



A Level Economics

Exam Technique & Guidance

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Paper structure

Paper 1: Markets and market failure

What's assessed

Content 1–8 above

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours
- 80 marks
- 33.3% of A-level

Questions

- Section A: data response questions requiring written answers, choice of one from two contexts worth 40 marks
- Section B: essay questions requiring written answers, choice of one from three worth 40 marks

Paper 2: National and international economy

What's assessed

Content 9–14 above

Assessed

- written exam 2 hours
- 80 marks
- 33.3% of A-level

Questions

- Section A: data response questions requiring written answers, choice of one from two contexts worth 40 marks
- Section B: essay questions requiring written answers, choice of one from three worth 40 marks

Paper 3: Economic principles and issues

What's assessed

All content 1–14 above

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours
- 80 marks
- 33.3% of A-level

Questions

- Section A: multiple choice questions worth 30 marks
- Section B: case study questions requiring written answers, worth 50 marks

Descriptions of Annotations

Annotation	Description
?	Unsure/unclear/somewhat confusing
AN	Analysis
APP	Application
BOD	Benefit of the doubt
Cross	Incorrect
EVAL	Evaluation
IR	Irrelevant
KU	Knowledge and understanding
NAQ	Not answering question
On Page Comment	Text box
REP_BIG	Repetition
SEEN	Seen
Tick	Correct
Enhanced Off Page Comment	May be used to make a comment

Top Tips for success

- 1) **Time management.** You must stick to the rule of a 1.2 per mark. Spending too long on the on questions results in less time to do others which often results in students failing to read questions and/or not finishing the paper.
- 2) **Read each question carefully and ensure you answer the question you are asked.** Often using the key words in the question at the start of each paragraph can help ensure your answer is focused throughout
- 3) **Make sure that you apply the case study and your economic knowledge.** Good application can be achieved by being completely in context, manipulating data as well as combining data. Being in context means that your answer relates to the business in the case study as well as the problems or issues that the business is specifically facing.
- 4) **Analysis.** To achieve GOOD analysis, you must provide a **coherent and logical multi-stage argument** that is focused on the question.
- 5) When it comes to analysis, think **HOW and WHY**. For example, if you say that increased labour productivity will reduce labour costs per unit, **explain HOW and WHY** this is important to the business you are writing about. Put your answer in CONTEXT.
- 6) **Evaluation.** To achieve GOOD evaluation, you must provide a **clear and well supported judgment** in relation to the question being asked which is **built on prior analysis and evidence**. A useful strategy is to explain what the most

significant point or argument was that led you to that judgement. Why did you choose one argument over another? Why did you reject one?

- 7) Efficient use of the **case study** is crucial. Underlining everything often results in key points being missed. Highlight the key points you want to use to put your answer in context.
- 8) Definitions. If there are two key words in the question **you only need to define ONE**. Defining both wastes time. Definitions only contribute to your knowledge marks. Define one key term well and then move on.
- 9) **Calculations**. Work quickly and accurately and keep to the time limit. If (for a 6-mark question) after 6 minutes you are still struggling then move on. It is unlikely that further time will result in a significant increase in your mark for that question and you run the risk of rushing the last question. **ALWAY**, repeat, **ALWAYS** show your workings when doing calculations.
- 10) **Read the examiners reports and mark schemes** for past papers. They are free and are designed to help you improve

MCQs advice

- With MCQ type tests, usually **time** is very limited. You have 1.2 minutes for each MCQ, so divide the time on all MCQs properly. This does not mean divide time equally. For example, Maths MCQs may take more time to solve while English MCQs should take lot less than the time allocated.
- **Read** the MCQ and before reading the choices, think in your mind for correct answer and then read the choices. It will help you to choose the correct choice or the answer.
- There will be some choices that would surely know are wrong, skip these wrong choices first and focus on the rest choices for correct answer. It increases your chances to select the correct choice.
- For answering MCQs you are directed to record your answers in a specific way. Ensure you follow the directions or your work with become void.
- Practice sample MCQs tests in timed environment. These let you know how you perform under time pressure.
- Watch out all students taking AQA A Level Business in June 2018. A new MCQ question format has appeared on Paper 1 which looks like it might become an examiner favourite.

