

Peter Stimpson and Alastair Farquharson
Cambridge International
AS and A Level
Business
Studies
Second edition

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This book is dedicated to Jackie, Julia and Myriam for their love and support.

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Introduction

Who is this book for?

The second edition of this book accurately and comprehensively follows the new Cambridge International AS- and A-level Business Studies syllabus (9707).

If you are a student preparing for the examinations based on this syllabus, or a teacher preparing students for the examinations, you can be confident that the book provides complete coverage of the course to the appropriate level. Other students of Business Studies or Business and Management could also benefit greatly from the subject content, activities and advice that this book contains. Students following the AQA, OCR or EDEXCEL A levels, the CIE Pre-U course or the International Baccalaureate Higher and Standard Diploma Programme will also find this an invaluable resource.

The first edition was also used in Higher Education institutions as an introductory text for Management and Business Studies degree courses. The changes and additions made to this second edition will reinforce its usefulness for this purpose.

What makes this book different?

The key distinctive feature of this book is the international perspective it gives to the study of businesses, strategies and decisions. There are many references to case studies, data and examples from countries all around the world. This is deliberate – very few businesses operate today in a narrow national marketplace and as a Business Studies student you are encouraged to look at business organisations and business decisions from an international viewpoint that accurately mirrors the real world.

The focus on business strategic decision making in the final unit means that the book also highlights some very important aspects of business management:

- Strategic decision making is holistic and cannot be undertaken effectively by studying a series of unconnected subject areas.
- There is no one perfect solution to a business problem – a variety of different strategic solutions might exist that reflect the objectives of the business, the external environment and the cultures of both the organisation and the country in which it operates.

The differences between AS and A level

There are *two* important differences between the AS- and A-level syllabus (or specification):

- 1 More subject content is examined at A level than at AS. A-level material is clearly indicated in this book with a logo and a colour bar in the margin of the page (illustrated on the right here).
- 2 The examination skills are weighted differently – much more emphasis is placed on subject knowledge at AS level but A level puts greater emphasis on analysis and evaluation. These differences are reflected in the types of questions contained in this book and in the suggested answers and the Student's and Teacher's CD-ROMs.

AS students do not need to study the A-level sections in this book or the associated activities. A-level students and their teachers must remember that the A-level syllabus includes all AS content and, therefore, all sections of this book need to be followed.

A-level students should tackle both the AS- and the A-level questions in the book. AS-type questions will also feature on A-level examination papers but they will always be followed by a more demanding part question. Again, this pattern is followed in AS-level and A-level Business Studies.




What are the key features of this book?

- **Learning objectives** – identifying the content and concepts covered in each chapter.
- **‘Introducing the topic’ case studies** – raising important areas for discussion and giving context to the business applications of the material to be covered in each chapter.
- **Clearly laid-out text** – with easy-to-follow subsections and many tables of data and ‘key advantages and disadvantages’.
- **Top tips** – helping avoid common errors made by students in examinations.
- **Hundreds of in-chapter activities** – giving practice at applying what is being learned, using evidence and data taken mainly from actual business examples.
- **Learning outcomes** – reinforcing the issues that should be understood by the end of each chapter.
- **Revision questions** – checking on essential understanding and knowledge.
- **Case studies with examination-style questions** – testing the skills of application, analysis and evaluation, using real international business situations.
- **Examination-style essay questions** – giving practice at writing longer, discursive answers.

What is the CD-ROM for?

The CD-ROM attached to this book provides invaluable support to students. It contains:

- detailed answers to one activity per chapter – you will have to do the others for yourself! Activities for which an answer is provided on the CD-ROM are marked with a logo  in the text
- a set of ten multiple-choice questions and answers for every chapter
- a full glossary of all the Key definitions in the book
- exemplar marking grids of the kind used by examiners when marking students’ examination answers
- revision mind maps for every chapter.

There is a second CD available to teachers (ISBN 978-0-521-12693-9) which provides detailed answers to all of the other activities, case studies and essay questions in the book along with suggestions for further reading.

Skills needed by students of Business Studies

Your final examinations, both at AS level and A level, will test the following skills:

- 1 **Knowledge** and critical understanding of the syllabus content.
- 2 **Application** of this knowledge and critical understanding of problems and issues that arise from both familiar and unfamiliar situations.
- 3 **Analysis** of problems, issues and situations. This skill can be demonstrated by:
 - distinguishing between statements of fact and opinion
 - explaining trends in data and the likely causes of them
 - examining the implications of a suggested idea or strategy.
- 4 **Evaluation** and judgement. This skill can be demonstrated by:
 - weighing up the reliability of data
 - discussing and debating issues and arguing points to reach an appropriate decision
 - discriminating between alternative explanations and strategies
 - judging the usefulness of the main concepts and models of Business Studies.

All of these skills will be developed as you progress through this book, especially if you work through the many questions that are presented for your self-assessment. Chapter 38 gives further details of how examiners assess the four skills and how to prepare for examinations.

Using the book

Even the keenest student is unlikely to read this textbook from cover to cover in one evening. Instead, it should be used to support and guide your learning as you progress through the syllabus. Make use of the many activities and revision questions to support and assess your learning.

The author hopes that the book, as well as providing essential subject support, will achieve two further objectives. Firstly, that it will encourage students to be observant and curious about all forms of business activity. Secondly, that, as a consequence, they will be keen to discover what is happening in business organisations, at international, national and local levels, and to bring these findings into their studies. To this end, there is also the expectation that students will update their knowledge through the frequent use of libraries, newspapers, business-oriented TV programmes and the internet.

Peter Stimpson
April 2010

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