

EXAMINER TIPS for IGCSE Economics 0455

These tips are designed to help you do as well as you possibly can in the examination. Many of the tips relate to the November 2006 examination papers.

General Advice

- It is important that you look very closely at the '**command**' or '**directive**' words used in a question. These tell you what the examiner is looking for. If a question asks you to 'identify' or 'state' something, you should not write a very long answer. If, however, the question asks you to 'analyse' or 'discuss' something, this will require you to go into much more detail and your answer should be longer. Very often, with a 'discuss' question, you will be expected to look at something from two contrasting points of view and then come to a reasoned and well supported conclusion.
- It is also important that you look very closely at the number of marks that are awarded for each part of a question. This will give you guidance as to how long you should spend on each particular part. Some parts of a question will only gain you two or three marks while other parts may be worth as many as ten marks.
- Remember to look closely at the precise **wording** of each part of a question. You need to make sure that your answer relates to what is required. For example, you may answer a question about inflation and write all you know about its causes and consequences, but the actual question asked wanted you to write simply about how it is measured.
- **Time management** is crucial. Don't spend too long on some questions, or parts of questions, and then leave yourself towards the end of the examination with very little time to complete all that is required. You also need to try and leave time to read through your answer and correct any mistakes and/or add anything that you feel is missing.
- Wherever possible, use **diagrams** to aid your explanations, but make sure that they are accurately drawn and correctly labelled. You should also make sure that you refer to them in your answer.
- You should also try and bring in appropriate and relevant **examples**, wherever possible, of current economic issues and problems to support the points you are making.
- **Look back** at the question every so often, just to make sure that you are answering the question correctly and staying 'on track'.
- You do not need to write out the question; this is a waste of your time. Just make sure that you write the number of the question, and the sub-part, so that the examiner knows which question you have answered and there is no possibility of confusion as to which question has been answered.
- Do not answer more questions than you have to. On Paper 2 and Paper 6, this isn't a problem because you are required to answer all the questions on the examination paper. It can, however, be a problem on Paper 4 where you are required to answer the first question and then select three from the remaining six questions.

Paper 2 and Paper 4 Tips

- Where the 'command' or 'directive' word is **state**, you do not need to go into a great deal of detail. For example, in Question 1 (a) in November 2006, you simply need to state the **four** ways in which multi-national companies can help developing countries such as Bangladesh. You do not need to spend time describing or explaining these; the mark allocated for this part of the question is 4, i.e. one mark for each of the ways stated. The same tip applies to Question 3 (a) where you are required to state **four** non-wage influences on an individual's choice of occupation. Again there are 4 marks for this part of the question, i.e. one mark for each of the ways stated.
- Some parts of Question 1 require answers to **specifically** relate to the material provided. For example, in parts (c) and (d) in November 2006, you would have needed to have referred specifically to the arguments of the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh in (c) and to the clothing industry and the manufacture of medicines in (d). However, questions (a) and (b) were more general.
- A question will sometimes **explicitly** require you to include a diagram. This was the case in Question 2 (b) in November 2006 where candidates were required to include a demand and supply diagram to help explain what might have happened in the market for air travel. Your diagram would need to be neatly and accurately drawn and correctly labelled. You would also need to refer to the diagram in your answer; this is why it says 'with the help of a demand and supply diagram' in the question.
- In some parts of questions, the 'command' or 'directive' word used is **discuss** (this point will apply to Paper 4 only). For example, in Question 2 (d) in November 2006, the question required candidates to 'discuss whether knowledge of price elasticity of demand is of use to a company selling holiday tours'. You would need to look at this from both points of view, i.e. firstly saying that it would be of use and then going on to make the point that it would not be of use. You would then be expected to reach a conclusion as to whether it would or not be particularly beneficial to such a company. It is a similar situation in Question 4 (d) of the November 2006 examination paper. The question required candidates to 'discuss the actions that a government might take to control inflation'. In this case, you would need to go beyond a description of the different possible actions; you would need to discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of the different possible actions and then come to a conclusion as to which ones might be preferable to use and why.
- You need to make sure that you do **exactly** what the question asks you to do. For example, in Question 3 (c) of the November 2006 examination paper, candidates were required to 'explain what is meant by a trade union'. There were 3 marks for this part of the question and so you would just need to explain what a trade union is; you would not be expected to go into a great deal of detail on the advantages and disadvantages of trade unions. It is a similar situation in Question 4 (a) where candidates are required to 'explain how inflation is measured'. You are **not** asked to define the term, consider its causes or analyse its consequences; you would simply need to explain how it is measured and nothing more!
- You need to look very closely at **every** word in a question. For example, in Question 4 (b) of the November 2006 examination paper, candidates were told that low inflation was one of the aims of government policy. They were then asked to choose two **other** macro-economic aims of the government and explain what they mean. A number of candidates, however, ignored the word **other** and wrote about inflation as one of the two macro-economic aims of government. You need to read **every** word in a question to make sure that you avoid writing about something that you are not required to.
- Sometimes, a question will require you to include **specific examples** of something. For example, in the November 2006 examination paper, Question 6 (a) (this was on Paper 4

