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Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research

COURSEBOOK

David Towsey

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Cambridge International AS & A Level

Global Perspectives & Research

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David Towsey

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> Introduction

Who is this book for?

This book is designed to support learners and teachers with the Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research (9239) syllabus. Global Perspectives & Research is an unusual course in that it has several distinctive purposes:

- It is designed to be global in scope, introducing you to issues that affect a range of different people across the world and that are of sharp contemporary relevance for our planet in the 21st century.
- It encourages you to explore different perspectives (alternative ways of seeing particular situations) and to appreciate that there is usually more than one perspective on any issue we encounter.
- Although intended to be a valuable experience in itself, it is also intended to support the development of academic skills that you can apply to other subjects you are studying and also use in the next stage of your education or work.

By completing this course, you will acquire specific ways of working and attitudes to study that will change the way you approach all of your academic studies, not just this course.

The nature of Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research

Global Perspectives & Research is unlike most AS & A Level courses in that it is cumulative and integrated. It is cumulative in that each stage builds on the previous one. Your success in each of the assessments depends in a very direct way on the ones you have previously completed and the work you have done before. It is integrated in that the course as a whole fits very closely together, and the skills and attitudes you learn will depend on everything that you have done, not just on individual units or assessments taken separately.

The idea is that each stage of the course builds on the one before and that the whole of the course can be seen together, brought together in a metaphor called the **Critical Path**. This is introduced in detail in Chapter 1, but the book will continue to use it as a representation of the skills you are developing and how they fit together. It is a metaphor because it uses the idea of a path as a representation of a route towards a destination, but one that connects that end point with where you started from and shows how each step along the route builds on the one that went before. It is a 'critical' path because the linked skills you are building up will encourage you to be critical, or to question what you find around you.

You are about to start on the journey of learning that is the Critical Path. Like any journey, it will take time but, with every step, you will make progress. Enjoy your experiences as you go because the skills you develop along the way will be just as valuable, and lasting, as the destination you reach.

KEY WORD

Critical Path: an approach to learning and thinking that involves following a defined series of steps, which are linked together and build on each other. These steps are deconstruction, reconstruction, reflection, communication and collaboration.

> How to use this book

Throughout this coursebook, you will notice recurring features that are designed to help your learning. Here is a brief overview of what you will find.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

Learning intentions start each chapter and set out what you should expect to learn by the end of the chapter, helping you to navigate the content.

Checklists

☐ Checklists are provided within each chapter to help you with time management, setting important milestones and creating personal plans.

REFLECTION

Reflection boxes help you to think about your learning, understanding the skills you are developing and how you can enhance these within your learning.

DISCUSSION POINT

These are questions or activities that you can use to reflect in pairs or groups on the topic and what you have learnt.

KEY WORDS

Key words are highlighted in the text when they are first introduced. An accompanying definition explains the meanings of these words and phrases. You will also find definitions of these words in the glossary at the back of this book.

ACTIVITY

These are practical tasks that allow you to understand and apply relevant skills and perspectives to what you are learning.

> Transferring your skills

These sections highlight how the skills covered within the chapter are useful in other contexts, helping you to apply lifelong learning as you move into further study or work.

SUMMARY

The summaries sum up the content in each chapter, and refer back to the learning intentions, to help you recap the most important content within the chapter.

SELF-EVALUATION

At the end of each chapter, you will find a series of statements outlining the content that you should now understand. You might find it helpful to rate how confident you are for each of these statements when you are revising. You should revisit any topics that you rated 'Needs more work' or 'Almost there'.

› Chapter 1

Getting started with the Critical Path

LEARNING INTENTIONS

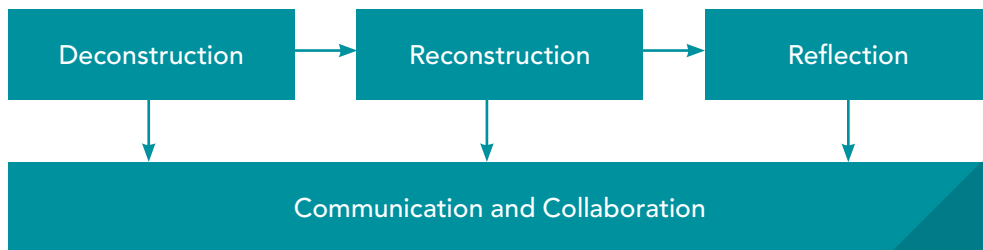
By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the relationship between skills and knowledge
- ask questions about a number of different global issues
- explain the Critical Path
- make use of the Critical Path to understand issues
- relate the Critical Path to the core academic skills of analysis and evaluation
- reflect on how the Critical Path can be used to develop skills and make decisions about issues and debates.
- understand how to manage your time effectively as a skill you can apply across and beyond the course.

