



2004 International Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The overall performance of students continued to improve, with the mean result raising a couple of percentage points in 2004. The improvement was most apparent in the essay sections, which lifted the overall mean despite a small decrease in the students' performances in the short answer section. Students seemed to have taken on advice from previous Assessment Reports to develop responses that are directly relevant to the essay question attempted. There was also more effort to attribute views to commentators, a practice that should be further encouraged by teachers.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION – SHORT ANSWER SECTIONS

Students displayed an extensive range of knowledge across these short answer sections, with responses at times exceeding what was expected. It's important to note that assessment is largely based upon the ability to produce responses relevant to the question being asked; more analytical responses should be consigned to the essays sections. Unfortunately, this means that students sometimes waste time that would be better utilised for the essay sections.

The question relating to the Australian Government's response to the *Tampa* appeared to catch many students out. Questions of this nature are possible due to the dot point of the Area of Study relating to 'debates about the national interest'. The handling of the issue raised debate as to whether the Howard Government's stewardship of foreign policy was overly focused on a narrower, more traditional view of security and economic elements of national interest rather than a broader foreign policy agenda that gave higher priority to international obligations and responsibilities.

Section A – Short answer questions

Question 1

'Ideology: the ideas and objectives that influence a whole group or national culture, shaping their political and social procedure.' Funk and Wagnall's Standard Desk Dictionary

Question 1a

Give one example of an ideology followed by one or more nation states or groups since 1945.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	13	87	0.9

Generally this question was well handled. The most common responses were communism and capitalism. Democracy, pancasila, Zionism and pan-Arabism were also accepted. Nationalism and imperialism were not mentioned, which was somewhat surprising. The most common error was in providing an example of a policy or doctrine such as the Domino Theory or the Truman Doctrine.

Question 1b

State two ideas that form the basis of this ideology.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	21	30	50	1.3

Most students were able to identify at least one key idea of their selected ideology, but sometimes struggled to identify a distinctive second idea. A common problem was in associating capitalism with certain political ideals related to democracy (for example, the right to vote or multiparty elections) rather than to its economic character (for example, private ownership or market forces). This was only accepted when students had selected democratic capitalism or even liberal capitalism as their selected ideology.

Question 1c

Explain how an ideology has played a major role in any one international conflict since 1945.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	13	15	34	38	2.0

The most important issue in this question was attributing an ideology to a specific conflict. It was then vital that the explanation of how the ideological dimension projected the conflict, either by activating ideologically based 'alliances' or by stimulating policy stances, related to views about an ideology (for example, Domino Theory). Some impressive answers noted how other ideologies, such as nationalism, were also involved in the conflict. Low-scoring responses just mentioned the Cold War without identifying a specific conflict, or referred to a conflict without associating it to an ideology.

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Question 2

Select two of the following terms and define each one as it relates to the study of international relations.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	11	24	28	32	2.7

- **Refugee status:** a quasi-legal, international term for a person who sought sanctuary from their country of origin due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on their political beliefs, membership of a particular group, or ethnic and/or religious background, or who sought safety and security due to the impact of war and/or famine.
- **Trade liberalisation:** the reduction in barriers (such as tariffs, quotas and subsidies) to the movement of goods and services, capital, and labour across national borders. When students cited agreements such as FTAs, or connected this to the process of globalisation, full marks were assured.
- **Ethnicity:** an identity with a group based upon a combination of a common language, religious and cultural customs/mores. This is often the basis for seeking nationhood from colonial authorities or separation from a multinational, constructed state.
- **Propaganda:** a means for state authorities to construct a truth through the media to justify and legitimise a particular course of action, whether that is in terms of maintaining the support of their population or influencing other states/peoples. When an example was cited this usually ensured full marks.
- **Multinational/transnational corporations:** a business/economic organisation (as opposed to a human rights or environmental body) that operates in many countries through various branches. Good answers showed an awareness of an issue related to this operation, such as acting as a major conduit for globalisation, exercising economic power in excess of national governments, moving capital and resources around the globe, profit concentrations or vertical pricing manipulation.

Section B – Short answer questions – Australian foreign policy

Question 1a

Outline two concerns that encouraged Australia to enter into security agreements such as ANZUS and SEATO in the 1950s.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	10	39	52	1.4

The most typical responses highlighted concerns about a remilitarised Japan, the fear of an ‘expansionist’ communist China, or the perceived need for a new, big and powerful friend to replace Britain.

