Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Geography (WGE01)
Paper 1: Global Challenges

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Introduction

Most candidates managed to answer all questions on the examination paper, however there were more blank unanswered questions than in previous series. As might be expected given the current global situation there was variation in the quality of answers. However some candidates had been prepared exceptionally for this exam series.

Global Challenges contains a choice of World at Risk or Going Global longer essay questions. More candidates opted to answer the Going Global option in this exam series.

Centres may wish to consider some general points going forward:

- Compulsory topic 1 World at Risk does contain detailed physical process content that demands an understanding of the global distribution of hydrometeorological hazards– this was often lacking in responses to question 5a.
- When tackling a 'describe the relationship' question, candidates are expected to make reference to the relationship between the two lines shown on the figure.
- Many questions use the command word 'assess' this is defined in the Specification on page 77. This requires higher-order thinking skills that involve candidates looking at several sides of an argument or question, weighing up issues, considering which factors / explanations are the most important and making supported judgements. Failure to demonstrate these cognitive skills limits available credit.
- Mark schemes refer to 'evidence': this can come in the form of examples, case studies, data, facts, detailed reference to places, concepts and geographical theory.

Question 1ai

This question asked candidates to correctly identify which defence protected against a tsunami with a 200-year return period. The vast majority of candidates answered this correctly with a few candidates opting for the elevated road which protected against a tsunami with a 100-year return period.

Question 1aii

Candidates were asked to explain the role of two of the defences shown in Figure 1. The majority of candidates gained at least two marks for explaining the role of two of the defences in the figure. The best candidates went on to explain how the defence minimised deaths or economic costs for example for a further expansion mark.

Question 1aiii

Candidates were asked to explain how earthquakes can generate tsunamis. The best responses showed clear understanding of the physical processes involved in the creation of tsunamis via either a submarine earthquake or landslide displacing the water column resulting in waves on the ocean surface.

Question 1b

This question asked candidates to focus on one scale that measured the magnitude of earthquakes. The vast majority of candidates correctly identified either the Richter scale or the Moment Magnitude Scale for 1 mark. However a smaller number of candidates obtained full marks by either describing that the scales measured the amount of energy released or by correctly identifying them as a logarithmic or arithmetic scale.

Question 1c

There was variability in terms of quality of response for this question. The best responses were able to articulate clear reasons why the numbers of people dying from natural disasters was falling, whilst the numbers of people affected were rising. Some students could exemplify this through applied examples of past disasters and how the number of deaths was limited due to effective government response e.g. Japan Earthquake 2011. The weakest responses tended to be generic, providing basic ideas e.g. population had increased but were not able to fully explain how this would lead to people being more vulnerable for example.

Question 2ai

For this question candidates were asked to identify the year with the highest number of sunspots. Nearly all candidates were able to correctly identify the year as 1958 from the figure provided.

Question 2aii

Candidates on a whole struggled to obtain more than two marks on this question due to many choosing to describe each graph separately rather than describing the

relationship between the sunspots and temperature shown. Candidates are reminded that on questions that require a relationship to be explored marks can be gained for stating whether the relationship is a positive or negative one. In this case there was a positive relationship between 1900-1960 and then a negative one from 1960-2005, articulating this would have gained candidates two marks. Further marks could have been gained by identifying anomalous periods on the graph, such as between 1910-1920.

Question 2b
This question required candidates to explain how tree rings and pollen records provide evidence for past climate change. On the whole candidates tended to gain marks more effectively in their explanation of the role of tree rings, with some having limited knowledge of the role of pollen records.

Question 2c
The majority of candidates were able to discuss why adaptation as a response to climate change would be possible in some locations and not others. At the lower end, these explanations were superficial and tended to focus on generic statements about a lack of economic development/wealth and areas being too low-lying. At the top end, candidates had a clear understanding of the role of adaptation and successfully applied examples such as the Netherlands and Bangladesh to demonstrate contrasting approaches and likelihood of success. A small minority of candidates did not fully understand the concept of adaptation and instead focused on mitigation strategies which was not appropriate to this question.

Question 3ai
This question asked candidates to identify which European destination was furthest from Addis Ababa. A significant number of candidates appeared to misread the question instead giving their response as Beijing or Shanghai which are not European.

Question 3aii
Candidates on the whole performed well on this question, gaining at least one of the two marks available by identifying benefits such as increased levels of tourism or increased foreign direct investment. However, for the second mark this idea need to be extended upon i.e. increased incomes in the service sector or increased employment by TNCs. A number of responses just repeated that increased levels of tourism would for example bring economic benefits without stating what these were.