This chapter will support you with all of the assessed components of Global Perspectives & Research: written exam-style answers, essays, team projects and your research report.

The Critical Path

The Critical Path consists of three linked steps which build on one another as types of thinking, and two closely associated skills of expression which support them:



Introduction

We live in a complex and ever-changing world. The amount of information in existence, and our access to it on a daily basis, would have been unimaginable for previous generations. This information is **global** both in its scale across the planet and in its **local** variety in many different places.

When we refer to something as ‘global’, we are not only concerned with things that relate to the whole globe, or world, at once. Global insights also come from comparing the situation in different global locations so that we understand the world through its diversity. Understanding global diversity, however, also means having a sharp sense of the local. When we study the local, we are looking at a specific place, not the world as a whole. This might be our own locality (our town, region or country) or concerns that are local to other places or cultures but not our own.

All of this variety also means that we will encounter a number of different, and frequently conflicting, points of view. Deciding who might be correct, and what we think ourselves, is not an easy task. We need some techniques that will enable us to discover what people think, why they believe what they do, and how we might develop, justify and present our own points of view.

Getting started – checklist

- ☐ Understand skills and knowledge
- ☐ Discuss global issues
- ☐ Explore the Critical Path

KEY WORDS

global: relating to the world as a whole, either looked at overall or compared in its diversity

local: relating to specific places in the world looked at individually. These might be villages, towns, regions or countries

skills: any mental or physical abilities you can improve through practising them

knowledge: understanding of facts or other information

1.1 Skills and knowledge

Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research differs from most other subjects that you might study. This is because it helps learners to develop **skills** rather than testing the recall of specific **knowledge**. It is designed to help you by giving you some tools and approaches to engage with the complexity of the modern world, to help you understand the views of others and to help you put forward your own views.

Being skilled means having the ability to do something effectively. It is any mental or physical ability in which you can become expert through practice or learning.

Knowledge is often seen as another word for the information or facts we possess about the world, as distinct from being skilled. However, knowledge and skills could be said to be closely related in a number of ways. Knowledge, in the sense in which we are interested, is ‘understanding of or information about a subject that you get by experience or study’ (according to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*). It could be said that being skilled is having developed the ability to understand a subject through practice. In this sense, skills are the tools we need to use knowledge effectively. We can improve our skills by using them repeatedly and reflecting on how we have used them in order to handle knowledge purposefully.

ACTIVITY 1.1

- 1 Make a list of five examples of knowledge you have acquired from your studies so far. This might include scientific knowledge, such as the boiling point of water, knowledge about different countries and cultures, or knowledge of specific information that is useful in the study of a subject.
- 2 Now make a list of five skills you think you already have as a learner. These might be the skills of writing, note-taking or organising your study notes and revision, or skills you have in speaking or interacting with others.

REFLECTION

What do you think the main differences are between skills and knowledge? Which is more important? Do we need both?

1.2 Global issues

Global Perspectives & Research starts with noticing **issues** in the world around us. Let's begin by exploring one of these.

What can we use to power our lives? For many, the answer is fossil fuels such as oil, gas or coal. For motor transport, heat and light, and electronic devices of all kinds, there is no clear alternative that would fully meet people's demands in all parts of the world. Yet these sources of energy have some clear limitations. Firstly, they are finite. Although they were laid down in the earth over millions of years, at our current rates of usage we will have used all of them up in just over a century, and possibly much more quickly than that. Secondly, there is significant scientific evidence that their use is changing our climate. Their emission of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere is warming the planet at rates that far exceed previous periods of natural climate change, which leads to the risk of catastrophic consequences of flooding and drought in different parts of the world. Yet many of the proposed solutions of renewable energy have their own problems. Can wind, wave or solar power produce enough energy to fill the gap and does the other alternative – nuclear power – carry too many risks of its own?

