



Pearson

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE in
Geography (6GE01/01)

Unit 1: Global Challenges

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6 GE01

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This is the last main sitting of 6GE01 as next year the paper will only be available for the few candidates who wish to retake. Around 4,000 candidates entered. It is likely that the vast majority of these were second year sixth retaking an AS paper alongside their two A2 papers. In addition, a few schools which had gone linear across all subjects entered candidates for all 4 papers at once. Almost all would have been second year sixth and therefore a higher performance on all questions, and in particular in the essays in part b), was expected.

In some ways this expectation was met, but of course the full range of ability was represented, and possibly revision across 3 or 4 papers may have reduced time available for 6GE01. The middle and lower ability candidates achieved more highly, and there were fewer outstanding papers. Comments are offered on specific questions where issues occurred.

Question 1aii

This question was poorly answered generally. Most answers merely repeated the question in a slightly different form (i.e. more people at risk). Very few explained the specific issues of high population density. Good answers explained the specific issue of high population density and how it affected disaster risk. For example, more likely for residents to live in dangerous locations or high rise housing, or in densely populated areas where poor/migrants/disadvantaged groups may be isolated from training/warning schemes so they are more at risk. Also, capacity to cope is reduced as services are stretched.

Question 1c

This was generally done well although a surprising number did not know the difference between hydro-meteorological and geophysical hazards, as there was much discussion of tectonics. Most focussed on typhoons and floods. The explanation of the effect of ENSO cycles was very variable, with some that were poor, as El Nino and La Nina were muddled by some. Good answers explained processes and their effects on hazard risk, and were likely to discuss at least 2 hazards. Weaker answers focused on sea temperatures and steep slopes.

Question 2a

The question required candidates to identify a reason, then explain it for a second mark. About 50% of candidates did not do this, with many offering two factors as opposed to one. Some discussed areas that were not flooded. On these short items (and indeed on others), there is no need to copy out the question. Many failed to move beyond 'low-lying' or 'urbanisation'. Overall, many did not appear to have used the resource in their answer, as the map information was overlooked. One examiner commented that candidates did not know the difference between tributaries and distributaries. Although this is not on the specification, teachers are encouraged to teach accurate geographical terminology wherever possible.

Question 2b

Some candidates misread the question and talked about coastal flooding. Most students gave clear reasons why rivers flood, although marks were dropped when candidates did not elaborate on the initial point for a second mark. A number stated that sea level rise will cause river flooding. Global warming could be used as a reason if it was linked to intense rainfall.

Question 2c

Good answers focused on causes of sea level rise only, with linked points using accurate terminology e.g. positive feedback, melting land ice, albedo. However, weaker answers drifted from causes to effects of sea level rise. There are still some students arguing incorrectly that warmer water molecules expand. It is more correct to say that they move more, due to kinetic energy, so occupy more volume and contribute to sea level rise.

Question 3a

Weaker answers gave partial description of the two scenarios, and many confused the two, whereas better answers gave accurate descriptions, quoting data. These were then explained with logical reasoning. Very few gave exemplars either by strategy or country. The best answers developed Business As Usual with industrialisation in China, and the alternative as growth in use of renewable/sustainable energy illustrated with explanations of the implementation of the Kyoto Treaty, with descriptions of wind power in the UK, improved public transport, use of electric cars etc.

Question 3b

Good answers gave a clear understanding of a range of appropriate evidence such as ice cores and pollen records which were developed or detailed, and accurate. The best went on to explain how ice cores/pollen analysis are used (e.g. CO₂/isotopes/types of vegetation etc.). Use of proxy information (photos, diaries, paintings) was not on the right timescale. Weaker answers were likely to name one or more sources of data but were unable to develop the description any further, or else drifted off into causes of climate change rather than evidence of its occurrence.

Question 4ai was successfully answered by most.

Question 4aii

The mark scheme allowed a range of approaches, and popular themes were the growth of wealth and switched on economies in Middle East and Asia so more people can afford to travel. Or explaining how globalisation allows cheap flights to be booked by internet, resulting in more business and leisure journeys.

