quite good
7	36	Satisfactory

Candidates' performance on individual questions

Section 1

- Q.1 Most candidates were able to present reasonably clear personal views on whether it was worthwhile for a woman in her twenties to have the blood test. However, only about half of the candidates were able to make adequate use of all the relevant data given so as to avoid making hollow points and over-generalisations. A few outstanding candidates were able to set conditions for different positions to take and to weigh the pros and cons of such positions before reaching their own. It was noteworthy that several candidates focused only on the elaboration of their scepticism regarding the validity of the information provided by the company. Such scepticism should have only formed part of their consideration, otherwise many interesting issues arising from the question would have been overlooked.
- Q.2 (a) Not many candidates did well in this questions. About one-third of the candidates failed to give a reasonably clear description of the data presented by the chart. Of those who were able to do so, only a few were able to suggest sufficient reasons for the changes in the three projections and even fewer could cite real instances to support their analysis. There was definitely room for improvement in answering this type of question.
- (b) Very few candidates did well in this question. Most candidates failed to realise that this question comprised two parts, each of which required elaborations. By failing to grasp the crux of the question, many candidates lost marks substantially.
- Q.3 (a) (i) In general candidates performed very well in this question. They were able to make use of the data to support their own views and arguments. Outstanding candidates were able to selectively compare and contrast the means of transport facing similar problems, and consequently the persuasive power of their argument was enhanced. Such candidates were also able to synthesise their common sense, arguments and imagination in explaining why a particular means of transport was selected for discussion.
- (ii) Candidates' performance in this part was good.
- (b) A substantial number of candidates gave undue emphasis to how the existing means of transport had been improved with modern technology in the past. Only a small number of candidates went beyond that and extended their scope of discussion to possible improvements in the future.

Section 2

- Q.4 This was the least popular question and only a few candidates attempted this question. Most answers were above average.
- Q.5 This was the second least popular question. Below-average candidates tended to present one-sided views, while outstanding candidates were able to weigh fairly the pros and cons for the government in keeping a record of the genetic information of every person.
- Q.6 (a) This question enjoyed high popularity and attracted candidates of various standards. Candidates good at comparing different scenarios and elaborating reasons why their selected student had committed the most serious Internet crime earned above-average marks, while those who offered one-sided and superficial views did not.
- (b) The sub-question attracted a highly diverse range of answers, some reflecting candidates' critical creativity while others were obviously shallow.
- (c) Candidates who attempted this question did not have much difficulty in suggesting a few ways to prevent young people from committing Internet crimes. However, only those who were able to elaborate their thoughts with feasible examples succeeded in distinguishing themselves from the others as outstanding candidates.
- Q.7 This was also a popular question. Some candidates made good use of the comments given and were able to draw wider implications and to analyse the question comprehensively. On the contrary, some candidates merely focused on a particular comment and failed to offer contextual interpretations of the implications of the comments.

General comments

This year, quite a number of candidates commendably displayed their ability to carry out *critical* analysis by approaching issues from *different angles*, such as offering comparisons of different choices given by a question and evaluating the pros and cons of certain choices. It should be noted that this important component of critical reasoning was not encountered so often in candidates' answers in previous years. On this score, candidates have made encouraging improvement in their performance.

On the other hand, many candidates did not realise the importance of *elaborating* the main points they made in their answers. Candidates who were able to make relevant elaborations would be awarded higher marks than those who stated their points briefly. For instance, if the solution to a problem was to educate young people, a good answer should not merely mention the solution, but should also elaborate why educating young people was the solution, or offer concrete suggestions on how to educate young people. Likewise, if an answer was about the danger of developing nuclear technology, merely mentioning the danger would not be as impressive as citing one or two past incidences resulted from such danger. Elaborations as such might require only one or two sentences, sometimes just a few words, yet they demonstrate the depth of candidates' answers.

Finally, it was quite disappointing that the number of candidates failing to finish the paper as required seemed to have increased this year. A number of candidates who did well in two or three questions did not have time to answer the fourth one. This inevitably led to substantial reduction of their total marks, a consequence that could have been avoided had better time management been in place.