Growing international popular protest movements and some governments are arguing that the world needs to take rapid and significant action to reduce its use of energy. This includes avoiding air travel, switching away from petrol- and diesel-fuelled transport, and phasing out coal-fired power stations. On the other hand, some countries argue that the damage caused by moving away from fossil fuels will be too great, both for their economies and the communities that depend on the use of coal and gas.

KEY WORD

issue: a topic or idea of importance locally or globally



Figure 1.1: What is the impact of using fossil fuels – and are there any alternatives?

ACTIVITY 1.2

- 1 The issue here is where we should get our energy from. What is your view? Write down your ideas.
- 2 If possible, discuss the issue with a partner. Add any further ideas that emerge to your own list.
- 3 From your list, which do you think is the best source of energy? Perhaps you have another alternative source of power you would like to suggest or perhaps you think we should continue to use fossil fuels for as long as we can. Another response might be to ask whether we should be using as much energy in the first place, or even to question who the 'we' is here. Industrialised countries, located mostly in the northern hemisphere, use by far the most energy, although some rapidly industrialising countries, such as Brazil and China, are catching up fast. On the other hand, many countries in the developing world use far less. Consider these options and use them to develop your responses to this activity in more detail.

REFLECTION

We now have a range of possible responses to this issue. Are they all mutually contradictory, or could some be reconciled so that they support one another? For example, is it possible that the world could switch to several different forms of alternative energy, depending on local circumstances? On the other hand, the views of those who see fossil fuels as the only realistic source of energy for the industrialised world may always be in conflict with those who argue that fossil fuels are too polluting.

How can we decide between these alternatives, or can we do so at all? Are there additional details we could find out to resolve the disagreements, or at least better justify each view? Where would that information come from?

ACTIVITY 1.3

Read through the four issues on the following pages. If you are working in groups, you might want to take one issue each and present your findings to the whole class. You can consider doing this by presenting your ideas visually on a large sheet of paper, writing them up on the board, using a set of objects or just talking it through. Using PowerPoint or other slide presentation software is another option. Working as a group will give you the opportunity to explore each issue in more detail than possible if working on your own. It also allows everyone in the group to receive and share different ideas. For each issue, consider the following points:

- What is your own opinion about this issue?
- Are there other possible opinions? If you are working in a group, can you make a list of the opinions of each member of the group?
- Where different opinions demonstrate disagreements, can you resolve these by reaching a compromise?
- What could you find out to help you reach a more considered opinion?

Issue 1: Online communities



Figure 1.2: How do you communicate online?

The growth of the internet has transformed social, cultural and economic life in ways that were unimaginable even a few decades ago. Online communities such as Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram have allowed people to present themselves, and find and remain connected to others, in ways that would have previously been difficult or impossible.

Information and learning are now available on a near-ubiquitous level, simply by typing a term into a search engine, signing up for a discussion list or enrolling in an online educational course. The ability to publish and consume knowledge has also become highly democratic, crossing social groups and international boundaries in a way that is almost entirely outside the control of the authorities.

This power to construct and share your identity, however, has also brought about the ability to conceal it. Is the 16-year-old girl you are messaging actually a 25-year-old woman – or a 50-year-old man? The definition of ‘community’ has also shifted in less appealing ways. The student community, or game-playing community, or YouTube-watching community can helpfully extend our notion of the term in ways not limited by geography. However, other ‘communities’ have used the anonymity of the internet to share and spread offensive or illegal material. The internet has also become the favoured medium for radical political groups, often advocating intolerance or violence to disseminate their ideas.

DISCUSSION POINT

- Does it matter if people present themselves online differently to how they are in reality?
- How comfortable are you with these definitions of ‘community’?

Issue 2: Quality of life



Figure 1.3: Does this represent a good quality of life?

What makes people happiest? One answer might be money, but evidence from countries in the developed world suggests that this might not always be the case. In recent years, many countries have suffered from an increased threat of terrorism, which has produced a sense of personal insecurity. Despite similar levels of wealth in these countries, the availability of social and healthcare services can vary, meaning that the position of individual citizens can be much more precarious, especially if they experience unemployment or have not insured themselves against risks.

Work–life balance can also play a role. The advanced industrialised economies might be able to generate much more money, but in order to do so many individuals are encouraged to make themselves available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, receiving messages about their work on their smartphones. Even climate can also be a factor, as the dark winter nights in some parts of the world can cause psychological disorders related to the level of available light, especially if people have to get up early or come back late in order to travel to and from work.

