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Examiners' report

# GEOGRAPHY

H481

For first teaching in 2016

H481/01 Summer 2023 series

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#### Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper 1 series overview

Following several years of this examination, candidates are familiar and prepared for the format and structure of the paper. Coastal Landscapes remains the most popular topic, however, as in previous years there was an increasing number of students answering Glaciated Landscapes questions. Dryland Landscapes continues to be answered by a very small proportion of candidates.

Many candidates were able to complete the paper in the time provided; of the few that didn't, this was often due to writing, at times, unnecessarily long responses, rather than making concise and clear points. Several candidates chose to complete the paper in a different order, for example, starting with the essay questions or with Earth's Life Support Systems before Physical Landscapes. This is an acceptable approach and may support candidates with elements such as timing.

Candidates also demonstrated an understanding of the assessment objectives and the need to include both knowledge and analysis. The structure of responses was, overall, logically written, and valid conclusions were reached. There was also an attempt from many to link points back to the question, however, at times this was done too briefly with a summary statement that did not add to their response. There were also too many candidates that wrote a response to the question they had prepared for, rather than one included in the exam paper. This resulted in long responses that did not address the question, particularly in the Physical Landscapes section.

The paper demonstrated that candidates were more prepared for the geographical skills questions in terms of carrying out the technique. However, it is apparent there is a need to develop candidates understanding of the purpose of the technique or how to interpret the results generated. Furthermore, candidates must make sure that where the question requires them to show their working, this is included in their answer booklet and nowhere else on the paper.

Handwriting must continue to be a focus for all candidates; while there is an understanding that candidates are writing quickly, this can result in illegible responses. It is essential that all their written responses are clear for examiners.

#### Candidates who did well on this paper Candidates who did less well on this paper generally: generally: answered the question that was being asked, wrote responses that did not relate to the rather than one they had pre-prepared question being asked • included place specific detail to support the found it difficult to identify landforms from points they were making sources or use figures to answer related questions used the figures as instructed to do so in the included generic points in their responses such question as definitions of processes which they did not wrote well-structured responses that then integrate into their argument. demonstrated ongoing analysis and discussion in order to reach a valid conclusion.

## Section A overview

There is a choice of three options within Section A; Coastal Landscapes, Glaciated Landscapes, and Dryland Landscapes. Candidates must respond to questions on only <u>one</u> of these. Coastal Landscapes continues to be answered by most candidates with an ever-increasing number choosing Glaciated Landscapes.

#### Option A overview

Coastal Landscapes remains a popular choice for candidates. It was evident that candidates were well prepared for this section and had a good level of knowledge and understanding of processes operating at the coast. Many were able to demonstrate place specific details and refer to examples to support the points they were making. However, at times, responses were overly descriptive with candidates writing everything they knew about a topic or place yet not relating this to the question that was being asked. Furthermore, when preparing candidates, it is important that they do not simply learn model responses for the 16-mark essay questions. Too many were writing responses to previous questions or questions they had prepared for, such as the influence of physical factors at the coastline. While some of what was written was relevant, it was not related to the question being asked and an overall argument was not present.

## Question 1 (a)

#### Option A - Coastal Landscapes

1 (a) With reference to a **case study** of **one** coastal landscape that is being used by people, explain the reasons for the economic development taking place.

[8]

Many candidates were able to answer this question and provided reasons such as tourism and trade. The focus of this question was the reasons for the economic development taking place; these required candidates to make links between the landscape and the economic development. However, several candidates did not make these links and instead simply provided a recollection of a case study such as a description of the coastal management.. For example, the Manghawai-Pakiri coastline was used by many candidates, with links being made between sand dredging due to the need for beach replenishment in Auckland and the use of the sand in the construction industry. While most students could identify an appropriate example, a small number wrote about a country, and this did not meet the requirements of the question.

#### Assessment for learning



While previously Question 1(a) has focused on coastal systems or the formation of landforms, it is important to remember that all areas of the specification can be assessed, candidates should practice writing in detail about these.

