

GCSE Citizenship Studies Short Courses : A briefing paper and progress report

“Each of the new specifications helps to provide an underpinning for the study of Citizenship and an ‘anchorage’ point for its establishment in an academic, or at least academicised, curriculum. Each helps to ‘brand’ Citizenship and give it the kind of visibility and presence that it has rarely enjoyed as a cross-curricular theme...GCSE must not dominate the Citizenship agenda in the way that it has other parts of the curriculum but it may have something to bring to the table. We would be wrong to ignore the contribution that it can make”

[Tony Breslin, “Calling Citizenship to account : assessment, inspection and the quest for quality”, Teaching Citizenship (Summer 2003) p.33-34]

“The operation of the first assessment in GCSE Citizenship Studies can be regarded as a success for the centres and candidates who participated. Few of those who teach Citizenship do so with the benefit of specialist knowledge and training. Constraints have existed in terms of... the start-up costs of a new subject and the allocation of curriculum time...

Coursework proved to be an active, positive, rewarding and enjoyable experience for almost everyone and it was truly a pleasure to see how young people could work together in such a positive and productive way. Their efforts and achievement, and those of the staff who clearly wanted citizenship to succeed, should rightly be applauded in a medium which extends wider than this report”

[Chief Examiner’s Report, Edexcel specification, 2003]

This paper sets out to do five things :

- Establish the context in which the three examination boards in England developed their specifications for GCSE Citizenship Studies short courses and summarise the content of these courses. The wider context of Citizenship’s place in the curriculum at key stage 4 will also be summarised.
- Explore the arguments that are offered for and against undertaking a GCSE course in Citizenship Studies
- Place GCSE Citizenship Studies in the context of wider debates about citizenship and assessment
- Identify the key points that emerge from the Chief Examiners’ reports for the first year in which GCSE Citizenship Studies awards were made (Summer 2003)
- Explore in more detail the areas for development outlined in these reports which will enable teachers and their pupils to undertake even more rewarding and successful Citizenship activities and approaches in the future (drawing conclusions with particular relevance for beginning teachers). The particular areas identified for further exploration are : Citizenship subject knowledge and concepts; Active Citizenship and coursework and Extended writing in Citizenship. Exemplary pupil learning resources are included in relation to these themes.

The paper has been commissioned by a project funded to undertake action research into the initial training of beginning teachers of Citizenship. Its target audience in the first instance is therefore students undertaking Citizenship PGCE courses, HEI tutors and school-based mentors. The paper is likely to be of interest, however, to all teachers currently teaching, or thinking about introducing, Citizenship Studies at GCSE and to the wider Citizenship community. It will therefore be available on the A.C.T. (Association for Citizenship Teaching) website. The author should declare an interest. He is the Chair of Examiners of the AQA Citizenship Studies GCSE Short Course. Nevertheless, every effort is made here to be balanced. The conclusions from the Summer 2003 GCSE Citizenship Studies awards are based upon a relatively small entry cohort (6,269 students across the three examination boards) and from students who were entered for the examination after only one year of study. What are reported here, therefore, are interim findings – conclusions are likely to be more secure and based upon a larger sample of students following the Summer 2004 awards. The key issues, however, are likely to remain broadly similar.

i) The Development of GCSE Citizenship Studies short courses

The QCA issued the broad criteria for GCSE short courses in Citizenship Studies that all examination boards needed to meet in March 2001. All specifications needed to comply with the requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study for Citizenship at key stage 4 in England. They were also required to give candidates opportunities to :

- i) Develop and apply knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens through and alongside the development of skills of enquiry, communication, participation and responsible action
- ii) Explore local, national and international issues, problems and events of current interest
- iii) Critically evaluate their participation within school and/or community activities

The QCA listed three Assessment Objectives which should be broadly equally weighted. Specifications must require candidates to :

- AO1 Demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of events of current interest ; roles, rights and responsibilities; communities and identities; democracy and government; and relate them appropriately to individual, local, national and global contexts
- AO2 Obtain, explain and interpret different kinds of information including from the media, in order to discuss, form and express an opinion formally, and in writing, and demonstrate their ability to analyse and present evidence on a variety of issues, problems and events
- AO3 Plan and evaluate the citizenship activities in which they have participated and demonstrate an understanding of their own contribution to them as well as recognising the views, experiences and contributions of others

Each scheme of assessment had to include an externally assessed exam component (60%) and internally assessed coursework (40%). Both components had to address all of the assessment objectives.

How have the different examination boards responded to the challenge of GCSE Citizenship Studies ?

Inevitably, given the common criteria that they were working to, there were significant similarities in the responses of the examination boards to the GCSE Citizenship Studies (Short Course) specification. For example, they all made links to the wider curriculum objectives in relation to Key Skills, Spiritual Moral, Ethical, Social and Cultural Issues, ICT, Environmental Education, Health and Safety issues and the European dimension. They provided useful lists of organizations, textbooks and other resources to support Citizenship and outlined the support and training that they are able to offer to centres opting for their particular course. There were interesting suggestions/claims made for the co-teachability of GCSE Citizenship studies alongside, for example, GCSE Humanities, English, Geography, Business Studies, Media Studies, Religious Studies and Foundation and Intermediate GNVQs in Health and Social Care, Media : Communication and Production, Science and Business. Some also offered teachers' guides. The question papers they produced were not tiered. However, this digest will tend to concentrate on the differing features in the approaches proposed by Edexcel, OCR and AQA. Teachers are advised to consult the full details of each board's specification in terms of the administration, supporting paperwork and detailed guidance.

a) Course Content

Edexcel identified three key Citizenship themes :

Theme 1 : Rights and Responsibilities

Communities and Identities : Multi-cultural Britain – The origins of regional, religious and ethnic differences in the UK and the reasons for them. The need for mutual respect and understanding; Issues relating to discrimination on grounds of race, gender, disability;
Roles, Rights and Responsibilities : human rights and laws protecting them, consumer rights, employment rights;
Criminal and Civil Justice : Crime and punishment; why laws are needed for society to function; the role and operation of the criminal and civil justice system

Theme 2 : Power, Politics and the Media

Power and Politics : The opportunity for individuals and voluntary groups to bring about social change locally, nationally, in Europe and internationally; the role of pressure groups; the nature of democracy; why people living in a democracy should vote; the importance of playing an active part in democratic and electoral processes; electoral processes/voting rights (who can vote, at what age, what can be voted for, voting methods); the role of parliament, the government and the courts in making and shaping the law
Media: The importance of a free press and the media's role in society; ownership of the media and whether what is presented is influenced by

owners or consumers; arguments for and against censorship; why freedom of information is necessary in a democracy; the press (the difference between quality and popular); television and the internet; the role of the media in shaping opinion

Theme 3 : *The Global Village*

Global Business: How the economy functions, including the role of business and financial services; Global trade, debt, participation and protest e.g. fast food, sportswear, arms, film and music

Environmental issues: Local, national and global issues; participation and protest e.g. sustainable development, Local agenda 21 (responsibilities of local authorities to improve sustainable development)

The UK's place in the World: Links to Europe, the Commonwealth and the UN e.g. disaster relief, epidemics, peacekeeping etc.; Opportunities for individuals and voluntary groups to bring about social change locally, nationally, in Europe and internationally

OCR

The content is divided into three themes which all candidates study. These are :

Theme 1 : *Citizenship - Rights and Responsibilities*

Rights and Responsibilities of individuals in families and at school/college

Rights and Responsibilities within the legal and justice system

Origins and implications of diverse identities and social groups in the UK

Theme 2 : *Citizenship and Government*

The work of parliament, the government and the courts in making and shaping the law

Democracy and the electoral process

Government, decision-making and the economy

The UK's relationship with the European Union, Commonwealth and United Nations

Theme 3 : *Citizenship and Participation*

Social change and the opportunities for individuals and groups to be involved

The global community and citizenship issues

International issues and individual action

Aspects of the media's role are included in each of these three themes. This is done to focus attention upon the media as a vehicle for the study of Citizenship and to emphasise the importance to citizens of the way in which the media represent events and influence opinion.

AQA

Identified three compulsory topics and, running alongside these themes, three conceptual strands :

Topic 1 : School, Work and the Local Community

Topic 2 : National and European Citizenship

Topic 3 : Global Citizenship

The three underlying conceptual strands are :

Theme 1 : Rights and Responsibilities

Theme 2 : Decision-making, Power and Authority

Theme 3 : Participation in Citizenship Activities

Across the three topics, through research, discussion, participation in school and community-based activities and reflection upon the roles and contributions of others, candidates should be able to describe, analyse, explain and evaluate the following :

Topic 1:

School :

- The legal and moral rights and responsibilities of parents, teachers and students
- How power and authority are exercised within school by individuals and through groups, and how schools provide opportunities for student participation and community involvement
- How schools can promote equal opportunities and reflect the diverse multi-cultural nature of society

Work

- The legal and moral rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, including how employment legislation (equal opportunities and health and safety) is applied either through a case study of a company and/or at a work experience placement
- How a case study company or work experience placement relates to other businesses and contributes to the local and national economy
- How individuals and businesses use financial services

Community

- How ethnic identity, religion and culture can affect community life
- How power and authority are exercised at local and devolved government levels (e.g. parliaments and assemblies)
- [With the aid of case studies and/or participation] how individuals can bring about change through the democratic process, through pressure groups or voluntary organizations

Topic 2 :

National and European Government

- How power and authority are exercised by the UK government and the European Union
- How citizens exercise their rights and responsibilities by participating in democratic processes (referendums, elections and participation in political parties)
- How the lives of citizens are affected by the ways in which government at national and European levels exercises power, authority and responsibility in relation to economic management, the raising of taxes and the provision of public services

Criminal and Civil Law

- How young people's lives are affected by the law, including consumer, race relations, human rights and age-related legislation

- How laws are made and how courts at local, national and European levels exercise their power and authority
- [With the help of case studies] the difference between criminal and civil law and the role of key people in the legal system, including police, magistrates, solicitors, barristers, judges and juries

The Media

- The importance of a free press, the responsibilities of the media in terms of fair reporting and the restrictions placed upon them
- [Illustrated by a comparative case study] how the media can report the same event in different ways to influence or reflect public opinion

Topic 3 :

International Relations

- The relationship between the UK, EU, Commonwealth and the UN and the rights and responsibilities associated with membership of these bodies
- The issues relating to one current area of international conflict, co-operation or human rights dispute

World Trade and Overseas Aid

- What is meant by global inequality and how this can be affected by trading practices; the impact of multi-national companies and aid programmes
- The challenges of global interdependence with reference to a specific issue
- How Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development are linked
- [With the aid of case studies] how consumers, the media, pressure groups and governments can affect international issues

Schemes of Assessment : Written Examination Paper (60%)

Edexcel

1 hr 15 minute exam paper entitled 'Citizenship Today'

Three sections :

A Short answer questions and one question requiring an extended answer based on a school and/or community-based Citizenship activity. Students will be required to evaluate the Citizenship activities in which they have taken part and demonstrate an understanding of them as well as recognising the views, experiences and contributions of others

B Short answer questions based on data that may consist of written material and/or graphs, graphics, photographs, pictures etc... The subject content to be drawn from one the three specified themes

C Short answer questions based on each of the specified themes and an extended answer on one question chosen from one of these three themes

The content of the exam paper will be drawn from the three themes and a Citizenship activity.