Question 3b
This question tended not to be answered particularly well by candidates as many didn't focus on high-skill elite migration, instead giving generic ideas of migrating to send remittances home. Candidates could have explained that TNCs tended to locate in global hubs due to foreign direct investment, and as a result have increasing levels of high skill employment such as management positions.

Question 3c

Candidates performed well on this question and most were able to gain two marks for identifying an action created by globalisation i.e. increased industrialisation and a knock-on environmental impact of this i.e. increased air pollution. Many candidates then linked this to increased global warming which is too broad to gain credit. Instead candidate could have explained the increased air pollution could lead to health issues for local people.

Question 3d

On the whole this question was not answered well by candidates with few achieving level 3. The question required candidate to explain how different groups such as NGOs, national and local governments could meet the demand for housing in rapidly growing urban areas. The best responses used applied examples such as self-help schemes in Sao Paulo and national home building strategies in the UK to explain how housing demand could be met.

Question 4ai

On the whole candidates scored well in this question, with candidates correctly identifying that Nicaragua had the greatest economic dependency on remittances.

Question 4aii

This question required candidates to correctly describe the relation between income per person and remittances as a percentage of GDP. Candidates tended to achieve one mark here for correctly describing that the higher the income per person, the lower the remittances as a percentage of GDP. Candidates struggled to gain the second mark as many lifted data from the resource without applying it. To gain the second mark candidates could have manipulated the data to work out the doubling income roughly decreased remittances by 2-3% or that Argentina was anomalous.

Question 4aiii

On the whole this question was answered well by candidates but a small number of candidates didn't fully understand the term remittances and therefore struggled to identify a disadvantage of being dependent upon them. The best responses explained how an economic crisis for example, could lead to financial problems if the remittances suddenly stopped.

Question 4b

This question was successful for the majority of candidates with clear explanations as to how governments could encourage globalisation. The most common responses involved the role of trade blocs such as the EU generating increased trade volumes between countries and the development of Special Economic Zones in places like China encouraging FDI by TNCs.

Question 4c
Candidates performed well in this question with the majority focusing on places such as the Rust Belt in the USA or Leicester in the UK. Weaker responses tended to be a collection of generic impacts such as loss of employment and derelict buildings. These were not categorised into social or environment nor were they fully explained. The best responses used specific locations as outlined above to fully explore the social and environmental impacts and included supporting evidence.

Question 5a
Candidates were required to explain why some areas in the Asia-Pacific region are more vulnerable to sea level rise than others. At the bottom end, candidates relied heavily on the resource information provided, lifting information with little additional own knowledge applied to it. For level 2, candidates suggested a range of reasons why areas such as China and Japan were more likely to be prepared for the risks of sea level rise and that this was largely due to their economic status. At the top end candidates applied their own knowledge to the information presented in the resource. Discussions regarding agricultural dependency and the impact of sea level rise on groundwater tables highlighted accurate geographical knowledge and understanding.

Question 5b
There was considerable variability in the level of responses that candidates wrote in response to this question. At the top end, candidates could clearly articulate the pattern of a range of hydrometeorological disasters such as drought, cyclones and flooding and explain how these were underpinned by physical factors such as latitude, temperature and ENSO cycles. Key to their success was clear process knowledge and for level 3 and 4, candidates were able to explain the role that human factors were playing in influencing the pattern of these disasters. Many chose to do this through the application of the disaster risk equation, introducing the concept of vulnerability. At the bottom end candidates struggled to identify which hazards to include, with a small minority drifting into tectonic hazards such as earthquakes and volcanoes which were not appropriate to the question set. Level 2 responses tended to focus solely on physical factors, without considering the role that human actions could play in explaining the pattern.

Question 6a
On the whole this question was answered well by candidates with the best using the four part approach as outlined in the question. At the bottom end candidates presented generic ideas such as the need for education and a large working population without applying it to the resource i.e. a named location for which that information would be appropriate. The best responses used the resource and highlighted that Japan would have a range of opportunities brought about by its ageing population, as a well a number of threats in the future. The answer then explored a country which had a youthful population such as Afghanistan and own knowledge was applied such as the Afghan war to give context to their response.

Question 6b
Candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the process of globalisation and a range of factors that had led to its acceleration. Weaker responses tended to explain how communication led to better connections between places and allowed TNCs to develop in new locations. Whilst correct, these responses tended to be a list of different communication technologies and how they could be used. The best responses fully explored the role of communications and its changing face through the internet, social media and meeting platforms. The best responses also tended to recognise the different facets of globalisation i.e. cultural and economic, and explored how communications allowed each to develop. Level 3 and 4 answers also discussed the role of other factors such as political decisions and transport in encouraging globalisation and came to conclusions regarding which was the most significant driving force.