

2013 Examination Report



2013 Outdoor and Environmental Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students need to ensure that they understand key terms such as 'explain', 'describe', 'analyse', 'name', 'discuss', 'identify' and 'evaluate' and what is required for each.

Students need to use their examination time efficiently. They do not need to rewrite the question in their answer. Instead, they should use key words from the question, as this often helps to keep the response on track.

Students should read each question carefully so that they accurately interpret what is required in their answer. Where a longer answer is required, students are advised to complete a brief plan first. There are a number of spaces within the booklet that can be used for this.

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 or select a specific outdoor environment, indigenous community, influence, movement, practice, conflict or issue for a particular question, the choice is critical – it must be one that will enable the student to thoroughly address all parts of 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; therefore, students who gave additional responses did not receive additional marks. 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 full 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 to fully describe them, rather than just giving a list of all possible responses.

Students need to understand study specific terms such as 'biosecurity', 'contemporary', 'nation building', 'actions', 'management strategies', 'decision-making processes', 'policies', 'influences', 'relationships', 'commercialisation', 'impacts', 'movements', 'biodiversity', 'sustainability', 'discourses' and 'methods'. Clarification of terminology used within the *VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies Study Design* can be found on page 31 of the study design. Students should 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 relevant. Generalised statements are not rewarded. Students should avoid giving rote-learned answers.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	13	32	55	1.4

Students needed to indicate the characteristic selected by ticking the box beside it. It was important that students used these boxes to provide the context for their answers.

Two marks were awarded for describing the selected characteristic. In general, students' descriptions appeared to be weak.

The following are examples of possible responses.

- Biological isolation – since Australia separated from the rest of Gondwana, flora and fauna have developed in isolation from other continents.
- Climatic variation – Climatic conditions are erratic as the country spans different climate zones. A hot and dry climate made the environment prone to bushfires, which resulted in the dominance of eucalypt trees.

2013 Examination Report



- Geological stability – Low tectonic and volcanic activity resulted in a flat landscape, which is vulnerable to floods, fire and exposure. It is also the reason for poor soils and dry, arid lands.

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	26	42	32	1.1

Students needed to select an environmental movement. Two marks were available for a general description of the foundation of the selected environmental movement.

The focus of this question was on the foundation of environmental movements; however, some students misinterpreted this and consequently focused on current activities or actions. Such responses were not awarded any marks.

The following are examples of possible responses.

- Victorian National Parks Association – This was founded in 1952, with the aim of increasing the number of national parks and providing education to individuals, industry and government on conservation issues.
- Greenpeace – This was founded in 1971 in Canada. Founders were motivated by a vision of a green and peaceful world. Their first mission was to bear witness to underground nuclear testing at Amchitka, an island off the west-coast of Alaska.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	13	28	35	25	1.7

Three marks were awarded for a valid evaluation of the role the selected environmental movement played in changing human relationships with outdoor environments.

There are many ways to construct responses to evaluative questions. Answers that received full marks did not always contain a final conclusion; they could have included several well-made points, with multiple reasons that supported and/or refuted the role of the movement.

Students appeared to confuse the role of environmental movements and their influence on changing relationships with the methods used and success of environmental conflicts. There was also significant confusion between the statutory body Parks Victoria and the environmental movement Victorian National Parks Association.

The following are examples of possible responses.

- Victorian National Parks Association – This has played a major role in changing people's views of the environment through providing education and fighting for the development of national parks and national park legislation. Through this education the Association has shown people the importance of preserving and protecting the natural environment. One particular example was saving Wilsons Promontory from hotel development in the 1990s, through what was called the 'Hands off the Prom' campaign. This helped change people's perception of what national parks should be used for.
- Greenpeace – This has made Australians aware of the plight of our marine life, especially whales, as activists protested to protect them. In Warnambool they have used controversial images to change the perception of whales being used as a resource to that of being a precious and unique species.

2013 Examination Report



Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	1	5	15	31	49	

Students needed to name an outdoor environment and use this as the basis of their subsequent response. The selected environment could have been a broad area (such as the Bellarine Peninsula in south-west Victoria or the coastline between Wonthaggi and Wilsons Promontory) as long as the student's response included specific and detailed examples.

One mark was awarded for the identification of each specific interaction that is, or could be (in the past or future), undertaken in the selected outdoor environment. Four different and specific interactions were required in order to receive full marks.

In general, student understanding of what constitutes a primary industry was extremely poor.

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	8	6	9	11	14	12	14	11	16	

Two marks were available for providing an explanation of how contemporary societal relationships are reflected through each of the four interactions identified in part a. Adequate explanations needed to be provided for each of the four interactions in order to receive full marks.