OCR

1 hr 30 minutes exam paper

Three sections :

A (20% of overall assessment)

Multiple-choice and short answer questions covering the whole of the specification content

B (20% of overall assessment)

Questions based upon resource material which will be focused on a particular Citizenship issue (the exemplar was 'Asylum Seekers'). This section will allow candidates to show their understanding and awareness across the whole specification content. A source booklet is made available six school weeks before the date of the first GCSE exam each year.

C (20% of overall assessment)

Questions about participation and responsible action. Some questions cover the candidate's participation and responsible action in school and/or community, and their reflection upon and critical evaluation of , their own experience. Other questions relate more widely to the role of participation and responsible action in a democratic society

AQA

1 hr 30 minutes exam paper

Four sections, each worth 15% of the overall assessment :

- A Candidates answer a series of compulsory short answer questions
- B Candidates answer one compulsory source-based structured question focusing upon a community-based issue (e.g. impact of the closure of a major factory)
- C Candidates answer one compulsory structured question based upon a Citizenship activity they have undertaken (usually – but not necessarily – for the internal coursework assignment)
- D Candidates answer one essay-style question from a choice of three

Guidance on Coursework (40%)

All of the boards offer coursework options that are internally assessed and then externally moderated. All also offer varying degrees of flexibility in terms of the focus and nature of students' work. A wide range of school and/or community citizenship activities is appropriate as a basis for coursework assignments. These might include, either as complete or partial fulfilment of the coursework requirements :

- Participation in simulation activities such as mock elections, mock trials, model United Nations assemblies
- Involvement in School Councils
- Setting up a school radio station
- Pro-active actions in school e.g. Organizing a school display for different pupils about issues studied; organizing petitions on issues that pupils feel strongly about; organizing a guest speaker to talk to the class
- Developing a local facility into a school/community resource e.g. open space, environmental improvement
- Projects relating to assisting elderly people
- Reading projects with pupils in earlier phases of education
- Liaison with police in setting up joint forums to discuss facilities for youth, vandalism etc..
- Environmental improvement projects e.g. Recycling, school grounds
- Work-experience related project relating to employment rights and

- opportunities
- Partnership project with a local community or voluntary organization
- Establishing gardens, simulated businesses etc..
- Communication with schools in other countries through twinning or similar arrangements
- Fund-raising for charity
- Training younger pupils in sport/music
- Youth council or youth parliament activity
- Activity in connection with membership of an interest or pressure group
- Working to produce a community newsletter or magazine
- Reflection upon Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme or Scout or Guide activity
- Conflict mediation or mediation project
- Researching an issue and presenting back to class/year group or other audience
- Working in a hospital or nursing home, or with disabled, disadvantaged or elderly people
- Organizing assemblies, performances, conferences, sports, social or musical events

This is not an exhaustive list and the precise mechanisms for organizing, recording and reflecting upon such activities and identifying individuals' contributions to projects should be checked with each board's specification.

Edexcel

Focus : Participating in Society

Organized through submission of a Portfolio Response Form and Supporting Evidence.

Students are required to complete an Assessment Sheet to describe the activity in which they have taken part and a Response Form to demonstrate that they have planned and evaluated the citizenship activity in which they have participated. The Response form may be based on written or oral work. Students are required to demonstrate that they have an understanding of their own contribution to the activity and to recognise the views, experiences and contributions of others. They also need to provide supporting evidence of the activities listed on the Response Form.

The Response Form consists of four sections :

- Planning (10 marks)
- Activity Log (10 marks)
 - Students should keep a log of their actions during the activity, indicating the precise nature of the knowledge and understanding of citizenship studies involved and the nature of individual and group contributions to the activities
- Communication (10 marks)
 - Sources of evidence for the Portfolio are listed e.g. Agendas of meetings held, minutes, videos, CD-ROMs, letters, overhead transparencies, power-point slides, photographs, leaflets etc.. Students should describe the method by which each of these materials contributed to the activity
- Evaluation (10 marks)
 - Students should evaluate the activity and assess their own contribution to

the activity and the views, experiences and contributions of others. They should describe their working methods showing how they changed during the activity. They should also describe any ways in which they would change their working methods in the light of the completed activity.

Supporting evidence for involvement with activities can take a variety of forms :

e.g. Extended written work, questionnaires, agendas, minutes, videos, letters, photographs, web pages, audio records of oral work.

"A minimum of one and a maximum of four types of supporting evidence must be included with the Response Forms. Where written evidence only is supplied, a minimum of 500 words and a maximum of 1,000 words should be submitted. When no written evidence is supplied, the material in the supporting evidence should be equivalent in terms of demand to four sides of A4 written work".

If groupwork is submitted, the contribution of individual students must be identified for moderation purposes.

OCR

Candidates are required to submit two pieces of coursework

Coursework A : (20%) (A structured response of no more than 800 words)

Evaluation of participation and responsible action in school and/or community.

Candidates must demonstrate that they have taken part effectively and will be required to :

- Explain the background and context of the chosen activity
- Plan the responsible action in which they have participated, analyse their contribution and evaluate the part they played, assessing any benefits to the people they worked with and themselves

Candidates should describe :

- The background and context of the chosen activity
- What they did and the impact of their actions on others, using specific examples from a diary or notes compiled during the participation
- What they learned or gained from the experience, including problems and ways of overcoming these
- How they might build upon the experience in the future

Coursework B : (20%) (c.800 words) A critical commentary on two contrasting sources of information of the candidate's choice.

The candidate should identify two contrasting sources of information (including information from the media) on an issue directly relevant to some aspect of the specification content. They might focus, locally, nationally, or internationally, on :

- A topical issue or controversy
- The aims and activities of a community organization (e.g. charity, self-help group, neighbourhood group, voluntary organization, campaign, political party etc..)

Candidates must demonstrate that they are able to :

- Understand the information presented in the article and the views expressed, relating them to local, national and global contexts as appropriate

- Express and explain their own opinion demonstrating their ability to interpret the evidence presented
- Explain and interpret different kinds of information evident in their chosen examples

In compiling the piece of coursework, candidates should :

- Set the article in context, explaining the background to the event/issue/controversy
- Summarise the view(s) expressed and show that they understand the argument(s) cited
- Identify and explain any evidence of bias, and express a personal opinion about the issue
- Comment upon the importance of the event/issue/controversy and what might follow

AQA

Candidates are required to produce a written or word-processed report on the school-based or community-based Citizenship activity in which they have been involved. Each report should be 1,500 to 2,000 words in length. The chosen activities must relate to the topics specified within the subject content of the specification and provide candidates with opportunities to develop and demonstrate skills of participation and responsible action.

In introducing the nature of their coursework this board comments that :
 "Citizenship Studies must relate to the real world and the community at large outside the classroom. This cannot be achieved by desk research alone, Active participation by candidates in the school and/or wider community is required.... It is not intended that all the work follows a common formula. Each centre may wish to tailor the coursework to its own requirements. However, centres may find it appropriate to set common tasks for all candidates in a teaching set, although this is not a requirement of the specification"

The pupils' final report should comprise :

Stage 1 : A structured and detailed rationale and plan of the various stages of the activity

Stage 2 : An account of the activity and associated research

Stage 3 : Evaluation and Reflection

The reports should also append a resource list.

The board also provides guidance on possible research resources. "While researching the coursework, candidates are likely to gather and produce various forms of evidence, information and data. Such evidence might include : questionnaires, survey results, legislation, Acts of Parliament, Hansard minutes, Green papers, textbooks, newspaper extracts, TV or radio recordings, agenda papers, minutes of meetings, interview notes, case study material, video recordings of student debates or mock election speeches, correspondence with organizations, photographs from visits, promotional pamphlets, data, charts, diagrams, spreadsheets, tables etc.."

It is not necessary to send all this information to the moderator – it should be sorted, analysed and used selectively.

Perhaps through necessity, or framing objectives to meet regulatory authority requirements, it is noticeable that none of the specifications do much to indicate the complex and contested nature of citizenship. Yet there are very different and competing definitions of citizenship that are glossed over or merged in the courses outlined above : citizenship as knowledge (Usher, 1996), action (Habermas, 1994); community (Etzioni, 1995); rights and responsibilities (Giddens, 1994); public and private morality (Beck, 1998); inclusivity (Lynch, 1992; Arnot, 1997; Lister, 1997) and locality (Wringe, 1999; Cogan and Derricott, 2000). This is reflected in the wide range of terms used to describe the area of citizenship education in different countries (e.g. citizenship, civics, social sciences, social studies, world studies, society and life skills). Moreover, the notion of Citizenship is also politically as well as intellectually contested with broadly those on the left of politics underlining the rights of citizenship whilst those on the right of politics emphasise the responsibilities of individuals within civic society. It has been noted that : “These competing definitions and models of citizenship and citizenship education are important precisely because they point towards the potential for an incoherent vision and varied practice of citizenship education to develop in English schools.” (Kerr et. al., 2003). The point is worth underlining as Citizenship Studies emerges as a fledgling GCSE course.