DISCUSSION POINT

- In your view what are the most significant factors influencing personal happiness?
- Does money matter most in the end, or does the individual's level of personal security or freedom play a greater role?
- To be happy, is it necessary to be able to balance work with family, or does it all come down to geographical location?
- What does happiness mean?

Issue 3: Global trade

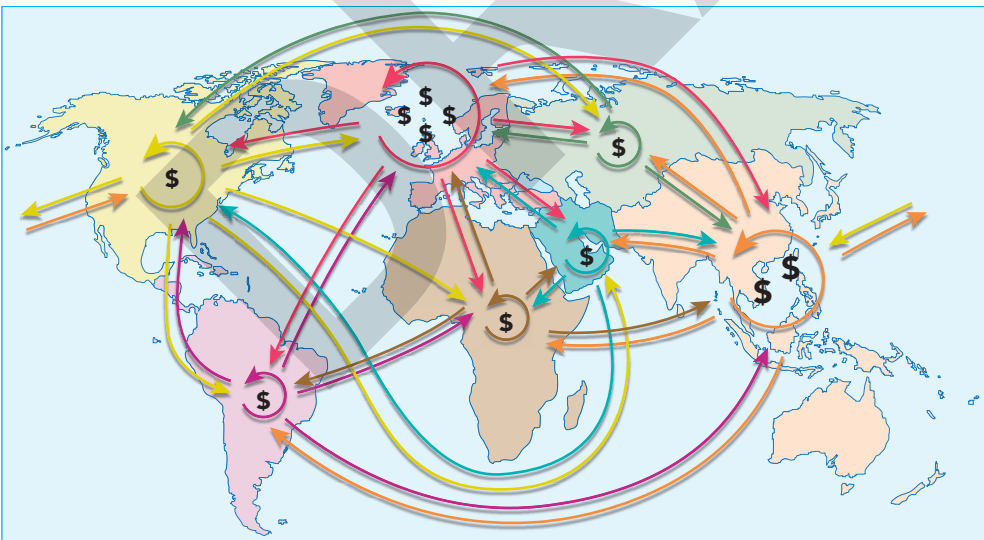


Figure 1.4: Are the global connections created by trade always a good thing?

Many of the manufactured goods purchased in Europe or North America are made in China or the Indian subcontinent. Sometimes this means that an item of clothing costs more to repair, or even to dry clean, than it cost to buy in the first place. For many electronic items, such as laptop computers or smartphones, the price of the individual product may be many times more than the monthly wage of the worker who assembled it.

Yet, and especially for electronic devices purchased on contract, it can often make more financial sense for the consumer to throw the product away after a couple of years in favour of a slightly upgraded model. Those discarded phones often end up back in the developing world, in vast waste dumps, where the metals and chemicals used in their manufacture slowly pollute the environment and make people sick.

DISCUSSION POINT

- Do you consider these sorts of relationships to be an inevitable part of global trade?
- Should factors such as the environment, human health or the gap between rich and poor play a greater role in international relations, whatever the cost?

Issue 4: Healthcare

In some countries, such as the United Kingdom, most aspects of healthcare are publicly funded and made free at the point of use through a government-backed health service. This is an enormous benefit to many people: medical treatment is related to need, rather than the ability to pay. However, getting treatment under such systems can mean a wait of many months, particularly for hospital appointments and surgical procedures. Some more recent (and expensive) drugs are also not available, even though they have been shown to help some people. Other people have expressed their concerns about the conditions (especially in terms of hygiene) of hospital wards and the general standards of care available.



Figure 1.5: How should healthcare be provided?

Some other countries, for example the USA, have a healthcare system based on private health insurance. There are no limits on the range of treatments available, no compromises on the standard of care and no significant waiting lists – provided you have the ability to pay or your insurers agree to pay. If your financial resources are more limited, you will receive considerably less or perhaps no medical treatment at all, however ill you are. Yet when former President Obama introduced a system in the USA with more publicly controlled elements and the requirement for everyone to have the option of reasonably priced health insurance, he met fierce political opposition.

DISCUSSION POINT

- What is the fairest system of healthcare? Is this the same as the most effective one?
- Does government healthcare place unacceptable limits on our ability to choose our own medical treatments?
- What about countries where little or no modern healthcare is available – public or private?
- What about healthcare in your own country? How does it compare with these alternatives?