Question: Which of the following statements is true?

- ✓ Select the correct response and ensure the circle is completely filled in alongside the appropriate answer.
- ✓ If you change your mind, cross out the original answer and completely fill in the circle next to the answer you now wish to choose.
- ✓ If you do change your mind, refer to the instructions at the start of Section A to ensure you are following them precisely; the key is to make sure your answer is clear.

Quantitative Skills

Example 1

0 1 Using the data in **Extract A (Figure 1)**, calculate the number of workers doing weekly platform work in 2019 for each worker doing monthly platform work in 2019.

Give your answer to **two** decimal places.

[2 marks]

Calculation: $9.6 / 11.8 = 0.813559$

Correct answer: 0.81 or expressed as a ratio 0.81:1

Response	Max 2 marks
For the correct answer, to two decimal places	2 marks
For the correct answer but not to two decimal places OR For the correct method but the wrong answer, to two decimal places OR 81.36%	1 mark

MAXIMUM FOR QUESTION 01: 2 MARKS

Example 2

- 0 5** Using the data in **Extract D (Figure 3)**, calculate the difference between the UK's and Argentina's mean unemployment rates over the period 2015 to 2018.

Give your answer to **two** decimal places.

[2 marks]

Response	Max 2 marks
For the correct answer (3.45 percentage points or 3.45%) with the words 'percentage points' or % sign and to two decimal places Also allow answers written as a negative (or with a minus sign)	2 marks
For a correct answer but without the words 'percentage points' or % sign and/or not to two decimal places OR For the correct method but the wrong answer, to two decimal places with the words 'percentage points' or % sign	1 mark

Note: In the event that candidates calculate this as a percentage difference rather than an absolute difference – allow answers stating that the Argentina's mean unemployment is 73.40% greater than the UK's or that the UK's mean unemployment is 57.67% of Argentina's.

Calculation: Argentina's mean = 6.5% + 8.5% + 8.4% + 9.2% = 32.6 32.6/4 = 8.15%
UK's mean = 5.4% + 4.9% + 4.4% + 4.1% = 18.8 18.8/4 = 4.70%
8.15% - 4.70% = 3.45 percentage points to 2 decimal places.

How to structure a 9-mark question

Recommend the following answer structure:

- Definition of one or two key terms, usually those in the question.
- Two basic points.
- Evidence from extract.
- Draw diagram.
- Explain / chain of analysis, including referring to the diagram.

Level of response	Response:	Max 9 marks
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is well organised and develops one or more of the key issues that are relevant to the question • shows sound knowledge and understanding of relevant economic terminology, concepts and principles • includes good application of relevant economic principles and/or good use of data to support the response • includes well-focused analysis with a clear, logical chain of reasoning • includes a relevant diagram that will, at the top of this level, be accurate and used appropriately. 	7–9 marks
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes one or more issues that are relevant to the question • shows reasonable knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles but some weaknesses may be present • includes reasonable application of relevant economic principles and/or data to the question • includes some reasonable analysis but it might not be adequately developed and may be confused in places • may include a relevant diagram. 	4–6 marks
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is very brief and/or lacks coherence • shows some limited knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles but some errors are likely • demonstrates very limited ability to apply relevant economic principles and/or data to the question • may include some very limited analysis but the analysis lacks focus and/or becomes confused • may include a relevant diagram but the diagram is not used and/or is inaccurate in some respects. 	1–3 marks