#### Exemplar 1

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		economic development and merebre internantly charging
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		me landscape is me Mongawnai - Pallir Coantine.  New reasons  This is a roum coantine in Arrhabia. There has
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		it is seen an a crucial economic resource and was
		resulted in this land scape bery used by humans more
		reason is most through account by 35.1. of the GDP
		of a New realand and 35.1. of the population. Therefore,
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local rougens. This can also be backed up by me
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Auculard rose from 1,063,000 to 1,500,000. Therefore
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for 40,000 -> 45,000, meaning more was were
required to be builty anich in why sond was needed
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on economic resource that bonys about income
and is merepre audiou max may une me contral
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mining apea only happens at Paulis at a rate of 75,1000 milys.
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As demonstrated in this exemplar, the best responses gave specific details that related to the case study chosen, such as the reasons why the sand is of high quality and is therefore vital for these purposes. For example, this candidate recognises that the high quality of the sand is the reason why it is used in different industries. Throughout their response, this candidate uses place specific detail, which further supports the points they are making.

## Question 1 (b) (i)

**(b)** Study **Table 1**, which shows mean monthly wind speed for a coastal location in South Africa for 11 months during 2019.

#### Table 1

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Mean wind speed (m/sec)	6.1	5.2	4.5	4.5	3.6	3.8	4.4	4.4	5.3	5.5	5.5

(i) Using the data in **Table 1**, calculate the median. You must show your working.

[2]

Overall, this question was answered well with the majority able to access two marks. A small minority made errors such as not ordering the numbers before calculating the median, or instead working out the mean. There were also a small number of candidates that did not show their working which resulted in them getting only 1 of 2 marks available.

## Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) Using the data in **Table 1**, calculate the interquartile range. You must show your working.

[2]

This question was answered correctly by many candidates. They understood the need to calculate the upper and lower quartile before finding the difference. There were some miscalculations that resulted in incorrect final answers therefore candidates should make sure they are checking their responses.

## Question 1 (b) (iii)

(iii) The mean wind speed for December 2019 was 9.4 m/sec.
Interpret this value with reference to the interquartile range for the data in **Table 1**. [2]

This question proved to be a challenge for a large proportion of candidates. While many had been able to calculate the interquartile range from 1 (b) (ii), far too many candidates did not understand what this figure meant. Too many were recalculating the interquartile range, rather than offering an interpretation. Some candidates missed out the question despite being able to correctly answer 1 (b) (i) and 1 (b) (ii).

#### **Assessment for learning**



When teaching geographical skills, it is essential that candidates not only understand how to carry out the method but can also interpret the result of the calculation. Alongside this, they should be encouraged to consider the techniques' usefulness. The Geographical Skills Teacher Guide and Student workbook can support with understanding and practising geographical skills. These resources can be found on <a href="Teach Cambridge">Teach Cambridge</a>.

## Question 1 (c)

(c) Study Fig. 1, a coastal landscape in England.
With reference to Fig. 1, explain one way flows of material influence the formation of landform A.

[3]

Many candidates were able to identify the shore platform from the figure, although some misunderstood and identified it as a beach and thus wrote about irrelevant processes. When identified correctly, many were able to get full marks for this question by discussing the mass movement or the influence of abrasion in creating striations.

## Question 1 (d)\*

(d)\* Discuss the relative importance of geomorphic processes in forming coastal landforms. [16]

This question was accessible for candidates, with very few unable to get any marks. Typically, candidates focused on the importance of erosion in forming coastal landforms and it was common to see detailed explanations of headlands, bays, caves, arches, stacks and stumps. Weathering processes were often covered in detail, with candidates able to explain their role in the formation of different landforms. Place specific detail was often incorporated into responses, with reference to named landforms that had been created through these processes. With regards to 'the relative importance', candidates approached this in one of two ways; either comparing the importance of different processes with each other or comparing geomorphic processes as a whole with other factors such as geology. Both were equally acceptable, with the second approach being more common. At times, the analysis of relative importance was sophisticated with candidates considering time scales, spatial differences, and locational differences. There were, however, a number of candidates that did not understand the meaning of geomorphic processes and instead referred to 'waves', 'tides' or 'geology' as these processes.

Furthermore, some gave lengthy descriptions of processes such as freeze-thaw weathering, with limited reference as to how it forms coastal landforms. There were also too many candidates answering the question that they had prepared for, in this case the relative importance of different physical factors. Finally, when analysing relative importance, candidates must go beyond sweeping statements, such as 'however, the importance varies spatially and temporally'. Including these words is not enough; they must be able to explain the point they are making.

## Option B overview

The number of candidates responding to Glaciated Landscapes has risen significantly since the first year of this paper. The place specific knowledge in this section was often well done, with candidates able to confidently discuss landscapes they have studied and name specific landforms.

