

## PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

### Overall grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	E	D	C	B	A
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 36

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The large majority of essays posed no fundamental problem in terms of the range and suitability of the work. Schools were aware of the new criteria and seemed to have familiarised the students with the new requirements. Most of the work submitted was relevant to the subject. There were a few extended essays focusing on history that were not entirely relevant in their approach. Very many took the form of chronologically-structured historical synopses of various conflicts. Popular themes were those concerning the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, terrorism and challenges to democracy in Latin America (Nicaragua, Peru, Colombia and the Dominican Republic), genocide in Rwanda and the Sudan, and similar topics. Very few candidates referred their narratives to any theoretical framework for conflict resolution and the establishment and maintenance of peace. Most relied on secondary sources in an uncritical way (and in subject areas where appropriate primary sources such as United Nations documentation are easily available), failing to raise and discuss the issues of reliability, and to a lesser extent validity, that come into play. Few introduced their work with explicit definitions of key terms of reference, such as 'genocide', 'terrorism', 'nation'.

The overall impression is that the marks tended to go up this year. Very few essays were below 10 marks; there was a large number between 20-22 marks. The number of essays gaining higher marks, 30 and above, did not seem to have increased or decreased. It seems that many of the "old problems" remain, but there was a bit more scope to be flexible in granting "good" points to the candidates.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

#### **A: research question**

A significant number of students stated the research question in the title page but did not state or refer to it in the introduction. Research questions must be phrased clearly and be sharply focused.

#### **B: introduction**

Although contextualizing the essay did not seem to be an issue, the significance of the topic was not explained. Very few discussed why the topic was worthy of investigation.

**C: investigation**

Most samples showed at least some evidence of planning. The selection of sources in planning the investigation was satisfactory. But there was little critical evaluation of them, and almost nothing that showed an understanding of the reliability, or not, of the Internet-based sources. For some centres it appeared that the Internet was the only source consulted. Again a great deal of Wikipedia!

**D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied**

Most candidates displayed at least a satisfactory knowledge of their chosen subject, though understanding was often variable, with many historical synopses only permitting a superficial demonstration of these. Few candidates explicitly sought alternative views on the controversies surrounding their topic to build their evaluation, linking this with analysis and reasoned argument. In certain cases, major elements of the debate on the topic were completely omitted from the essay, to the detriment of candidates' ability to draw conclusions which were reasonable assessments of the situations described. The failure to address issues of reliability when explicitly referring to secondary sources was also frequently a significant limitation on understanding. Candidates showed knowledge and understanding of the topic in general but with limited reference to debates and academic publications.

**E: reasoned argument**

Most candidates structured their narratives chronologically and coherently.

**F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject**

As has been pointed out already, this was a weak point for many candidates. Analysis and evaluation are skills that need to be developed.

**G: use of language appropriate to the subject**

Most essays communicated their ideas clearly. There is room for improvement in the use of terminology appropriate to the subject, and candidates should define key terms, especially those used in the research question, to gain a clearer understanding of their arguments.

**H: conclusion**

Conclusions were relevant but some included arguments that had not been addressed throughout the essay. This is not the same as suggesting other areas it would be interesting and relevant to approach, and makes the conclusion not entirely consistent with the essay.

## **I: formal presentation**

The *Table of Contents*, which should be designed to be clear and informative for the reader, indicating the outline structure of the essay and its major thematic contents, was often reduced to the vaguest possible categorizations of: “*Introduction*”, “*Body*”, and “*Bibliography*”. Many essays could have been improved in clarity through the use of sub-sections in the argument, clearly titled. More referencing of the material should be offered. Internet sources need to be referenced fully (date of access, full title, author if available). Interviews used throughout the essays should also be included in the bibliography. Bibliographies were often not compiled alphabetically. Although there is a requirement for essays to include at least one book that deals with peace and conflict theories (*Extended essay guide* page 130), this is often not the case.

## **J: abstract**

Many candidates lost both marks for this criteria - at times, entire centres received 0 for J. This was either because the abstract was used to provide a summary of events or because it did not include all listed elements.

Candidates should be encouraged to use the full 300 words of the abstract to explain the research question, the scope of the essay and the conclusion.

## **K: holistic judgment**

In this area, the majority of the candidates got at least one point. The teachers' comments were a welcome development that helped to indicate some of the problems and/or interests of the students.

## **Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates**

- A clearly devised research question with a feasible focus is essential to success in this task.
- *Tables of Contents* should be properly informative and used as an aid to the student in planning and structuring the presentation of evidence, analysis and comment.
- Referencing within the body of the text should be of a frequency and manner to allow the reader to distinguish clearly the student's own ideas from those summarized (and sometimes closely paraphrased) from secondary sources.
- The skills of analysing and evaluating sources should be explicitly discussed and practised in class.
- The demonstration of knowledge of peace and conflict theories should be one of the requirements of a peace and conflict studies extended essay.