

# Markscheme

May 2025

**Social and cultural anthropology**

**Standard level**

**Paper 1**

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The following interpretation of the markscheme is offered as an example of the types of responses we may expect, however it is not prescriptive or exhaustive, and other possible answers should be appropriately rewarded if relevant.

1. Define the term **agency** and describe how it can be understood and applied in the context of the passage.

[4]

This question requires candidates to demonstrate conceptual knowledge and understanding of the term **agency** and apply it in relation to the text. Candidates may write in terms of any of the following guidelines, but other definitions or applications will also be acceptable if made relevant to the context of the passage.

**Possible ways of defining the term:**

- Agency is the capacity of social actors to act in relation to structural constraints.
- Agency is the capacity of human beings to act in meaningful ways that affect their own lives and those of others.
- Agency may be constrained by class, gender, religion, and social and cultural factors.
- Agency is the capacity to create, change and influence events.

Other appropriate definitions should be credited

**Possible examples of description and application:**

- The choices/decisions boxers make with regards to structural constraints
- The reconfiguration of aspirations (e.g., Osman’s quote) and acceptance of subaltern roles in the sport industry
- The refusal to participate in international boxing matches (e.g., Abraham’s quote)
- The ambiguities and paradoxes of keeping hope
- The boxers’ critical views about the global sport industry

Their collective political agency in relation to colonialism.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The response demonstrates a basic knowledge and understanding of the concept. There is a partial application of the concept in relation to the text.
3–4	The response demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the concept; the concept is described in detail. The concept is clearly applied in relation to the text.

2. Analyse the ethnographic data presented in the passage using the concept of **identity**. **[6]**

This question requires candidates to develop an analysis and explanation of this ethnographic text using the key concept of **identity** to help make sense of the ethnographic data. In order to do this, candidates are required to demonstrate an understanding of the key concept and use it to illuminate certain issues within the context of the passage, developing an analysis with reference to the ethnographic data of the extract.

**Possible ways of defining the key concept:**

- With reference to group identity (religious, ethnic, national, etc.).
- The individual’s private and personal view of the self
- How an individual is viewed from the perspective of a social group.

Other appropriate definitions should be credited.

**Possible examples and ways of analyzing:**

- With reference to masculine identities
- With reference to professional identities
- With reference to subaltern identities in the transnational sport industry
- In relation to racialized structural inequalities
- With reference to ethnic identity, associated with the Ga people
- In relation to historical narratives of resistance to colonialism
- In the use of the past to connect masculine combative ability and precolonial martial practices.
- The attributes and roles of the ‘tough Ghanaian’ boxer in the global industry
- The reconfiguration of aspirations and identities (as losers, though morally respected).

Other appropriate examples and ways of analyzing should be credited.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The response offers a common-sense or superficial understanding of the key concept. There is an attempt to relate the key concept to the text, and some ethnographic examples are presented but these are only partially relevant.
3–4	The response demonstrates an understanding of the key concept and establishes its relevance to the text. There is an analysis of the text using the key concept, although there are some inconsistencies. Relevant ethnographic examples from the text are presented to support the analysis.
5–6	The response demonstrates a clear understanding of the key concept, discussing this in the context of the text. There is a clearly explained analysis of the text using the key concept and a detailed interpretation of the ethnographic data. Clear and explicit ethnographic examples from the text support the analysis.

3. Compare and contrast the ways in which the key concept of **power** or **belief and knowledge** is evident in this passage with how it is evident in **one** other ethnographic example you have studied. [10]

Candidates are expected to show an ability to think about the text in relation to other contexts and to draw explicit comparisons. In order to do this, responses must demonstrate an understanding of how either the key concept of **power** or **belief and knowledge** relates to this ethnographic context. Either of the key concepts on which such comparisons may be drawn should be made explicit and clearly linked to any anthropological issues raised by the text.