REFLECTION

What do you think you learnt from Activity 1.3? What process did you follow to reach conclusions? Were there any barriers you needed to overcome?

1.3 Following the Critical Path

It is now possible to consider the linked steps involved in following the Critical Path in some more detail. We will see how they can be used to explore and understand global issues and debates.

The Critical Path process

If you did Activity 1.3 yourself, or discussed it in groups with other learners, you may find that you had to do something like this:

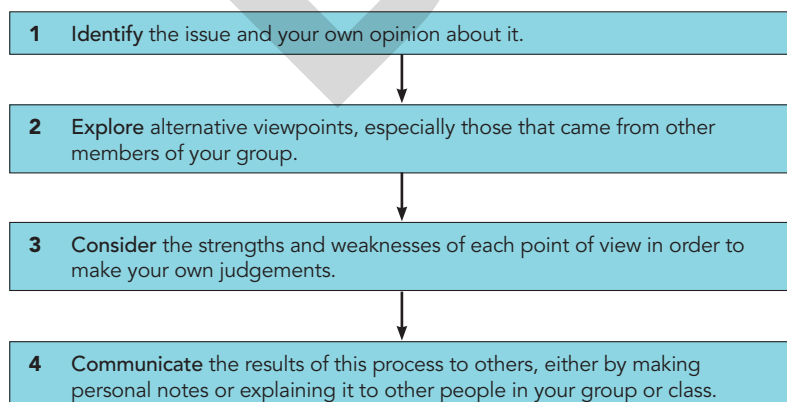


Figure 1.6: The Critical Path is a linked process

Each of these activities needs to be undertaken in order, and each one builds on the previous one:

- Before being able to say anything about the issue, we need to *identify* it first. This allows us to decide what we are responding to, what we want to say and what that might mean.
- Once we have identified the issue, then we can *explore* alternative points of view, measuring how they differ from our own responses. These points of view might include information and ideas we find from elsewhere.
- All this then allows us to *consider* the extent to which those other viewpoints might make us change or develop our own viewpoints.
- We can *communicate* the results of this process to others, by speaking or by writing, in a report, essay or piece of reflective writing. Our audience is important, as any communication involves a relationship, or *collaboration*, with other people, whether we have ever met them before or not.

In truth, both the communication and the collaboration do not occur only at the end of the process. Just as, when discussing the issues in the activity, you may have been working with others from the start, you will also have been undertaking many separate and individual acts of communication along the way.

DISCUSSION POINT

- Of these four steps, which did you find easiest and which did you find most challenging to complete?
- What do you think the effect is of combining the steps so that they build on each other?

In embarking on this path and following this course of linked tasks to complete Activity 1.3, you have in fact demonstrated all the skills required of you by Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research. As with any skill, repeated practice will improve the precision and detail of your performance of it. You will also need to be able to explore how you can follow the path in a variety of different contexts: answering formal questions, researching and writing essays, working with groups of people, giving oral presentations to an audience and putting together an extended research report. However, the path itself, and its skills, will remain the same.

In Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research, we call this path the Critical Path. The course develops and tests your ability to perform the skills associated with each stage of the path and to combine them together in order to carry out typical academic or professional tasks. In this sense, mastering the Critical Path will give you a core set of competencies for the other International A Levels, or equivalent courses, that you are also following.

Deconstruction

Deconstruction is what you do first, and involves answering some questions about what you are looking at, for example:

- What is the issue you are investigating?
- Are there different points of view about this issue?

1 Getting started with the Critical Path

- Who is saying what? Where are they saying it? This might be in newspapers, magazines, books or other kinds of sources.
- Where is the evidence that will enable you to reach your own answers?

You may notice that all of these questions have something in common: they require **analysis**. Analysis literally means ‘breaking down’ (from the Greek term *analusis*: ‘breaking apart’ or ‘loosening’). It is one of the most important skills A Level learners need to have. We are breaking down what we are asking into issues, views, sources and evidence. By doing this we can see the inner workings of what we are enquiring about more clearly and precisely.

Even when you have answered these questions, you will not be finished. As well as breaking down views, sources and evidence, we need to make some judgements about how useful or convincing they are:

- How persuasive is that point of view?
- How convincing is the person, organisation or publication that presents it?
- How effectively is it supported by evidence?