Citizenship at key stage 4

Pupils don't have to do a GCSE in Citizenship Studies – indeed in the first year less than 2% of pupils in England did so (although this figure is expected to increase substantially). There are a variety of other ways of accrediting achievements in Citizenship. All pupils, however, do have to meet the outcomes set out in the key stage 4 programme of study for 14-16 year olds. Central guidance has noted that at key stage 4, when pupils are studying optional GCSE or GNVQ courses, “discrete provision of Citizenship will be necessary to meet the requirements of the programmes of study”. For example, “a separately planned [Citizenship] course based on real issues, themes or concepts connected with political and legal systems may be necessary to promote the knowledge and understanding of the work of parliament, the government and the courts, required in the programmes of study” (QCA, 2000).

There is a recognition, however, that 14-16 year old students will realise their Citizenship entitlement in different ways. Links can be made with other statutory requirements such as Careers Education and Guidance, ICT, PE and RE and core subjects such as English. Schools will also wish to identify the contribution of optional GCSEs. All pupils are likely to develop a portfolio to record their Citizenship achievements (it may be that one approach will be for schools to supplement existing Records of Achievement approaches with children progressively putting together a Citizenship portfolio detailing various curricular and extra-curricular tasks, activities and successes in the area of Citizenship).

Whilst there is no statutory assessment of Citizenship at age 16, schools have a legal responsibility to give all pupils access to the Citizenship National Curriculum Programme of Study and to monitor and assess progress. There is an end of key stage 4 level descriptor to guide the curriculum organization and management of the Citizenship knowledge, skills and opportunities that children are entitled to encounter at key stage 4, which “the majority of pupils should characteristically demonstrate by the end of the key stage” :

“Pupils have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the topical events they study; the rights responsibilities and duties of citizens; the role of the voluntary sector; forms of government; and the criminal and civil justice, legal and economic systems. They obtain and use different kinds of information, including the media, to form and express an opinion. They evaluate the effectiveness of different ways of bringing about change at different levels of society. Pupils take part effectively in school and community-based activities, showing a willingness and commitment to evaluate such activities critically. They demonstrate personal and group responsibility in their attitudes to themselves and others”.

OFSTED noted in their most recent report that :

“Key Stage 4 presents a particular problem for the provision of citizenship, but the need for schools to give very serious consideration to this is underlined by the status of citizenship in the proposed 14-19 curriculum” (OFSTED, 2003)

Arguments for and against a GCSE in Citizenship Studies

Attitudes towards GCSE Citizenship are divided. There are respectable and progressive educational arguments that are either sceptical or outright opposed to the implementation of a GCSE in Citizenship Studies. Ruth Tudor, for example, writing in Teaching Citizenship in the Secondary School (J.Arthur & D.Wright eds., David Fulton, 2001) noted :

“ How can we ensure that the impact of a GCSE in ‘Citizenship Studies’ will not be to narrow the experiences of learners and lose the spirit and vision of citizenship education as it is intended to be? The need to provide qualifications in citizenship education is not self-evident and the implications of doing so should be considered carefully. The nature of citizenship education means that it is equally relevant and meaningful for all pupils...In relation to accrediting citizenship...there is a tension between citizenship as an entitlement for all and the nature of qualifications, such as GCSE, which differentiate between candidates using grade criteria. How can this tension be overcome so that pupils are not put in the position of ‘failing’ citizenship or of not being given the opportunity to enter for a qualification in the first place ?”

Tony Breslin, the Chief Executive of the Citizenship Foundation, in a recent article quoted at the head of this paper, also expressed some caveats about GCSE Citizenship Studies alongside his cautious welcome. He articulated a “widely held suspicion that ‘Citizenship’ does not lend itself to the whole paraphernalia of the school subject: lessons, assignments, tests, exams and so on”. Similarly, an Advanced Skills Teacher for Citizenship from a PSHE background, who I showed this paper to, commented :

“I believe strongly that citizenship is something we practice and not attain. This perhaps makes it incompatible with academic subjects in the present value system of education”. Breslin also noted other concerns about GCSE Citizenship Studies short courses. Perhaps they disproportionately emphasised “the knowledge base for Citizenship”. There are alternative assessment tools and courses to consider such as the Key Skills Framework and ASDAN awards. His central point was that :

“Following a course in GCSE Citizenship Studies does not act as a proxy for doing Citizenship in the fullest sense. In this context, participating in a student council, taking part in a mock election, carrying out a school-based trial, visiting local civic facilities, undertaking a community service placement or joining a local campaigning group, all of which constitute experiencing Citizenship, might be captured in the quality of a student’s GCSE answer or, in some cases, the theme of their coursework; but Citizenship programmes should involve opportunities to undertake this kind of active work whether or not students are following a GCSE course.”

These are important observations. It is certainly the case that, for key stage 4 pupils, schools will need to think about how they enable all to make progress and have their Citizenship achievements recognised. Moreover, the way in which learning experiences are provided in Citizenship is fundamental to its success. In order that pupils meet the statutory requirements and gain a broad range of Citizenship experiences they should :

- ◆ Take responsibility for their own learning
- ◆ Explore and discuss topical issues of significance and interest
- ◆ Work in groups of different sizes and compositions
- ◆ Explore and discuss issues through debates, simulation activities or role play
- ◆ Undertake work with adults other than teachers
- ◆ Take time to reflect on all their experiences in both the formal and informal curriculum

Counter arguments in favour of a GCSE Short Course in Citizenship Studies might note that :

- Pupils, parents and employers value GCSEs and therefore accreditation gives citizenship additional status and credibility (it doesn’t become a non-examined ‘easy life’ low status option in Years 10 and 11, or the subject ‘most skived’ as Ken Livingstone put it recently)
- The 40%+ coursework requirement has the potential to lead to active and beneficial community projects. Why not give GCSE credit to the work that pupils do in this area ?
- The early evidence from OFSTED inspections (see below) is that schools are struggling to implement curriculum changes that do justice to Citizenship at KS4 and that cross-curricular approaches are not working – if all pupils undertake a GCSE Short Course as part of a ‘core’ curriculum there is a much stronger possibility of demonstrating robust and effective teaching and assessment of Citizenship at this level
- There are precedents in terms of the introduction of other GCSE Short Courses. GCSE Short Courses in Religious Studies have proved

successful in many schools (and might dovetail with and complement Citizenship within the timetable)

- Whilst it is true that the assessment demands of any qualification, including GCSE, can have a 'dulling' impact on teaching and learning styles, in the case of citizenship it may well be possible to temper this influence through a focus upon problem-solving, argument, debate and active engagement with contemporary issues
- There should certainly be no implication that in only attaining low GCSE grades for Citizenship Studies pupils are in some way 'failing' as citizens. Teachers are looking at pupils' understanding of the civic, social and political dimensions of society rather than attempting to save pupils from 'failing life'. In starting to engage with social science disciplines such as Politics, Sociology, Law and Media Studies it is inevitable that some pupils' intellectual responses will lack the depth of others. (Some educationists go on to make a distinction between Citizenship and Citizenship Studies but the difference may be more semantic than helpful).

There is quite a strong case that could be made that the 60/40 balance between formal examination and coursework is inappropriate for Citizenship and that greater weight could have been given to the 'active' component of the subject but the issue was not up for negotiation with the examination boards. It is up to teachers to ensure that the Citizenship courses offered to their students within the frameworks outlined represent an opportunity to innovate and 'experience' Citizenship rather than a syllabus-driven strait-jacket.

Broader debates about Citizenship and Assessment

Baseline research undertaken across 318 schools in England in the academic year 2001-2002 indicated the distance that would need to be travelled in relation to the area of Citizenship and assessment. Over 80% of teachers surveyed said that they did not assess students in Citizenship education. Indeed, few schools reported that they had definite policies for recognising student achievement (11% at key stage 3 and 8% at key stage 4). The majority of teachers (71%) had not received any training in relation to citizenship education. (Kerr et al., 2003)

The relatively damning findings from inspectors (June 2003) on the implementation of Citizenship in English schools – based upon a survey of twenty five representative schools which had been planning for the new subject area - are therefore not surprising, but they are sobering nonetheless.

- In over half of the schools, the management of the introduction of citizenship had been unsatisfactory – mainly because the full implications of citizenship as a national curriculum subject were not understood
- In only one in five schools was the Citizenship curriculum well developed
- 'Assessment is currently a weak aspect of citizenship and few schools have progressed very far with it'
- Standards of pupils' work in citizenship was too often unsatisfactory and written work was generally weaker than it should be

- ‘In several schools, the focus of attention has been on key stage 3, and there is as yet minimal provision of citizenship in Key Stage 4’
For ‘light touch’ many schools had read ‘soft touch’ and given the new subject area little status. Inspectors sensed “a degree of complacency” – “In all schools, the debate about what National Curriculum Citizenship involves, and its contribution to their pupils’ education, needs to continue, and for some this will be a long term project”.

