



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **General Studies 1766**

*Specification B*

**GENB2      Space**

# **Report on the Examination**

*2009 examination - June series*

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## GENB2 Space

### General Comments

Unlike the January paper, candidates did not seem to manage their time as well. It is advisable to make a correlation between the number of marks available and the number of minutes that a candidate should spend on each question. As a consequence, answers to Question 3 were often too brief. A significant number of candidates did not read the questions properly and produced two-sided responses to 2(a), 2(b), 3(a) and 3(b), when they are clearly asked to present arguments in favour of or against a proposition. Calculators are likely to be needed for Question 1(b) but candidates can get the correct answer and gain full marks without one. It just makes it harder. Candidates who did not feel confident with data analysis and evaluation and percentages often began with the other questions and this was, in many cases, very successful in terms of outcome.

Quality of English was generally good and many candidates were well prepared. Unfortunately, some candidates were clearly not responding at the required level and showed very little knowledge and understanding or had such poor levels of expression and analysis that success was extremely unlikely.

### Question 1

**Q1 (a)** This question was rarely done well, with few answers achieving marks in Level 1. The chief reasons were that candidates failed to refer specifically to the data or that they described rather than explained and often made sweeping generalisations. There was a lot of misunderstanding of data with many candidates confusing the three bars of the graph and not relating the level of internet use and access with the total population for the region. Few answers moved beyond rich and poor countries/regions and far too many confused continents with countries. Simply rewriting the statistical data in words was not likely to achieve many marks.

Better answers did attempt to unravel relationships such as being perceptive enough to pick up on the fact that usage was a global figure and not related to the specific region. Where candidates did pick up on this, answers often included clear reference to stages of economic development, often citing particular examples and variations between and within regions. Misunderstandings produced some odd responses including the good weather of Oceania providing alternatives to using the Net.

**Q1 (b)(i)** Although the rubric specifies that calculators can be used, in some centres a number of candidates either did not have access to them or did not use them. However, many achieved the correct answer through long addition/long division/long multiplication methods and scored at least 3/6 for showing method. Very few simply wrote down the answer which was encouraging: more showed a lack of awareness of how to round up / down, which was less encouraging. A lot of candidates used the wrong data from the source and chose to base their calculation on global population figures of 6.6 billion rather than Internet usage of 1.2 billion which inevitably produced zero marks.

**Q1(b)(ii)** There were some very clear responses to this question which showed good understanding of the reasons behind different patterns of Internet growth but relatively few mentioned a language specifically or commented vaguely about the overall growth of languages. Sadly, far too many believed that language growth related to more people in Britain learning another language and there were a lot of often interesting and sometimes strange ideas to explain the growth of Arabic. Unfortunately, a significant minority treated this four-mark question as an essay and wrote far too much. A short, focused explanation of two reasons (perhaps 4-6 lines) is adequate.

**Q1 (c)** A lot of candidates had some clear awareness of how the Internet might affect the lives of people in LEDCs and addressed issues of education, access to global news, improved medical access and finding out about opportunities to improve their quality of life. Some contrasted urban / rural differences and access being something that only the more affluent could enjoy. A lot of candidates addressed issues where the LEDCs could get left behind as global communications expanded (which was unlikely to score high marks unless developed very precisely) and where charities could use the Internet to raise money by highlighting the problems, which did gain some credit. Many candidates viewed the Internet through “Western” eyes and commented on the opportunity to; have water and groceries delivered instead of making long walks; talk on *Facebook* (and similar sites); play games; gamble and download films. Sadly, there were few specific examples to support the points although some successfully talked about urban business potential, jobs and, (less appropriately) the opportunity for subsistence farmers to sell surplus food on-line. On the whole this part was done better than other aspects of Question 1.

## Question 2

**Q2 (a)** This question proved to be very accessible with some clear and well-developed answers although many candidates clearly had a concept of a rural idyll and ran, at times, to the poetic. There was good exemplification and discussion of why some sectors of the population, for example retired people, might want a slower pace of life. There were misunderstandings such as all rural areas are remote, people wanting career changes to farming, cheap home-produced food, people hunting for their own food and cheapness of housing, but these were in the minority. The source was generally well used and candidates picked up the key elements.

Unfortunately a small number of people wrote both for and against answers and obviously used up a lot of time writing irrelevant material. Equally, a small number wrote answers relating to the tourist appeal of rural areas in terms of visitors rather than residents.

**Q2 (b)** As with 2(a), this question proved to be very accessible with most candidates picking out the appeal of urban areas for different groups, especially the young. Weaker answers tended to produce list-like descriptions of amenities without considering their relative merits, a kind of catch-all that relied on breadth rather than depth. Too many less able candidates got hung up on the shops in the source and a lot tried to second guess where it was. Exemplification was often easier on this question with a lot of students using local examples to illustrate their points. Several candidates did not focus on the UK and wrote about push-pull factors in

LEDCs. Where they were focused, credit was given.

As in 2(b) above, a small number wrote both for and against answers and unfortunately used up a lot of time writing irrelevant material.

- Q2 (c)** This was less well done with too many candidates referring to both sources explicitly or making generic points that could apply to either. Weaker responses focused on income levels or on how people could budget more effectively and / or cut back on expenditure in order to be able to afford housing.

When they did focus on the thrust of the question, less able candidates failed to explain how construction costs could be reduced or how financial packages might be delivered and work. It is a shame that so much that has been in the news recently was ignored. There were a number of unrealistic and generally vague answers such as the government reducing prices or vendors lowering their price.

Better answers discussed urban regeneration, buy / rent schemes, low-cost flats and packages for first-time buyers. On the rural side, incentives to encourage local purchases at the expense of holiday homes proved fruitful as did those responses that looked at encouraging the renovation of disused farm cottages.

### Question 3

- Q3 (a)** The source provided a lot of information and this led to the undoing of some candidates on both parts of this question. Far too many, and not always the less able candidates, simply rewrote, quoted from or relied wholly on the source for their answers. Breadth was often very narrow focusing only on, for example, economic benefits or tourism. The consequence was that many answers showed a lack of breadth or did not develop the issues raised. Few candidates made any reference to airports other than Heathrow, ignoring other London airports and the rest of Britain. There were some useful illustrative points including the forthcoming Olympic Games, expanding tourism in London at the expense of other European cities and current problems of delays and overcrowding at Heathrow.
- Q3 (b)** As in Question 3(a) there was over-reliance on the source. Few people developed the clues offered in the text. There was some discussion of the vested interests of different groups and a significant number looked at issues surrounding the impact on the environment in local and global terms. There was far too much description and reiteration with few candidates analysing the two alternatives offered in the source, video-conferencing and high-speed rail as viable alternatives. In each part of the question, some candidates wrote balanced responses when this was not asked for. The two separate parts of the question require one-sided responses only.

### Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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