



National
Qualifications
2025

2025 Modern Studies

Paper 2

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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General marking principles for Higher Modern Studies Paper 2

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) Marking must be consistent. Never make a hasty judgement on a response based on length, quality of handwriting or a confused start.
- (d) Use the full range of marks available for each question.
- (e) The detailed marking instructions are not an exhaustive list. Award marks for other relevant points.

Marking principles for each question type

For each of the question types the following provides an overview of marking principles.

The information handling questions used in this paper are:

- what conclusions can be drawn . . . **10 marks**
- to what extent is it accurate to state that . . . **10 marks**
- to what extent are sources . . . reliable **8 marks**

Objectivity questions (10 marks)

- Award up to **3 marks** for a single developed point depending on the use of the evidence in the sources and the quality of the analysis or evaluation.
- Award marks where candidates synthesise information both within and between sources.
- For **full marks** candidates must refer to all sources in their answer.
- Candidates must also make an overall judgement as to the extent of the accuracy of the given statement. Award a **maximum of 8 marks** if no overall judgement is made on extent of accuracy of the statement.
- Award a **maximum of 6 marks** if a candidate only refers to one side of the argument in their answer.

Conclusions questions (10 marks)

- Award up to **3 marks** for a single developed point depending on the use of the evidence in the sources and the quality of the analysis or evaluation.
- Award marks where candidates synthesise information both within and between sources.
- For **full marks** candidates must refer to all sources in their answer.
- Candidates are required to make an overall conclusion about the issue in the question. Award a **maximum of 8 marks** if candidates do not provide an overall conclusion.

Reliability questions (8 marks)

- Award up to **2 marks** for a single developed point depending on the use of the evidence in the sources and the quality of the analysis and/or evaluation.
- For **full marks** candidates must refer to all sources in their answer.
- Candidates must also make a judgement based on the evidence on the most reliable source. Award a **maximum of 6 marks** if candidates do not provide an overall judgement.
- Award a **maximum of 3 marks** if only one factor is considered, for example, date, bias, sample size, provenance.

Higher Modern Studies marking grid for 10-mark source based (conclusions/objectivity) questions

	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks	7 marks	8 marks
Use of sources of evidence. Award up to 8 marks .	Candidate uses one relevant piece of evidence from one source relating to one aspect of the issue.	Candidate links two distinct pieces of evidence relating to one aspect of the issue which may be from within a single source or between sources.	Candidate synthesises two distinct pieces of evidence relating to one aspect of the issue which may be from within a single source or between sources, and gives an evaluative comment.	In addition the candidate addresses a second aspect of the issue with reference to one relevant piece of evidence.	In addition the candidate addresses a second aspect of the issue with reference to linked evidence.	In addition the candidate addresses a second aspect of the issue is addressed with reference to synthesised evidence including an evaluative comment.	In addition the candidate addresses a third aspect of the issue with reference to one relevant piece of evidence.	In addition the candidate addresses a third aspect of the issue with reference to linked evidence OR synthesised evidence including an evaluative comment.
Objectivity Candidate presents an analysis of the accuracy/selectivity/objectivity of a given view against the evidence. Award up to 2 marks .	Candidate provides an objective assessment of a given view, based on evidence presented from the sources.	Candidate provides a detailed objective assessment of a given view, based on evidence presented from the sources.	For full marks candidates must refer to all sources in their answer. Award a maximum of 6 marks if all sources are not used. Objectivity questions. Award up to 8 marks for an accurate evaluation of the given view using evidence. Award up to 2 marks for an overall judgement as to the extent of accuracy and/or objectivity of the view. Conclusions questions. For full marks candidates must make evaluative comments or judgement(s) or draw a conclusion about each of the points given in the question. Award a further 2 marks for an overall conclusion.					

	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks	7 marks	8 marks
Conclusion Candidate presents an overall evaluative comment(s) derived from a judgement of the evidence. Award up to 2 marks .	Candidate presents an overall conclusion that is clear and supported by evidence from the sources.	Candidate presents an overall conclusion that is insightful and supported by detailed evidence from the sources.						