only) asked candidates to distinguish between direct and indirect taxes and between progressive and regressive taxes and they were explicitly required to do this 'with the use of examples'. If you didn't include any examples of these different types of taxes, you would not have gained as many marks as you would have done if you had included appropriate examples.

- Finally, make sure that you answer the **correct number of questions**. This isn't a problem with Paper 2 where you have to answer all five questions on the examination paper. However, on Paper 4, you are required to answer Question 1 and then select three further questions to answer from the remaining six questions on the paper, i.e. you should do **four** questions in total. Each year, however, there are always some candidates who answer more than four questions. There are even some candidates each year who answer all seven questions. This will have involved them in a significant waste of time as no more than four answers can be accepted.

Paper 6 Tips

- Paper 6 is the **Alternative to Coursework** examination paper and you should keep this in mind as a number of the questions relate to the collection of information and to the usefulness of the information obtained.
- Unlike Papers 2 and 4, where there is only a long extract in Question 1, both of the questions in Paper 6 will relate to a long extract (though they may not be of equal length).
- In Papers 2 and 4, Question 1 will always carry 20 marks and the other questions will always carry equal marks (10 marks in the case of Paper 2 and 20 marks in the case of Paper 4). In Paper 6, however, the marks allocated to the two questions will vary and will not necessarily be the same for each question. For example, in the November 2006 examination paper, Question 1 had 23 marks and Question 2 had 17 marks. You need to take this into account when allocating your **time** in the 1 hour 30 minutes paper (the same length of time as for Paper 2 but less than the 2 hours allocated to Paper 4). The total number of marks for Paper 6, however, will always be 40.
- A question will sometimes require you to include an **example** from the extract provided. For instance, Question 1 (a) (ii) in the November 2006 examination paper required candidates to 'identify and explain **one** example of opportunity cost from the above extract'. If you had identified and explained one that was not in the extract provided, you would **not** have gained any marks.
- As has already been pointed out, Paper 6 is the Alternative to Coursework paper and some questions will reflect this focus. For example, in November 2006, Question 1 (b) asked you to do two things. Firstly, you would have needed to have discussed how helpful you found the extract provided in terms of an investigation into the arguments for and against a ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol. Secondly, you would have needed to have considered what **further** information would have been useful in addition to what was provided. This is the idea of a coursework element, i.e. how you would go about obtaining further information.
- There is a similar situation in Question 2 of the November 2006 examination paper. In Question 2 (c), candidates were asked how they would 'investigate whether Toyota should expand production into other countries as planned'. You would need to be able to say what information you would need and how you would aim to obtain it.

About the Examiner – Terry Cook

Terry Cook has been an examiner with CIE for over 25 years marking IGCSE, O Level, HIGCSE and A Level examination papers in Economics. He is the Principal Examiner for Paper 4 and has been Principal Examiner for Paper 6. He has been involved in training workshops in a range of countries including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, The Maldives, Mauritius, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa and the UAE. As well as examining, Terry has taught Economics for over 25 years and has been a Head of Economics for most of this time. He has taught in a number of schools, colleges and universities during this time.