This question was answered poorly. Common errors included focusing on patterns of interaction rather than contemporary relationships, and an apparent lack of understanding of the distinction between tourism and recreation interactions.

The following is an example of a high-scoring student response.

Tourism interaction

Ecologic provide tourism and give people a sustainable education on the environment. Therefore seeing the environment as a museum and temple and developing a deep understanding. Therefore appreciating the environment and recognising the intrinsic value of the outdoors such as at Angelsea.

Primary industry interaction

The interaction of coal mining reflect the environment being seen as a resource. The environment is being exploited and people will have low respect for the environment through releasing high carbon emmisions into the atmosphere through this mining.

Conservation interaction

Fencing off and replanting around the sand dunes of Angelsea beaches show the environment is seen as a temple and is respected. The environment is understood to need to be protected and conserved. This sustainable relationship by fencing and replanting shows the increased respect for the environment.

Recreation interaction

Surfing in Angelsea reflects a relationship of positivity. The environment is seen as a place for recreation and to have fun and enjoy. Therefore people respect the environment and will work to maintain its health as it can provide enjoyment through recreation. It is seen as a gymnasium and a place for fun.

Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	3	3	6	10	12	13	18	13	10	11	

Three marks were awarded for a valid evaluation of the role each selected factor has had in influencing contemporary societal relationships that humans have with the chosen outdoor environment. Three different factors needed to be selected and evaluated in order to receive full marks.

2013 Examination Report



As stated previously, answers that received full marks did not always contain a clear-cut judgment; they could have included several well-made points, with multiple reasons that supported and/or refuted the item being evaluated.

This question was also answered poorly, despite the fact that students could select the factors they were evaluating. In relation to the factor 'social responses to risk taking', student responses that focused on real and perceived risk (which is content from Unit 1 of the study design) or risky activities in a broad sense could not be awarded any marks.

Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	16	21	63	1.5

One mark was awarded for each indicator identified that was relevant to the information collected and/or from the activities outlined. Two different indicators needed to be identified in order to receive full marks.

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	9	26	26	32	2.7

Two marks were awarded for a general description of how each of the indicators identified in part a. could be used to determine the health of any outdoor environment. An adequate description was needed for each of the indicators in order to receive full marks.

Some students misinterpreted this question. Responses that focused either on the importance of keeping environments healthy, or on how consequences such as salinity, erosion or pollution occur, could not be awarded any marks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring student response.

1 Soil Quality: this could determine the health of any outdoors environment if the soil is moist and soft, also if there is a wide variety of vegetation for ground cover, it can indicate a healthy outdoor environment. Yet, if it is hard and dry top soil, with little surrounding vegetation, it can indicate the environment in an poor state.

2 Water Quality: if the water in the given environment is clear and flowing, also is drinkable without treating it. This is a good indication of a healthy outdoor environment. Yet, if the water is discoloured and has large amounts of sediment, this could indicate the state of the environment is poor.

Question 4c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	11	11	34	44	2.1

Three marks were awarded for providing an adequate evaluation of the health of an outdoor environment that was visited or studied throughout the year, using both of the indicators identified in part a.

Students needed to name an outdoor environment and use this as the basis of their response. The selected environment could have been a broad area (such as the Bellarine Peninsula in south-west Victoria or the coastline between Wonthaggi and Wilsons Promontory) as long as the student's response included specific and detailed examples.

The following is an example of a high-scoring student response.

Mt Buller Alpine Resort

Soil Quality: At Mt Buller, the soil is moist, also very soft. There is also a wide range of various species of vegetation covering the ground. This indicates that Mt Buller's soil is in a healthy state.

Water Quality: At Mt Buller, the water is clean and clear, there are no clear signs of ant sediment present, and the water was drinkable without treating it, thus indicating healthy water quality. Overall, judging by these two indicators, it is clear that Mt Buller Alpine Resort is a healthy environment.

2013 Examination Report



Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	14	28	39	20	1.7

Students needed to select a critique of sustainable development or state another critique. Three marks were then available for analysing the validity of the chosen critique.

This question was answered poorly. Students appeared to have a limited capacity to describe what their critique actually meant, to examine its validity or to provide supportive reasons.

A possible response for 'sustainable development is too expensive' could have been: There is no doubt that the idea of sustainable development is too expensive and therefore it is not being practised by a large number of people in society. Sustainable development includes the use of materials such as insulation in homes, solar panels, grey water tanks, recycled building materials and double-glazed windows. All of these items come at a premium cost which deters people from using them, minimising the success of sustainable development as a concept. The government did implement rebates to encourage people to use these options, but these have since been withdrawn.

Question 6a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	32	61	1.6

Two marks were awarded for identifying two reasons why it is important that outdoor environments remain healthy. The reasons provided needed to be different in order to receive full marks.

