NSW Education Standards Authority

2025 HSC Society and Culture
Marking Guidelines

Section I — Social and Cultural Continuity and Change

Multiple-choice Answer Key

Question	Answer
1	C
2	D
3	A
4	B
5	C
6	A
7	B
8	A

Question 9

Criteria	Marks
• Provides a detailed explanation of the value of research in understanding societies and cultures • Effectively integrates a contemporary example	4
• Provides an explanation of the value of research in understanding societies and cultures • Integrates a contemporary example	3
• Demonstrates some understanding of the value of research in understanding societies and/or cultures	2
• Provides some relevant information	1

Sample answer:

Research is valuable in expanding our knowledge and understanding, as it helps form a more complete and accurate picture of contemporary societies and cultures. A combination of different research methods, such as primary, secondary, qualitative and quantitative, allows for different types of information to be collected. For example, unique cultural practices such as *tamoko* (Māori face tattooing) can be more widely understood and collectively preserved because of research. In-depth knowledge of this practice also builds empathy with, and appreciation of, the diverse beliefs and values of Māori culture.

Question 10

Criteria	Marks
• Provides a comprehensive discussion of the effects of globalisation in ONE country • Integrates detailed and relevant references to ONE aspect	8
• Provides a thorough discussion of the effects of globalisation in ONE country • Integrates relevant reference(s) to ONE aspect	6–7
• Provides a sound discussion of the effects of globalisation in ONE country • Integrates reference(s) to ONE aspect	4–5
• Provides some discussion of the effects of globalisation in ONE country • May refer to ONE aspect	2–3
• Provides some relevant information	1

Answers could include:

Globalisation is a process brought about by improved technologies and sharing of goods, capital, services, knowledge, leisure, sport, ideas and culture between countries. This has created a consciousness of the world as a single place but has not always had positive effects.

For example, globalisation has changed family life and population in the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in the following ways:
- Increased individualism and greater gender equality within families – since the 2000s, modern ideals of individualism and gender equality from Western cultures, have driven changes in traditional kinship-orientated, patriarchal power structures within South Korean families. Amidst increasing pressure from international feminist movements, the Republic of Korea officially abolished the *hojuje* system of patrilineal family registration in favour of individual registration.
- Shifts in cultural diversity – tourism and greater migrant worker flows into South Korea have affected this traditionally monocultural society. Now, 1 in 10 marriages are cross-cultural and have led to some *gireogi (wild geese)* family situations where the connection or migration to another country may threaten the continuity of family life.
- Population decline – South Korea's population continues to decline with one of the lowest fertility rates of 0.68 babies per woman in 2024. Global economic and cultural shifts have affected the population. Decreases in fertility rates have been attributed to higher levels of education for women, younger generations adopting Western capitalist values and female empowerment as captured through social media activism, such as the international 4B movement.

Section II — Depth Studies

Question 11 — Popular Culture

Question 11 (a)

Criteria	Marks
• Demonstrates a thorough understanding of why the construction or deconstruction of gender is important in the evolution of ONE popular culture • Effectively integrates a relevant example	5
• Demonstrates a sound understanding of why the construction or deconstruction of gender is important in the evolution of ONE popular culture • Integrates a relevant example	4
• Demonstrates some understanding of why the construction or deconstruction of gender is important in the evolution of ONE popular culture • Makes reference to a relevant example	3
• Demonstrates a limited understanding of gender and/or popular culture	2
• Provides some relevant information	1

Sample answer:

To maintain global acceptance, surfing has constantly evolved in response to changing societal attitudes, especially regarding gender. Surfing began as a male-dominated sport associated with territoriality, masculinity and competitiveness that was reinforced through paraphernalia.

However, the rise of female surfers has challenged traditional views of gender, while deconstructing sexualised representations of women within surfing culture. Stereotypical images of female surfers are now depicted as athletes who possess skill and strength without compromising femininity. The longevity of surfing is reliant upon the ongoing deconstruction of gender, reflecting contemporary values. This evolution ensures the inclusion of women in the commercialisation of surfing.