9m-L3

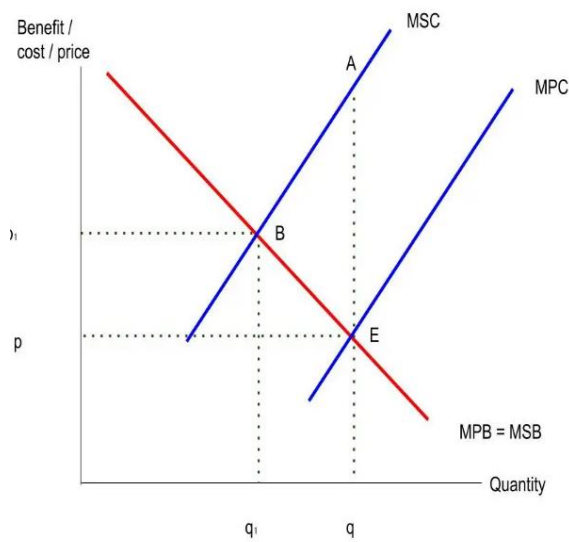
- A good response that focuses on many of the demands of the question
- Demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question
- Include a well drawn and annotated diagram.
- Demonstrates analysis which is well developed
- Applied effectively to the context

Example question

Using extract B, explain why pollution may represent a market failure”

Market failure is when the market does not allocate resources efficiently. Pollution can cause a negative externality in production. A negative externality is a harm to a third party not directly involved in the transaction.

Pollution from the production process of a car plant could spill into nearby rivers. This could harm the fish supply in the rivers, reducing the income for fishermen. Pollution from industry for example may lead to “global temperatures rising more than 1.5 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels” according to extract B. This could lead to rising sea levels which could lead to flooding and the displacement of production.



The diagram shows a negative externality in production. Consider the market for cars. A negative externality in production means the marginal social cost of car production exceeds the marginal private cost. The free market produces where marginal private cost = marginal private benefit at q . But the socially optimal quantity occurs where marginal social cost = marginal social benefit at q_1 . This means the free market overproduces cars by $q - q_1$, meaning there is a misallocation of resources, in other words market failure. This leads to a welfare loss as shown by the area ABE.

How to structure a 15-mark question

Recommend the following answer structure:

- Definition of one or two key terms, usually those in the question.
- Three/two basic points.
- Evidence from extract.
- Draw diagram(s).
- Explain / chain of analysis, including referring to the diagram.

- Refer to the question and use examples from the extract data or real-world examples.

Level of response	Response	Max 15 marks
3	<p>A good response provides an answer that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is well organised and develops a selection of the key issues that are relevant to the question • shows sound knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles with few, if any, errors • includes good application of relevant economic principles to the given context and, where appropriate, good use of data to support the response • includes well-focused analysis with clear, logical chains of reasoning. 	11–15 marks
2	<p>A reasonable response provides an answer that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focuses on issues that are relevant to the question • shows satisfactory knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles but some weaknesses may be present • includes reasonable application of relevant economic principles to the given context and, where appropriate, some use of data to support the response • includes some reasonable analysis but which might not be adequately developed or becomes confused in places. 	6–10 marks
1	<p>A weak response provides an answer that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has identified one or more relevant issues • has some limited knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles but some errors are likely • has very limited application of relevant economic principles to the given context and/or data to the question • might have some limited analysis but it may lack focus and/or become confused. 	1–5 marks

How to structure a 25-mark question

Recommend the following answer structure:

- Introduction
- Analysis (including relevant diagram and application)

- Evaluation
- Analysis (including relevant diagram and application) if applicable.
- Evaluation
- Depending on depth of your previous points, add another round of analysis and evaluation.
- Conclusion.

A conclusion has these key elements:

1. Answer the question.
2. Justify your answer in step 1.
3. Consider other evaluation points, including real-world context, for further justification or that may go against your answer.