Higher Modern Studies marking grid for 8-mark source based (reliability) questions

	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks
Use of sources of evidence. Award up to 6 marks .	Candidate uses one relevant piece of evidence accurately to explain the reliability of one source.	Candidate uses one relevant piece of evidence accurately to explain in detail the reliability of one source. OR Candidate uses two distinct pieces of evidence accurately to explain the reliability of one source.	In addition, the candidate uses one relevant piece of evidence accurately to explain the reliability of a second source.	In addition, the candidate uses one relevant piece of evidence accurately to explain in detail the reliability of a second source. OR Candidate uses two distinct pieces of evidence accurately to explain the reliability of a second source.	In addition, the candidate uses one relevant piece of evidence accurately to explain the reliability of a third source.	In addition, the candidate uses one relevant piece of evidence accurately to explain in detail the reliability of a third source. OR Candidate uses two distinct pieces of evidence accurately to explain the reliability of a third source.
Reliability Candidate presents an overall evaluative comment(s) on which source is the most reliable, derived from a judgement of the evidence. Award up to 2 marks .	Candidate presents an overall conclusion on the most reliable source, that is clear and supported by evidence from the sources.	Candidate presents an overall conclusion on the most reliable source, that is insightful and supported by detailed evidence from all the sources.	1 For full marks candidates must refer to all sources in their answer. Award a maximum of 5 marks if all sources are not used. Award a maximum of 3 marks if only one factor is considered, for example, date, bias, sample size, provenance. 2 Award up to 6 marks for an accurate evaluation of source reliability. Award a further 2 marks for an overall judgement on the most reliable source.			

Marking instructions for each question

Conclusions question

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
1.			<p>Candidates interpret and/or evaluate complex sources in order to reach conclusions.</p> <p>In order to gain marks candidates must show evidence which explains the conclusions reached.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> award up to 3 marks where candidates use evidence appropriately, depending on the quality of the explanation and the synthesis of the evidence to reach any one conclusion for full marks candidates must refer to all sources in their answer award a maximum of 8 marks if candidates do not provide an overall conclusion about the issue in the question. 	10	<p>Candidates can gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 10 marks.</p> <p>Possible approaches to answering the question</p> <p>The impact of armed conflict on children in Somalia</p> <p>Response 1 Armed conflict has a severe impact on children in Somalia. Source A states ‘The presence of children fighting in the conflict is not a new occurrence but has been made much worse by the rise of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, who recruit children as young as ten to become soldiers.’ Total – 1 mark (conclusion with evidence from one source)</p> <p>Response 2 Armed conflict has a bad impact on children in Somalia. Source A states ‘The presence of children fighting in the conflict is not a new occurrence but has been made much worse by the rise of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, who recruit children as young as ten to become soldiers.’ This is supported by Source D which states ‘Large areas of southern Somalia are in crisis and are controlled by terrorist group Al-Shabaab. In these areas, children face horrific human rights abuses, including sexual assault and attacks on their schools.’ Total – 2 marks (conclusion with evidence from two sources)</p> <p>Response 3 Armed conflict has a bad impact on children in Somalia. Source A states ‘The presence of children fighting in the conflict is not a new occurrence but has been made much worse by the rise of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, who recruit children as young as ten to become soldiers.’ This is further supported by Source D which states ‘Large areas of southern Somalia are in crisis and are controlled by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. In these areas, children face horrific human rights</p>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
					<p>abuses, including sexual assault and attacks on their schools.’ Both of these issues contribute to Somalia’s high infant mortality rate of 84 deaths per 1,000 births. Total – 3 marks – (conclusion with synthesised evidence and evaluative comment)</p> <p>The link between armed conflict and undernourishment</p> <p>Response 4 Source C shows Somalia has the highest rates of undernourishment at over 50%. Total – 0 marks (no overall conclusion)</p> <p>Response 5 In conclusion, there is a strong link between armed conflict and undernourishment. We know this because Source A states ‘In Somalia, about 6.7 million people face severe food insecurity with citizens frequently struggling with undernourishment in areas that have been torn apart by fighting.’ Total – 1 mark (conclusion with evidence from one source)</p> <p>Response 6 In conclusion, there is a strong link between armed conflict and undernourishment. We know this because Source A states ‘In Somalia, about 6.7 million people face severe food insecurity with citizens frequently struggling with undernourishment in areas that have been torn apart by fighting.’ This links with Source C where the graph shows us that over 50% of the population in Somalia are undernourished. This figure is way above Eswatini where there is little or no conflict and which has an undernourishment rate around one fifth of Somalia’s. Total – 3 marks (conclusion with synthesised evidence and evaluative comment)</p> <p>The success of the UN in providing aid in Somalia</p> <p>Response 7 The UN has been successful in providing aid in Somalia as they have deployed more staff there than anywhere else in sub-Saharan Africa. Total – 1 mark (conclusion with one piece of source evidence)</p>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
					<p>Response 8 In conclusion, the UN has had mixed success in providing aid to Somalia. Source D states that ‘The UN has been involved for decades in Somalia, dealing mainly with the humanitarian aspect of the crisis. For example, the UN Refugee Agency delivers lifesaving aid such as shelter, water and healthcare to people forced to flee their homes.’ However, Source A states ‘One of the biggest challenges facing international organisations delivering humanitarian aid, for instance the United Nations (UN), is that despite large numbers of staff being present in countries, they often struggle to reach and therefore help many of the citizens who are trapped inside conflict zones, such as Somalia.’ Total – 2 marks (conclusion with two pieces of source evidence)</p> <p>Response 9 In conclusion, the UN has been mostly unsuccessful with its aid response. This is because Source B shows that the United Nations deploy more staff to Somalia than the sub-Saharan average, with over 1,600 staff there in 2022, however despite this, the humanitarian situation in Somalia is poor. This links to Sources C and D which show that the infant mortality rate of Somalia (84 deaths per 1,000) is higher than all the countries given in Source C. Total – 3 marks (conclusion with synthesised evidence and evaluative comment)</p> <p>Possible overall conclusions on the Sub-Saharan African country most like Somalia:</p> <p>Response 10 I conclude Chad is the Sub-Saharan African country most like Somalia. Total – 0 marks (conclusion without supporting evidence)</p> <p>Response 11 Chad is the Sub-Saharan African country most like Somalia because it has the most similar life expectancy. Total – 1 mark (conclusion with supporting evidence from Source C)</p>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
					<p>Response 12</p> <p>Overall, Chad is the Sub-Saharan African country most like Somalia as it is similar on various factors. Source D tells us Somalia has a high infant mortality rate of 84 deaths per 1,000 births while Source C shows us that the country closest to this is Chad with 62.5 deaths per 1,000.</p> <p>Total – 2 marks (conclusion with synthesised supporting evidence from Sources C and D)</p> <p><i>Any other valid point that meets the criteria described in the general marking principles for this type of question.</i></p> <p>Do not award marks for a valid conclusion which is not supported with relevant source evidence.</p>

