Both texts tell us something about the consequences of living in the global village. In Wikipedia, the advantages of world-wide sharing and participation are offset by the problems of placing group consensus above accuracy. In 'Interpreter of Maladies', one consequence of easy travel to the rest of the world is that we can be no wiser at the end of the trip than we were at the start, returning home with our attitudes, values and beliefs completely unchanged.

Notes from the Marking Centre

Section III – Module C: Texts and Society
Question 8 – Elective 1 – The Global Village
In better responses, candidates developed a thesis that clearly addressed the question and demonstrated a strong understanding of the elective, based on a detailed knowledge of the prescribed and related texts. Thoughtful choice of related texts allowed these candidates to integrate their discussion, often on a conceptual level. An informed and confident voice was a consistent feature of the better responses.

In weaker responses, candidates made simple generalisations about the concept of the elective, which often led to a superficial or literal retelling of the selected texts. Some responses were driven by an explanation of techniques rather than an engagement with the ideas of the module.

Some candidates relied on related material that did not facilitate their engagement with the elective or the question. Related material for these candidates was often simplistic or irrelevant. Some candidates selected material derived from historical contexts that were not congruent with ‘the global village’. The responses of these candidates seemed to be more fitting with a previous elective from this module: The Individual and the Institution. Weaker responses often did not engage with the question.

Exercise
Understanding the Notes from the Marking Centre
1. Why is it important to develop a clear thesis?
2. What is a “conceptual level”?
3. Why is “retelling” a problem?
4. What kind of related material do you need and why?
5. Why is explaining the techniques not the best approach?

2010 Paper 2 Section III Module C – Elective 1: The Global Village

‘An individual’s attitudes and beliefs can be challenged by the experience of living in the global village.’
Discuss this view with reference to your prescribed text and at least ONE other related text of your own choosing.

Sample response: Novel
Prescribed text: The Year of Living Dangerously, Christopher Koch, 1978
Related text: Bend it Like Beckham, Gurinder Chadha, 2002 (film)
The idea of the ‘global village’ has been with us since the 1960s, when Marshall McLuhan used the term to describe the way that new technologies would change how people lived and thought. While ‘global village’ suggests that technology can bring people closer together in a unified, global community, it also inevitably results in clashes of culture when the many different traditions and viewpoints from around the globe meet and conflict. To successfully negotiate the global village, people need to adjust to the challenges posed by encountering different values and beliefs. The way the global village challenges people’s attitudes and beliefs can be seen in Christopher Koch’s novel, *The Year of Living Dangerously* and Gurinder Chadha’s film, *Bend it Like Beckham*.

**The Year of Living Dangerously** is set in Jakarta in 1965, a year of conflict for Indonesia and a time of great instability in South-east Asia as Western colonialism came to an end and political borders changed after World War II. The novel deals with the ways that Western viewpoints are challenged by people and events in Indonesia, and Koch is quite critical of those who exploit the country without ever really trying to understand or engage with its culture and people. The characters in the novel fall into two distinct categories: those who are changed by the experience of living in another culture and those who do not learn anything new about themselves or others. The most important characters who grow through having their attitudes and beliefs challenged are Billy and Guy; the other Western journalists and diplomats remain aloof and insulated from the real Indonesia, having no more real insight when they leave the country than when they first arrived.

Billy is the one who most clearly rises to the challenge of different attitudes and beliefs. As an Anglo-Chinese and a dwarf, he is already between two worlds and, to some extent, an outsider in the journalists’ group. His size and appearance help him to blend into the Jakarta crowds and give him more freedom than the tall, white Westerners have. This is an advantage for him, as he is able to take a wider view than the other journalists and has a much greater understanding of the real problems confronting the Indonesians. Billy is an idealist, with a highly developed sense of justice and injustice. Because of this, he immerses himself passionately in the politics of Indonesia and takes personal responsibility for Ibu and her child. He covers the political instability of 1965 from the perspective of the Indonesian people, rather than remaining remote from events as almost all the other journalists do. He is so challenged by the poverty and injustice he sees that he takes political action himself, hanging out the banner criticising Sukarno, and paying with his life.
In contrast, the other journalists remain sealed inside the Wayang Bar in Jakarta, never breaking out of their preconceived notions of the country or its people. They have nothing to do with the Indonesians, except for sexual exploitation, and mix only with other Westerners, reinforcing each others’ views but learning nothing new. They view the Indonesians as child-like and inferior, and do not ever come to understand the complexities of the culture and the people. Koch uses the metaphor of the Wayang for the Indonesian culture and sensibility. Billy tries to make the Wayang a reality through his reading of himself as Semar, Guy as Arjuna and Jill as Srikandi. The others, however, live in an artificial, Westernised version of Indonesia, called the Wayang Bar, but remote from the real thing and protecting them from the challenges of confronting and dealing with different attitudes and beliefs.