How can teachers’ early difficulties with assessing citizenship best be explained ? There are a whole range of answers – difficulties relating to the contested nature of the subject and the lack of subject specialist training have already been partially touched upon. To these should be added the following factors :

- Citizenship is (quite rightly) seen as ‘more than a subject’ – it also relates to whole school ethos and policies and extra-curricular activities. It therefore needs the full support of school senior managers if the citizenship co-ordinator is not to be a small under-resourced fish at the bottom of a big pool. A lack of understanding about the place of Citizenship in the curriculum at the top of schools and colleges can lead to it being assigned low priority.
- Assessing subjects via cross-curricular routes is always complicated – co-ordination of how Citizenship is taught through, for example R.E. and English is complex and time-consuming. There is a lack of clarity in relation to who is responsible for assessing pupils’ citizenship work across the curriculum and few developed models and mechanisms for doing this effectively.
- The dominant model for the organisation of the citizenship curriculum has been through existing (non-statutory) personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes. Whilst there is scope for complementary approaches and useful synergy, some schools and teachers have treated PSHE and Citizenship as being synonymous. OFSTED underlines that schools need to recognise what is new and distinctive about citizenship and what distinguishes it from PSHE. A further consequence of this link is that traditionally little written work has been undertaken in PSHE. Oral work and debate is important in Citizenship, too, but the new subject area also needs to demonstrate rigour in other ways.
- Citizenship is a different kind of subject area and needs different kind of thinking about how it is assessed – official guidance (rightly) underlines the idea that it should be creative, varied and emphasise pupil involvement. There are few case studies of developed classroom practice to call upon but a recognition that evidence of achievement might include videos, presentations, drama, displays, photographs and diaries as well as more traditional methods.
- The kinds of assessment mechanisms that are important to Citizenship e.g. self-assessment; peer assessment; portfolios of evidence; oral work and debate; community projects; a focus on the ‘soft’ skills of negotiation, team work and participation all have under-developed pedagogic roots in theory and research evidence although progress in this area is starting to be highlighted (e.g. Jerome, 2003). Skills (such as reasoning, collaborating, communicating, presenting, debating etc..) and dispositions

- (such as empathising, tolerating, reflecting and being open-minded) require very different forms of assessment compared to those used to test retention of factual knowledge. In many of these areas, practice is in the process of development in schools rather than secure and established.
- Finally, and fundamentally, there are a lack of clear answers to the question – What does it really mean to do well in the area of Citizenship education and how can teachers encourage pupils to do even better ? The lack of developed models of progression handicaps all teachers of citizenship. In the absence of such a model there is a danger that Citizenship is interpreted as a static body of content; progression deteriorates into a patchwork of single lesson snippets of information rather than a coherent body of knowledge and understanding.

The following summary of key issues from the chief examiners' reports on the first year of GCSE Citizenship Studies needs to be put into the wider context of difficulties related to Citizenship's arrival as a National Curriculum subject in 2002-2003 and teachers difficulties in assessing Citizenship as an emerging area of study.

Key Points from the Chief Examiners' reports for Citizenship Studies (Summer 2003)

This part of the paper will be sub-divided into four sub-sections :

- ◆ Positive conclusions and success stories
- ◆ Subject Knowledge in GCSE Citizenship Studies
- ◆ Issues relating to coursework and the active citizenship aspects of the specification
- ◆ Extended writing in GCSE Citizenship Studies

The author includes three extended extracts from a forthcoming book, [Peter Brett, GCSE Citizenship Studies Exam Techniques (Folens, 2003)] in relation to the latter three bullet points.

i) Positive conclusions and success stories

Of the 6,269 students entered for the GCSE Citizenship Studies Short course award in the Summer 2003, 54.2% achieved a Grade C or above. There was no especially marked gender difference although predictably girls performed slightly better than boys – 58% of girls securing a Grade C or above compared with 50.3% of boys. The overall pass rate ie Students securing Grade G and above was 94.2%.

All of the examination boards expressed similarly positive sentiments to those outlined by the Edexcel Chief Examiner at the head of this paper :

- “Very few [candidates] encountered problems with the structure of the paper... Most candidates are to be congratulated on their understanding of Citizenship concepts”. (AQA)
- “The majority of centres embraced the philosophy of the course and encouraged candidates to plan, undertake and evaluate an activity that explicitly emphasised participation in order to understand concepts and issues relating to citizenship”. (AQA)

- “The paper offered an opportunity for candidates of all abilities to demonstrate achievement” (OCR)
- “In centres where students had participated in active citizenship, most wrote at length and with enthusiasm about what they had achieved” (OCR)
- “Centres which had bravely decided to enter candidates for this new GCSE subject after just three terms of study and preparation were generally rewarded with good results” (EdExcel)
- “The commitment to Citizenship Studies from many of the staff involved was inspirational. It was clear that individual teachers had invested a lot of their precious time and energy in helping to guide and support their candidates. This was widely acknowledged by the candidates themselves” (EdExcel).

Broadly, the course structures, examination/question paper organisation and coursework arrangements worked smoothly. It is a significant tribute to the professionalism of large numbers of experienced examiners and teachers that young people were able to celebrate their citizenship achievements with a GCSE award :

“Although the quality of work varied, the impression was that almost all candidates participated in a positive way, often in activities which would not normally have found a place in a classroom-based curriculum. There was little evidence of cynicism or ‘simply going through the motions of doing good’.
(Edexcel).

Moreover, given the potentially controversial and political nature of Citizenship, it was a sign of success that the subject did not hit the headlines for any of the wrong reasons.

ii) **Subject Knowledge in GCSE Citizenship Studies**

As Citizenship educators we need to think through the rationale behind an integrated vision of subject knowledge which contextualises the fostering of skills. To do otherwise risks a reductionist view of Citizenship whereby young people are rehearsed in the disaggregated “skills” of Citizenship, as expressed in the second and third strands of the National Curriculum Citizenship Programme of Study relating to the skills of ‘enquiry and communication’ and ‘participation and responsible action’ but do so without a clear map of the political landscape within which these skills are to be exercised. This landscape is highlighted through the first ‘Knowledge’ strand of the National Curriculum Programme of Study and enables an exploration of issues such as: Human Rights, Sustainability, the civil and criminal justice system, the contemporary workings of government and issues relating to global development (See Brett and West, 2003). As the introductory section to the Citizenship Programme of Study puts it : “teaching should ensure that knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens are acquired and applied when developing skills of enquiry and communication and participation and responsible action”.

OFSTED evidence indicates that there were early problems associated with whole school Citizenship audits of the ‘enquiry and communication’ and ‘participation and responsible action’ strands of the National Curriculum –
“Some schools used the audit to show that they were teaching these skills

throughout the school curriculum, when in fact they were not set in the context of 'knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens'.

A key way of conceptualising approaches to Citizenship education has been to think in terms of :

- Education ABOUT Citizenship
- Education THROUGH Citizenship
- Education FOR Citizenship

The former is easiest to teach and to assess – it is largely content-led and knowledge-based. It lends itself to didactic teaching and learning approaches with teacher-led, whole-class teaching as the dominant medium. It is also a negation of what active and engaging teaching and Citizenship should be about – with little opportunity for, or encouragement of, student interaction, involvement and initiative. Education THROUGH Citizenship involves students learning by doing, through active, participative experiences in the school or local community. In the United States this is known as 'Service Learning'. The danger here is that the emphasis is upon the service as opposed to the learning and that voluntary work or projects are undertaken in a knowledge vacuum. Education FOR Citizenship encompasses the other two approaches and involves equipping students with a set of tools which will enable them to participate actively and responsibly within their communities in adult life. In other words, it is the inter-relatedness of skills and knowledge which is the key.

The GCSE Citizenship Studies specifications attempt to achieve this synthesis although some would argue that the flavour of the examination papers places too much emphasis on 'Education ABOUT Citizenship' approaches. What light do the comments of chief examiners, then, throw on the subject knowledge question ?

On the positive side, candidates generally secured relatively high marks on short answer questions worth one or two marks, indicating reasonable course coverage across the syllabus – “most of the question parts in this section caused little difficulty” (AQA). “Where candidates were secure in their knowledge and understanding of the specification content, they responded well to most questions and were able to use appropriate examples to gain high marks” (OCR). “There were some outstanding performances at the top end of the mark range. This suggested that candidates had been very well taught in a way that allowed them to demonstrate wide knowledge of the subject matter” (EdExcel). One of the boards reported, however, that “candidates from a significant minority of centres had insufficient knowledge to offer examples or explanations based on the specification content” (OCR)

Some interesting specific subject knowledge 'gaps' were highlighted. For example, the AQA report identified Local Agenda 21 and the role of the individual in relation to global poverty “Issues like fair trade and ethical trading were often missing or misunderstood”. A number of OCR candidates misunderstood “the work of the United Nations with significant minorities believing that it was a country or confusing it with the EU”. “There was some confusion about the difference between pressure groups and political parties”.

The Edexcel report noted similarly that “few candidates were able to state successfully that political parties put up candidates at elections and form governments, or control councils by seeking or winning votes in contrast to pressure groups which try to influence voters, organisations or governments in terms of policies and priorities”. Moreover, “some candidates were evidently not aware that The Sun, The Guardian and the Independent are daily newspapers”.

More interesting, perhaps, are the comments of the chief examiners in relation to some of the key concepts of Citizenship. Citizenship needs to establish a more secure conceptual heart as a subject. Units of work on, for example, identity, voting, politics and politicians and legal/human rights can be seen as bedrock topics, introducing some of the core citizenship concepts and skills. These core concepts include words such as ‘fairness’, ‘justice’, ‘freedom’, ‘power’, ‘tolerance’, ‘democracy’ and ‘equality’. Pupils should be encouraged to understand and use the language of Citizenship from an early point in their courses and re-visit these ideas in different contexts and at increasing levels of sophistication. A key challenge for GCSE Citizenship Studies is to find ways of exploring concepts like these in active and engaging ways (see Douglas, 2002).

This advice is echoed in the three reports. The AQA report notes that “*Candidates need to develop points around the key concepts relating to the course, ie power, authority, accountability, fairness, and justice*”. In relation to a question focusing upon rural primary schools and the communities they served, “*many candidates had problems using words like ‘fair’ and democratic’ in relation to the school closures*”. The Edexcel report picked up misconceptions in relation to the concept of identity : “*Identity – how people see and define themselves – was explained by most candidates in terms of their gender, the kind of work they did, the religion they held or a football or cricket team they supported. Some candidates appeared to regard ‘identity’ as a means of ‘identification’ – ie passport, birth certificate, driving licence, DNA profile etc...*”. OCR found “*significant variation between centres in the extent to which candidates understood the key concepts of the specification and were able to explain them using a range of suitable examples*”. In particular, “*a significant minority of candidates...did not understand the term active citizenship*”.

