

2011 Outdoor and Environmental Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The format of the 2011 Outdoor and Environmental Studies question and answer booklet gave a clear indication of the depth of answer required for each question, as did the key words in the questions. Words such as 'explain', 'describe', 'outline', 'identify' and 'evaluate' indicated the type of answer required. Students need to ensure that they understand these, and other, key terms and what is required for each.

Students need to use their examination time efficiently, including using the reading time to ensure they have an understanding of each question. When answering the paper, students do not need to rewrite the question in their answer. Instead, they should use key words from the question in their answer, as this often helps to keep the response on track.

Students must ensure that they read each question carefully so that they accurately interpret what is required in their answer. Where a longer answer is required, students are strongly advised to complete a brief plan first. There are a number of spaces within the booklet that can be used for this, and students may ask for an additional script book if needed. A plan enables students to outline the main ideas they will cover and order their responses before they start.

In preparing for this examination students need to be familiar with a range of outdoor environments and with varying types and levels of human impact. When asked to identify a specific outdoor environment or issue for a particular question, the choice is critical – it must be one that will enable the student to thoroughly address the question.

Some questions asked for a specific number of responses. These responses were marked in the order presented and extra responses were not taken into account. If a student thinks of a better response after finishing their initial answer, they should cross out the answer that they feel is the weakest and add the extra response. If there is insufficient room an additional script book may be used, as long as the response is clearly labelled. A number of students did not score maximum marks in some questions as they had listed a variety of responses when only one was asked for. Students are advised to choose their responses carefully and fully describe them, rather than just giving a list of all possible responses.

Students need to understand study specific terms such as 'strategies', 'actions', 'management strategies', 'processes', 'policies', 'influences', 'relationships', 'perceptions', 'views', 'commercialisation', 'impacts', 'movements', 'biodiversity', 'sustainability' and 'methods'. Clarification of terminology used within the *VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies Study Design* was published in the February 2008 edition of the *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET*. This can be accessed on the VCAA website Teachers are advised to consult previous Assessment Reports to obtain a broad range of examples of these study-specific terms. Students also need to be able to use these terms in the context of specific questions and give appropriate examples rather than using general definitions. Students are advised to be specific and to enrich their answers with suitable examples where possible and appropriate to indicate the depth and breadth of their knowledge. Sweeping, generalised statements are not appropriate and do not attract marks. Students should avoid rote-learned answers and ensure that they have carefully read and understood the question before answering.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Question 1

Students needed to identify an outdoor experience and a natural environment although there were no marks allocated for these. This is common throughout the exam, and it is important that students used these parts of their responses to set the context for their answers.

1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	1	2	12	32	53	3.4

One mark was awarded for each valid action.

The following is an example of a possible response related to ski touring as the chosen outdoor experience and the Victorian Alps as the chosen natural environment. The impact is minimised by:

- planning the experience well before going
- skiing on designated tracks where possible

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- using fuel stoves for cooking food
- when going to the toilet, burying human waste in the ground, below the layer of snow.

This question was handled well by most students. Generic minimal impact strategies were acceptable only if they related specifically to the experience identified by the student. Students needed to think carefully about an experience that would be appropriate. Responses that included actions students would normally avoid, such as 'not littering' or 'not damaging local plants', were not generally accepted unless the student's justification was particularly effective.

1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	2	5	10	20	22	38	4.6

For each one of the three responses required, students needed to identify a management strategy and then explain the strategy.

The following is an example of a possible response related to ski touring as the chosen outdoor experience and the Victorian Alps as the chosen natural environment:

- fencing off sensitive areas for the protection of flora and fauna in the area
- putting drop toilets near huts for skiers to use instead of digging their own toileting holes
- grading and clearing of tracks to keep skiers on tracks and off vegetation.

The management strategy needed to relate to the specified environment. Explaining and/or describing the strategy might have included detailed elaboration, stating examples of the strategy in use or justifications of the strategy.

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	3	7	14	21	23	27	4.3

For each of the management strategies described in 1b., students needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy and justify the evaluation.

The following is an example of a possible response related to ski touring as the chosen outdoor experience and the Victorian Alps as the chosen natural environment:

- fencing off areas can be a good strategy but skiers can usually get around fences pretty easily, so this might reduce the effectiveness
- using drop toilets is a very effective strategy as people would much rather use standard toilets than drop toilets, and it keeps human waste out of the environment
- clearing tracks is not very effective in an alpine environment as skiers can go wherever they like.

Question 2

Students needed to name an outdoor activity, which was used as the basis of their subsequent responses.

2a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	10	40	49	1.4

There were two accepted ways of responding to this question. Students could either:

- identify an example of society's response to risk taking and then connect this response to a change in the participation associated with the chosen activity
- develop a detailed description of changes in participation associated with the activity.