## Question 2 (a)

#### Option B – Glaciated Landscapes

2 (a) With reference to a **case study** of **one** glaciated landscape that is being used by people, explain the reasons for the human activity taking place. [8]

This question was generally well answered with candidates often reaching Level 2 or 3. The Grande Dixence Dam in Switzerland was utilised by many in their responses, with lots discussing the use of this dam for energy and tourism. For the higher level, candidates needed to explain why this human activity was occurring in this landscape rather than anywhere else; relating the features of the landscape such as the melting of the glaciers, etc. allowed candidates to make these links more effectively. Candidates were able to include facts and figures within their responses to increase the level of detail. It is important to note that the question required a case study of a glaciated landscape rather than a peri-glacial landscape and candidates had to select the right example from their learning. While some points were still relevant, there were a number that used inappropriate examples which limited their marks.

## Question 2 (b) (i)

**(b)** Study **Table 2**, which shows mean monthly precipitation for a glaciated location in Canada for 11 months during 2019.

#### Table 2

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Mean precipitation (mm)	250	210	190	185	140	120	110	160	240	390	280

(i) Using the data in **Table 2**, calculate the median. You must show your working.

[2]

This question was answered well with most candidates able to gain two marks by ordering the figures and then calculating the median. A small number of errors occurred with candidates not copying out the figures correctly or omitting a number accidentally, which caused the wrong final answer to be calculated.

## Question 2 (b) (ii)

(ii) Using the data in **Table 2**, calculate the interquartile range. You must show your working.

[2]

Most candidates were able to respond to this question correctly, particularly those that scored the marks for question 2 (b) (i). There were some errors though; candidates should be reminded to show their working, as this was a requirement of the question.

## Question 2 (b) (iii)

(iii) The mean monthly precipitation for December 2019 was 370 mm.Interpret this value with reference to the interquartile range for the data in Table 2. [2]

This question was challenging for many candidates. While lots had achieved all marks available for questions 2 (b) (i) and 2 (b) (ii) they were unable to interpret the result they had calculated. It is important that when preparing candidates for this paper, they are taught not only how to carry out the calculation, but also why the technique is used and what it tells us about the data. A significant number of candidates did not attempt the question.

#### **Assessment for learning**



When teaching geographical skills, it is essential that candidates not only understand how to carry out the method but can also interpret the result of the calculation. Alongside this, they should be encouraged to consider the techniques' usefulness. The Geographical Skills Teacher Guide and Student workbook can support with understanding and practising geographical skills. These resources can be found on <u>Teach Cambridge</u>.

## Question 2 (c)

(c) Study Fig. 2, a glaciated landscape in England.
With reference to Fig. 2, explain one way flows of material influence the formation of landform B.

[3]

Many candidates were able to identify the landform correctly, however, a number incorrectly stated that it was a drumlin. Candidates had clearly been prepared for how to answer questions where only one way is requested, as they correctly developed one idea sufficiently to access the three marks. Their understanding of roche moutonnée formation was strong with many able to explain the role of abrasion and plucking in detail.

## Question 2 (d)\*

(d)\* Discuss the relative importance of geomorphic processes in forming glacial landforms. [16]

In many cases, candidates were able to write in detail about geomorphic processes in forming glacial landforms. They were able to articulate not only a description of the process but also explain these in relation to specific landforms, for example in corrie formation. Place specific detail was included with named landforms and locations such as Snowdonia. In some instances, this was done in an exceptional level of detail and specific features were discussed. Relative importance was usually addressed through comparing the geomorphic processes with other influences such as climate or aspect. This approach was more than acceptable and allowed candidates to demonstrate skills of analysis and evaluation. However, at times, candidates wrote general summary statements such as 'this shows they are important' without any clear explanation. Some candidates demonstrated analysis through comparing the relative importance of the processes with one another; this was often done in a sophisticated way and candidates used different landforms to illustrate their points. They also discussed how the different processes linked together and were interrelated, which often supported their overall argument.

#### Option C overview

Dryland Landscapes continues to be the least popular option within Section A. Of the small number that answered these questions, candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of processes that occurred in these landscapes and use some place specific detail to support their ideas.

## Question 3 (a)

#### Option C - Dryland Landscapes

3 (a) With reference to a **case study** of **one** dryland landscape that is being used by people, explain the reasons for the economic activity taking place.