Objectivity question

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
2.			<p>Candidates interpret and/or evaluate complex sources of information, detecting and explaining the extent of objectivity.</p> <p>In order to gain marks candidates must show evidence which supports the extent of accuracy in a given viewpoint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> award up to 3 marks where candidates use evidence appropriately, depending on the quality of the explanation and the synthesis of the evidence, for any one explanation of the extent of objectivity for full marks candidates must refer to all sources in their answer award a maximum of 6 marks if a candidate only refers to one side of the argument in their answer award a maximum of 8 marks if no overall judgement is made on extent of accuracy of the statement. 	10	<p>Candidates can gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 10 marks.</p> <p>Evidence that supports the view – ‘the problems facing healthcare in the UK are worse than in other countries.’</p> <p>Examples of types of evidence that support the view include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opposition politicians think we should spend more money to be as successful as the health services in other countries (Source A) the UK has fewer doctors per 10,000 people than most of the selected countries shown and the UK figure is considered too few to care for the growing number of patients (Sources A and C) UK life expectancy is the second lowest of all countries shown (Sources C and D) nurses in the UK earn 1% less than the average workers while in all the other countries shown, except France, nurses earn more than the average worker (Sources A, B and D). <p>Possible approach to answering the question</p> <p>Response 1 The view can be supported as opposition politicians think we need to spend more money to match the success of the health services in other countries. Total – 1 mark (evidence used from one source)</p> <p>Response 2 It is true that the problems facing healthcare are worse in the UK than in other countries as the UK has problems recruiting enough nurses due to low wages. Currently, nurses in the UK earn 1% less than the average UK worker. It is clear from Source B that nurses in every other country, except France, earn more than the average worker in that country. For example, in Australia they earn nearly 30% more. Total – 3 marks (relevant evidence from three sources with evaluative comment)</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
			<p>Evidence that opposes the view – ‘the problems facing healthcare in the UK are worse than in other countries.’</p> <p>Examples of types of evidence that opposes the view include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the NHS has lower administration costs than all of the countries shown – the NHS spends 1.9% on administration – meaning that it is arguably more efficient than the systems on other countries (Sources C and D) the UK spends less on drugs as we prescribe generic alternatives and not expensive brands (Source A) the UK isn’t alone facing the challenges of an ageing population (Source D). <p>Possible approach to answering the question</p> <p>Response 3 The NHS’ problems are worse as it spends less on drugs and medicines than in other countries due to prescribing generic drugs and medicines rather than the more expensive branded alternatives. Total – 1 mark (evidence used from one source)</p> <p>Response 4 The problems facing healthcare in the UK are worse than the problems facing healthcare in other countries. The NHS spends less on administration than all the other countries shown which the Conservatives have pointed out as being one of their successes as it allows more to be spent on medical staff. Sources C and D show that the UK figure (1.9%) is less than a third than the USA which indicates they have a worse issue here. Total – 3 marks (relevant evidence from three sources with evaluative comment)</p> <p>For full marks, candidates must make an overall judgment as to the extent of the accuracy of the given statement.</p> <p>Examples of possible overall judgements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is mostly incorrect to say that the UK healthcare system has the worst problems (0 marks) the statement is correct to a certain extent as the UK spends a very low amount on administration compared to all other countries (1 mark)

