

Outdoor and Environmental Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

This was the first examination of the new study design and generally students showed a good understanding of the course. Students need to be encouraged to read each question carefully to ascertain the degree of information expected, and to ensure examples they choose are the most appropriate. The terms **explain**, **describe**, **analyse** or **evaluate** indicate that some depth is required in the response whereas questions which ask students to **identify** or **outline** indicate a briefer response is expected. The format of the question and answer book provided an indication of the length of responses required and students generally seemed to find this format more useful than responding in a script book.

A number of questions asked students to use examples of activities or procedures that were environmentally sustainable. Those which were obviously not environmentally sustainable were not awarded any marks.

Students must read each question carefully before commencing their response. Many students tended to make a response based on the starting phrase of a question only and as a consequence did not address all aspects required by the whole question.

Where questions required examples of recreational activities the choice needs to be made carefully. Activities must be feasible for the given area. More successful responses chose distinctly different examples where more than one activity was required. When a number of examples are required students are advised to give only the required number, as additional examples will not be considered part of the response.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Question 1

a. (Average mark 4.16/Available marks 6)

Possible strategies were:

- use a lightweight portable stove
- select a clear flat site to locate a tent
- wash dishes away from the river
- do not use detergent.

b. (1.56/4)

Possible impacts were:

- introduced weed species
- introduced feral animal grazing/predation
- changes in fire regimes
- changes in river flow regimes
- changes in water quality due to fertiliser use and farm animals upstream.

Many students did not read this question accurately and assumed incorrectly that this land had already been developed for farming and consequently gave inappropriate impacts.

c. (1.23/2)

Possible reasons were:

- flood prone area
- inaccessible except by water
- soil is of poor quality for farming
- area is a long way from a major population area
- the land is an aboriginal reserve.

This question was poorly answered, especially by those students who had misinterpreted part b.

d. (3.92/6)

Activities could include:

- bushwalking/camping near natural bush
- canoeing/kayaking in suitable waterway
- swimming in calm water
- bird or animal watching.

Activities had to be both environmentally sustainable and appropriate for the area. Water skiing on this river is not sustainable and hence was not awarded any marks; similarly surfing was not awarded any marks. In evaluating the

impact of the chosen activities, better responses used diverse activities. Bushwalking and lightweight camping are similar in their impact so students who chose both could not demonstrate as wide a knowledge of impacts.

e. (2.32/4)

Possible regulations were:

- introduction of permits to limit the number of people who can enter the area to limit the impact of soil compaction, wastes going into the water, human wastes going into the water.
- construction of walking tracks to localise the impact (if right surface is used impact can be quite low).
- closing off particular areas
- prohibiting particular activities.

Suggested regulations given had to be appropriate and realistic. A regulation to prohibit littering was inappropriate as it is already an offence under our current legal system. The question clearly required both regulations to be for the one activity. Students who provided two regulations for two separate activities were only awarded 1 mark.

Question 2

a. (1.18/4)

Influences could include:

- increased leisure time
- increased/improved economic situation
- better equipment and improved techniques
- social responses to risk taking
- guide books and grading systems
- packaging and marketing of activities
- certification and qualifications.

The influences needed to be described. This question was done quite poorly and indicates that this aspect of the course needs more emphasis by teachers.

b. (2.16/4)

Effects could include:

- crowding (loss of solitary experience)
- noise (loss of solitary experience)
- environmental degradation and consequent loss of tranquility
- increased safety due to more people
- increased enjoyment due to the opportunity to meet more people also interested in outdoor experiences.

This question was done well by those students who read the question clearly and focused only on outdoor experiences. However, many students were not able to distinguish between effects on outdoor experiences and effects on the outdoor environment.

c. (1.59/2)

Negative impacts could include:

- blowouts on sand dunes
- vegetation degradation
- fauna degradation from fishing and collecting
- loss of species diversity
- change in animal visit patterns
- sewerage outfall
- more sharks and seagulls.

Impacts given had to be specific with general statements such as pollution or litter needing to be explained to gain a mark.

d. (2.52/4)

Measures could include:

- fencing of walkways
- boardwalks
- replanting vegetation
- restricting car parking.

This question was generally well done when the suggestions were fully explained.

e. (2.62/4)

Additional uses could include:

- fishing
- ecotourism with seal colony
- swimming
- jet skis
- boating
- feeding of seals (leading to more sharks in the area).

Students had to choose both appropriate activities and also ones that are sufficiently different to surfing. It was difficult for students who chose bodyboarding to make as strong a case of conflict with surfing as those who chose swimming.

Question 3

a. (2.29/4)

Examples of appropriate responses included the development of such comparisons as worship vs worthship use, sustainable use vs exploitive, specific uses such as fire stick farming vs clearing the land for farming, or killing native animals for food vs introducing animals such as cattle and sheep.

b. (1.98/6)

Examples of appropriate responses included:

- Mornington Peninsula National Park (MPNP) because it is bigger and has a more diverse range of habitats and areas
- there are more species present therefore there is more biodiversity in the MPNP
- presence of more rare or threatened species in the MPNP could indicate a greater threat to biodiversity.

Students must show an understanding of the concept of biodiversity. Teachers need to focus on this area to a greater extent.

c. (2.28/4)

Threats could include:

- introduced animals
- introduced environmental weeds (non-indigenous plants)
- edge effects (land use practices outside the park)
- chemical and fertiliser drifts into park
- human use
- pollution of water flowing into the park
- sewerage outfall.