[8]

This question required candidates to explain the reasons for the activity using the example they had studied. While some were able to do this, others drifted to discuss the impacts of the human activity which was not the focus of the question. Those that were more successful discussed the reasons for tourism in their chosen landscape. It is important that candidates explain why tourism (or any other economic activity) is taking place in that specific environment rather than in any other place.

## Question 3 (b) (i)

**(b)** Study **Table 3**, which shows mean monthly precipitation for a dryland location in Australia for 11 months during 2019.

#### Table 3

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Mean precipitation (mm)	45	35	30	10	15	1	8	8	9	18	30

(i) Using the data in **Table 3**, calculate the median. You must show your working.

[2]

Candidates were able to calculate the median successfully. A small number of candidates misunderstood what was meant by the median and instead worked out the mean, however this was only done by a very small number.

#### Question 3 (b) (ii)

(ii) Using the data in **Table 3**, calculate the interquartile range. You must show your working.

[2]

Candidates showed familiarity with how to calculate the interquartile range. They were able to calculate the upper and lower quartile with confidence and subtract one from the other to provide the correct response.

## Question 3 (b) (iii)

(iii) The mean monthly precipitation for December 2019 was 40 mm.
Interpret this value with reference to the interquartile range for the data in **Table 3**. [2]

Many candidates found this question challenging and misinterpreted its requirements. There was no need for candidates to recalculate the interquartile range with December's figure included rather they simply had to interpret it in relation to what had already been calculated. Several candidates did not attempt the question.

#### **Assessment for learning**



When teaching geographical skills, it is essential that candidates not only understand how to carry out the method but can also interpret the result of the calculation. Alongside this, they should be encouraged to consider the techniques' usefulness. The Geographical Skills Teacher Guide and Student workbook can support with understanding and practising geographical skills. These resources can be found on <a href="Teach Cambridge">Teach Cambridge</a>.

## Question 3 (c)

(c) Study Fig. 3, a dryland landscape in the USA.
With reference to Fig. 3, explain one way flows of material influence the formation of landform C.

[3]

Overall, candidates were able to identify that Figure 3 showed a canyon. They were able to explain its formation with reference to flows of material. It was common to see candidates talk about vertical erosion and develop this point sufficiently to access three marks.

## Question 3 (d)\*

(d)\* Discuss the relative importance of geomorphic processes in forming dryland landforms. [16]

Candidates were able to identify a range of processes that could occur in these environments. Weathering featured heavily in candidate responses and links were also made to mass movements. Some candidates were able to discuss specific landforms in different named places, although this place specific evidence needed to be developed in some responses. Several candidates compared the importance of geomorphic processes with other factors such as climate, which was an acceptable approach. However, there were still occasions of candidates misunderstanding geomorphic processes, instead they talked about factors such as climate. Some candidates were able to judge relative importance of one process against another and argue that some are more important for some landforms over others. These approaches were effective at demonstrating AO2.

## Section B overview

Once again, it was clear that candidates were familiar with the structure of the paper. Some chose to respond to this section first; however, this was not a common approach. Furthermore, candidates that wrote overly long responses in Section A found time management a challenge and this led to them running out of time particularly on Question 4 (c). Candidates could write confidently about different environments (notably the tropical rainforest and the tundra) and in many cases were able to demonstrate strong knowledge and understanding of the natural cycles that operate.

## Question 4 (a) (i)

- 4 (a) Study Fig. 4, which shows spring snowmelt timing in Alaska 1999–2015.
  - (i) Using evidence from Fig. 4, identify three limitations of the data presentation method.

[3]

Many candidates were able to identify three limitations and it was pleasing to see that candidates tried to write succinctly and clearly in their responses. It is important that candidates are focusing on the limitations of the presentation technique itself rather than general points about the data. Common acceptable responses included the lack of place names for the area, the inability to see internal variations, and the lack of information on the source. Colour was mentioned by a number of candidates, but many needed to be specific as to why this was a limitation, e.g., specifically stating the colours that are similar such as the blue and dark green. Some candidates need to remember that where the question specifically asks for a number (such as <a href="three">three</a> limitations in this case), they should not write more than these, as subsequent points are irrelevant and result in the candidate spending time on work that won't be credited.

