Teacher Guide Section 5

19 Language and communication

General

The chapters in Section 5 provide suggestions for individual research and group projects as well as a practice written examination.

Encourage students to use their responses to the activities in Skills Section 5 to help them to work independently on individual research and group projects.

Encourage students to refer to Skills Sections 3, 4 and 5 to remind themselves of the skills they need to apply and the processes they have learned for planning a line of inquiry and planning a project.

Always download and use the most recent mark scheme to help students to assess their practice written examinations.

Guidance to practice written examination

Skills not knowledge

Remember that the written examination is testing Global Perspectives skills, not knowledge of the topic content. To date the questions have always followed the pattern below.

Question 1: Identify and analyse issues, considering problems, solutions, causes, consequences, perspectives and opinions. This can include identifying reasons, specific bits of evidence, perspectives and so on, as well as making suggestions and giving explanations.

Question 2: Plan a line of inquiry. This is usually about identifying gaps in knowledge or things students need to know, and working out how to find this information. This can be by framing questions to particular people, designing a small survey or suggesting an experiment or research project. It often requires students to identify specific information that they need to know for a particular purpose, and explain how this information will help. This question could address the project planning process.

Question 3: Question information and reasoning. This section can include questions about the reliability of sources, about the difference between facts, opinions and value judgments and about the quality of reasoning.

Question 4: Develop a line of reasoning. There is usually one long question, which may be a standard essay-type question. Other kinds of question may appear, such as a debate in which students have to make a case for one proposal, one use of energy and so on. Students may use, develop or argue against material from the resource booklet. They may
also use any knowledge they have or opinions and perspectives of their own. No specific knowledge is required.

Note that the questions more or less follow the Global Perspectives learning process of: collect; question; reflect and plan; present and act. The skill of reflecting is rarely tested specifically but students who reflect on the issues tend to develop better reasoning in question 4.

**Vocabulary and concepts**

No specific knowledge, vocabulary or concepts are required for the written paper. In fact, specific knowledge can lead a student to write down what they know rather than responding to the questions. However, students may be more within their comfort zones if some subject-specific vocabulary and concepts are familiar to them. For this reason, it may be useful to do skills development exercises from a variety of topics that haven’t otherwise been used in the course. Another possible activity would be to organise debates and discussions on topics that haven’t been formally studied, in order to familiarise students with key concepts and vocabulary. Students can evaluate each others’ reasoning (using red cards for a weakness, perhaps), and the activity leads nicely into development of written reasoning.

**Mark schemes**

Always download and use the most recent CIE Global Perspectives mark scheme to help prepare students for assessment. Most of the questions are marked by levels, so you can adapt the marking grids to the questions in this chapter. For instance, quite a number of question parts, especially in questions 1, 2 and 3 in 2012 were marked according to levels which can be summarised as:

- **Level 3**: Strong and supported reasoning, directly relevant to the question.
- **Level 2**: Some description generally relevant to the question.
- **Level 1**: Simple description, general and not specific to the question.

This general guide can be adapted to each question. Students can use this to learn what counts as simple description, what counts as relevant to the question and so on. Even weaker students, given the tools to understand how their answers are marked, can often identify what they need to do to achieve the next level.

Question papers and mark schemes evolve over time, and it is in students’ interests to use the most recent versions. For instance, in June 2011, the top level of the mark scheme for question 4 looked like this:
### Indicative content

This section provides indicative content for the practice paper. Accept other reasonable responses (and allow students to discuss what a reasonable response might be and why). Accept a variety of levels of sophistication, and encourage students to find the level on the most recent mark scheme that matches their performance.

**Question 1**

(a) No. Document 1 shows us that there are more English- and Chinese-speaking users of the internet, so it’s worth thinking about whether or not to have an English or Chinese version of your website. But part of the reason for this could be that because there are more websites in English and Chinese, there are more English- and Chinese-speaking internet users; speakers of other languages don’t spend as much time on the net as there are fewer websites they can understand. Also, “all” is an extreme claim. Document 2 shows that people prefer to spend time on (and presumably buy things from) websites in their own language. So this would be a reason for companies to have a version of the website in the languages of people they hope will buy their products. This may well be English and Chinese but a French company selling only in France would do well to have a French language website.
(b) Cartoon 1 “Modern English Lesson”. This cartoon deals with the issues of changing language and communication, and plays on the idea of traditional, old-fashioned grammar teachers and the notion of “correctness” in language. Many teenagers in English-speaking countries will sometimes say “was like” instead of “said” or will have come across this on American television. They will also have been corrected, and told that they are using bad English, often by someone older, pedantic or old-fashioned, like the stereotypical old-fashioned teacher in the cartoon. But another perspective on the issue is that, because “was like” is used frequently, it is therefore correct. This could raise further issues about the need for a standard English to make communication (between nations, between generations) possible, and issues about what it means for there to be a “correct” form of a language. Who sets the standard of correctness? Who decides what is right? At what point does a common mistake become correct?