Two points needed to be fully developed to gain full marks. For example, when using introduced animals, an answer is improved if specific animals are referred to such as the impact of foxes and rabbits. Some students who did not read the question with care, did not realise that this land was already part of the Parks system and hence some regulations already applied. No marks were awarded for banning shooting, as this would already be the case. Likewise land clearing was very unlikely to be a threat to biodiversity within an established park.

d. (1.43/2)

Could include two of:

- ecosystem or habitat values
- aesthetic values
- to provide for a range of recreational activities
- to maintain stability of the environment (e.g. prevent soil erosion)
- possible future food sources
- bird and/or animal watching.

This question was poorly done. Many students were not clear on the importance of biodiversity to human society and this link needs to be clearly made during the year.

e. (2.51/4)

Strategies could include two of:

- restrict access to certain areas
- limiting types of activities
- rehabilitation of areas
- enlarging the park (consolidating areas)
- developing migration corridors between fragments
- build boardwalks
- education and interpretation activities.

In their explanation, students were expected to show briefly how each of these strategies could be expected to conserve biodiversity.

f. (1.56/2)

Activities could include two of:

- nature study
- walking
- camping
- beach-going
- surfing
- fishing
- cycling
- hang-gliding

- fossicking.

Many students obtained full marks on this question, students who did not obtain full marks chose activities that were not consistent with ESD in the park, e.g. motocross.

g. (2.64/4)

Likely impacts could include:

- soil compaction
- disturbance of drainage patterns
- spreading of cinnamon fungus and weeds
- pollution of waterways by droppings
- trampling of vegetation.

Students had to show how horses could cause each of these possible impacts.

hi. (2.4/3)

Likely responses were:

- Riding club – want increased access for horse riding
- Friends – completely eliminate horse riding from park
- Bushwalkers – restrict access of horse riding.

A range of responses was accepted for this question as long as they were plausible. However, many students misinterpreted the question and gave general requirements of each group when using the park.

ii. (1.52/3)

Possible strategies could be:

- use media
- lobby minister
- lobby department
- protest or rally
- letters to the editor
- petitions.

iii. (2.26/6)

Marks depended on the appropriateness/feasibility of the justification given for the strategy chosen. Many students reiterated their answers to part ii, instead of evaluating the strategy. Many failed to show why each strategy chosen was appropriate to the given group.

iv. (0.88/4)

An appropriate process could be:

- passing legislation
- court decision
- compromise/setting up management committee
- regulation/zoning.

There was confusion amongst some students on the difference between processes and strategies/methods. This difference is clear in the study design and teachers need to ensure that they stress that difference.

Question 4

a. (2.53/5)

There is still some confusion amongst students about what constitutes an environmental interest group. Government bodies such as the DNRE or EEC are not interest groups and responses which named these were not awarded marks. Other groups such as Landcare and Coastwatch that have been set up by Government bodies are more debatable. Teachers are advised that they should introduce a number of groups within the course and at least some should be completely independent community based interest groups.

An outline of a sample answer would be:

The Wilderness Society was formed in 1976 to protest about the flooding of Lake Pedder as part of the Tasmanian Hydro Electricity Commission's development schemes in the Gordon River catchment. Their first successful campaign was to stop the damming of the Franklin River. This campaign lasted 7 years and created enormous public interest. Current activities are concerned with protecting, promoting and securing the future of wilderness and other high conservation areas. Current activities include: national forest campaign, woodlands and land clearing, Cape York wilderness, Antarctica.

b. (6.9/15)

Most students responded well to this longer form of question, although many comparisons between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians were very simplistic. A common response suggested that the former used the land for food and the latter more for recreation. Students are expected to show considerably more sophistication in their responses than this and should be able to recognise that non-indigenous Australians still use the land for their food source despite this not being immediately obvious to urban dwellers. Another over simplistic statement commonly expressed is that one group looks after the land and the other does not. Students should be able to acknowledge any advantages they may recognise in their own lifestyle instead of being universally condemning of it.

The table below identifies some possible examples students may have considered (it is not exhaustive and distinguishes between early European settlers and contemporary Australians whereas this distinction was not required in the examination).

	Perceptions	Uses	Management practices
Indigenous Australians	Land perceived in terms of worship	For food, but without exhausting supplies	Sustainable – use of fire and migration of tribal groups in search of seasonal foods
Early European settlers	Land perceived in terms of worship: cleared for farming (profit), tall tree is indication of fertile soil, saw no value in tree itself (except perhaps as firewood or ship's masts)	Environment seen as hostile/threatening: needing to be changed/manipulated/controlled, worthlessness of Australian plants and animals, land to be cleared and farmed (made to look like mother country) not harvested, native species replaced with introduced species	Limitless supply of resources so no need for conservation, forests cleared to make farmlands, environment there to be used for 'man', introduce species and changed water courses without thought of consequences
Contemporary Australians	Still mainly in terms of worship but there is growing recognition of the need to conserve and preserve what is there for the future	Exploitation continues but there are efforts at conservation of landscapes, recognition of beauty of Australian environment, recognition of value of environment for recreation (gymnasium)	Some still see limitless supply of resources but others husband resources, greater awareness of sustainable development practices, revegetation, use plantations and recycling, recognition of conservation as legitimate use of the environment, declaration of national parks, tourism potential of environment, need to control introduced species, need environmental effects statements before developments