



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Rewarding Learning

GCSE subject criteria for citizenship studies

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Introduction

1. GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in citizenship studies. They provide the framework within which an awarding body creates the detail of the specification.
2. Specifications must also meet the regulators' general requirements, including the common and GCSE criteria as defined in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications* (QCA/04/1293).
3. Subject criteria are intended to:
 - help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies
 - ensure that the rigour of GCSE is maintained
 - ensure that specifications build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established by the national curricula for England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and facilitate progression to higher level general or vocational qualifications, and employment and training
 - help higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders such as learners and parents/guardians know what has been studied and assessed.
4. Any GCSE specification that contains significant elements of citizenship studies must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

Aims and learning outcomes

5. GCSE specifications in citizenship should encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study. This should enable learners to gain the confidence and conviction to participate in decision making and play an active role as effective citizens in public life.
6. GCSE specifications in citizenship studies must enable learners to:
 - engage with topical citizenship issues and contribute to debates on challenges facing society involving a wide range of political, social and ethical ideas, issues and problems in different contexts (local to global)

- develop and apply understanding of key citizenship concepts (justice, democracy, rights and responsibilities, identities and diversity) to deepen their understanding of society and how communities change over time
- use an enquiring, critical approach to distinguish facts, opinions and bias, build arguments and make informed judgements
- develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to take action with others to address citizenship issues in their communities.

Subject content

7. The content of GCSE specifications in citizenship studies must reflect the learning outcomes.
8. GCSE in citizenship studies must be a broad specification based on learners' involvement in citizenship and consistent with the national curriculum key stage 4 programmes of study requirements in the orders for England.

Assessment objectives

9. All specifications must require candidates to demonstrate their ability to:

Assessment objectives		% weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of citizenship concepts, issues and terminology	25–35
AO2	Apply skills, knowledge and understanding when planning, taking and evaluating citizenship actions in a variety of contexts	40–50
AO3	Analyse and evaluate issues and evidence including different viewpoints to construct reasoned arguments and draw conclusions	30–40

Scheme of assessment

10. GCSE specifications in citizenship studies must allocate a weighting of 40% to external assessment and a weighting of 60% to controlled assessment in the overall scheme of assessment.
11. Question papers must be targeted at the full range of GCSE grades.

Grade descriptions

12. Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.
13. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade	Description
A	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate detailed knowledge of citizenship issues, and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the concepts of democracy, justice, rights and responsibilities, identities and diversity. They make perceptive observations about issues as they explore and analyse the impact their actions have on different communities. They use and explain citizenship terminology appropriately and accurately.</p> <p>They apply their relevant knowledge and understanding as they take actions to address issues of concern. They select appropriate research methodologies and sources of information to develop responses to enquiry questions. They work purposefully with others to decide on, plan and carry out citizenship actions in different contexts. They make meaningful, timely and effective contributions to decision-making. They evaluate the success of the actions they have taken, drawing conclusions about the extent to which the aims were achieved and the course of action was appropriate.</p>

	<p>They discuss, analyse and evaluate questions and issues, using a critical approach to distinguish facts, opinions and bias. They make reasoned and persuasive arguments to represent their own and other viewpoints to substantiate conclusions, selecting a range of appropriate evidence. They discuss, interpret and evaluate different perspectives on issues, including those they may not agree with themselves.</p>
C	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate knowledge and understanding of concepts relating to democracy, justice, rights and responsibilities, identities and diversity. They describe the impact of issues on different communities. They explain these in relation to their own experience and those of other people. They use appropriate citizenship terminology.</p> <p>They apply their knowledge and understanding as they take actions to address issues of concern. They use different research methods and develop questions to investigate issues. They plan, carry out and explain the citizenship actions they take. They work with others to address issues of concern and make relevant contributions to decision-making.</p> <p>They discuss and analyse issues. They demonstrate an appreciation of different points of view and draw their own conclusions, supporting them with evidence.</p>
F	<p>Candidates recall and communicate some relevant knowledge of issues to show some basic understanding of democracy, justice, rights and responsibilities, identities and diversity. They describe citizenship issues in relation to their own and other people's lives, and make some comments about the impact on different communities. They use everyday language to explain their answers with some references to citizenship terminology.</p> <p>They use their knowledge when they participate in citizenship action to address issues of concern. They undertake research to explore</p>

	<p>questions on the issues they are investigating. They work with others to plan and make decisions, and begin to contribute suggestions and ideas to influence the type of actions they and others take.</p> <p>They discuss issues and express opinions based on what they know. They recognise that there are different points of view and begin to draw conclusions, supporting them with some simple reasons.</p>
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