The best answers recognised the need to respond to concerns of the 1950s. Some excellent answers highlighted the nationalist rhetoric of Sukarno’s Indonesia. Poor answers either failed to provide two distinctive concerns or referred to more contemporary concerns such as terrorism.

Question 1b

Give two examples of Australia joining the USA in an international military operation between 1946 and 2000.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	21	72	1.7

This was the best handled question, with the examples of the Korean War, Vietnam War and Gulf War (1990-91) most frequently cited. Somalia in the early nineties was also accepted. The most common problem was students who hadn’t taken note of the period and cited examples such as Afghanistan and the present conflict in Iraq.

Question 2a

List two aims that the Australian Government gave for participating in the ‘coalition of the willing’ in 2003.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	10	26	64	1.6

Most students could identify two distinct aims. The most common aims were to display support for the US alliance or to support the US campaign in the ‘war on terror’. Other aims that were accepted included to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and to free Iraq from a brutal dictator or regime. Clearly there was a blurring of Australian aims with those of the US, which was generally accepted; however, winning contracts for Australian businesses in the reconstruction of Iraq, or gaining control of Iraqi oil were viewed as too far-fetched as Australian aims (but might have been accepted if the question had focused on the aims of the US).

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Question 2b

Assess the extent to which each of these aims has been achieved.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	14	11	24	21	29	2.4

This was a more challenging question as it required students to **assess** the progress of achieving the two listed aims. When assessing the US alliance, responses generally highlighted the increase in close relations between the two countries and their respective leaders. Sometimes a comment that Australia's participation had assisted in gaining a FTA with the US was accepted; however, if it was emphasised as the purpose of the Australia's contribution, it was regarded as an overstatement.

In terms of winning the war on terror or providing Iraq with democracy and freedom, responses tended to be more circumspect. The on-going hostilities in Iraq despite Saddam's overthrow led many students to view this aim as unfulfilled, with many arguing that it had only stimulated more terrorist attacks. When students suggested that it had made Australia less secure (as evidenced by the Bali bombings), assessors were directed to take a negative view because of the chronology of events. However, if later attacks were referred to, such as on the Jakarta embassy, assessors were guided to be more generous.

Many students highlighted that the absence of WMD had undermined the legitimacy of the war. What many didn't do was assess what this meant for a middle-sized power such as Australia in terms of its future ability to invoke international law. Some suggested that the lack of legitimacy had contributed to a negative view of Australia amongst the Muslim communities in South East Asia.

Question 3a

List two cases in the last decade in which Australia has sent military or police forces to an area in the Asia-Pacific region.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	6	24	70	1.7

This was generally a well-handled question. The most common cases cited included East Timor, with both the UNIMET and INTERFET operations cited, the Solomon Islands 'Help en fren', the Bali and Jakarta terrorist bombings, *Tampa* (although Tampa Bay wasn't accepted), and even the Philippines. Answers that cited Korea, Afghanistan or Iraq scored no marks because they are outside either the time period or outside the Asia-Pacific region.

Question 3b

Outline the reason(s) why Australia took this action in either one of these cases.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	18	27	55	1.4

Most responses focused on Australia's effort in East Timor. When a couple of reasons were cited, such as domestic pressure, responding to a humanitarian crisis in Australia's immediate area, and/or halting a potential refugee influx for Australia, full marks were awarded. References to Australia gaining control of gas and oil fields were sometimes accepted if the answer made a reference to the gas and oil fields being a long standing interest in East Timor's status.

Pressure from the US was rejected as a reason for Australia's actions in East Timor. This might have been a commonly cited reason due to confusion over US pressure placed on Indonesia to allow the Australian-led forces into East Timor. In fact, the US had flagged the idea of deploying troops in February 2001, which was rejected by Australia which argued that through 'adept diplomacy' we could handle the situation with Indonesia.

The other major response concerned the Solomon Islands. Acceptable responses included references to requests by the Solomon Island Government, concerns about the emergence of a failed nation state leading a terrorist attack or criminal haven, and displaying our capacity to be a deputy sheriff in the region.

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Question 4

The 'Tampa' issue and the exclusion of certain islands from Australia's migration represent a distinct hardening of the Australian Government's attitude towards the matter of asylum seekers.