In doing so, you will not only be analysing issues, views and evidence, you will be engaging in **evaluation**. When we evaluate something, we are making judgements on its value. This involves measuring its strengths and weaknesses in order to make a decision on how convincing or useful it is for the task in hand. These questions of evaluation will be broken down further and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

REFLECTION

Are there examples from your previous experience where you have had to analyse or evaluate? How did you find this?

Reconstruction

Reconstruction follows from deconstruction as the next stage on the path. They are closely related to one another, but while deconstruction works inwards, measuring and weighing up individual views, sources and evidence, reconstruction faces outwards. Interestingly, another term for reconstruction is **synthesis**. This is the opposite of analysis and comes from the Greek verb *syntithenai*: ‘to put together’ or ‘to combine’. Rather than just looking at one point of view, reconstruction is concerned with **debates**: how might that view be challenged and what are the alternatives?

Some of the questions we might ask here include:

- Who would agree or disagree with this view and why?
- Where else would we find additional evidence in support of this view?
- Why does more than one person or organisation subscribe to this view?
- What leads individuals or organisations to support one view more than another?
- Which approaches to issues seem stronger or more convincing, and why?

Chapter 3 will combine reconstruction with deconstruction to show how these questions can be answered. It will also introduce the idea of **perspectives**: as the title of this course suggests, these are central to the skills we are trying to develop. The organisation of points of view into shared and opposing groups is key. (Perspectives are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.)

KEY WORDS

analysis: the breakdown of something into smaller parts in order to understand it more clearly

evaluation: an identification of the strengths and weaknesses of something in order to make a judgement about it

KEY WORDS

synthesis: the combining of more than one thing together in order to understand them more effectively by exploring their differences and similarities

debate: the confrontation of opposing views on an issue, where each tries to show they are more convincing than the others

perspective: a coherent worldview that responds to an issue, made up of argument, evidence, assumptions, and perhaps also from a particular context

REFLECTION

Write down at least one (no more than two or three) occasions in your life when you had to combine information from a number of different places in order to get something done or find something out. How did you go about doing this?

Reflection

Reflection has several different, but equally important, meanings on the Critical Path:

- 1 Reflection is firstly about considering what you think, and why. Which view is strongest? Which approach is better? Which evidence is more convincing? Being able to look carefully at what you have found out, consider it and make a judgement is one of the most important outcomes of this course. Doing it well depends on its close relationship of reflection with the stages of deconstruction and reconstruction. Reflection is not the same as just having an opinion, it needs to be supported by the views and evidence you have already broken down and grouped together.
- 2 Reflection also has a second sense as part of your studies on this course. You are encouraged, all the time, to reflect on what you are doing and how you are working. This includes your own learning, but also your experiences of working together with others, especially in team projects. This type of reflection identifies and weighs up what you have achieved so you can measure the learning you have already achieved and perform better in similar situations in the future.

Chapter 4 explores the first type of reflection, focusing on the kind of thinking and judgements you will need to make when writing essays, and how this relies on what you have already deconstructed and reconstructed. Chapter 8 is concerned with the second type of reflection, both in your general development as a learner and for the assessed reflective paper you are asked to write on the work you have done for the team project.

Communication

Finally, we will now deal with communication and collaboration, not because they come at the end of the process, but because they inform every stage, whether they are assessed there as part of the A Level or not.

Communication has a number of different forms, depending on how and where you are doing it:

- Firstly, by following this course, you will become more effective at communicating in writing using formal, academic formats. One key format you will need to produce successfully is the essay, and in doing so you will need to be able to communicate appropriately and effectively in this form.
- Secondly, you will also develop your skills of individual oral communication by producing a formal presentation as part of the team project. This will be your opportunity to effectively communicate your ideas to an audience for up to ten minutes, using appropriate techniques and resources to make your message as compelling as possible. This is an important skill for life, both in many university courses and in employment, where you will often be expected to present formally to your peers, those you manage or people who are more senior than you.

Chapter 5 specifically focuses on the skills of written communication you need for writing a formal, academic essay. Chapter 7 gives lots of detailed advice and activities to help you learn and practise the skills you will need to put together and deliver an effective oral presentation.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a specialised form of interpersonal communication and working. It is a general term for the skills and attitudes required by people when they work together to achieve a shared aim or use the work of others in their team to improve their own individual learning and performance.