A possible response related to climbing as the chosen activity could have been: Because of the risk involved in climbing, we now need instructors to be qualified and certified. This has made climbing more expensive for groups and has led to fewer people being involved in the activity.

Society responses to risk taking that students could have used included (but were not limited to):

- infrastructure development
- certification requirements
- safety procedures and/or equipment
- criticism of risk takers

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- legal responses and sanctions
- training and education
- restriction of access to venues
- development of regulations.

2b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	12	36	52	1.4

Students needed to give an explanation of an impact on the natural environment and connect this impact to the changes in participation described in 2a.

A possible response related to climbing as the chosen activity could have been: Fewer people going climbing has had a positive effect on the environment. Cleared camping sites near some climbing areas have gradually started to become revegetated.

Question 3

Students needed to identify an outdoor experience they'd had.

3a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	3	15	82	1.8

Students needed to identify a view of the environment and then connect this view, or the development of it, to the outdoor experience.

A possible response related to surfing as the chosen experience could have been: Being able to surf in some spectacular places has helped me to develop a view of the natural environment as something we should protect.

3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	4	11	20	59	3.2

Each of the two responses needed to identify a view and then give a description of that view.

A possible response could have been: Another view of the environment is as a gym, where the environment is a venue for people to physically challenge themselves.

Views could have included (but were not limited to) the environment as:

- a gym
- a museum
- a cathedral
- noble and separate
- an adversary
- a resource.

3c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	10	8	12	19	20	16	15	3.4

For each of the three responses students needed to identify a relationship and then connect the relationship to the appropriate view from 3a. and 3b.

A possible response could have been: Viewing the environment as an adversary can lead to people fearing it. This may keep people away from natural environments or lead them to be aggressive in clearing and destroying environments.

In explaining relationships students could have used metaphors, such as land as mother, but needed to go beyond this and give a useful explanation. In explaining relationships students might also have discussed perceptions, interactions and/or impacts.

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Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	2	4	9	16	23	17	14	8	5	4.4

Two marks were allocated for each of the four main cells in the table: positive impact on locals, negative impact on locals, positive impact on tourists and negative impact on tourists. Students needed to describe how the commercialisation of this area would impact on the human relationships with the surrounding natural environment. For each of the four descriptions students needed to include two clear and relevant positive and negative points of information.

A possible response could have been:

- (positive impact on locals) increased tourism is likely to lead to more money coming into the local economy. This money could help locals to do a lot of different and positive things in their environment, such as protect it, restore degraded land or develop new activities
- (negative impact on locals) an obvious negative impact on the locals will be more people visiting the environment they live in and its surrounds. More people may make their experiences not as enjoyable; for example, surfing a local break won't be as enjoyable when you have to fight for space on waves with tourists
- (positive impact on tourists) the commercialisation will probably lead to more tourists and that means more people will get to see the environment. Experiencing the beautiful place may lead the tourists to want to visit more places like this, and encourage them to help to try to protect and conserve natural places
- (negative impact on tourists) certain activities and experiences might become more popular and common for the tourists that visit the local area, but this will mean that tourists may miss out on other activities and experiences. The chance to do different and interesting things could be lost.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	2	4	9	16	23	17	14	8	5	4.9

There were four marks allocated for each of the two chosen technologies. For each identified technology students needed to:

- evaluate the development of the technology in changing relationships
- justify the evaluation
- describe changing human relationships connected with the technology.

A possible response for Gore-Tex jackets as the chosen technology could have been: The introduction of Gore-Tex jackets has had a mixed effect on human relationships with natural environments. These light and breathable jackets have made outdoor trips more enjoyable and comfortable, compared to older materials that did not keep people as dry and warm, and could make trips less safe. On the other hand, Gore-Tex is very expensive and may only be affordable for wealthy people.

Question 6

6a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	12	7	17	21	17	8	18	3.2

For each of the three ways of assessing biodiversity, students needed to name the component of biodiversity and describe an aspect of the component relevant to assessing biodiversity.

A possible response could have been:

- (for genetic diversity) genetic diversity could be measured by comparing the genes of individuals within a species
- (for species diversity) species diversity could be determined by counts of the numbers of plant and animal species
- (for ecosystem diversity) ecosystem diversity could be examined by looking at the variety of habitats in the Murray–Darling Basin.

Students who responded to the question by referring to different methods of measuring biodiversity, such as quadrats and transects, were not awarded full marks.

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6b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	11	9	17	15	18	12	18	3.3

For each one of the three reasons, students needed to identify the reason and then explain or describe it.