The target societies for this comparative question are varied and many. Candidates should be able to establish a relevant comparison with any other group or society based on either of these concepts. The response should be structured as a comparison, highlighting similarities and differences. Candidates must situate the comparative case in terms of place, author, and fieldwork context.

**For power, possible ways of defining the key concept include:**

- as an essential feature of social relations
- the relation between power and ideology.
- as structural power
- in relation to hegemony and resistance.
- as a person's or group's capacity to influence, manipulate or control others and resources.
- as involving distinctions and inequalities between members of a social group.
- In relation to its capacity to produce subjectivities.
- Terms such as discourse, habitus, socialization, classification, social control, may come into play.

Other appropriate definitions should be given credit.

**Possible examples from the text about power may include:**

- The racialized structural inequalities in the boxing arena that disadvantage Ghanaian boxers
- Global North- Global South divide
- The global labour market
- The role of hope as ideology or mechanism to obscure/reproduce the unequal structure
- In relation to the concept of political agency and resistance to colonialism (e.g., Roy Ankraah winning the title)
- With reference to colonial power
- With relation to personal experiences (reference to Abraham's quote)
- With reference to the fighting body (the 'tough Ghanaian') and their subaltern condition in the fighting industry
- With reference to the Ga ethnic identity and their precolonial history as warriors
- With reference to post-colonial, neoliberal governance.

Any other relevant point of comparison used from the text should be credited.

**For belief and knowledge, possible ways of defining the key concept include:**

- as a set of convictions, values and viewpoints regarded as "the truth" and shared by members of a social group, underpinned, and supported by known cultural experience.
- in relation to cultural understandings.
- the production of belief and knowledge at the interplay between structural constraints and collective or individual agency.
- terms such as ideology, hegemony, resistance, discourse, socialization, morality, classification, social control, may come into play.

Any other relevant point of comparison used from the text should be credited.

**Possible examples from the text about belief and knowledge may include:**

- a focus on hope as ideology or mechanism to reproduce an unequal structure.
- the Ghanaian boxers' views in relation to the false sense of equality of opportunity of the global industry (quotes from boxers)
- ambiguities and contradictions in boxers' beliefs and aspirations
- cultural beliefs about Ghanaian boxers' bodily qualities (the Ga combative tradition, the assumed 'toughness')
- with reference to racism as belief system
- with reference to gendered beliefs and morality.

Any other relevant point of comparison used from the text should be credited.

**OR**

4. Compare and contrast the approaches to research adopted by the anthropologist in this passage to the approaches to research used by **one** other anthropologist you have studied. Make reference to concepts and ethnographic material in your answer. **[10]**

Here, candidates are expected to show an ability to think about the text with emphasis on the methodological perspectives of the ethnographer as the focus on which such comparisons should be established.

By "approaches to research" the question essentially refers to the research methods used by the anthropologist to gather data.

**Possible comparative examples regarding approaches may include:**

- participant observation: the description of the anthropologist's involvement and activities with the Ghanaian boxers.
- ethnographic interview: quotes from interlocutors.
- historical narratives
- Other relevant methodological terms and discussions. For example: qualitative methods; insider/outsider; local categories/analytical categories; positionality; representation.
- The ethnographer's Neo-Marxist theoretical approach.
- Discussion of structure-centered or agency-focused approaches.
- Any other relevant point of comparison used from the text should be credited.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	Comparative ethnography <b>or</b> approaches are presented but in limited detail; relevance is only partially established. The response is not structured as a compare and contrast. The identification of ethnographic material is missing.
3–4	Comparative ethnography <b>or</b> approaches are presented and although this is in limited detail, its relevance is established. The response is structured as a compare and contrast, but this is not balanced and lacks detail. The identification of ethnographic material is partially complete.
5–6	Comparative ethnography <b>or</b> approaches are presented; relevance is established and explained. The response is clearly structured as a compare and contrast; however, <b>either</b> comparison (similarities) <b>or</b> contrasts (differences) are explained in detail, but not both. The identification of ethnographic material is mostly complete.
7–8	Comparative ethnography <b>or</b> approaches are presented; relevance is clearly established and explained in detail. The response is clearly structured as a compare and contrast with comparisons (similarities) and contrasts (differences) being discussed in detail, although this is not balanced. The response demonstrates anthropological understanding. The identification of ethnographic material is mostly complete.
Capped marks	If fieldwork location(s), fieldwork context(s), group(s) studied and ethnographer(s) have not been fully identified, no more than 8 marks will be awarded.
9–10	Comparative ethnography <b>or</b> approaches are presented; relevance is clearly established and discussed in detail. The response is clearly structured as a compare and contrast with comparisons (similarities) and contrasts (differences) discussed critically. The response demonstrates anthropological understanding. The identification of the ethnographic material is complete.