Cartoon 2 “Son, we’re learning to speak teenage”. This deals with issues of communication between the generations, and the way that older people (like parents, teachers etc) have to learn to speak to their children in the same way they might have to learn a different language, with new words, new grammar rules, new ways of seeing the world. It also probably plays on the idea that any attempt by settled, older people to learn “teenage” is probably doomed and possibly ridiculous. It raises issues such as how adults communicate with teenagers, how the world is remade in new ways by new people looking at it with new perspectives, how people with fundamentally different ways of seeing the world can communicate with each other. It also raises issues about when a variant of a language starts to become a language in its own right.

Question 2

(a) You would need to know how many people in the world speak a language – this would help you to decide whether there are there more English users because there are more English speakers, because people use English as a second language or just because most of the websites are in English. You would need information on whether there are more websites in English and Chinese than in other languages. You would need to know about the proportion of each population that has access to the internet. This would help you to decide what the figures mean. For instance, if you find out that there are many more Russian speakers than Korean speakers in the world, but that most Koreans have internet access whereas many Russians do not, you would have a much better understanding of what the statistics mean.

(b) Look up population figures on government websites or on reliable supranational sites like that of the UN. The UN could also be a good place to look for relative internet access statistics. You could search, for instance, using “Global + comparison + internet access” or “Russia statistics internet access”.

Question 3

(a) Sherryl Kleinman works specifically on gender equality, so she has expertise and has thought carefully about the issues. This would make her
a reliable source. She has a clear perspective of her own, and is likely to see information in the light of her perspective but this does not make her unreliable in the same way that a reason to lie would.

(b) The parts of the article that list male generics are facts. We can verify that these expressions are used, and can even use print and audio evidence to give a geographical range for their use. It is a fact that in 1986 Douglas Hofstadter wrote a parody of sexist language. We would be able to verify that Kleinman has reported the contents of the parody accurately, so that is sort of factual. But the parody itself is not factual, it’s an imaginative prediction of consequences. So there is a substantial factual basis to the article but it is also strongly influenced by opinion. “The worst, from my observations, is the popular expression, ‘you guys’,” is clearly a personal opinion. “It makes a difference, if I think of myself as a ‘girl’ or a ‘woman’” is also an opinion, as it is possible to argue against it (although it’s tempting to think of this as a fact because there is such clear supporting evidence). Even some of the questions and suggestions convey the author’s opinion that male generics are a problem – “And can you think of one, just one, example of a female-based generic?” So, (for me), the article is primarily opinion (and opinion that I agree with), but based on facts.

(c) It is likely that people’s reactions to the quality of reasoning in this article will be determined by whether they agree with it or not and this will depend at least partly on whether they are male or female, live in a traditional society or not, and have had experience of language affecting or limiting our realities.

Some of the objective things that students can look for here include the following.

- The passage does quite a good job of highlighting for us just how often we use male generics, and how we do use the male to refer to “the entire universe of human beings”.
- The author gives reasonable evidence of “you guys” as occurring across the United States.
- “And even if it were regional, that doesn’t make it right” is a fair point, but just because it’s national, that doesn’t make it not right. The author does show later why she thinks it is not right, but at this point, it’s rather rhetorical. Pointing out that there are regional things we would like to get rid of doesn’t really add to the argument (although be prepared to listen to students who argue that it does, so long as they can justify it).
- “One consequence of male based generics is that they reinforce the system in which ‘man’ in the abstract and men in the flesh are privileged over women” seems reasonable – it’s plausible, possible, and many of us have seen evidence of it. It is quite well supported by the ideas of words as tools of thought, and using words to maintain or to change reality. (It might be worth encouraging students to think of the kind of language that it applied to naughty or mischievous girls and boys, and how it is different. If it’s appropriate in your school’s culture, consider how girls and boys are insulted, what language is used for
men and women who are sexually active with a number of partners, what language is used about male and female politicians. You can even consider what is discussed about male and female politicians – how often does the press concentrate on what female politicians are wearing rather than what they are saying? There is an alternative view here, which is that words are just words and don’t mean much, and that these terms are just general and women shouldn’t get so upset about them. This is, of course, precisely the view that the article is arguing against, and from my perspective, it seems that it is an everyday view, which does not hold up to examination and inspection of the evidence. I do have a very strong perspective here.

- “There could be serious consequences for referring to a man as a ‘woman’” – this is an unspecific prediction, but it seems reasonable, plausible, and consistent with evidence we can observe in many countries.

- The main value of this passage seems to be that we should want our society to be inclusive, treating all people as of equal value. This seems to me to be an admirable value. Some may read the passage and think that it is about putting men down – this is only true if they believe that it really is an insult for a man to be seen as of equal value with a woman.

Question 4

Some issues that students may choose to consider include the following.

- The need for one standard form of a language to aid communication – it is nice to know what other people are talking about, useful for business and so on.

- The need for a standard form of a language so that you know what is “right” – this is especially important while you are learning (either as a young person or as a speaker of another language).

- The acceptance of other forms of a language as valid – Singlish, Hinglish, Chinglish – because of common use in various places.

- The use of non-standard forms of language to mark a particular group – social and economic groups, age groups, regional groups, cultural groups.

- Most people are flexible enough to deal with more than one form of a language, for example, a local dialect and a business form of the language.