



Pearson

Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

May 2018

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level in
Geography (WGE04_01)
Unit 1

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

May 2018

Publications Code WGE04_01_1806_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2018

Introduction

In general, centres need to help candidates appreciate how best to write a succinct but effective introduction to their reports, which covers all the requirements of the mark scheme. The most obvious omission was the failure to deconstruct the question effectively so that key words are identified and thus what the focus of the report will be. Inevitably, given the pre-release of the 'steers' the framework i.e. what they intend to cover in terms of case studies, key section and definitions of key terms will be largely pre-determined, but only the question asked can determine the focus of the report, not the 'steers'. Too many introductions appeared almost pre-written in candidates minds and thus, in too many cases it was not possible to guess the title from reading these introductions; something of an acid test of their effectiveness. It was rare to be able to allocate full marks for this section.

Most candidates were able to outline their sources and in most cases they had a good range of appropriate case studies. Wikipedia is widely and generally sensibly used alongside other more conventional textbook sources. There is not much evidence of moving beyond these sources into now quite widely accessible material available through JSTOR , Google Scholar and other weblinks.

The majority of candidates used a report style of their answers with clear side headings. Stronger candidates had sub conclusions at each section which related well to the question set and showed that they were remaining focused on the question, by using the key focus words in that question. Conclusions did link the question in many cases but had more limited recall. Not all conclusions 'followed' logically from the analytical material offered. Referencing was generally poorly done although methodology showing a rationale for evidence selection was clear. Although some candidates spent too long on this so that they ran out of time for sections with higher credit, for example their conclusion and evaluation. Time management is an important element of this paper.

Option 1- Tectonic Activity and Hazards

This was a very popular question. Most candidates were able to demonstrate a good understanding of plate boundaries and some had excellent process knowledge and vocabulary. However, it was rare for candidates to deconstruct the question and in some cases even mention it. Some candidates spent a long time outlining what happened at each plate boundary but then struggled to link this to the question. It also meant that they spent so long doing this that they ran out of time to fully address the question in their report. There were a few cases where candidates did not write a report at all and presented on long essay sometimes without any clear introduction. This was self-penalising.

There was some excellent use of annotated diagrams for example to explain destructive plate boundaries and the Benioff zone. Many candidates referred to the VEI scale for volcanoes and moment magnitude scale and Richter scales for earthquakes.

Where candidates did try to answer the question and thus focus on the key phrase; 'much easier' many concluded that predicting location was 'easy' and that magnitude very much depended on the type of plate boundary. As a result, there was a good deal of generalisation and few effectively explored the complexity of the topic. Iceland and Eyjafjallajokull in particular was a popular case study and illustrate this point well; the general truth concerning the magnitude of eruptions held by most is that eruptions at constructive margins lack the explosivity of those at destructive margins forgetting that the complex chemistry of volcanoes and magmas made that generalisation unreliable as a predictor. A few stronger candidates were able to explain that this eruption did not follow the predicted plate boundary magnitude because of the particular circumstances of volcano and the storage time of the magma. Variations in magnitude of earthquakes were not well understood, for example along the Benioff Zone. Links with the depth of the focus for example were rarely mentioned. For location, most linked these to plate boundaries and hot spots. It was rare however to have an idea that distribution could be predicted but precise location particularly for earthquakes could not. There was some good understanding of how science can now help to predict when a volcano may erupt. Some candidates thought that earthquakes could be predicted although there was some good use of the attempt to predicted an earthquake on the San Andreas fault.

Popular case studies included Eyjafjallajokull, Pinatubo, Montserrat, Guatemala, Nevado del Ruiz. For earthquakes the Boxing Day Tsunami, Japan Sendai e/q and tsunami, Nepal, San Andreas Fault, Haiti and Christchurch they.

Option 2. Feeding the World's People

This was a less popular question and it was felt that many candidates used their pre-prepared standard case studies and introduction and then struggled to adapt these to the question set. It was rare for example for candidates to deconstruct the question and consider what 'technology' means when related to food supply. Most introductions defined food security and considered Malthus and Boserup and 4 pillars without making it clear how they were relevant to the question. Candidates need to

spend a bit more time considering and then referring to the question and to keep checking on it to make sure they use their information to link to the question. A plan is a good idea. In this case if one is going to make a case that improved technology is indeed the 'best way' of increasing food supply it is obviously necessary to examine alternative methods too.