Question 11 (b)

Criteria	Marks
• Provides comprehensive judgements about the extent ethnicity and location influence the consumption of ONE popular culture • Supports the response with a breadth of detailed and accurate information and effectively integrates appropriate examples • Presents a sustained, logical and cohesive response • Effectively applies relevant course concepts and language	13–15
• Provides thorough judgements about the extent ethnicity and location influence the consumption of ONE popular culture • Supports the response with detailed and accurate information and integrates appropriate examples • Presents a logical and cohesive response • Applies relevant course concepts and language	10–12
• Provides a judgement(s) about the extent ethnicity and/or location influence the consumption of ONE popular culture • Supports the response with relevant information and uses example(s) • Presents an organised response using course concepts and language	7–9
• Demonstrates some understanding of ethnicity and/or location and/or consumption of ONE popular culture • Includes course concepts and/or language • Refers to an example(s)	4–6
• Provides some relevant information	1–3

Answers could include:

Ethnicity and location have significantly influenced the consumption of hip hop, in the following ways:

• An individual's ethnicity can dramatically shape their engagement with hip hop music as they develop parasocial connections between their cultural identity and the beliefs, values and attitudes communicated in hip hop. For example, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists have achieved immense popularity and success amongst Aboriginal youth in remote communities in Arnhem Land. The communities draw strength, solidarity and cultural pride from the themes contained in this music.

• Location can simultaneously facilitate and restrict access to hip hop. Historically, urban locations were a focal point for the creation and consumption of hip hop, embodying the struggles of socioeconomically disadvantaged African American communities in New York City. However, communication technologies have mitigated geographical barriers between artists and consumers, allowing for greater consumption of hip hop via web-based downloads and streaming platforms.

Question 12 — Belief Systems and Ideologies

Question 12 (a)

Criteria	Marks
• Demonstrates a thorough understanding of how meaning is created for adherents within belief systems and ideologies • Effectively integrates a relevant example	5
• Demonstrates a sound understanding of how meaning is created for adherents within belief systems and ideologies • Integrates a relevant example	4
• Demonstrates some understanding of how meaning is created for adherents within belief systems and ideologies • Makes reference to a relevant example	3
• Demonstrates a limited understanding of adherents and/or belief systems and/or ideologies	2
• Provides some relevant information	1

Sample answer:

Meaning is created within belief systems and ideologies through shared values, customs, rituals and common worldviews. This generates a sense of collective identity, belonging and purpose.

For example, a sense of shared meaning is created within Islam when adherents all demonstrate the Five Pillars – the declaration of faith (*shahada*), prayer (*salah*), alms-giving (*zakat*), fasting (*sawm*) and pilgrimage (*hajj*). These constitute basic norms and understanding of Islamic practices worldwide. They bring together the Islamic community, regardless of ethnic diversity, location and variance in rituals, because they are the visible signs of the Muslim way of life and of the adherents' unity across micro, meso and macro levels of society.

Question 12 (b)

Criteria	Marks
• Provides a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of secularisation on the acceptance or rejection of ONE belief system or ideology • Supports the response with a breadth of detailed and accurate information and effectively integrates appropriate examples • Presents a sustained, logical and cohesive response • Effectively applies relevant course concepts and language	13–15
• Provides a thorough evaluation of the impact of secularisation on the acceptance or rejection of ONE belief system or ideology • Supports the response with detailed and accurate information and integrates appropriate examples • Presents a logical and cohesive response • Applies relevant course concepts and language	10–12
• Provides an evaluation of the impact of secularisation on the acceptance or rejection of ONE belief system or ideology • Supports the response with relevant information and uses example(s) • Presents an organised response using course concepts and language	7–9
• Demonstrates some understanding of secularisation and/or acceptance or rejection of ONE belief system or ideology • Includes course concepts and/or language • Refers to an example(s)	4–6
• Provides some relevant information	1–3

Answers could include:

Secularisation is one outcome of the modernisation process. The rise of scientific knowledge and technological advancements have shaped ideas about spiritual thinking. Through this process, the influence of traditional religion continues to decline in various spheres of social life, whilst ideologies gain increasing acceptance. Secularisation has had a profound impact on the global acceptance and adherence to humanistic ideologies. For example:

- Secular values of individualism and empowerment directly align with humanist values, therefore acceptance of humanism becomes a natural fit for many individuals. Greater acceptance of humanism is evident in the increased number of Australians choosing 'No religion' in the 2021 Census, and as a result, the submission to include humanism as a choice in the future.