5. How are we the same and different from each other? Discuss with reference to **at least two** sources of ethnographic material and examples from the passage. **[10]**

This question requires candidates to develop an argument that is built on an understanding of the following “big anthropological question”: **How are we the same and different from each other?** This response should include argumentative discussion and analysis and should be supported by making reference to the passage and by relevant, detailed ethnographic material that gives evidence of the understanding of this big question in different cultural contexts. This big anthropological question should be the very backbone of the response.

In the development of their response, candidates may make reference to a number of ideas or propositions connected to the question. For this reason, below are some ideas that may appear in candidates’ responses. However, any other relevant lines of thought should be rewarded.

**Possible issues to develop an argument may be:**

There are many different ways that candidates can approach this question, and any valid discussion of the strengths and limitations of anthropological endeavor is acceptable. While it is not possible to predict how they will use any additional ethnographies, in relation to the passage they may focus on:

- commonalities in feelings such as hope, ambition, willingness to work hard, aspirations, needs, etc.
- globalization as a process of homogenization and differentiation
- class, ethnicity, gender, age, global inequalities, or any other forms of differentiation
- contexts of uncertainty about the future
- capacity for agency
- adaptiveness to changing circumstances
- power imbalances, decision making, inequalities
- domination and resistance
- processes of exclusion and integration
- production and reproduction of structural inequalities
- different belief systems
- global/local tensions in the contemporary world.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1-2	There is limited understanding of the big anthropological question. The response refers to ethnographic material; relevance to the question is superficial or not established. There is no reference to the passage. The identification of ethnographic material is missing.
3-4	There is partial understanding of the big anthropological question. The response presents some ethnographic material and establishes its relevance to the question, but this lacks detail. There is no or limited reference to the passage. There is an attempt to analyse and interpret the ethnographic material in relation to the big anthropological question, but this lacks clarity and coherence. The identification of ethnographic material is partially complete.
5-6	There is an understanding of the big anthropological question. The response presents a range of ethnographic material and establishes its relevance to the question. There is some reference to the passage. There is some analysis and interpretation of the ethnographic material and passage in relation to the big anthropological question but there is a limited or undeveloped argument. The identification of ethnographic material is mostly complete.
7-8	There is clear understanding of the big anthropological question in different cultural contexts. The response presents detailed comparative ethnographic material and establishes its relevance to the question. There is clear reference to the passage. Analysis and interpretation supports the development of an argument; however minor inconsistencies hinder the strength of the overall argument. The identification of ethnographic material is mostly complete.
Capped marks	If fieldwork location(s), fieldwork context, group(s) studied and ethnographer(s) have not been fully identified, no more than 8 marks will be awarded.
9-10	There is a clear understanding of the big anthropological question in different cultural contexts. The response presents detailed comparative ethnographic material and establishes its relevance to the question. There is clear reference to the passage. Analysis and interpretation supports the development of a reasoned argument; any minor inconsistencies do not hinder the strength of the overall argument. The identification of ethnographic material is complete.