Human beings are social animals and we would achieve very little if we worked entirely on our own, without the help or contribution of others. This is especially the case in an educational setting. Think about the different ways, every day, in which you collaborate with the teacher and other learners in every class you are part of, whether Global Perspectives & Research or other subjects. This will continue in university or the workplace, and this course is designed to help with developing those skills.

DISCUSSION POINT

Talk to a group of other learners (who may or may not be following the Global Perspectives & Research course) about your experiences of working together with people.

Considering your past experiences and sharing your feelings is an important first step towards the work you will do to develop your collaborative skills on this course.

You are also, however, asked to collaborate in a more specific way when you undertake the team project. Although your final presentation will be an individual performance reflecting your own views and approach, it will rely in part on the common issue and collaborative research you have undertaken as a team with other learners. Effective collaboration here is something that will make this task less challenging. When you write your reflective paper as part of the team project, you will not only be required to reflect on your individual learning, you will also be asked to consider how effectively you worked with your other team members. Knowing something about effective collaboration in a professional setting and how to measure this will therefore be very useful when you come to write that reflective paper.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the question of collaboration. This chapter is mainly focused on the collaboration that will be expected of you while undertaking the team project, and how to make effective judgements on the quality of that collaboration. However, it also has lessons you can apply to any collaborative activity, both in your learning for other parts of the course, and in your education and life more broadly.

A note on the research report and the Critical Path

The work you will do on the written paper, essay and team project does not only lead to an AS in Global Perspectives & Research. This work is also essential preparation for your research report. This will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 9, the final chapter of this book. At this stage, however, it is worth noting that this also means that the various stages of the Critical Path come together to reach the path's destination: the extended report on the thinking and research you will have done for the topic you have selected. As such, it will be your opportunity to demonstrate how well you can combine deconstruction, reconstruction, reflection and communication in undertaking an academic project you have chosen for yourself.

1.4 Time management

You will need to organise your time effectively in order to decide what you need to do, to plan the order you need to do it in and to ensure you are building up your skills on schedule in order to become fully competent. Time management is a skill that is required not only in doing this course, but also for success right across your life, whether it is at school, at work or even in your personal life.

Like many other skills you will need for this course, the ability to manage time well is transferrable. It can be used not just in one situation, but in a number of different contexts you might encounter now and in the future. For example, you might find that lessons take up less time now you are studying A Levels: the work has not reduced, but you are expected to manage your own time to do more work independently. If you go to university, you will find that this is even more the case. Your lectures and seminars will take up even less of your week and you will need to manage your workload, within specific time limits. Many students are also involved in societies, events or sports teams, and they need to plan and manage time for those activities alongside their academic commitments. In full-time work, many jobs will require you to manage time yourself in order to complete the tasks you have been assigned. Of course you will need to fit all of this in within your working hours, leaving time for everything else that is happening in your life. Time management is therefore one of the most important transferrable skills you need to master.

The starting point for time management is to be aware of what you need to do before you start doing anything. If you know what is required of you in advance, then you can categorise it and prioritise it in a variety of different ways. One of the most common ways to organise your time is to make a to-do list. This is a list of the tasks that you have to undertake. Writing them down can help as it takes away the burden of remembering them. This is, however, only the starting point. The most important thing is to reflect on which tasks are most important and the order to do them in. In other words, which should you do first? Deciding on priorities and the best sequence of tasks will enable you to use your time effectively to get the right things done in the correct order.

The Eisenhower matrix (invented by Dwight Eisenhower, Allied Supreme Commander during the Second World War and then president of the USA, to manage his work) is one method for organising your tasks once you have written them down. This categorises them according to whether they are urgent or important:

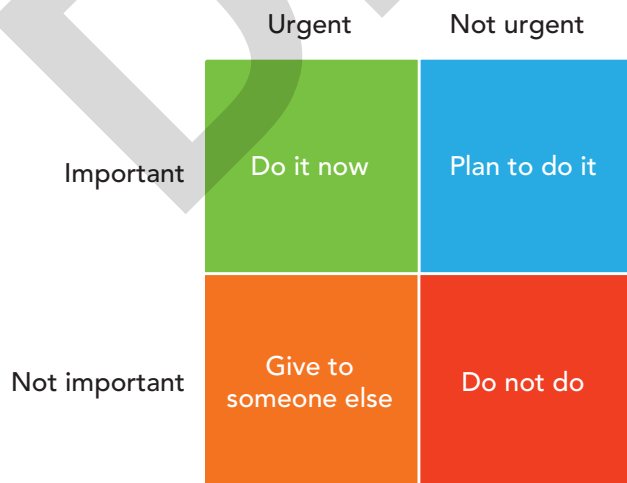


Figure 1.7: The Eisenhower matrix is a good way to prioritise your work. Where would you place today's tasks?