A possible response could have been: It's important for the aesthetic appreciation people get from visiting parts of the Murray–Darling and experiencing the variety of species there.

Reasons for maintaining biodiversity in the Murray–Darling Basin included (but were not limited to):

- maintenance of air and water resources
- recycling of nutrients
- water filtration
- support for primary industry
- provision of medicines
- rest and relaxation
- economic benefits
- venues for research and education.

6ci.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	4	12	85	1.8

One mark was awarded for the identification of each of two human activities.

Human activities that may have had an impact on the Murray–Darling Basin could have included (but were not limited to):

- logging
- farming and grazing
- irrigation
- hydroelectricity
- recreational activities
- fishing
- supplying drinking water to cities and towns
- mining.

This question was handled well by most students.

6cii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	8	23	27	36	2.8

For each one of the two responses, students needed to give a detailed description of an impact on the environment.

A possible response could have been: Irrigation reduces the amount of water in the river, which can put stress on the aquatic plants and animals.

6d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	8	28	30	28	2.7

For each one of the two actions, students needed to identify the action and give a description of the action.

A possible response could have been: Governments could create new national parks or extend existing ones. This would help to protect plants and animals and provide bigger buffer zones for protected ecosystems.

Actions could have included (but were not limited to):

- planning regulations
- revegetation and other conservation measures
- limits on fishing

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- limits on irrigation
- creating parks and other reserves
- creating action plans for endangered and threatened species.

6ei.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	12	11	78	1.7

One mark was allocated for each one of two possible uses that might lead to conflict.

Two possible responses could have been:

- irrigation and conservation of river habitats
- hydroelectricity generation and recreational uses.

The uses identified needed to be clearly different. Students also needed to note the requirement for uses and not 'users'. For example, irrigation is a use and was acceptable, whereas farmers are users and were not acceptable.

6eii.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	19	37	44	1.3

Two marks were allocated for a description of the possible conflict between the two groups.

Two possible responses could have been:

- irrigation reduces the amount of water left in the rivers, which threatens aquatic plants and animals and is a problem for those trying to protect and conserve the species
- generating electricity through hydro schemes means damming rivers and this can reduce the ability of people to be involved in recreational activities like canoeing and fishing.

6f.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	21	4	10	21	45	2.7

One mark was allocated for outlining each one of four different methods.

Methods used to influence decision making needed to be appropriate to the groups. Methods could have included (but were not limited to):

- direct action/protests
- lobbying
- letter writing
- use of the media
- use of prominent people
- education campaigns
- petitions.

6g.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	35	25	23	17	1.2

Students needed to identify a decision-making process and explain the process in detail.

A possible response could have been: The government could set up a consultative committee to help resolve the conflict. This usually involves a committee of experts listening to input from all interested users of an environment and then developing a report with recommendations for the government.

Decision-making processes could have included (but were not limited to):

- consultative processes
- legislation
- litigation and the use of courts
- use of management plans

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- direct mediation.

Police action was not an appropriate decision-making process.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	4	1	2	4	6	9	13	14	15	14	9	6	4	7.1

Students needed to identify an environment they had studied or visited. Four marks were allocated for each of the three time periods listed. The response for each time period needed to include detailed descriptions of interactions and of the relationships that were typical for the time period.

A possible response related to Wilsons Promontory as the chosen environment could have been:

- (for Indigenous relationships) the Indigenous people living around Wilsons Promontory had a deep spiritual connection with the land and sea. They lived off the land through hunter/gatherer practices, taking only what they needed and moving from place to place. They practised firestick farming to promote the growth of certain grasses that were eaten by kangaroos. Their relationship was a sustainable one that had very few large impacts on the environments they lived in
- (for first settlers relationships) the first settlers to the Wilsons Promontory area were sealers who saw the area as a rich source of money. The sealers lived in small coastal camps, cutting down trees for fires to treat the seal blubber. They brought dogs and cats with them; these animals would later become pests in the area. The impact of the sealer's interactions was very high and they killed off most of the seals in the area within only a few years
- (for relationships related to environmental movements) for many years, the area has been protected as a National Park, with people visiting the area to camp, swim, surf and bushwalk. In the mid-1990s the Victorian Government looked at creating a high-cost resort in the park and there was a major protest to stop this development. The protests helped to remind people of the beauty of the area and encouraged more visitors, who thought that it was a good idea to protect the park. A new management plan was created that made conservation a main focus for the managers of the park.

Interactions and relationships described must have included:

- Indigenous people before non-Indigenous settlement
- first settlers.

Other time periods described might have included:

- the Gold Rush
- federation
- early 20th century
- after the World Wars
- the rise of environmental movements
- contemporary.

Students could not gain full marks unless their descriptions included direct connection to their chosen environment.