The following activities might assist pupils engage with the language of citizenship :

Understanding the language of Citizenship

You will need to show that you understand social and political issues as they appear in, for example, newspaper reports or magazine articles. There are key words and concepts in Citizenship that are essential to get to grips with. You could not talk about a football match without using words like ‘goal’, ‘foul’, ‘pass’ and so on. In the same way, you need the right words to comment on questions relating to Citizenship.

CITIZENSHIP VOCABULARY PALETTE

Human Rights Politics	Identity	Tolerance	Participation
Responsibilities Prejudice	Fairness	Government	Society
Freedom Community	Democracy	Parliament	Rule of Law
Power Justice	Equality	Election	Protest

Task :

- Choose six words that you do not understand or would find hard to define and find out what they mean.
- Write six sentences, using one of the words in each, to show how you can use them accurately and effectively (Try to write an extra sentence for each word to develop your definition).

E.g. In Britain we have freedom of speech which means that we are free to say what we think, including criticising the way that the country is run. However, there are legal limits to this freedom – for example, we are not allowed to slander or racially abuse people.

Building up 'topic' vocabulary palettes

You may find it useful to build up word banks of useful Citizenship words, phrases, concepts and organisations on particular topics. Again, look up the meaning of any of the concepts or organisations in the example below that you are unsure about.

VOCABULARY PALETTE : Global Citizenship

Developing countries Disaster relief	United Nations	Fair Trade
Sustainable development International aid	Climate change	Global village
Multi-national companies Epidemics	Third world debt	Interdependence

World Trade Organisation Global inequality Participation Exploitation
--

Task:

Try drawing your own palettes of at least 12 key words similar to the example above for the following topics :

1. The Role of the Media
2. Government, Power and Politics
3. The Criminal and Civil Justice System

Reflecting on 'Active Citizenship'

You will have had an opportunity as part of your course to do some kind of project work in relation to your school or local community. Perhaps you have worked with others to bring about a change. This is 'active citizenship'. Read what the author of the newspaper article (Source A) has to say about this concept and then study the extracts below :

Extract 1 : *"Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country"*

[President John F Kennedy, Inaugural Presidential Speech, January 1961]

Extract 2 : *"Healthy democracies need well-informed citizens who take an active interest in their community. They need people who value themselves and others and are aware of the contribution they can make to society"*

(Citizenship Foundation website, April 2001)

Task 6 :

Write an essay which answers the following two questions :

Why do healthy democracies need active citizens ?

Should all young people be required to do some kind of voluntary work ?

To help you to structure your answers you should :

- Describe the benefits of active citizenship (Use the extracts as well as your own experiences to help you)
- Give examples of positive community projects or campaigns in your area
- Describe the difficulties of being an active citizen and why some people can't be bothered
- Think about the consequences if everyone was a passive and 'inactive' citizen
- List the advantages and disadvantages of making it compulsory for young people to undertake voluntary work.
- Sum up your case. Why is active citizenship healthy for democracy ?

iii) **Issues relating to coursework and the active citizenship aspects of the specification**

All of the boards reported that some excellent Citizenship coursework projects had been undertaken:

- “What was most encouraging in regard to coursework was the range of tasks undertaken which indicated how many candidates were actively involved with their local communities” (AQA)
- “There were some very good accounts considering health and safety aspects of work, the rights of employees e.g. on equal opportunities and the role of different employees within the management hierarchy. Candidates undertaking a charity event included some excellent material on the organisation concerned and its role in supporting communities e.g. in a developing country with a particular emphasis on the role of the media in raising awareness of the organisation and its activities” (AQA)
- Projects – including awareness-raising campaigns e.g. child poverty and homelessness and involvement with school councils – “arose from involvement in an impressive range of worthwhile school and community activities” (OCR)
- “The overwhelming majority of candidates entered into the spirit of their activity and many clearly gained from it, enriching their education, broadening their experience and gaining considerable personal satisfaction and fulfilment” (Edexcel)

It is the role that GCSE Citizenship Studies plays in shaping and celebrating a variety of worthwhile projects that influenced me to want to become a Chair of Examiner’s. I wanted to ensure that the active component of citizenship was well represented in the approach of examination boards to the emerging subject.

However – and understandably in the context of a new specification and new subject area – many teachers and pupils were feeling their way in terms of the demands of GCSE Citizenship Studies coursework and sometimes submitted work which did not directly address the assessment requirements.

Specifically, coursework projects require a clear citizenship focus, evidence of planning and research and an evaluation which reflects upon strengths, ways in which the project might have been improved and includes a recognition of “the views, experiences and contributions of others”. Success in this area requires the students and their teachers to adopt a very structured approach. Two of the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status for beginning teachers require them to demonstrate that they involve pupils in “reflecting on, evaluating and improving their own performance” [3.2.2] and “promote active and independent learning that enables pupils to think for themselves, and to plan and manage their own learning” [3.3.3]. These are facilitative skills which can be relatively novel and challenging even for some experienced teachers. They prompt questions such as: What constitutes good project work at GCSE ? What skills underpin effective planning, research and self-evaluation ?

We know that effective teachers :

“Motivate pupils to learn independently”

“Equip pupils with independent learning skills to enable them to become lifelong

learners”

“Consistently provide a range of opportunities for pupils to direct their own learning”

“Encourage pupils to use a variety of problem-solving techniques”

“Provide individualised formative feedback to get pupils thinking and encourage breakthroughs in their understanding”

“Regularly employ individual work and small group activities as ways of reinforcing pupil learning through practice and reflection”

[Research into Teacher Effectiveness Hay McBer Report, June 2000]

These findings have implications for the success of GCSE Citizenship Studies coursework.

All of the examination boards reported that some candidates struggled with identifying the Citizenship focus of their coursework :

- “Some candidates described their Citizenship activity very vaguely and it was sometimes not easy to work out exactly what the candidate had done and why” (Edexcel)
- “Some of those who produced a narrative [on their work experience] said little about working with others in the sense of group activity or issues like health and safety or the rights/conditions of employees which might have had a more direct relevance to their Citizenship course” (Edexcel)
- “Many candidates drew on work experience activities as a basis for coursework... These documents and reports must, though, be re-visited and presented in a way that directly addresses the Citizenship Studies assessment requirements. A minority of candidates clearly submitted work that had been prepared for another purpose. Work experience diaries or descriptions of work activities are NOT in themselves acceptable for coursework A” (OCR)
- “In some centres the activity was organised around simulated ‘games’ which apparently gave the candidates little if any opportunity to choose their activity or to build up a sense of commitment to it” (Edexcel)
- “The aim of the activity needs to be explicit, integrated to the overall aims and objectives of the course and demonstrated in the candidates’ approach to, and write-up of, the activity” (AQA).

The planning and research stage of the project is obviously vital to ensure a successful and effective outcome to the citizenship activity and the resulting coursework assignment. Schools and students have decisions to make about how much freedom of choice students are given to choose their own projects – this is an issue which gets to the heart of participation and the extent to which activities are genuinely student-centred. The Edexcel report noted that :
“In most cases it was clear that the enthusiasm of the candidates had been kindled by the Citizenship activity – especially in those cases where the pupils had been allowed enough scope to make their choices, thereby developing a real sense of commitment, ownership and pride in what they had achieved.

Candidates demonstrated much less enthusiasm or satisfaction where their activities had been solitary, largely prescribed by teachers, or offered little opportunity for either autonomy or a sense of personal achievement”.

In terms of detailed observations on the planning undertaken the following comments were made :

- “A detailed planning record of the activity is required possibly in the form of a log, planning sheet or timetable. Candidates may have certain aspects of their planning validated by a teacher or other responsible adults. Candidates are required to explicitly outline the strategies utilised in the planning of the activity” (AQA)
- “Candidates are encouraged to obtain the widest range of relevant information/data to support their assignment...Candidates made use of the internet but good practice indicates that such material should be used to support an argument rather than included simply to pad out the assignment...Centres need to support candidates and train them to analyse and interpret information more effectively” (AQA)
- Some candidates chose a task which was essentially an individual activity – “their own contribution to the activity was clear, but it must be stressed that candidates are also required to demonstrate their ability to ‘recognise the views, experiences and contributions of others’ (Edexcel)
- Some accounts of planning “were simply too terse...Moderators were often able to see ‘a range of evidence’ worth 5-6 marks out of 10 but it was rather less common for candidates to move into Levels 4 and 5 which required ‘a range of detailed evidence’ or a ‘wide range of detailed evidence’ (Edexcel)

In general schools are encouraged to use the internal assessment forms, paperwork and templates provided by the examination boards to support the students in adopting a structured approach to their coursework.

The evaluative skills demonstrated by the students in their coursework was generally reported to be a relatively weak feature of their Citizenship coursework assignments :

- “Weaker candidates...failed to directly address Assessment Objective 3. There was limited discussion of what they had learned from the activity and even less on how they might build on the experience in the future” (OCR)
- “Only a minority managed to provide a more detailed evaluation of their participation and that of others in their chosen citizenship activity...A few didn’t understand fully what evaluation required and simply described the activity..” (Edexcel)
- “The evaluation of the activity was greatly assisted when the planning stage was effectively organised, thereby enabling candidates to reflect upon and evaluate the whole experience...Good candidates demonstrated explicit understanding and evaluation of the activity from the point of view of a ‘Citizenship’ activity: viz, what the candidate had learnt about citizenship and the nature and purpose of participation through this activity” (AQA)

An encouraging feature of the approach of the examination boards towards coursework assignments is their preparedness to encourage the submission of varied forms of evidence of research and achievements. AQA noted, for example, that : *“It was pleasing to see candidates developing questionnaires, surveys, using interviews, taking photographs, collecting information from the internet and obtaining material from organisations...The use of annotated photographs, leaflets and other illustrative material is to be encouraged. The inclusion of video material would also be a welcome addition providing it is used with purpose”*. Edexcel noted that an *“enterprising and successful approach was often for candidates to be allowed to submit photographs which showed each of them undertaking their particular role or task”*.