- Secularisation has enabled humanism to gain widespread influence and acceptance at the macro level. The formation of organisations such as *Humanists Australia* have become key agents in political and social policy debates such as reconciliation and LGBTQIA+ rights. This has ensured greater representation and advocacy for previously marginalised groups.

- The growth of artificial intelligence (AI) has negatively impacted the acceptance of humanism as it presents a challenge to several core beliefs. Humanists believe AI will devalue people's capacity to exercise empathy and demonstrate moral reasoning when making decisions in such fields as medicine, economics and politics.

Question 13 — Social Inclusion and Exclusion

Question 13 (a)

Criteria	Marks
• Demonstrates a thorough understanding of why social mobility is important in achieving equality • Effectively integrates a relevant example	5
• Demonstrates a sound understanding of why social mobility is important in achieving equality • Integrates a relevant example	4
• Demonstrates some understanding of why social mobility is important in achieving equality • Makes reference to a relevant example	3
• Demonstrates a limited understanding of social mobility and/or equality	2
• Provides some relevant information	1

Sample answer:

Social mobility is the movement of people within or between social classes. Upward social mobility allows for improved access to socially valued resources (SVRs) and a more equal society. For example, the *dalits* in India have historically experienced intergenerational disadvantage, prejudice and stereotyping, which has limited their chances to improve their socioeconomic status. Macro level policies aimed at achieving equality, such as the official abolition of the caste system and enforcing quotas in parliament, have been the foundations of upward social mobility for this social group. When social mobility is facilitated, marginalised groups become empowered and their access to SVRs improves, resulting in a more equal society.

Question 13 (b)

Criteria	Marks
• Provides a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of socioeconomic status on access to technology for ONE group • Supports the response with a breadth of detailed and accurate information and effectively integrates appropriate examples • Presents a sustained, logical and cohesive response • Effectively applies relevant course concepts and language	13–15
• Provides a thorough evaluation of the impact of socioeconomic status on access to technology for ONE group • Supports the response with detailed and accurate information and integrates appropriate examples • Presents a logical and cohesive response • Applies relevant course concepts and language	10–12
• Provides an evaluation of the impact of socioeconomic status on access to technology for ONE group • Supports the response with relevant information and uses example(s) • Presents an organised response using course concepts and language	7–9
• Demonstrates some understanding of socioeconomic status and/or access to technology for ONE group • Includes course concepts and/or language • Refers to an example(s)	4–6
• Provides some relevant information	1–3

Answers could include:

The socioeconomic status of people experiencing homelessness in urban Australia means they may have limited access to technologies, resulting in further social exclusion.

• Mobile phones are often the only form of modern technology people experiencing homelessness in Australia have access to. Since they are without housing, in insecure housing or between dwellings, this group often does not have access to alternative forms of digital information. In turn, access to other socially valued resources such as education, employment and health care is therefore extremely limited.

• Due to modernisation and globalisation, internet access is increasingly required to function effectively in society. The digitisation of many government and community support services is seeing a reduction in face-to-face contact. This results in greater exclusion for lower socioeconomic groups, such people experiencing homelessness. This has become known as 'digital exclusion'.

• Continued unequal access to modern technologies severely limits the participation of homeless people in society, as they may be unable to complete a job application, apply for housing or receive updates about support payments.

• People experiencing homelessness are at risk of being further excluded from support services if affordability of mobile and internet access is not addressed at a macro level. Up to 95% of those experiencing homelessness own a mobile phone, however their ability to stay connected is difficult due to their socioeconomic status. Limited finances contribute to difficulties purchasing credit for their phone.

