Principal examiner reports for teachers

Principal examiner reports for teachers summarise what candidates did well and what candidates needed to improve for this examination series only.

This report is to be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

For guidance on teaching and learning we provide resources for many of our syllabuses.

Resource	Where to find it
Grade descriptions – Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Syllabus and specimen materials
Schemes of work – Schemes of work are designed to support you in your teaching and lesson planning.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Lesson planning – Guidance on how to plan a lesson.	Lesson planning
Resource plus – There may be additional resources such as teaching packs containing lesson plans, resources and worksheets and videos for aspects of your syllabus.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Teaching tools	Teaching Tools
Exemplar candidate responses	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Learner guide – A guide for students to help them understand what the course involves.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Community forums – Do you have a question or something to share? Our online forums are great way to keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community.	Community forum on the school support hub
Access to scripts for this series.	Access to scripts service
Results analysis is available for some syllabuses.	Results analysis
Test maker is available for some subjects.	Test maker

Other services from Cambridge International Education

- **Digital mocks service**
- **Insight assessments**
- **Professional development**
  - Focus on assessment
  - Online marking workshops

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CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL PROJECT QUALIFICATION

Paper 9980/01
Project

Key messages

What candidates did well
- There was an interesting mix of topic areas driven by personal interests.
- Many candidates followed the correct procedures and submitted only three Microsoft Word files – a report, log and a bibliography.
- Some projects engaged with all the different aspects of the assessment criteria.

What candidates needed to improve
- Careful thought as to the project title is important – a statement rather than a question can limit opportunities for analysis and evaluation.
- A full understanding of the assessment criteria and their levels optimises the chances of success.
- The focus should be on the candidate's person journey and research.

Comments on specific assessment criteria

AO1 Research

(a) Comprehensive responses
- Candidates included a justification of their research question, which was often thoughtfully linked to a personal interest in their topic or its wider relevance.
- This clarity of thinking provided a clear focus throughout their project.
- Candidates provided clear evidence and justification of their selection of appropriate research method and sources which was personal to their project.
- Candidates gave careful thought to the design of their project, evidenced by the layout and structure of their report such as the use of a contents page. This enabled the building of a thoughtful argument through the project leading to an effective overall answer to the research question.
- Candidates used their log to illustrate a timeline through the project with an explanation of any significant gaps, they focused on activities once the final project title had been settled, they linked to research sources and indicated how they had facilitated the project's development as well as providing evidence of their entire journey.

Limited responses
- Candidates attempted to justify their question by linking it to their studies or a conversation with a mentor or family member; others simply stated it was an interesting area or gave no justification for their topic or title choice.
- Some projects had a very general title which led to broad and often less focused research.
- Candidates used research methods without any clear justification and others used research methods which were not appropriate; for example, a survey which did not fit the project title.
- Candidates included a table of contents in their report with little or no evidence of how this had been planned or designed; some included a separate contents document.
- Candidates included a log which was a list of what happened without any link to the project's development. Some listed sources without detail as to their relevance or usefulness. Some listed numerous meetings with mentors or supervisors, which led to the appearance of a project not entirely owned by the candidate.

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AO1 Analysis

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates used a research question as their title, so they had something specific to interrogate in relation to their secondary research and any primary research.
- There was a clear indication of when words were taken from sources, or were the candidate's own, by the use of phrases such as 'The source shows that …' or 'the data means that …' or interpreting findings such as data from a survey by linking it to the project title.
- Analysis was relevant to the project title and consistently focused on it, facilitating the building of an argument through conclusions which were logical, driven by research and clearly the candidate's own thoughts.
- This led to a clear answer in response to the research question.

Limited responses

- Candidates included statements which were analytical among source material without making it clear which were their own thoughts and words.
- Some candidates included only general analysis of research.
- Conclusions were sometimes limited in content and without a clear link to any evidence presented.
- Reports based on a statement often found it hard to reach an overall answer as they did not include a clear focus, others reached an overall answer which was unsupported by evidence.

AO1 Evaluation

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates included detailed discussion of both strengths and limitations of the research method or methods in their own words; they referenced personal insights and evaluated the usefulness of their methods in a balanced way rooted in their project title.
- There was clear and explicit evaluation of a source or a range of sources – for example, by commenting on the credibility of an author or a journal from which it came linked to its validity and overall impact on the project.

Limited responses

- Some candidates focused on only one of strengths and limitations of research methods; in other instances, both aspects were included as a generic list without a clear link to the candidate's own experience and their thoughts on the benefits, or otherwise, of that method.
- Candidates sometimes evaluated at least one source in a basic way, for example by saying that a writer was an academic without exploring whether, for example, they were a leader in their field. Evaluation was not seen in some reports.

AO2 Reflection

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates included detailed reflection of both the strengths and limitations of their project in their own words in the context of their title, giving balanced personal insights in relation to what worked well and what was less successful.
- They included personal reflection on how their views had been impacted related to what they thought at the outset and how this changed, or not, during their project journey.

Limited responses

- Some candidates included generic strengths and/or limitations of a particular type of project, such as an experiment, without a link to their own experiences and thoughts; in some instances, they repeated material relating to research methods.
- Some candidates reflected by stating that they had learned a lot, often with a focus on skills development or potential future research rather than related to their topic. In some instances, no reflection was included in the report.

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AO3 Communication

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates used a clear, easy to follow structure, including a contents page and sub-headings.
- Accurate and relevant subject-specific terminology was used throughout the report.
- Candidates presented their research findings clearly and appropriately at points in the report where they linked to analysis or conclusions, including only those relevant to building their argument.
- Citation and referencing were complete and consistent between the report and the separate bibliography using an appropriate and accepted format, such as including the access date for web-based sources. Sources listed in the bibliography could be found in the report and accessed from the information given in the bibliography

Limited responses

- In some reports there was no final title at the start of the report or the title given did not match that in other documents and some contained no contents page. Some reports were largely descriptive and often repetitive, providing little evidence of analysis, the building of an argument and the drawing of conclusions to an overall answer.
- Some subject-specific terms were used at times with variable levels of accuracy.
- Research findings sometimes did not demonstrate clarity as to their relevance or impact, for example, the inclusion of pages of experiment results or complex mathematical formulae without explanation, or the use of graphs and charts distant to any analysis or conclusion. In some instances, elements outside the assessment process, such as an entire survey or a transcript of an interview were included at the end of the report and impacted on the overall word count.
- Most candidates submitted a separate bibliography; in some instances, this was incomplete when compared to the sources seen in the report. At times the bibliography was a list of website addresses without detail or access dates, and in other examples journals and articles were listed without referencing as to their source.

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