



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2011**

Geography

GEOG2

(Specification 2030)

Unit 2: Geographical Skills

Report on the Examination

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General

This was the fifth series of GEOG2 Geographical Skills. The paper follows a well established format with plenty of preparation material through past papers now available for centres.

The paper was worth 50 marks in total; 25 marks were available for Geographical Skills and 25 marks for fieldwork. The 'vehicle' through which the skills are examined is either the Core Physical Section (Rivers) or Core Human Section (Population Change). In this paper Population Change was the theme and specifically migration. As with all GEOG2 papers, there are 6 marks allocated to Assessment Objective One (Page 18 Specification) for this paper. This means that some content, concepts and processes have to be examined in each skills paper. Those who had not studied the Core Human Section may have been at a slight disadvantage. By the time of the summer series this should no longer be an issue.

The second part of the paper worth 25 marks was a series of linked fieldwork questions; five in total on this paper. The questions had to be sufficiently broad to allow all candidates fair access to the paper. The basis for the questions is the Investigative Skills section found on page 16 of the specification. In this paper the basic skill of sketch maps was tested in the second part of the paper.

It was very pleasing to see so many candidates evidentially having undertaken a wide variety of enquiries. River studies were very common. Centres also have to be aware that the fieldwork must come from some part of the Specification. Some responses showed at best only a very tenuous link to the Specification.

Candidates generally scored well in the first section. The Spearman's Rank test was completed well by most candidates, though assessing the statistical significance in 1(b)(ii) was less successful in most cases.

The guidance on the front of the paper will continue to make reference to the necessary equipment for the completion of this paper. On this paper, a calculator and a sharp pencil were essential. Candidates without this equipment were put at risk of losing credit. Bringing the correct equipment is essential for all GEOG2 examinations.

It is also important to note that over the lifetime of the specification the aim is to examine all AS skills in the specification. Clearly different skills come with different level of challenge and candidates will be required to meet the demands of all skills.

In terms of the development of the fieldwork section of the paper, it is important to note that questions will vary in every series. This is in order to reduce the formulaic nature and potential predictability of writing about fieldwork. If candidates have undertaken a full piece of fieldwork and experienced all aspects of the subsequent write-up, they will have every chance of being successful in the examination. The sketch map 2(a)(ii) and the primary / secondary sources question 2(b) proved particularly difficult for candidates who may have only used past papers in preparation for this examination.

Question 1

1(a)(i) Completing the located bars got most candidates off to a successful start. The Mark Scheme accepted lines drawn to the nearest millimetre. So, 12mm for India and 5mm for Nigeria would have scored credit. 4mm for Nigeria was not allowed. There were no marks lost for failing to shade in the bars. Accuracy remains a problem for some. Accuracy is assisted by candidates having a sharp pencil and a ruler.

1(a)(ii) Candidates need to be aware that questions which require a description of spatial pattern or distribution only require the resource in question. Many candidates wrote interesting responses around the idea that most migrants appear to come from LEDC's. While this is true, this was not answering the question because that information was not provided in **Figure 1**. Candidates had to use only **Figure 1** in their responses. Considering clustering, geographical locations, ideas of distance decay, use of manipulated data were all routes to successful completion of this response.

1(b)(i) The Spearman's Rank Correlation test was completed well in most cases. There were three relatively straightforward marks for the completion of the table. It was made clear on the paper itself that rank ordering was from the highest value being ranked as 1 and lowest being ranked as 10. Some omitted off the sum of d^2 calculation. As the question required evidence of working, one mark was reserved for that and even if the wrong figures were entered, credit was still available here. One mark was reserved for three decimal places and one mark was also reserved for the minus sign. Candidates generally scored well on this question.

1(b)(ii) Candidates generally scored less well on this question. Relatively few were able to showing understanding that because the calculated r_s value was less than the values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance, the result was not statistically significant. To avoid cumulative error, even if the wrong r_s value was calculated in 1(b)(i) 2 marks were still available provided candidates interpreted the figure accurately. This rather generously included a calculated value of r_s greater than 1 or minus 1.

1(c)(i) Weaker responses here focused on the three data sets, describing year on year changes without showing an understanding of broader trends. These were held to level 1. Stronger responses looked at trends, spotted anomalies e.g. 1992-3 and most importantly showed they understood the link between immigration, emigration and net migration. It is also important to use data effectively in these sorts of questions. Straight lift can be used to exemplify points but manipulating data through simple calculations adds quality to such responses.

1(c)(ii) The key word here was 'implications'. The best responses referred back to **Figure 4** and the general trend increasing net in-migration over time. This was then linked to issues such as potential job shortages, strain on public services, housing shortage, racial tensions and so on. There was clearly a trade off between breadth and depth here with a tariff of only 5 marks, but there had to be more than one implication for full marks. Those who misunderstood the word 'implication' often referred instead to reasons for moving to the UK and drifted into push/pull factors. It was difficult to find credit in such responses. Many responses scored 0 marks on this question.

Question 2

2(a)(i) Weaker responses did little more than state the aim and hypothesis here. This was worthy of credit but only accessed Level 1. Those who went further often linked this to some theory they were investigating. This strengthened such responses giving access to Level 2. Those who investigated local human issues easily accessed Level 2 with a brief description of the issue in the local context. This was not a common approach but those who did human studies were able to access Level 2 relatively easily.

2(a) (ii) The sketch map posed a slightly unusual challenge having never been examined this way before. Many referred to a previous series paper and drew a meander with annotations. While this could pass as a sketch map, without specific location information it was held to Level 1 in all cases. The general quality of sketch mapping was not good and should provide an area of focus for centres in preparation for fieldwork. The best responses had a basic attempt at scale, (including an indication of scale), a north arrow, clear location information and some detail in terms of annotation of basic characteristics.

2(b) Most candidates understood that primary sources include data collected by the individual student or group on the day in the field; data which is unique at that point in time and place. An example added a further mark as this addressed the ‘...used in your fieldwork...’ part of the question. Secondary sources was less clear in many responses. Those who referred to OS maps to help identify the study area scored credit, but many were vague in choosing their example, referring to maps and the Internet without clearly distinguishing this from primary data.

2(c) The command word in this question was ‘justify’. The easiest way to justify the use of the technique was by referring to its strengths and suitability in relation to data being presented. Those who misunderstood the question and wrote about method of data collection scored no credit. Also those responses which used a tool of analysis such as Spearman’s Rank, scored minimal credit. Using a scatter graph and referring to its ability to help identify anomalies, spot trends, draw lines of best fit and indicate correlation as well as links to further statistical analysis easily accessed Level 2.

2(d) In weaker responses improvements were basic and superficial. There was also some drift into the limitations. While this naturally forms part of a response about improvements, some responses were dominated by references to limitations. Such responses were held to low Level 1. Better responses referred to improvements to method and the subsequent impact this could have on the reliability of the data. Others referred to possible extensions to their study as a way of comparing findings in order to develop an even more secure understanding of the underlying theory. Such responses scored Level 2 comfortably.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.