# Society and Culture Subject Assessment Advice

## Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

## Assessment Type 1: Folio (50%)

Student work for this assessment type was generally of a very high standard. The majority of students completed four written responses and there were some good examples of multimodal tasks undertaken by students. Students were more easily able to achieve at the high levels of the performance standards when they completing tasks that allowed them to develop and demonstrate skills of social inquiry and include evidence from both primary and secondary sources in their responses. Students were also more likely to achieve in the higher grade bands by undertaking tasks that offered choices, for example in the issues to be investigated, and by completing tasks that promoted an in-depth investigation and critical analysis of issues. It was pleasing to see many students were provided with opportunities to vary the format of their responses in this assessment type.

The more successful responses commonly:

* considered a variety of perspectives and stakeholders relevant to contemporary issues
* demonstrated a clear understanding of concepts, such as power structures and social change
* allowed students opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways
* were well-articulated
* completed tasks which had clear guidelines without being overly scaffolded
* responded to open questions which invited critical analysis and consideration of a broad range of aspects and issues
* demonstrated a high level of student interest and engagement with contemporary issues
* responded to specific questions which related to the performance standards; for example: ‘How are power structures both a part of the problem and the solution to the issue?’ ‘How could individuals and groups effect social change in response to the issue?’
* provided clear evidence of social inquiry in the form of primary research; for example, by undertaking surveys and interviews
* used a wide range of well-chosen secondary sources to support their analysis
* compared, contrasted, and evaluated the data obtained from primary and secondary sources in their analysis
* considered the underlying causes of issues, how issues impact on stakeholders, and suggested strategies for social change
* addressed the ways in which the actions of individuals and groups are connected and interdependent.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were overly scaffolded, containing closed (often short answer questions) rather than open questions inviting deeper engagement with and analysis of issues
* used limited and/or easily accessible secondary sources only
* required students to complete tasks with a more historical or legal focus, limiting achievement against the assessment design criteria for this subject
* tended to write about or describe issues rather than demonstrate in-depth analysis
* did not address a broad range of aspects, perspectives, complexities, and subtleties of issues in their analysis
* completed tasks which had overly restrictive word-limits, limiting an in-depth response
* did not specifically address social change in their responses
* did not consider how individuals and groups are interconnected.

## Assessment Type 2: Interaction (20%)

The overall standard of the oral interaction task was high. Whilst there were some good examples of group oral presentations, students typically performed better when given the opportunity to present individually. In the group interaction task, many students were able to demonstrate comprehensive evidence of collaboration in their planning and evaluation of informed social action. A cause of concern was the number of students who provided limited, sometimes no evidence, of social action being undertaken. Students were more easily able to achieve at the high levels of the performance standards when they provided evidence of collaboration (for example, meeting records and annotated images), evidence of collaborative evaluation (for example, a transcript of a debriefing session after the social action) and clear evidence of their individual contribution to the group activity, including the required individual 600-word evaluation.

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided opportunities for students to produce multi-modal responses to the oral activity
* provided clear evidence of each student’s individual contribution to the group activity
* provided clear evidence in the form of a transcript or filmed recording of student oral presentations
* depicted meaningful social action which had occurred beyond the classroom; for example, within the whole school community, or with organisations and/or other groups in the broader community
* included social action that incorporated an awareness-raising component
* contained comprehensive evidence of the social action undertaken, including but not limited to: records of meetings, photographs, transcripts or filmed recordings of collaborative evaluations, and an individual student reflection on the social action
* contained collaborative evaluations which evaluated the success of the social action.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided limited or no evidence of collaboration
* provided limited or superficial evidence of knowledge and understanding of the issues related to the social action undertaken
* included recordings of poor quality
* provided recordings which did not identify individual students
* provided limited or no evidence of the oral presentation
* involved oral presentations undertaken as a group, which tended to limit opportunities for individuals to demonstrate achievement in the higher grade bands
* provided limited or no evidence of the social action undertaken
* depicted evidence of ‘simple’ forms of social action only, such as giving a presentation to their own class or placing posters around a school
* focused mainly on raising money without linking this to an issue or cause
* contained collaborative evaluations which focused only on the group processes and did not specifically evaluate the social action.

External Assessment

## Assessment Type 3: Investigation

This assessment type gives students the opportunity to independently undertake an investigation of a contemporary social or cultural issue, which may have a local or global context. Their findings are presented in the form of a written report. The overall standard of investigations in 2017 was very good. Most students included a range of sources in their research, and when teachers guided students to choose appropriate and expert interview subjects, it allowed them to gain authoritative evidence from which to draw insightful conclusions.

### Common topics included the impacts of social media, gender identity, medical marijuana.

The more successful responses commonly:

* followed the structure suggested in the course outline, choosing a clear and concise hypothesis/guiding question and presenting their report as a critical analysis in answer to three (or four at most) focus questions
* demonstrated an effective use of reliable, valid and relevant sources, and contrasting opinions and perspectives (EC1), including expert primary sources
* considered bias and intent in their sources, and the limitations of their research
* showed a good understanding of the mechanisms and implications of change (KU2), and the ways societies and cultures are connected and interdependent (KU3)
* incorporated survey results into the body of their text, rather than as an appendix
* found additional ways to present evidence, such as photographs, and included these as part of the analysis, not as mere illustration
* acknowledged sources consistently, using in-text referencing and an attached bibliography or reference list.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied solely on easily-accessible secondary sources
* featured description or recount rather than analysis of findings
* simply created a narrative from data, often from only a single source, rather than synthesised and evaluated different voices and perspectives
* did not identify the expertise or experience of primary sources
* addressed topics out of the scope of the subject
* did not adhere to the specified word count
* gave no or limited options for social change.