Level of response	Response:	Max 25 marks
5	<p>Sound, focused analysis and well-supported evaluation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is well organised, showing sound knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles with few, if any, errors • includes good application of relevant economic principles to the given context and, where appropriate, good use of data to support the response • includes well-focused analysis with clear, logical chains of reasoning • includes supported evaluation throughout the response and in a final conclusion. 	21–25 marks
4	<p>Sound, focused analysis and some supported evaluation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is well organised, showing sound knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles with few, if any, errors • includes some good application of relevant economic principles to the given context and, where appropriate, some good use of data to support the response • includes some well-focused analysis with clear, logical chains of reasoning • includes some reasonable, supported evaluation. 	16–20 marks
3	<p>Some reasonable analysis but generally unsupported evaluation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focuses on issues that are relevant to the question, showing satisfactory knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles but some weaknesses may be present • includes reasonable application of relevant economic principles to the given context and, where appropriate, some use of data to support the response • includes some reasonable analysis but which might not be adequately developed or becomes confused in places • includes fairly superficial evaluation; there is likely to be some attempt to make relevant judgements but these aren't well-supported by arguments and/or data. 	11–15 marks
2	<p>A fairly weak response with some understanding that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes some limited knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles is shown but some errors are likely • includes some limited application of relevant economic principles to the given context and/or data to the question • includes some limited analysis but it may lack focus and/or become confused • includes some evaluation which is weak and unsupported. 	6–10 marks
1	<p>A very weak response that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes little relevant knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles • includes application to the given context which is, at best, very weak • includes attempted analysis which is weak and unsupported. 	1–5 marks

25m- [L5]

- An excellent response overall that is fully focused on the key demands of the question
- Demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding that is precise and well selected Demonstrates analysis throughout which is well developed
- Applied effectively to the context and considers a balanced range of the issues in the question
- Makes judgements or provides solutions which are built effectively on analysis
- Shows balance and has a clear focus on the question as whole throughout

Evaluation

<p><u>Decision</u></p> <p>To begin your evaluation, you should simply decide on which side of the argument you agree with.</p>	
<p><u>It depends on</u></p> <p>The success of every decision will depend on a number of factors, aspects which the firm should consider prior to finalising their decision. You should include these factors here. Think about financial and operational factors which firms consider often. These “depends on” factors should be explained in this sector. Aim to include at least three.</p>	
<p><u>Short- and long-term factors to consider</u></p> <p>Any decisions will result in both short- and long-term consequences. When deciding on your short-term factor think about the immediate impact the decision will have on the stakeholders. In this context it may be worth thinking about the impact over a 12month period. Long term consequences will have a wider impact for the future.</p>	
<p><u>Cost (opportunity)</u></p> <p>Having made your decision what is the option forgone? What will the firm not be able to do having made their choice? What opportunities have they sacrificed by making this choice?</p>	
<p><u>Other factors which might impact the decision</u></p> <p>This section is an opportunity for you to incorporate any other factors into your answer. For example, you may want to introduce internal and external factors which you have not already discuss. In addition, it is advisable to include points related to functional areas which have not already been include (HR,Ops,Finance,Marketing)</p>	
<p><u>Main point</u></p> <p>End your paragraph with a clear, concise sentence with reaffirm your main points and links directly to the hook in the question.</p>	

How to answer a 4 marker questions

[4 Marker - Paper 1 & 2 - AQA A Level Economics - YouTube](#)

How to answer 9 & 15 marker questions

[9 & 15 Marker - Paper 1, 2 & 3 - AQA A Level Economics \(youtube.com\)](#)

How to get top grades in A-level Economics

[How to Get a Top Grade in A Level Economics - 12 Top Teacher Tips for Success | Reference Library | Economics | tutor2u](#)

How to answer 15 marker with an example

[Example 15 mark answer in style of AQA Economics \(tfurber.com\)](#)

How to answer 25 marker with an example

[Example 25-Mark Essay in style of AQA Economics A-level \(tfurber.com\)](#)

How to structure a 25 marker

[A Level Economics: 25 Markers - How to Structure Your Answer \(youtube.com\)](#)