Broad statements such as 'for future generations' were not awarded any marks.

Question 6b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	12	26	38	24	1.8

Three marks were awarded for further explaining the importance of one of the reasons identified in part a. to individuals or society or both.

The following is an example of a high-scoring student response.

Scientific research

This is very important to society as the health of natural environments is crucial to conducting research to discover how the health of humans can benefit from natural resources. Medicines, vaccines or cures that may save the lives of individuals may be found, meaning that it is important for society as a whole and also individuals who may require assistance further in life.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	10	29	39	22	1.8

Students needed to select an environmental threat or state another threat. Three marks were awarded for giving a description of the threat and its subsequent impact on an individual or group that would affect their use of a specific outdoor environment.

Students tended to focus their responses on simply describing the threat, and neglected to mention its impact on individuals or groups. As the question stipulated, reference to a specific outdoor environment was required in order to receive full marks.

2013 Examination Report



Question 8a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	6	11	27	51	3.2

Students needed to select a conflict. Four marks were then awarded for accurately describing the conflict and naming two key groups that were involved.

The term 'government' was not awarded any marks for any of the conflicts, as more specific detail was required (such as Tasmanian Government, Victorian Government or Federal Government).

A possible response could have been: Marine national parks and sanctuaries. The Victorian Government set aside marine areas to preserve and protect habitats. Commercial fishermen were opposed to the protected areas, as it restricted their fishing spaces and consequently their income.

Question 8b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	10	10	29	18	34	2.6

Two marks were awarded for describing an appropriate method used by each group named in part a. to influence decision-making processes in the selected conflict. The two methods provided must have differed in order to receive full marks.

Legislation and police action were not accepted as they are not methods used to influence decision-making and therefore were not awarded any marks.

A possible response for 'marine national parks and sanctuaries' could have been: Group 1 – Direct action in the form of people taking action, which is intended to reveal a problem, highlight an alternative or demonstrate a possible solution to an issue, was used by the commercial fishermen who protested and engaged in non-violent resistance. Group 2 – The Victorian Government used a variety of media sources such as radio and newspapers to raise public awareness about this issue.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	34	27	23	16	1.2

Three marks were awarded for an adequate description of the role of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) in resolving conflicts.

This question was generally answered poorly. VEAC was often described as a mediator that aims to please all parties involved, or a statutory body that creates terms and conditions for the use of environments.

A possible response could have been: VEAC is made up of five members that collectively have a range of skills, experience and knowledge in the management of public land and natural resources. They conduct investigations and collect information on the management of the environment as requested by the Victorian Government. VEAC makes recommendations to the government, which in turn then makes the final decision.

Question 10a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	21	43	36	1.2

Students needed to select a specific Act or convention by ticking the box beside it. Two marks were then awarded for accurately describing the purpose of the chosen Act or convention.

The following are examples of responses.

- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Victoria) – This is a key piece of Victorian legislation for the conservation of threatened species and communities, and for the management of potentially threatening processes.

2013 Examination Report



- Ramsar Convention – This is a framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation of wetlands of international importance. It includes the protection of migratory birds that frequent these wetlands, and wise use of the wetland resources.

Question 10b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	23	23	29	25	1.6

Three marks were awarded for describing how the selected Act or convention promotes the management and sustainability of an outdoor environment that was visited or studied throughout the year.

As the question stipulated, reference to a specific outdoor environment was required in order to receive full marks.

A possible response could have been: Ramsar Convention – Edithvale wetlands is a Ramsar protected site, which enables the future security of the wetlands, its surrounding habitat and bird species that breed, eat and migrate there. Edithvale has Ramsar-specific signage and information boards for the public to gain an understanding of the importance of the area.

Question 11a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	26	38	36	1.1

Students needed to select a specific management strategy or policy by ticking the box beside it. Two marks were then awarded for adequately describing the purpose of the selected management strategy or policy.

In relation to Trust for Nature, many students were not aware that they deal with private land only, not public or crown land such as national parks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring student response.

Trust for nature is an organisation that was designed to put legal binding covenants on privately owned land in order to protect it. They provide education to landowners through a stewardship program and have a revolving fund in which they can buy back land and place a covenant on it to protect it for life.

Question 11b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	31	22	25	22	1.4

Students needed to name an outdoor environment and use this as the basis of their subsequent response. Three marks were available for explaining how the selected strategy or policy has been used to improve the health of the selected outdoor environment.

The following is an example of a high-scoring student response.

privately owned land in Gembrook

Trust for Nature provide a stewardship program to the private owners of this land so that it could be furtherly cared for. Whilst the covenant was placed over the land it ment that it was now protected by law, so it could no longer be damaged or cleared, even if the property sold. This saw the large area of land being cared and then flourish to be homes for many native flora and fauna.