The following material aims to guide students through the processes of undertaking a successful Citizenship coursework assignment :

Citizenship in Action : How to Plan, Research and Evaluate it

Targets:

1. To understand how to plan and structure your Citizenship coursework project
2. To know some ways of finding things out and researching background information
3. To be aware of some effective strategies for ‘writing up’ your Citizenship activity
4. To understand how to evaluate your Citizenship coursework activity

Probably the most important decision you will make is the first one ! Choose a project that you really want to do. Talk about this with your teacher and check how it relates to the Citizenship Studies course you are doing.

Your coursework will be based upon a Citizenship activity that involves working with other people in either a school or community setting. The opportunities for Citizenship projects are exciting. There are too many to list them all but they might include :

- Undertaking a Citizenship project/investigation during your work experience
- Involvement in a local or voluntary group aiming to bring about change (for example, related to an environmental issue)
- Organizing a school or community-based activity/event
- Organizing a charity fund-raising activity as part of a national event (e.g. Red Nose Day, Children in Need)
- Participation in a Citizenship activity in the wider world e.g. A foreign exchange visit or clean water campaign

Remember !

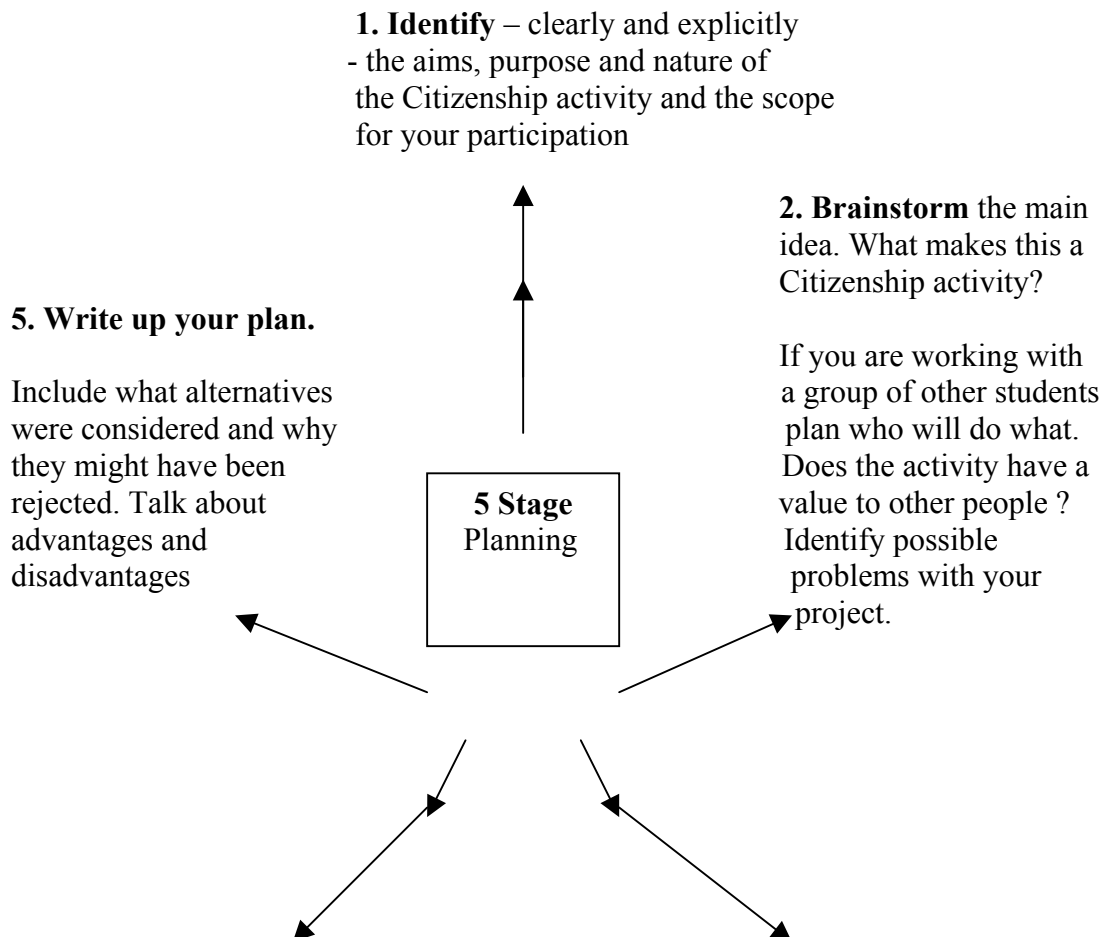
Coursework makes up 40% of your marks in Citizenship Studies + about a quarter of your marks in the exam paper will also allow you to write about your involvement in a Citizenship activity, so it is important that you know what examiners are looking for in order to gain maximum credit for what you know, understand and can do.

How to plan your Citizenship activity

A successful plan for your Citizenship activity requires :

- A clear sense of purpose
- An explanation of what makes the project a Citizenship activity
- A outline of what research you will need to carry out
- A clear division of roles and responsibilities
- An action plan with time scales and staging posts
- Reflection on the processes of planning e.g. consideration of different alternatives

You might plan in five stages:



4. Create an 'Action Plan'.

Break the activity down into smaller parts and specific tasks. List the intended outcomes. Explain your time scales and staging posts.

3. Plan what research you will need to do. What information do you need to find out and where will you find it ?

EXAMINER'S TIP : Keep all of your rough notes and a diary of what you do or plan to do

How to Brainstorm

Tracey decided that the Citizenship focus of her work experience at the local supermarket would be to investigate the issue of 'Fair Trade' coffee which she had been learning about in the classroom. What was the supermarket's policy on 'Fair Trade' products and the customers' attitudes towards 'Fair Trade' goods ?

Her brainstorming plan looked like this :

Revise class notes on Fair Trade issues
Read supermarket's policy on Fair Trade issues
Find out where supermarket's Fair Trade coffee comes from and costs

Questionnaire for customers
Presentation at end of the work experience (?)

FAIR TRADE COFFEE

Research coffee production in country of origin
Find out proportions of different coffee brands sold in the supermarket
Talk with supermarket manager and/or person in charge of coffee section

Look at relevant websites
Find out what it would take for people to change their shopping habits
Analyse Fair Trade campaigns

BIG QUESTIONS : How can people act locally to improve the quality of life for Others globally ? What is the power of the 'active' citizen in the global economy ?

TASK

With a group of three friends you agree that you want to raise funds for charities working with children in Africa. You decide to organise a quiz for Y7 pupils and their parents in about three months time. Brainstorm how you would plan this in order to make it a focused and successful Citizenship activity. Use the plan above for ideas.

[Clue : Think about what you need to research and who does what within your group]

How to research your Citizenship activity

Your Citizenship coursework activity will partly be assessed on :

- The knowledge and understanding that you demonstrate of a Citizenship issue which underpins your activity
- How well you obtain and explain the information that you collect

In other words it is important that you carry out plenty of relevant background research.

You will need to gather and summarise a wide range of information and present it effectively in your written report. You also need to give your opinions and draw conclusions based on your research.

All the resources that you have used should be noted on a resources list and attached to your coursework report.

REMEMBER : The key is how you use and reflect upon the data you have collected

You will find that you will need to research your project from a wide variety of sources. These might include :

Official reports (e.g. From Parliament, Local Government, voluntary organisations or pressure groups)

Textbooks/Websites

Questionnaires/Surveys that you have designed

Newspaper extracts

Interview notes/observational notes

Letters you have written and correspondence with organisations

Photographs/ Charts/Diagrams/Graphs/Tables/Statistics

Promotional literature

TASK

1. You see a TV news report about the poor working conditions of the people who make trainers. These include long working hours and the use of dangerous chemicals and manufacturing equipment. A group of you decide that you want to do something to help and to join a campaign to persuade a multi-national company to introduce an ethical code of conduct for its workers. How might you find out more about this issue ? Who might you contact in order to make sure of your facts ?
[Clue : Find out more about the role of Development Education Centres and the Local Agenda 21 Project]
What might you do with the information once you have done your research ?

EXAMINER'S TIP : For your research to be assessed as 'wide ranging' you

should try to use at least five different types of sources/methods

Writing up the activity

When writing up the Citizenship activity you need to show how much knowledge and understanding you have gained from the activity itself and from researching the wider issues. Your report will get higher marks if it is analytical rather than descriptive. If the project is based around a key question it is more likely to help you to produce sustained explanation rather than simply describe what you did.

EXAMINER'S TIP : Think about basing your coursework project around a key question

TASK

This is a section from a report by Paul which would receive a top grade :

" For my project I organised (with the help of eight friends, my parents and teachers) a bring and buy sale for the Blue Peter Waterworks appeal. The aim was to help groups of people in Tanzania install purifying pumps and also to provide improved education to build pumps in the future so the people become self dependent.. The project also aimed to raise awareness of citizenship issues throughout the school, such as the plight of people in Africa. Often in Tanzania, particularly at times of drought, people cannot rely on getting clean water from day to day and have to walk several miles to collect and carry water by hand (See www.wateraid.co.uk)...

I decided to write to companies and also produce notices for people in school asking them to donate goods to be sold at the sale. I put posters around the school, notices in registers and put an advertisement in the school newsletter to inform people of the event. I created a questionnaire and quiz for Year 10 students based upon information in the Blue Peter pack (which also included posters and price labels)...

I visited the site management team to outline my plan, book the hall and some large tables. On the day of the sale my friends and I took the preceding lesson off to set up the tables, organise the products and put up more posters and information. We also sold some raffle tickets in the staffroom. It was well supported by staff and students. We raised just over £100 in an hour...

I was proud to have played a pivotal role in the organising, setting up and running of this Bring and Buy sale. I also had excellent help from my friends, family teachers and peers. The experience was an eye opener as to what some peoples' lives are like in the developing world. It made me appreciate that campaigns like the Blue Peter appeal really can help. I am privileged to live in a developed country with a secure economy which provides advantages like not only clean water, but clean running water on tap...