Question 4a

Briefly state the Australian Government's purpose in excluding certain islands from Australia's migration zone.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	38	27	34	1.0

The key to this question was **purpose**. A response that recognised that it was an attempt to limit the access of asylum seekers to Australia's legal system, which tends to be more favourable to claimants than the UNHCR process, would have been an astute answer. Another, more controversial, response might have been to win domestic approval from One Nation supporters in the lead up to a federal election, or to play 'wedge' politics with the Labor opposition. Another potential response was that, due to the perceived lack of cooperation from Indonesia, the Australian Government felt it had to show a tough stance, particularly to 'people smugglers' that were identified as operating in South East Asia.

Many students responded by simply arguing that it was a matter of security due to the refugees possibly being terrorists, drug-runners, criminals, job takers and/or disease-infested. These responses indicated a lack of sophistication on the issue and were rarely prefaced by the word 'perception'. They might have gained a mark, but this depended upon the response to Question 3b. Assessors were directed to be generous, with the proviso that an additional point was being constructed. 'Purpose' and 'justification' were often confused.

Question 4b

Outline one justification for and one criticism of any other aspect of the Howard Government's policy on asylum seekers.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	15	16	27	21	21	2.2

This question didn't seek an assessment of the policy on asylum seekers, but rather a **justification** and a **criticism**. The best justifications were in terms of national security, and the sovereign right of Australia to determine who could or couldn't come into this country. Poor answers cited that Australia has enough people, or that asylum seekers take jobs from Australians. It has to be pointed out that at no stage during the 'crisis' did the Australian Government halt refugee intakes or even cut migration levels, and therefore it wasn't the number of people but rather the process that was a key justification for the Government's tough action.

Acceptable criticisms that were given included that:

- the Government's actions violated international conventions and protocols that previous Australian governments had signed
- the confinement of particular types of peoples, such as on the *Tampa*, from other destinations reflected an inconsistency that could be associated with racism
- their detention was unnecessarily cruel given that they were often from well-known war zones, and included many women and children who were just exercising a legitimate human right to seek and apply for asylum
- the numbers involved were well within Australia's intake of humanitarian migrants and a simple switch from off-shore to on-shore numbers would have maintained Australia's orderly migration program.

Question 5

Outline one argument for and one argument against the proposition that free trade with other nations is in the best interests of Australia.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	10	15	22	25	29	2.5

The best responses highlighted the argument that free trade has the potential to expand Australian industries' global market share and thereby assist an economy which is based on a small population base. Some also highlighted the argument that greater free trade could result in a reduction in tension, or even conflict, for countries like Australia.

The propositions' main criticisms were that certain industries become less viable in a more global market, and therefore job losses are likely. Some students highlighted the argument that free trade can lead to a loss of cultural identity as more powerful economies force their cultures upon Australia.

In many responses both for and against, the pending FTA with the US was given as an example. The future prospects for some sectors of the agricultural industry were contrasted with the prospects for the sugar industry under this



agreement. Some leniency was shown if the response didn't focus on Australia if the explanation displayed some understanding of the concept of free trade, and recognised that often bilateral agreements are more about rearranging trade relations than paving the way for across-the-board elimination of trade barriers. Some students suggested that bilateral FTAs discriminate against non-signatories, particularly those in the underdeveloped world.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION - ESSAY SECTIONS

Section C – Power and national interest

Question Chosen	0	1	2	3
%	3	54	26	17

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	11	10	9	11	9	4	3	8.5

Each of the questions in this section required the evaluation of **at least** one relationship or situation; it did not matter whether the response focused on one relationship or situation or on a variety. The most common contexts related to China-Taiwan and/or the US, and tensions and conflicts within Indonesia and on the Korean peninsula. One noticeable difference this year was the reduction in the number of case studies covered. This is understandable given the potential problems of covering case studies of minor significance to the region which do not provide the material to cover in-depth central concepts of the course, but there are certainly more case studies that could be pursued successfully. One that might be adopted is the newly independent state of East Timor and its emerging foreign relations and internal debate over national direction.

Question 1

Military resources alone will not enable a nation state to achieve all of its goals in its relationships with other nation states.

Discuss with reference to one or more international relationship or situation within the Asia-Pacific region.

This was by far the most commonly attempted question. This is not surprising, given the familiarity with this question from previous years, and that students deal with its theme of 'the utility of military power' for a great proportion of the year.