Tasks that are urgent and important are those that need to be done immediately. Those that are important, but not urgent, should be planned to be done in sequence at a point in the future. Urgent but non-important tasks can probably be done by someone else, and things that are neither important nor urgent probably do not need to be done at all.

One way of further categorising the important, non-urgent tasks you need to plan is to consider the final outcome of each task. What would you like to see happen? You can then list the tasks that would bring about that goal and think about the order they need to happen in. For example, you may need to learn how to identify arguments before you can locate some arguments on a particular topic, and you need those arguments before you can organise them into different views.

After identifying which tasks are urgent and/or important, you should then consider which tasks are quite large and need to be broken down into smaller actions in order to complete them. For example, learning how to identify arguments means learning what an argument is, and then practising with some example arguments until you can confidently identify ones you come across. Breaking a task down into smaller actions will help you to allocate the appropriate amount of time to each one.

Finally, list the things you need to do in chronological order and then give a due date to each. From this you can clearly see the date by which each task needs to be done. It will also enable you to identify the task you need to do first.

ACTIVITY 1.4

- 1 Make a list of the things you need to do for one of the subjects you are studying. It does not need to be Global Perspectives & Research. They could even be things you have to do for a hobby or something else you are organising in your personal life.
- 2 Draw out a copy of the Eisenhower matrix and write each task into the most appropriate part.
- 3 For the tasks that are important but not urgent, put the tasks in the order you will need to complete them, with the final goal last. Use this to give yourself a deadline for each task. Identify the task you need to do first.
- 4 After a week of working on the tasks, reflect on whether this has helped you to organise your time better and get more done.

› Transferring your skills

As we have just seen, time management is a transferrable skill: it can be used in a range of different situations you will encounter as part of your Global Perspectives & Research course, in other courses you do, and in your life in general.

In this chapter we have discussed a number of other skills that make up the Critical Path:

- Deconstructing, or breaking down, an issue
- Reconstructing, or putting together, different views
- Reflecting on what you think or what you have done
- Communicating your ideas
- Collaborating, or working together.

These are all also transferrable. When you did Activity 1.3, you covered all the areas of the Critical Path. Becoming a more effective learner of Global Perspectives & Research will now involve transferring those skills: repeating and developing them in more detail and in a range of different contexts. It will be through that process of repetition – practising, getting feedback, identifying strengths and weaknesses, then testing yourself again in new contexts – that you will become a fully competent learner of Global Perspectives & Research. You will also be able to use these skills in other ways beyond the course. The ‘Transferring your skills’ section at the end of Chapters 2–9 will highlight some ideas about how you can do this.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have:

- identified why skills are important, and considered the focus of the Global Perspectives & Research course on developing skills
- considered what ‘issues’ are in a global context, and practised using those skills to explore, discuss and make decisions on a number of example issues together in groups, as well as reflecting upon and communicating those decisions
- formally identified this process as something called the Critical Path, and showed how this path relates to each stage and type of learning you will undertake for Global Perspectives & Research
- used the Critical Path to provide a roadmap for the whole of this book and to show how each chapter will help you to develop particular skills and prepare for specific contexts
- introduced time management as an important skill across the course and explained some of the ways in which it can be developed.

SELF-EVALUATION

How much progress do you feel you have made in developing your skills?

For each skill listed below:

- assess your progress and tick the appropriate box
- then write at least one example of where you think you have successfully achieved this skill in your work on the Global Perspectives & Research course.

If you need to do some more work to master a skill, write down two or three things you can do to practise it further. Make these actions specific: think of how you will measure their effectiveness and set a time limit for yourself to achieve them in.

I can ...	Needs more work	Nearly there	Ready to move on
Explain the relationship between skills and knowledge			
Identify global issues and ask questions about them			
State the different parts of the Critical Path			
Understand how the skills of analysis, synthesis and reflection relate to the Critical Path			
Manage my time effectively to undertake tasks			