I might have improved the project by holding it on a date which didn't coincide with Comic Relief fundraising as this prevented some people from attending the sale. Details of this project could be listed in the school library or on the school website making it easier for others to access the contacts and ideas used. It could be an annual event to raise money for other charities, local, national or international.

[Adapted from a real coursework project undertaken in 2003 – Congratulations to the student concerned !]

a) Write down the effective examples of :

- Planning
- Citizenship knowledge and understanding

- Organisation of the activity
 - Opinion/Reflection/Self-evaluation
- b) What are the obstacles that make this kind of activity difficult ?
- c) Why do you think that Paul's project succeeded ?

GCSE COURSEWORK : WRITING UP THE CITIZENSHIP ACTIVITY

- Indicate how and why you became involved
- Say what you and others actually did – including your rights and responsibilities
- Show what research you did and why
- Provide some contextual knowledge linking your project to the Citizenship curriculum (Some of this research could be presented in the form of appendices – consult your teacher for advice on this)
- Note whether information was easy/difficult to obtain and what was useful
- Don't undersell yourself – if you were fully involved in the activity, say so !
- Give your opinions and draw conclusions from what you have learned
- Get people to read your first draft – friends, parents etc.. – and then re-draft

REMEMBER : The word limit is 1,500-2,000 words (Check the precise limit with your teacher). You may need to re-draft and use an appendix if your report is too long.

Evaluating your Coursework Project

The evaluation stage is last but it is still very important. The key is to evaluate what you did, what others did, what was achieved, what lessons you learned and what could have been improved.

- You will need to draw together your opinions and conclusions, clearly stating :
- ◆ Your role, views, experience and contribution to the activity
 - ◆ Your active involvement over a period of time (the more active the better !)
 - ◆ The good and bad points of the project, your Action Plan and the strategies used
 - ◆ What you learned and what you and others gained from undertaking the activity
 - ◆ Your opinions/reflections/conclusions on the activity and its value to others
 - ◆ What changes you would recommend that might have 'improved' the activity

TASK

Organising a Youth Football Tournament in Fitzrovia

Trouble between young people and residents/racial tension

“ The Warren playground is in a part of London called Fitzrovia. For years it was run-down and vandalised. Local residents were worried by behaviour around the site and got up a petition about it. Teenagers and young adults used the area as a social meeting place. They would park up, play loud music, drink and maybe smoke some cannabis. There was broken glass and litter everywhere. The young people who used to meet

there were mainly Asian, of Bengali origin. There was quite a lot of racial tension in the area between white and Asian youths.

The Big Dream

Then a group of young people had the idea of holding a five-a-side football tournament. Andre, one of the young men involved in the project tells the story :

'There was massive interest. So we started meeting in the playground on Sunday afternoons to plan it – there was about ten of us. The big dream was to raise £500 and get 16 teams from the local community.

Encountering opposition

[But] the local residents were dead against it. They said the playground was meant for children not teenagers and young adults. The police were also concerned. Then we got told that the football pitch actually belonged to the parks department. They were just as suspicious as everyone else to begin with. Worst of all, they were going to charge us £100 for the use of the pitch – and we had no money.

A different slant

We had a meeting and agreed that to get people on our side we would need to put a different slant on the tournament. So we decided to make it a tournament against vandalism. We would clean up all the rubbish in the playground. Then with any money raised from the tournament we'd do something to improve the area... We had to convince the people who used to hang out at the playground not to come to drink, or smoke drugs or play their music late at night...

Building support

We opened a bank account, put in a small amount of our own money and started to look to local businesses. We produced a leaflet on a neighbour's computer. We were lucky – the boss of a local design firm liked what we were doing and ran off 500 copies for us... By now we'd cleaned up the playground. What a difference! I swear it was AMAZING! Word began to get round. So we went back to the residents. We knocked on every single door, told people we wanted to do this tournament to help clean up the area and look after the place.

We organised a petition and got people to sign it. We printed out a list of all the residents who wanted the tournament to happen, the local businesses who were supporting us and the young people who had pledged to steward the event on the day – about 30 in all. It was obvious we had massive community support. Finally the support of Camden Council made us official – We'd cracked it.

The day of the tournament

Everyone had said we couldn't organise a tournament on such a small pitch, but it wasn't the World Cup! We worked out a schedule of teams to play. Instead of having all 16 at once, we had 8 in the morning and 8 in the afternoon, and then the final!

We invited the mayor and the councillors. The boys brought their own sound system, blasting out rap and hip-hop. We also put up a display of us clearing up the playground. It showed everyone what we had done.

[Abridged and adapted from Ted Huddleston, Changing Places (Citizenship Foundation, 2002) p. 2-6

- a) What do you think Andre learned as a result of his involvement in this project ?
- b) What was the value of the project to the community ?
- c) This was an excellent project but can you think of any ways in which it might have been improved ?

When you come to do your GCSE Citizenship Studies coursework it may not be as ambitious as some of the activities outlined in this Unit. You will need to be realistic. You will probably have a limited amount of time to complete the

coursework. It is important that what you choose is achievable. Nevertheless, this Unit should have given you some ideas for producing a good coursework report.

iv) Extended writing in GCSE Citizenship Studies

There are dangers in academicising GCSE Citizenship Studies and putting it beyond the reach and understanding of lower attaining pupils. As with all GCSEs, a premium is placed upon literary skills and the ability to marshal arguments and analysis supported by a range of examples. But Citizenship (including Citizenship Studies at GCSE) has to be inclusive and not simply reinforce the sense of academic inadequacy felt by a significant minority of 14-16 year olds – particularly boys. Citizenship Studies is an untiered paper and only one examination board currently offers an entry level award. Therefore the extent to which the GCSE papers for Citizenship were open to the full range of pupils was a natural concern for the examination boards. (All three boards, however, offer imaginative Unit Award schemes for Citizenship Studies).

The overall findings from all three boards for the first year of the award in relation to the courses' accessibility are, therefore, generally encouraging. AQA reported, for example, that *"centres entering candidates for this examination covered the full range of institutions which enter candidates for GCSE...The Question Paper enabled candidates to demonstrate what they know; very few encountered problems with the structure of the paper"*. Edexcel reported that, *"the examination paper offered rewards for all who had prepared as well as they could. It tested all levels of achievement"*. *"Some candidates, including those who might not previously have enjoyed much academic success seemed to surprise themselves at the end of their activity, looking back with a real feeling of pride.."* The OCR report noted that, *"some candidates with low levels of literacy achieved well because they had developed a good knowledge and understanding of the specification content and had been given opportunities to engage in active citizenship at their centre"*. It added that, *"Some candidates had received assistance with the examination paper as a consequence of their special educational needs but there was scope for more centres to have arranged such support for students with literacy difficulties"*.

Nevertheless, and unsurprisingly, it was when candidates were asked to undertake extended writing in examination conditions that literacy weaknesses often became apparent. In part, of course, this reflects a positive necessity for the specifications to provide 'challenge'. Thus OCR reported that, *"the examination differentiated appropriately by providing opportunities for able candidates to achieve in the sections where extended writing was required. Candidates often wrote in detail and depth, structuring their responses coherently and convincingly"*. The same board acknowledged, however, that *"candidates from a significant minority of centres had insufficient knowledge to offer examples or explanations based on the specification content"*.

Partly this related to the nature of pupils' preparation and levels of knowledge of the specification content, but it also reflected technique and opportunities to practice extended writing in Citizenship contexts :

- “For the extended writing tasks...very few candidates recognised that they needed to briefly explore points for and against the proposition and then to indicate the view they considered to be strongest, thereby forfeiting a considerable number of marks” (Edexcel)
- “The bullet points under each question were designed to assist candidates to frame a response. Far too many candidates took this framework and simply added some supporting comments” [ie There was little or no ‘value added’ in their answers]. “Too many candidates wrote in general terms without using clear examples to illustrate the point they wished to make” (AQA)
- “Variations in response were often related to candidates’ experience at sustained writing...Some candidates with obvious literacy problems were able to plan a coherent response based on the prompts in the questions and/or the stimulus provided. Other candidates with higher levels of literacy but with less experience of constructing written arguments, often produced answers that were insufficiently well focused...There was a variation between centres in this respect as well as between candidates. Centres should ensure that candidates have experience of responding to questions that require them to use evidence to evaluate a statement or point of view” (OCR)

The lessons from these comments is that candidates need to practice organising their arguments and ideas in the form of extended writing. The links between Citizenship and literacy need to be made more explicit.

“Candidates in some centres had prior experience of writing essays to respond to a statement and used evidence effectively to make their case. This prior experience helped candidates across the ability range to achieve higher levels of attainment than would otherwise have been possible”. (OCR). This sounds rather dry, academic and far removed from the exciting realm of active citizenship. It needn't be. Literacy – to put it crudely – is a ‘doing’ skill. Crucially, literacy empowers. It secures young people access to information bases and grants them a measure of independence. Without it there are dangers of at least partial disenfranchisement.

The following activities adopt structured approaches to building confidence in extended writing in a GCSE Citizenship Studies context :

Skill 1 : Realising why extended writing is hard

Extended writing is difficult because you have to do so many things at once !

You have to:

- Remember what you want to say and select the right material to keep your answer relevant to the question.
- Sort your ideas into a structure which give them meaning : This is difficult where abstract concepts – such as democracy, freedom and rights – are being used.

- Distinguish between the general and the particular : You need to balance your 'big points' – often the first sentence of a paragraph - with your 'particular' material e.g. details and examples which support the 'big points'
- Know the right words to link your ideas together

In this Unit we will build up an answer to the following sample exam question :
Why is the Human Rights Act (HRA) important for protecting the rights of UK citizens ?

You should be able to use the techniques used in relation to this question and apply them to planning for any Citizenship Studies question.

Task

Find all your textbooks and class notes on this topic so that you have them to hand to help to flesh out a writing frame for this topic. Make some spider-diagram notes on the Human Rights Act

Skill 2: Creating a writing frame

When revising you will need to develop your ability to plan essays quickly and effectively. When you were younger your teachers may have given you 'writing frames' – in other words paragraph headings which helped to give your essays a 'skeleton' framework. Organising your own writing frames for different topics and questions at GCSE level can help you to 'sort' your thinking.