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is largely correct that the NHS faces worse problems. Although the UK spends a lower amount on administration than all the other countries shown, it has the second lowest life expectancy. As Source B says, this can be a key measure for a health service and therefore the problems facing the NHS must be worse as life expectancy is comparatively low. (2 marks)

Reliability question

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
3.			<p>Candidates interpret and/or evaluate three complex sources of information, evaluating and explaining the extent of reliability.</p> <p>In order to gain marks candidates must show evidence which supports the evaluations reached.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> award up to 2 marks where candidates use evidence appropriately, depending on the quality of the explanation and the synthesis of the evidence, for any one explanation of the extent of reliability for full marks candidates must refer to all sources in their answer award a maximum of 3 marks if only one factor is considered, for example, date, sample size, bias, provenance award a maximum of 6 marks if candidates do not provide an overall judgement on the most reliable source. 	8	<p>Candidates can gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 8 marks.</p> <p>Source A</p> <p>Response 1 Source A is unreliable as it is two years old. Total – 0 marks (no evidence or explanation provided)</p> <p>Response 2 Source A only gives the story up to May 2023 and a lot could have changed in the two years since then. Total – 1 mark (straightforward evidence provided)</p> <p>Response 3 Source A is quite reliable as it has been published by Alcohol Focus Scotland, a charity who specialise in alcohol policy so they can be considered experts in this field. On the other hand, their aim is to reduce the harm caused by alcohol, so they are likely to be biased to one side of the argument. Total – 2 marks (detailed evidence provided)</p> <p>Source B</p> <p>Response 4 Source B is unreliable because it is biased. Total – 0 marks (no evidence or explanation provided)</p> <p>Response 5 Source B is quite reliable as the names of the two journalists are provided and these can be checked for bias. Total – 1 mark (straightforward evidence provided)</p>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
					<p>Response 6 Source B is unreliable as it is from 2013, and much will have changed since that date 12 years ago. However, The Independent is a well-respected quality newspaper with a good reputation for accuracy so it may be seen as reliable as a comparison with the position in 2025. Total – 2 marks (detailed evidence provided)</p> <p>Source C</p> <p>Response 7 Source C has been published by the Scottish Government who employed a well-respected polling company, Ipsos, to carry out research. This suggests it is reliable as Ipsos have a good reputation as professional accurate pollsters. Total – 1 mark (straightforward evidence provided)</p> <p>Response 8 Source C is partly unreliable as it was published in September 2023. This was nearly two years ago and much has happened since then. However, as it was carried out by one of the world’s leading polling companies it would be an accurate picture of opinion at the time and could be repeated to provide a comparison with today. Total – 2 marks (detailed evidence provided)</p> <p>Examples of an overall conclusion on the most reliable source of information</p> <p>Response 9 Source C is the most reliable source as the author is the most trustworthy of all three sources. Total – 0 marks (overall conclusion is not supported by evidence with no comparison)</p> <p>Response 10 Overall, Source C is the most reliable as the research was carried out by a respected international polling company with a reputation for balance. Total – 1 mark (overall conclusion, supported by evidence from one source)</p>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Detailed marking instructions for this question
					<p>Response 11</p> <p>Overall, Source C is the most reliable as the research was carried out by a respected international polling company with a reputation for balance. On the other hand, Source A will be biased in favour of Minimum Unit Pricing. Source C is also better than Source B as Source B is 12 years old whereas Source C is only two years old and much less likely to contain completely out of date information.</p> <p>Total – 2 marks (overall conclusion, supported by detailed evidence from all sources)</p> <p>For full marks, candidates must make an overall judgement on the most reliable source.</p>

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]