

Initial preparation

Candidates are advised to choose a topic that engages them strongly and is of real importance to them.

The title of the report **must** take the form of a question. Formulating a good research question forms part of the research process and the assessment criteria. It takes time and careful consideration. It must be made clear to the reader how and why the question was developed. Considerable thought must be given to this; why, for example, is the question worth asking, and how did it develop throughout the research process? The use of the research log is important in supporting the process throughout its development.

Research log

A research log must be maintained and used in support of the report. The purpose of the log is to help plan, monitor and review progress and thinking throughout the research process. The log **must** be submitted as part of the assessment but it will not constitute part of the 5000 word limit. The log must be included as an electronic appendix and cross referenced as necessary within the main body of the report.

The log does not need to include details of all actions and thinking; it should be maintained and used in order to support how the research developed over time. It could contain reflective thoughts, a reminder of things to check, notes/commentary on the use of methods and methodology, comments on how the research question may have changed as a result of feedback received. It must not be used as a means of extending the 5000 word limit but rather as supporting evidence for how the research progressed the way it did.

Perspectives

The research question should lead to the discussion of different perspectives. The possibilities of analysing and evaluating different views and arguments and the evidence which supports them should be evident from the way the question is formed.

To take an example, there are different views about capital punishment. Those against may oppose it on grounds of its failure as a deterrent and they may produce evidence in the form of statistics and studies to confirm this; they may also oppose it on moral grounds based on views on the sanctity of life. There may also be underlying assumptions behind the views to consider. Some views cannot be supported by empirical evidence but they may be supported by reference to philosophical or religious evidence. The counter view should also be considered, including its arguments, evidence and assumptions. Thus two broad perspectives will be assessed and a judgement reached by careful and sympathetic but critical evaluation of serious and genuinely-held views.

The question should lead directly to the assessment of the perspectives. So the title 'Capital Punishment' will not be sufficient. 'Why it is right to abolish capital punishment' does not lead directly to a debate. 'How capital punishment developed' is asking for a description and is not framed as a question. 'Should capital punishment be abolished?' could lead to establishing and evaluating different perspectives and would be an example of an appropriate title.

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Cambridge International AS and A Level Global Perspectives & Research 9239 syllabus Description of component

Methods and methodology

Research methods relate to the techniques used. Research methodology relates to the choice and use of the method/s which in part relates to the theoretical assumptions underpinning the work. The extent to which candidates develop issues of methodology will be related to the research question and the nature and scope of the report.

The report must explain the process through which any data were collected. This is to ensure that the author and any future reader are able to consider the impact of this process on the inferences drawn from the findings. Candidates do not have to use primary research methods (techniques) unless these are relevant for their study. Many successful reports will use a literature review as method; this may

well be appropriate but candidates must still make clear to the reader the process through which they identified and selected relevant literature – the key words/themes used, and why.

The choice and use of research methods are related to the theoretical assumptions underpinning the work, because it is only through understanding these that the author's assumptions about reality become clear.