Question 12a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	19	81	0.8

One mark was awarded for providing an example of an action that can be taken to help sustain healthy outdoor environments, other than urban planning (as this was provided in the question).

2013 Examination Report



Possible responses included

- green building design
- integrated farming
- renewable energy
- Landcare.

Question 12b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	21	39	40	1.2

Two marks were awarded for providing an accurate description of how the action given in part a. could be applied.

A possible response could have been: The use of renewable energy involves providing alternative power sources such as wind, sun and water, rather than burning fossil fuels.

Question 12c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	17	24	35	25	1.7

Three marks were awarded for giving a valid evaluation of how this action could help sustain healthy outdoor environments.

A possible response could have been: The use of wind farming has become increasingly popular as it provides a reliable energy source with no pollution once towers are constructed. However, people living near wind farms have provided evidence of a range of illnesses believed to be caused by the farms, as well as complaints about the level of noise they produce. Overall wind farms are good sources of renewable energy as the wind is a never-ending resource, but thought needs to be put into where they are located.

Question 13

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	4	1	3	4	6	7	8	8	8	9	9	8	8	7	5	5	8.4

Students needed to name an outdoor environment and use this as the basis of their subsequent response. The selected environment could have been a broad area (such as the Bellarine Peninsula in south-west Victoria, or the coastline between Wonthaggi and Wilsons Promontory) as long as the student's response included specific and detailed examples.

Three marks were awarded for providing an accurate analysis of how human relationships with the selected environment have been influenced over time.

All five influences needed to be analysed in the student's response in order to be awarded full marks. Generic responses that did not relate to any specific environment were not eligible for full marks.

Common student errors included

- making unrealistic statements; such as nation building is building cities at Wilsons Prom
- selecting one environment and part-way through the answer swapping to another environment; such as discussing the Yorta Yorta Indigenous community and then the building of the Great Ocean Road
- focusing solely on the indigenous relationship throughout the analysis
- answering within a contemporary context, rather than a historical context.



The following is an example of a high-scoring student response.

The Otways

Prior to European colonisation, indigenous communities in the Otways such as Gadabanud tribe of the Apollo Bay region had a strong connected relationship with the land. They had the perception that nature was their mother, any impact on nature would impact on them and that they were custodians of the land. This then influenced their interactions, wanting to have minimal negative impacts on the environment. An interaction they had with the land in the Otways included throwing limpets they found on the shore back into the sand dunes – on Crayfish bay on the Coast of the Otways. This then had a positive impact on the land as the shells returned nutrients to the soil of the dunes. This allowed for vegetation growth, resulting in an increase of biodiversity – a positive impact. After European settlement, the perceptions of the indigenous in the Otway region remained the same, believing nature was their mother, any impact on nature would impact on them and that they were custodians. Their interactions, however, altered. Once living a nomadic lifestyle in the Otways prior to the Europeans, they were no longer able to do so as the Europeans forced them into permanent settlements. They then had to hunt and gain resources from the same area in which they lived. This had a negative impact on the land as resources and species began to deplete in the areas of permanent settlements in the Otways. As a result, species of both flora and fauna could have become endangered or even extinct due to habitat loss as a result of the indigenous in the area using the land as a resource for essential needs. The first non-indigenous settlers had the perception that the land was a resource and the Otways was a wild and untamed environment. They then interacted with the land by using it for their own benefit through gaining resources & land clearing for things such as settlements. This had a negative environmental impact as the removal of trees in the Otways from clearing land results in soil erosion – roots of trees can no longer hold top soil in place, causing it to erode and possibly pollute waterways. Increasing population in the Otways caused people to have the perception that land was a means to gain profit and resources. This increase in population was a result of the Gold rush. Interactions, then, involved the logging of timbre – which was needed to create mine shafts in Ballarat as their timbre had already been used. This had a negative impact on this environment of the Otways.

Logging of trees resulted in habitual loss for many native species such as the Koala. Leading to possible endangerment and possible extinction. It also led to increased soil salinity as there were no trees present to control salt levels in the soil. The time of industrialisation was where many believed that land was a commodity – something that could be bought and sold. An interaction they had was mining the land for coal, in order for it to produce electricity. This was present in the Otways at the Skene's creek mine. This interaction had a negative impact on the land as heavy industrial machinery had to be used, releasing great amounts of CO₂ emissions. This affected the air and reduced its quality as a result. Nation building was a time in which people had the perception that the environment was a canvas on which to build a nation. This led to the creation of bridges, railways and roads – such as the Great Ocean Road in the Otways. These interactions had a negative impact on the land as the creation of these hard surfaces led to large amounts of storm water run off. With the run off, liquid litter was accumulated and polluting waterways – leading to a decrease in water quality in the Otways.