## Question 4 (a) (ii)

(ii) With reference to **Fig. 4**, suggest **one** way this seasonal change affects the water cycle in the Arctic tundra. [2]

This question assessed the ability of candidates to interpret the figure and explain an appropriate link to the water cycle. It was pleasing to see candidates knew key terminology, and more successful responses referenced increased surface stores of water due to the impermeability of the permafrost. However, several candidates did not reference the figure and talked generally about permafrost melting; this was not displayed in the figure and was therefore not credited. The question required a focus on snowmelt and only points that clearly linked to this were acceptable.

## Question 4 (a) (iii)

(iii) With reference to **Fig. 4**, suggest **one** way this seasonal change affects the carbon cycle in the Arctic tundra.

[2]

As in Question 4 (a) (ii), candidates were required to reference the figure and explain how the seasonal change of snow melt affected the carbon cycle. Common responses referred to plant growth increasing, however, several candidates talked about temperature increase without linking this to snow melt and this was not credited.

#### **Assessment for learning**



When using figures and resources, students should be directed to focus on the data that is being presented rather than anything they might assume from the resource.

#### Exemplar 2

4	asii	The meeting or snow will mean that the
		carbon stored in the atmosphere vill
		be absorb more by plants, through Photo-
		synthesis since more water anailability will
		mean more plant growth.

Both marks were given to this candidate as they correctly referenced the seasonal change that is demonstrated in the figure and the response was developed. This was done by discussing the increase in the availability of water which, as a result, could support photosynthesis and the movement of carbon from the atmosphere.

## Question 4 (b)

**(b)** Examine how temperature affects flows and stores in the carbon cycle of a tropical rainforest.

[10]

The links between temperature and the carbon cycle were understood by many candidates. Reference to photosynthesis and decomposition featured heavily and candidates were able to explain how both processes would impact the carbon cycle. It was pleasing to see specific references to the environment of the tropical rainforest, with many candidates being able to provide figures for Net Primary Productivity for example. This level of detail enabled candidates to move higher in the levels. It is important to note that both AO1 and AO2 credit was available for this question and candidates must move beyond a description and explanation of the links to temperature, and make sure there is sufficient evaluation. Level 3 candidates often demonstrated an understanding of the rapid flows within the cycle due to this specific environment. Some candidates wrote lengthy responses that were 'opposites' of each other, for example, firstly discussing temperature increase and then temperature decrease.

#### Exemplar 3

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Speed up he vare of decemparinan. A plan decempne,
mes rejeane loi no me amaphere, in me hopical
roundrest in Brazil, which is over see 6 million hom2,
Mere is a nigh NPP of over 2000 and milyo memig
mat decompainer of plants is high, merepre affecting
affecting the flung corbon in the rest rainbrent.
Furmermore, due to he high rates of NPP and vont
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are two processor and flows which occur daily and
as coz is taken up by photosynhesis, mis home
increase he store in bromass on trees store up to
180 ponner of CO2 be and on additional 40 bonners

This response achieved Level 3 due to the comprehensive understanding of the influence of temperature. Points were succinct and well developed, with the candidate discussing the link between temperature and decomposition, as well as photosynthesis. Furthermore, detail was added to the response using specific figures related to the environment. The candidate also demonstrated an understanding as to the rate at which these processes were occurring; again, showing strong evaluative skills.

#### Misconception



A common misconception was that the rate of photosynthesis would definitely increase with rising temperatures. Several candidates made this statement and did not demonstrate an understanding that this may not be the case, partly due to other elements being required for this process to occur.

## Question 4 (c)\*

(c)\* To what extent do human factors enhance rather than disturb the natural processes and stores in the water cycle? [16]

Candidates approached this question in several ways; most defined 'enhance' as either human activity increasing the speed of water cycle processes or the ways in which humans can address the disturbances created. Both approaches were deemed acceptable. Disturb was generally understood as actions by humans that can affect the water cycle in a negative way. The most common factors discussed were deforestation, agriculture, water extraction, and urban development. Most candidates were able to use correct terminology when discussing the impact on the water cycle, with references to infiltration, run off, groundwater, evapotranspiration and so on.

Those that gained Level 3 for AO1 often explained the impact on the water cycle with reference to specific examples, rather than discussing generic examples such as 'in the rainforest'. For AO2, the Level 3 responses formed well-developed arguments, often counteracting the points about disturbance with how humans are also trying to enhance processes and the varying successes of this activity. Again, there was opportunity for place specific detail, which some candidates integrated effectively into their responses. A small number of candidates did run out of time at this point, which resulted in unfinished responses to this guestion.

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