The question required students to assess the effectiveness of military power across a range of goals (perceived national interests), and to draw attention to other forms of power relative to military power (such as economic and diplomatic power). Some students recognised that a range of military resources exist and that a state has to be careful in selecting the appropriate form of military power to be successful. Most students commented that military power in conjunction with other forms of power was most likely to be an effective course of action for a state.

The quality of the essay was heavily dependent upon the application of specific examples to illustrate the student's points and support his or her argument. When the example of the contentious issue of Taiwan's status was assessed, it was vital that China's relationship with the US was brought into the discussion; however, at times students discussed China and Taiwan without any reference to the role of the US. In regard to Indonesia, some students highlighted military resources as often having a paradoxical effect on maintaining the territorial integrity of the state. On the one hand, the use of force could stymie separatist causes, while on the other hand it could stimulate independence movements. Some students recognised that if Indonesia genuinely allowed democratic expression in the restive provinces, fragmentation was possible, and hence debated whether the Indonesian state is capable of existing without authoritarian rule. When students highlighted the significance of external forces to a particular separatist movement's chance of success, another interesting dimension to the topic emerged: that the role of the international community in accepting the legitimacy of a particular situation is vital when contrasting the effective use of military power in East Timor to that in Aceh or West Papua.

Question 2

Both the national interests and power of a nation state are determined by a combination of internal and external factors.

Discuss with reference to one or more international relationship or situation within the Asia-Pacific region.

There was a lot to cover in this question. Students were expected to adequately discuss both the national power and national interests of a state or states, and also to determine both internal and external constraints to its power and interests.



The question didn't require an assessment as to whether internal or external factors were the more potent players in a situation, but if either of these were presented as more significant this was quite acceptable. Often students were able to highlight the interdependence of internal and external factors that operated in most of the selected situations. Typical internal factors highlighted were the size of the military, political stability, national cohesion, the strength of the economy, population, management of diversity and geography. External factors that were highlighted included international bodies like the UN and IMF, alliances, international trade and aid.

Indonesia was quite a popular case study for this question. The complex interplay of internal and external factors at work during the economic crisis of 1997-98 had a significant impact upon Indonesia's power status, and arguably altered its national interest in East Timor.

Question 3

The successful pursuit of national interests requires a nation state not only to exercise its own power, but also to cooperate with other nation states.

Discuss with reference to one or more international relationship or situation within the Asia-Pacific region.

The key to this question was for students to assess the level of success a state has had in cooperating with others rather than acting unilaterally. The key term was 'successful'. It was also important to note that there are various levels of cooperation possible, ranging from formal alliances and membership of bodies to one-off examples of cooperation.

This was potentially a good question for the Korean peninsula. One issue that could be discussed included, 'Did the North Korean regime exhibit more cooperation under the mid '90s "Sunshine Policy" compared to since it has been designated as part of the "axis of evil"?'

Some argued that China gained nothing from the threat of force (conflict) but much from economic relations (cooperation). Yet students also noted that without the threat of force, China's influence over Taiwan's sovereignty would be minimal. Responses that highlighted the complexity of this situation and produced a broader discussion of goals and means tended to more highly rewarded.

Section D – International conflict

Question Chosen	0	1	2	3
%	3	58	20	19

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	4	1	2	3	4	5	7	8	10	11	11	11	10	8	4	2	8.6

Despite the recent developments in 'International conflict' that have made the contrast of two conflicts from two eras more challenging, student responses were generally impressive. The questions instructed students to refer to **at least** one conflict from each era, therefore no penalty occurred if students stuck to a singular conflict in comparison to those who made reference to several conflicts. However, when students had to make broader comments about the respective eras, responses that used more than one conflict generally gave a more insightful analysis. This point was most evident if the student used the Gulf War 1990-91 as their post Cold War conflict. Where students did not refer to later developments in Iraq, comments that it was a much easier war to resolve, or that it proved that the UN could act as an effective body, ignored the subsequent events which make such remarks fairly meaningless.

One aspect that became clear was the wide variety of positions that students took. This somewhat depended upon the examples of conflicts cited, but was also due to students recognising the key words which had to be tackled to achieve a high mark (**fundamentally changed, more complicated and more difficult and more important**).

Also, higher grades were awarded to students who limited their narratives about conflicts and were prepared to analyse the proposition.