Task

This task is designed to help you to 'theme' information under more general headings and develop relationships between 'big points' and supporting 'little points'.

Photocopy this page, cut up the sixteen points [A-P] and sort them into whatever pattern you like. You may add extra information slips from your own notes.

A	Historically, the rights of UK citizens have not been well-defined. For a long time, Parliament was reluctant to make the European Convention on Human Rights part of UK law because it would interfere with Parliament's right to decide law.
B	Since 2000 new laws made by the UK Parliament must, as far as possible, follow the terms of the HRA
C	The model Naomi Campbell used the HRA to try to protect her privacy when a national newspaper pictured her attending a Narcotics Anonymous meeting
D	In May 2001, some protesters at an anti-capitalist rally in London complained that they were being denied their right to peaceful protest – public safety and protection of property were given priority
E	The UK Parliament can over-rule the HRA in the event of war or in the interests of preventing terrorism and on the grounds of national security

F	Taking cases to the European Court of Justice is a long, difficult and expensive process
G	In 2001 a court found that the two boys who committed the murder of James Bulger in 1993, when they were 10 – Jon Venables and Robert Thompson – had the right under the HRA to have their whereabouts protected from publication by the press. The court concluded that they would face the risk of death or serious injury if their addresses were revealed. Here ‘freedom of expression’ competed with the ‘right to life’
H	In thirty years before 2000, the UK government was judged to have broken the European Convention on Human Rights over 50 times
I	Important Articles of the HRA provide for fundamental rights (e.g. the right to life and the right not to be subjected to torture), procedural rights (e.g. the right to a fair trial) and qualified rights (such as freedom of expression and the right to privacy)
J	The HRA provides stronger protection for equal opportunities – it states that everyone should have the right not to be treated differently because of their race, religion, sex or any other status
K	Some rights under the HRA are ‘qualified’ and may be restricted by the UK Parliament [e.g. Freedom of expression] for public safety or to protect the rights of others
L	Diane Pretty, who suffered from the wasting Motor Neurone Disease, lost her case under the HRA in April 2002 seeking to protect her husband from prosecution if he helped her to die. This conflicted with Article 1 in the European Convention on the right to life.
M	The HRA is enormously important for protecting the rights of UK citizens because it incorporated a whole series of fundamental human rights historically recognised by the UN (1948) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) into legal rights law. Now if someone believes their rights have been abused, they can apply directly to the British courts.
N	It is important to recognise that different UK citizens will want to ‘protect’ different rights. Moreover, sometimes rights will conflict – the HRA still has to be tested in many areas
O	The HRA draws upon ideas in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights including protection from unfair arrest, the right to an education and freedom of assembly
P	In the 1970s and 1980s parents went to court to oppose ‘caning’ of their children. They lost in the UK but won in Europe. It was a long time before ‘caning’ was banned in UK schools. In a similar case now, courts in the UK could decide, using the new HRA

Skill 3: Identifying big points and supporting details

Task

Now think about the relationship between the points labelled with the letters ‘M’ ‘A’ ‘I’ ‘N’ and the rest. Arrange the points into an essay plan and use the ‘M’ ‘A’ ‘I’ ‘N’ points to help with the first sentence of each paragraph.

You could simply arrange the points and choose from the menu of ‘connecting statements’ to help to link them up. Hopefully, you will choose to be more ambitious than this and use the ideas as a starting point and framework only. You should try to include ideas from your notes generated in Task 1.

M	A	I	N
<p>The HRA is enormously important for protecting the rights of UK citizens because it incorporated a whole series of fundamental human rights historically recognised by the UN (1948) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) into legal rights law, so now courts of law can protect people in the UK (and Europe)</p>	<p>Historically, the rights of UK citizens have not been so well-defined or protected. For a long time, Parliament was reluctant to make the European Convention on Human Rights part of UK law because it would interfere with Parliament's right to decide law.</p>	<p>Important Articles of the HRA provide for fundamental rights (e.g. the right to life and the right not to be subjected to torture), procedural rights (e.g. the right to a fair trial) and qualified rights (such as freedom of expression and the right to privacy).</p>	<p>It is important to recognise that different UK citizens will want to 'protect' different rights. Moreover, sometimes rights will conflict – the HRA still has to be tested in many areas.</p>
<p>F Taking cases to the European Court of Justice could be a long, difficult and expensive process</p> <p>J The HRA provides stronger protection for equal opportunities....</p> <p>P In the 1970s and 1980s parents went to court to oppose 'caning' of their children. They lost in the UK but won in Europe. It was a long time before 'caning' was banned in UK schools. In a similar case now, courts in the UK could decide, using the new HRA</p>	<p>H In the thirty years before 2000, the UK government was judged to have broken the European Convention on Human Rights over 50 times</p> <p>E The UK Parliament can over-rule the HRA in the event of war, to prevent terrorism or on the grounds of national security</p> <p>B Now new laws made by the UK Parliament must, as far as possible, follow the terms of the HRA</p>	<p>O The HRA draws upon ideas in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights including</p> <p>L Diane Pretty case....</p> <p>K Some rights under the HRA are 'qualified' and may be restricted by Parliament [e.g. Freedom of expression] for public safety or to protect the rights of others. [e.g. Freedom to hold raves; freedom for BNP to march in some areas]</p>	<p>G Bulger case....</p> <p>D In May 2001, some protesters at an anti-capitalist rally in London complained that they were being denied their right to peaceful protest – public safety and protection of property were given priority</p> <p>C Naomi Campbell privacy case against a national newspaper....</p>

Skill 4 : Connecting your ideas together

If you do not have a good supply of connecting words and good ways of beginning sentences and paragraphs, it will make it harder for you to demonstrate your ability to evaluate, interpret or explain. On the other hand, you are more likely to gain higher marks if you can use 'connectives' because it will give your work more fluency. These kinds of words and phrases help you to show the relationship between one fact and another.

Task

Practise using each of the 'connectives' noted here to link two of the labelled statements A-P or material from your own notes on human rights

Contrastive Connectives : **However** **Moreover** **Nevertheless**

Looking at it another way

Contradictive connectives : **On the other hand** **A counter argument is**

Causal Connectives : **Therefore** **As a result** **Thanks to** **Consequently**

The effect of this was

Temporal connectives : **Eventually** **At length** **Up to that time**

Meanwhile

EXAMINER'S TIP : Using a range of different 'linking' words and phrases increases the fluency of your writing

Skill 5: Answering the Question, Introductions and Conclusions

It is worth reminding you again of the title of the question (you should keep reminding yourself of this whilst you are writing the essay in the exam !):

Why is the Human Rights Act important for protecting the rights of UK citizens ?
[You could include the following points in your answer and other information of your own:

- **There are legally recognised basic rights**
- **How the Human Rights Act is used in UK and European courts**
- **The role of Parliament in relation to the rights of UK citizens**
- **Relevant recent court cases]**

You should now have an idea of how you are going to organise the content of this essay from Tasks 1-4. There is obviously more than one way to do this and you might have identified some 'big points' of your own or felt that some of the little points could be re-phrased and promoted to 'big points' !

EXAMINER'S TIP: In the examination it is not compulsory for you to follow the suggested structure and bullet points given after each question in brackets. You will not be penalised for developing your own approach to the question.

HOWEVER, the guidance is there for a reason – if you ignore the bullet points, there is a danger that you will fail to answer the question directly and may include irrelevant information that the examiners will find it hard to give you credit for.

Now we need to think about:

- how you can stay focused on the question
- how you are going to start the essay
- how you might end the essay

Focusing on the question : It is a common complaint in GCSE Examiner's Reports that many candidates fail to address directly the question they have been asked.

- On 'why' questions, examiners are usually looking for candidates to rank factors in order of priority and decide which were the more important reasons. This is a useful task for you to carry out in order to clarify your thinking and start to organise paragraphs in order.
- Examiners also expect you to zone in and focus on the key words of questions.
- Try to make sure that the first sentence of each paragraph directly addresses the question

FOCUS : Answering the question in a direct and relevant way from start to finish

EXAMINER'S TIP: Read the question carefully. Identify the key words and phrases and work out precisely what the examiner is expecting you to do

Introductions :

DO: Address the question directly right from the start
 Identify the main issues and areas of debate raised by the question
 Show that you understand the main point or points of a question
 Use a telling fact or statistic which goes straight to the heart of the question if you can remember a relevant one !

DON'T: Plunge straight into description
 Start to write everything you know about the subject
 Waffle vaguely about events un-related to the question
 Start providing irrelevant 'background'

How long should an introduction be ? A sentence is too little; a side of A4 too much – aim at about six to ten lines.

Conclusions :

DO : Refer back to the question and answer it as clearly as you can
 Make sure that you reach a verdict and give your opinion
 Try to keep one telling detail in reserve which supports your main points

DON'T: Simply repeat what you have already said
 Throw in a new idea that you only thought of towards the end

Task

Start to think about effective ways in which you might start and end this essay on human rights

Skill 6 : Writing – Putting it all together

Now you should be in a position to bring your answer together and write the essay. Most of the hard work has already been done. However, there are

skills to emphasise at this point. Extra marks are awarded for 'Quality of Written Communication'; for top marks from one of the exam boards you need to present : *"relevant information coherently, employing structure and style to render meaning clear. The text produced is legible. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently accurate to render meaning clear"*

Conclusion

It is hoped that this briefing paper and progress report on GCSE Citizenship Studies is helpful to all educators involved in this area of the curriculum. Achieving a balance between knowledge, skills and active citizenship and will be a perpetual challenge for the examination boards. It is important that young people have a sense of the possibility of change and an understanding of their role in bringing about change – the GCSE Short Course in Citizenship Studies represents a useful vehicle for achieving this objective. There are also useful links to a range of post-16 social science options. Like any school-based initiative, making a success of GCSE Citizenship Studies will rely heavily on the commitment and professionalism of teachers. They deserve the support of examination boards in their journey of continuing professional development.

Peter Brett, St. Martin's College
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