Question 14 — Social Conformity and Nonconformity

Question 14 (a)

Criteria	Marks
• Demonstrates a thorough understanding of how individual obedience is influenced by authority and the environment • Effectively integrates a relevant example	5
• Demonstrates a sound understanding of how individual obedience is influenced by authority and the environment • Integrates a relevant example	4
• Demonstrates some understanding of how individual obedience is influenced by authority and the environment • Makes reference to a relevant example	3
• Demonstrates a limited understanding of obedience and/or authority and/or the environment	2
• Provides some relevant information	1

Sample answer:

Authority influences an individual's level of obedience through the legitimate use of power and involves the ability to enforce rules or decisions through a system of reward and/or punishment. Obedience to a person in a position of authority may increase if that person has a higher status, is in close proximity and if they are wearing a uniform, as this gives an impression of legitimacy (Bickman, 1974).

Certain environments and settings can enhance obedience of individuals. For example, in an academic examination hall, tables and chairs are spaced out deliberately to minimise non-conformist behaviours, such as talking. Expectations associated with such exam conditions are reinforced by invigilators and therefore leads to individual obedience.

Question 14 (b)

Criteria	Marks
• Provides comprehensive judgements about the extent society's perception of ONE group is influenced by deviance and stereotyping • Supports the response with a breadth of detailed and accurate information and effectively integrates appropriate examples • Presents a sustained, logical and cohesive response • Effectively applies relevant course concepts and language	13–15
• Provides thorough judgements about the extent society's perception of ONE group is influenced by deviance and stereotyping • Supports the response with detailed and accurate information and integrates appropriate examples • Presents a logical and cohesive response • Applies relevant course concepts and language	10–12
• Provides a judgement(s) about the extent society's perception of ONE group is influenced by deviance and stereotyping • Supports the response with relevant information and uses example(s) • Presents an organised response using course concepts and language	7–9
• Demonstrates some understanding of society's perception and/or deviance and/or stereotypes of ONE group • Includes course concepts and/or language • Refers to an example(s)	4–6
• Provides some relevant information	1–3

Answers could include:

Deviance and stereotypes play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of non-conformist groups. Deviance (non-conformity) refers to behaviours that challenge accepted social norms and ethical standards. Formal deviance, such as breaking laws, can immediately shape negative perceptions of non-conformist groups, whereas informal deviance, such as breaking unwritten social norms, can contribute to the construction of stereotypes. Media agenda-setting can further reinforce and spread negative stereotypes of one group from meso to macro levels.

• Attitudes towards deviance are evident in social contexts such as skateboarding groups. Skaters who act in a deviant way may be perceived by wider society as problematic and disruptive. Anti-social behaviours by some skaters, such as littering at the skate park, loitering, swearing and graffitiing, create negative perceptions of this group.

• Inaccurate stereotypes may be formed about skaters. Views may be based upon isolated incidents of non-conformist behaviours and styles of clothing. This can lead to widespread distrust and contempt towards the skaters and may be perpetuated in the media.

• However, the inclusion of skateboarding in the Paris 2024 Olympics shifted public perceptions of skaters. Australia celebrated the skill and athleticism of a range of young female skaters whose discipline and dedication countered the typical deviant skater stereotype. National success at the Olympic Games has elevated the status of skateboarding, leading to greater alignment with mainstream values and culture.

2025 HSC Society and Culture Mapping Grid

Section I — Social and Cultural Continuity and Change

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
1	1	Framework (section 8.2) – research process	H6
2	1	Framework (section 8.2) – research process	H6
3	1	Framework (section 8.3) – social and cultural literacy	H4
4	1	Integrated concepts	H2
5	1	Integrated concepts	H2
6	1	The nature of social and cultural continuity and change	H3
7	1	The nature of social and cultural continuity and change	H1
8	1	The nature of social and cultural continuity and change	H5
9	4	Contemporary context	H6
10	8	Focus study – social and cultural continuity and change in a selected country	H1, H3, H5

Section II — Depth Studies

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
11 (a)	5	Focus study – popular culture	H1, H9
11 (b)	15	Focus study – popular culture	H1, H3, H9, H10
12 (a)	5	The nature of belief systems and ideologies	H1, H9
12 (b)	15	Focus study – belief systems and ideologies	H1, H5, H9, H10
13 (a)	5	The nature of social inclusion and exclusion	H1, H9
13 (b)	15	Focus study – social inclusion and exclusion	H1, H5, H9, H10
14 (a)	5	The nature of social conformity and nonconformity	H1, H9
14 (b)	15	Focus study – social conformity and nonconformity	H1, H3, H9, H10