In Bend it Like Beckham, we see some different ways in which the global village challenges beliefs and attitudes, among these that it can create challenges growing up and cause conflict between the different generations in a family. The film is set in multicultural London, where there are many races and cultures and many groups who feel that they are outsiders in some ways, because they are not part of the dominant ‘Anglo’ group. The global context is established through soccer, the ‘world game’, which is a point of contact across cultures, religions, races and genders. The Bhamra family also establish their global status through the jobs of Mr Bhamra, a pilot, Pinky, a flight attendant, and the frequent trips of the family to the Punjab.

The main challenge to attitudes and beliefs in the film centres around Jess’s desire to play soccer and her parent’s wishes for her to learn traditional Punjabi domestic skills, study law and marry an acceptable Indian man. Jess hopes to make a career in soccer, but is held back by the traditional view that “Indian girls aren’t supposed to play football”. Her mother tells her that she must give up any plans for a future in sport and “start behaving like a proper woman”. Parental resistance to Jess playing soccer is increased by the fact that it conflicts with many of the rules for acceptable behaviour for girls in Indian culture. She is not supposed to show bare flesh or have physical contact with men and should keep herself out of the public eye as much as possible, all of which conflict with playing sport and training with a male coach.

In trying to be true to herself and still comply with her parents’ wishes, Jess finds herself in an impossible situation. The challenges and difficulties of her situation mean that she is caught in a round of deceptions and lies, shown most clearly when she goes to Hamburg without her parents’ knowledge. She realises after this that no matter
However, whereas in *The Year of Living Dangerously* we see people who do not learn from the challenges of living in the global village, in *Bend it Like Beckham* the central dilemma helps all the characters to develop a broader understanding of difference and reach a point of acceptance about conflicting values. Jess’s stance challenges her father to reassess his own attitudes about sport. We discover that he was a talented cricketer in India, but was excluded from playing in England because of racism. This has made him hostile to sport. He learns from Jess’s insistence on playing soccer that he must deal with the hurt of rejection and take up the challenge of racism, not hide from it. He is shown in the final scenes of the film playing cricket again. Jess’s mother must also deal with the challenges Jess poses to traditional beliefs and customs. She must accept that she is likely to have only one daughter, Pinky, who will follow the traditional Indian role, while the other adopts a much more independent, Western way of life.

Jules’s mother does not initially understand or accept the way Jules is influenced by international sport. She, too, wants her daughter to adopt the traditional feminine role and settle down with a suitable husband. In this, we see how the two cultures, English and Indian, are connected by their opposition to girls playing professional soccer. However, when it becomes clear that Jules will not abandon her plans, Mrs Paxton accepts the challenge, makes an effort to learn about the game and supports her daughter. This has the added advantage of bringing the family closer together, rather than dividing them.

Pinky’s wedding and the football final happen simultaneously. Chadha edits these two events so that the action in one mirrors the action in the other and we can see how much these two cultural rituals have in common. Both events have central players, supporting crowds, choreographed or planned moves, drama, joy, elation and special costumes. By cutting between the two events and showing us how alike they really are, we see that the cultural divisions are not as great as they might initially seem. The challenge for us as viewers is to recognise what unites us, not divides us, in the global village.

Both texts show us that there are significant challenges to living in the global village and how we respond to those challenges is important. In *The Year of Living Dangerously*, most characters reject the challenge and remain emotionally closed and culturally divided. When Guy accepts the challenge, he becomes more aware and a better person. In *Bend it Like Beckham*, Chadha shows us how accepting the challenges and differences of the global village can lead to personal growth and stronger ties within and between communities.

**Follow up**

Look up the Notes from the Marking Centre and the Marking Guidelines for the 2010 Examination (on the Board of Studies website). Use these guidelines to identify what was valued and to assess the sample 2010 responses.