Many candidates considered a range of technologies at various levels including the 'green revolution', the gene revolution, drip irrigation techniques and more basic technology such as magic stones and zai pits. There were some good ideas about using technology to improve food storage although these sometimes wandered into comparison between different technologies rather than the claim made in the question. Commonly occurring case studies included Cuban organic farming, hydroponics, irrigation in Spain and Israel. But in some cases, they did not acknowledge that these were good examples of where technology was helping to increase food supply and, perhaps the 'best way' of increasing food supply.

The use of case studies such as Pag Pag in the Philippines and Food banks was often less successful and only worked effectively when they were compared with the use of technology, either favourably or otherwise as a method or methods of increasing food supply.

Option 3 - Cultural Diversity: People and Landscapes

This was a very popular question and on the whole responses to this option were the strongest on the paper. Most candidates showed good understanding of traditional and indigenous cultures and defined globalisation. They had some idea about protection but were less clear on whether these cultures should 'always be protected'. As with other options candidates would benefit by spending a minute or two longer considering the question and keeping focused on it during the writing of the report. The keyword in the contention of this question is obviously 'always' and there was generally insufficient focus on when, if ever, protection should not be afforded to traditional and indigenous cultures.

Many candidates were able to discuss the impact of globalisation on a range of cultures but the need to protect was sometimes implicit rather than explicitly examined. Some answers just focused on the positive versus negative impacts of globalisation and so did not answer the question set despite the detailed research and evidence offered from a range of locations.

Thus, there was an impressive range of case studies delivered, which candidates had clearly enjoyed researching and could often demonstrate an excellent level of detail in their answers. These case studies included:

the Maasai and impacts of tourism, Mallorca and tourism, Awa in Brazil, Kayapo and links with Body Shop and HEP projects in Brazil, aboriginal groups in Australia in general and Tasmania in particular, the Amish and technology, Dambulla in Sri Lanka, Keyan in Myanmar, Jarawa in the Andaman island and tourism.

There were some excellent conclusions comparing which indigenous cultures needed protection and which were able to protect themselves, many answers did look at 'always' but a few candidates did not consider the question at all in their conclusion.

Option 4 – Human Health and Disease

Rather surprisingly, this was not a popular question. Candidates tended to adopt a framework that counterposed a number of consider national strategies to a number of global strategies and conclude that some health risks were best addressed by national and some by global strategies. These conclusions were often based on rather scanty evidence – perhaps a choice of four health risks at the two scales, and very few candidates made the evaluative point that their evidence was a bit thin

There were, however, some good examples chosen including Ebola, HIV, obesity issues, Malaria, Polio, TB, but opportunities to develop arguments and look at how national and global agencies need to work together to address the health risks were not as well developed as the detail within the case studies. Once again care needs to be taken to adapt learned material to the demands of the question which will never be 'Write up all you know about....'!

Sources of information for research seemed to be more limited for this question and candidates seem to have used a narrower range of sources, dominated by Wikipedia and you-tube clips. Detail of specific strategies was more limited in candidates' answers. Overall the opportunities that this question presented did not seem to have been fully utilised by the majority of candidates.

Summary

To better prepare students for the challenges of this paper the generic mark scheme with its key levels descriptors should have a central place. A thorough understanding of these descriptors will help candidates focus on question asked rather than the detail of their case-study knowledge and the understanding of processes. However, the research is important and it would be very encouraging to see a wider use of sources; this will inevitably lead to more complex areas introducing uncertainties into previously rather generalised clichés.

When writing the reports it might be helpful to recall the following points;

- Questions will always ask for candidates to 'take a view'
- Make a quick plan of evidence for and against the proposition noting the keywords used
- Those keywords need to appear in your introduction
- On-going evaluation helps retain a focus on the proposition – keep using the keywords in these evaluations
- When you make a claim always try to produce evidence to support it
- Be aware of the limitations of your research – it is inevitably partial and all conclusions are therefore tentative
- Don't be afraid of taking on the title – it may be that your evidence suggests that it cannot be upheld