Question 1

The nature of international conflicts has fundamentally changed since the end of the Cold War.

Discuss with reference to at least one Cold War and at least one post-Cold War conflict.

This was the most commonly attempted question, with students viewing the 'nature of international conflict' as an opportunity to discuss causes and resolution as well as the conduct of the conflicts. Although this was acceptable, at times students described causes for one conflict but not the other in quite a lot of detail, but then much detail was given on the conflicts' resolutions. It is important in comparative essays to make points of direct comparison so that the



argument is meaningful and convincing. Another key to a high mark was tackling what, if anything, in the nature of international conflicts had fundamentally changed.

Generally students commenced with a broad description of the Cold War era as a bipolar global struggle between two ideologically opposed superpowers, and then stated that this is absent today. Where students diverged was in whether this is such a fundamental difference. Some recognised that nationalistic and longstanding hegemonic factors were at play in Cold War conflicts, while others viewed the rise of international terrorism as a similar challenge to Western hegemony as the Soviets were during the Cold War era. Some students took the approach that international conflict has entered a new era since 2001, a fundamental difference from the post-Cold War period, while others noted the present conflicts were generated by Cold War conflicts. Once they made such comments, they might query convincingly whether a clear-cut distinction between the two eras is evident.

Question 2

Post-Cold War conflicts tend to be more complicated and more difficult to resolve than was the case with Cold War conflicts.

Discuss with reference to at least one Cold War and at least one post-Cold War conflict.

This question was more focused than Question 1 as it required a discussion of the efforts to resolve specific conflicts, and an analysis as to what degree this reflected the nature of the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. To obtain a high mark, students needed to take a position on whether this indicated that the conflicts of one era were more complicated and difficult to resolve than those of the other era. Many answers didn't give much detail about efforts to resolve conflicts, with the exception of the Cuban missile crisis. This was disappointing, given the lengthy nature of negotiations in the Vietnam War and even in the Korean War. In terms of the (post-Cold War) Gulf War conflicts, there was little discussion as to why the US and Iraq didn't find an accommodation to avert Desert Storm.

It was essential that students presented an argument that evaluated which era's conflicts were more difficult to resolve. When comparing Iraq and Vietnam, many students saw parallels due to the timetable of the conflicts, and felt that conflict is just as difficult to resolve now as during the Cold War. Some noted that the fear of nuclear war ensures that the superpowers have a vested interest in limiting or restricting the conflict which makes it easier to resolve, while others noted how these wars are often proxy wars and therefore reaching agreement amongst locals is made more difficult now because of the involvement of superpower(s). Others noted that, since September 11, conflict has become more difficult because of the involvement of non-state actors like al-Qaeda. In terms of the present conflict in Iraq, it was noted that the lack of UN involvement makes this conflict comparable to the Vietnam War because there is no non-combatant body to broker a peace. In some cases when students examined the Afghanistan wars, they actually noted that the post-Cold War conflict was easier to resolve due to the lack of a major external sponsor, thus contradicting the premise of the question.

Question 3

During the Cold War international conflicts often resulted from the rivalry between the USA and the USSR whereas in post-Cold War conflicts local or regional causes have been more important.

Discuss with reference to at least one conflict during the Cold War and at least one post-Cold War conflict.

Many good answers were able to explain how the question's proposition had merit; that most of the Cold War conflicts were either fuelled or commenced by one or the other superpower. When more closely examining causes of specific conflicts, the better answers noted that local and regional factors were also instrumental in Cold War conflicts (for example, nationalist causes within the Vietnam, Korean and Cuban conflicts). In regard to some of the post-Cold War conflicts (for example, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia), causes which highlighted legacies of the Cold War were noted in answers. Other students described how the lack of a bipolar order on the last remaining superpower (the US) makes conflict more possible (for example, Iraq 2003-). Other impressive responses noted that since the so-called 'war on terror', local and regional reasons for conflicts have given way to a new international dimension.

Whatever the context or argument, a keen focus on the cause of conflicts was essential. Sometimes essays drifted into narratives on the conduct of the war/conflict, rather than an evaluation of different and similar causes. It is important for students to develop both a specific and general understanding of the causes of conflict before attempting such questions. Students ought to be reminded that the cause of wars/conflicts are highly debatable, and examiners are keen to see an engagement with the variety of debates that surround specific conflicts as well as general views about respective eras.