



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

Mark scheme

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GCE

Archaeology

Unit ACH2

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Unit 2: Post-Excavation, Dating and Interpretation (Techniques and Methods)

Tell Abu Hureyra

Mark initially to the middle of bands. With 2 mark bands, whenever in doubt, mark low for L1 and high for L3/4.

Question 1

(a) **Study Figure 1.**

Why have these grains survived? (3 marks)

- L1: Plausible but not the main reason e.g. anaerobic conditions, hard outer casing. Dry region OR understands that the process of decay has been arrested by charring **1**
- L2: Aware that **carbonisation** has occurred (e.g. says so) OR **explains** how charring has stopped decay/bacteria **2**
- L3: Explanation of why carbonisation retards decay (both parts L2) **3**

Question 2

Study Figure 2.

What conclusions can be drawn from this diagram? (7 marks)

- L1: Face value responses, largely descriptive. For 2 marks likely to 'tell the story' of the annual cycle. 1 mark for partial accounts **1-2**
- L2: Summative responses on diet or seasonality. May describe each season or environments or foods in detail and add an overall comment e.g. 'certain foods available all year and others in particular seasons' or 'narrower food choice in February' **3-5**
- L3: Answers which emphasise interpretation. Likely to focus on seasonality, sedentism, exploitation of different environments, wide range food sources etc. **6-7**

Do not expect ACH5 type responses but credit them if they are relevant. Also credit relevant comments on survival/recovery of evidence at top level in appropriate band.

Question 3

Study Figures 2, 3(a) and 3(b).

Explain the value of archaeologists carrying out these activities. (7 marks)

- L1: **Purely descriptive** responses or which only identify experiments **1**
- L2: **Vague or general** statements of value e.g. 'to understand lifestyles and diet' or 'for empathy' etc. **2**
- L3: Answers which focus on **relevant areas** which archaeologists might be **investigating** e.g. function of tools, nutritional value, how to prepare and cook knotgrass, what it tastes like, how it would be used, how long it might take to process. Credit range. Just 'to test their ideas' = 3 marks. Generic experimental responses alone can get up to 4 marks dependent on quality **3-5**
- L4: Answers which focus on **the use to which archaeologists might put such experiments** such as using experimental data to identify/interpret archaeological remains (e.g. waste products) or **very good** level 3 responses which consider the possible implications of investigations such as the possible contribution of knotgrass to overall diets **6-7**

Question 4Study **Figure 4**.

What does this diagram tell us?

(4 marks)

- L1: Face value, largely descriptive responses. These range from ‘More gazelle than bos killed to layer by layer changes described OR answers which explain how the diagram works **1-2**
- L2: Answers which identify a pattern such ‘gazelle kills decline over time and are replaced by sheep’ **3**
- L3: Answers which combine L2 with an understanding of horizons OR good responses on trends which recognise and explain the shift from hunting to herding **4**

Question 5

How might archaeologists use **Figure 4** when comparing the economies and occupational sequences of other sites in the area? (4 marks)

- L1: Vague statements which allude to patterns e.g. ‘to see what they had in common’ **1**
- L2: To compare diets/hunting/environment across the region or ‘to get a broader picture of TAH’ where candidates interpret the question as being about other trenches on this site OR answers which show an awareness that dating may be relevant **2**
- L3: Faunal dating (explained for 4) or building up regional sequence e.g. in the transition to farming. To see if TAH was ‘typical’ = 3 **3-4**

Question 6Study **Figure 5**.

Identify and briefly explain A, B and C.

(8 marks)

1 mark each for identification. A = 3 B = 2 C = 3 marks each for quality of explanation

- A ‘date’, mid-point or radiocarbon date/approx 8900 or gives margin range/error margin or range
- B sample number/lab code or British Museum
- C Before present **and up to 2 from**/c1950/converts to c9000BC/calibrated

Question 7

Blades of obsidian which had been imported from a considerable distance were found on the site.
Explain how obsidian can be used to date sites. (5 marks)

- L1: Generic e.g. helps dates contexts or plausible (typology of blades). Also answers which could be applied to any artefact e.g. dating of blade residues **1**
- L2: Mentions Obsidian Hydration or vaguely accurate descriptions without terminology **2**
- L3: Explains either hydration or how samples are processed. Both but very unbalanced for 4 **3-4**
- L4: Both elements **5**

Don't expect very detailed knowledge. The following is sufficient: 'Obsidian absorbs water from the time an edge is broken or flaked. This 'hydration' occurs at a uniform rate and can be used to date the time of flaking'. Processing might say 'A thin sample is cut from the blade and examined under a powerful microscope. The width of the hydration layer is relative to the date'. Credit responses in diagrammatic form where they demonstrate understanding.

Don't expect knowledge of regional variation in hydration rates or problems due to reuse.

Question 8

Study **Figures 6(a), 6(b) and 6(c)**.

What information can archaeologists gain about health and lifestyle from remains such as these?(12 marks)

- L1: General/prepared accounts based on human skeletal remains or incomplete and/or sketchy responses based on these figures **1-3**
- L2: A few points on health and lifestyle related to these type of sources or several points on one of them. These responses may be quite descriptive, OR, good generic responses with some reference to these sources, OR, very good lists **4-6**
- L3: Consideration of what can be learnt about Health/Lifestyle from each type of remain shown here (teeth/jaw, joint, spine) **7-10**
- L4: Extensive range of L3 points OR detailed L3 with correct use of technical terms or with limitations credited OR good Level 3 plus discussion of how a large sample might be used (e.g. mortality profiles, gender and occupation) **11-12**

This is likely to be an accessible question. Candidates should not be rewarded for general responses on skeletal remains which do not address health or lifestyle, e.g. a response which just talks about sexing skeletons. Similarly discussion of techniques which could use any bones alone (e.g. DNA), will not move beyond Level 1.