Question 4c

The most successful answers used a series of linked ideas focused on a real place to explain the reasons for poor connectivity. Weaker answers although often generalised, were able to identify a couple of relevant factors, often linked to TNCs or rural areas.

Question 5a

Good answers went beyond London/South-East with reference to Northern Ireland or the movement of BBC to Salford for example. Few recognised the question was about creative industries and instead discussed tertiary/service jobs or even just jobs in general. Better answers recognised the concentration of universities/creative industries in London (e.g. London Fashion Week) linked to its role as a hub. Few remembered the geography of footloose industries being able to settle 'anywhere'. Surprisingly few seemed aware of the existence of a thriving computer games and film and media industries in the country.

Question 5b

Good answers were able to describe in detail the pressures experienced in both locations, and were able to stay focussed on environmental issues, rather than drifting into broader urban problems. For weaker candidates, this was typically a low scoring question, with one pressure identified for each section but not developed or extended. Many repeated ideas in both sections without differentiating, which failed to gain marks. Answers were usually better on developing cities and focus on an example e.g. Mumbai helped.

Question 6a and 6bi were answered effectively by most candidates with high mean scores.

Question 6bii

As with other "one reason" questions, candidates struggled to develop a basic reason for a second mark. Centres are advised to practise this skill with candidates.

Question 6c

High marks were scored for two developed strategies linked clearly to environmental problems. Weaker answers described one strategy (e.g. congestion charge) and then went on to develop the idea to explain how this will help reduce an environmental problem (pollution/CO2 emissions).

Question Q7a

Many focused on development status and lacked discussion of change over time. Good answers were structured by reasons for contrasting numbers of deaths, and considered physical factors alongside others e.g. level of development/scale/progress over time, supported by reference to the resources, typically using three columns of data.

Question 7b

Answers needed to link specific human factors to changes to specific hazards, e.g. urbanisation/floods, global climate change/tropical storms. Sound process explanation explaining why these two were linked helped build a strong answer (e.g. the deforestation/runoff/infiltration relationship). An ability to discuss links to increasing frequency was seen in the best answers.

Question 8a

Good answers distinguished between ecological and environmental impacts of global warming, and many also covered positive changes as well as negative, and used their own knowledge to support answers. Weaker answers had too much lifting from the resource and a failure to develop the ideas any further.

Question 8b

A clear differentiation between national and international level schemes to tackle climate change was needed here. Additionally good answers were likely to explain why action at both scales is needed, explaining that the two complemented each other, or that one made up for the shortcomings of the other. Most candidates used Kyoto (and many Paris) as examples of international actions, and a range of examples for national actions, though some focussed on London-based initiatives such as congestion charges, which are not national.

Question 9a

High scoring answers used the Tata information to explain a range of strategies TNCs use, with effective use of appropriate terminology, and were likely to introduce their own ideas about ways TNCs grow their business, going beyond the resources. But many were over reliant on the resource, and struggled to identify the strategies they are describing, but they were able to outline these briefly.

Question 9b

Knowledge of at least two International Organisation players was needed, with in depth, wide-ranging understanding and exemplification. This then needed to be well linked to their role in accelerating globalisation. Some considered the relative importance of the IOs. Less good answers tended not to focus on globalisation, but were able to explain the roles of a couple of IOs.

Question 10a

Good answers covered social and economic consequences of changes to the UK population, with some balance, and were likely consider both positive and negative outcomes. A less strong answer had limited use of the resources and instead, relied on their own knowledge. Such essays lacked balance between economic and social (often weaker on social) but did have discussion of the consequences of the ageing population.

Question 10b

Answers needed to consider the impacts on people's lives, with good use of terminology and were well supported with located exemplars. There was good balance between improvements and challenges for the migrants, and some considered rural areas, and possibly existing urban dwellers as well. A feature of less good essays was description with limited depth. They often had some exemplification but this lacked precision, and the range of ideas was restricted or else there was a broad brush approach. They were likely to focus on either positive or negative outcomes, lacking balance.