

2000 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre Geography

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Geography

Introduction

In 2000, 8166 candidates presented for the Geography 2/3 Unit Common paper. This represents a decrease of 533 candidates on the 1999 candidature. For the 3 Unit (Additional) paper, 1777 candidates presented, representing 320 fewer than in 1999.

The Geography 2/3 Unit examination format consisted of:

Section I (25 marks)

- Part A (15 marks) multiple choice based on skills and the stimulus material on the Broadsheet
- Part B (10 marks) short-answer questions based on skills

Section II (75 marks)

- Three extended responses to be written
- Choice of three out of four options from each of which one question was attempted
- Each option contained two questions, one of which was structured and based on the Broadsheet

2/3 Unit (Common)

Geography Broadsheet

Once again, the Broadsheet was thematic in its approach and the information presented, which was based on South Africa this year. The wide variety of stimulus material was used to examine candidates' skills in Section I and was also used in the structured extended response questions in Section II.

Section I – Part A: Multiple Choice Questions

It was generally felt that a well-chosen range of skills was tested. The Broadsheet was informative and clearly laid out.

Answers to the multiple choice questions were as follows:

Question Number	Correct response	Percentage of correct responses
1	C	83.66
2	A	72.96
3	D	68.84
4	A	90.21
5	C	34.61
6	A	71.01
7	A	94.57
8	C	59.61
9	B	57.48
10	C	60.45
11	D	68.60
12	B	67.22
13	C	86.51
14	D	83.28
15	B	75.58

Section I – Part B: Short Answer Questions

Marking Criteria for Q 16 (a-c) and Q17

Question	Marks	Marking Criteria
16(a)	1	Low, low pressure, low pressure system, cyclone, cyclonic depression, L
16(b)	1	W, west, westerly, from west to east, WSW, west south west, west south westerly, WSW to ENE, moving easterly, moving to the ENE
16(c)	3	<p>Select 3 of the following, only 1 aspect of each feature can attract a mark.</p> <p>Mark on the basis of 1 mark per line – if there is incorrect information on that line then that line attracts zero marks.</p> <p><i>Wind speed</i> – 14-23 km/hr winds, moderate winds, breezy, windy.</p> <p>Don't accept strong or very strong winds unless it is directly mentioned with the 14-23 km/hr winds reading.</p> <p><i>Wind direction</i> – SW winds, onshore winds</p> <p><i>Temperature</i> – temperatures decreasing, getting cooler/colder, cool temps.</p> <p>(Note: Not acceptable are cold, low or using numbers that cannot be justified.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Accept getting warmer if they explain why e.g. cold front has moved away.)</p> <p><i>Cloud</i> – overcast, cloudy, full cloud cover.</p> <p><i>Storms</i> – storms, stormy weather, unsettled weather, unstable weather.</p> <p><i>Precipitation</i> – possibility/probability of showers/rain.</p> <p><i>Humidity</i> – high humidity, high relative humidity, moderate humidity.</p> <p><i>Air pressure</i> – fairly constant, staying around 1012 hPa, normal.</p> <p>Don't accept just a number or air pressure reading such as 1012 hPa</p>

17(a)	1	<p>Must relate to any of the pieces of material on the Broadsheet.</p> <p>Must be a question.</p> <p>Must make sense.</p>
17(b)	2	<p>Mark this section holistically.</p> <p>To be a contemporary geographical issue it must be impacting now, relate to the syllabus and display an aspect of contention.</p> <p>Can be a single word e.g. pollution, over-fishing, poaching – no justification needed.</p> <p>If (b) does not relate to (a) then 0 marks.</p> <p>2 discrete issues = 2 marks</p> <p>1 issue or 2 non-discrete issues = 1 mark</p> <p>No issue = 0 marks.</p>
17(c)	2	<p>Mark this section holistically.</p> <p>Must relate to (b)</p> <p>Must be a valid sense of purpose for the data.</p> <p>Good data collection methods and valid use = 2 marks</p> <p>Good data collection methods OR use, OR vague data collection methods and use = 1 mark</p> <p>No valid primary data collection methods or how it will be used = 0 marks</p>
16 & 17	<p>Note: incorrect information in the answer causes the answer to be wrong.</p>	

Question 16

The question on the synoptic chart was generally well done. The map was clear and the key concise. However, candidates did not always follow instructions carefully. If a question asks for three characteristics and gives three lines, it follows that candidates should write one characteristic on each line and differentiate clearly between the characteristics. Teachers need to expose candidates to maps of all types with curved lines of latitude and meridians of longitude, which do not always run directly from north to south on maps.

Better Responses

- Candidates were able to differentiate between pressure systems and frontal systems.
- Candidates understood the elements of weather and clearly identified three separate characteristics of weather from the synoptic chart.

Weaker Responses

- Many candidates had difficulty identifying wind direction.
- Some candidates were confused by the curved lines of latitude and the lines of longitude which did not run north/south on the map.

Question 17

Candidates still do not always demonstrate that they understand the concept of a contemporary geographic issue. A geographic issue refers to an area of interest related to human interaction with the environment, in a way which has become contentious.

Better Responses

- Candidates who understood that a focus question is used in planning fieldwork had an advantage.
- Candidates who had actually undertaken fieldwork with specific and recognisable methodology had an advantage.
- Candidates were able to differentiate between primary and secondary data collection.

Weaker Responses

- Candidates did not understand how to write a geographic question.
- Candidates had difficulty relating their data collection to its use.

In order to maximise their marks, candidates answering short answer questions should answer as fully as possible, using geographic terminology and making sure that they understand the directive term in the question.

Section II – Extended Responses on the Options

General Comments

The following table indicates the selection of questions within and between the four 2 Unit Options.

Option	Question Number	Percentage of total responses
Large Cities	18	12.5
	19	18.2
Fragile Ecosystems	20	13.0
	21	16.0
Natural Resources	22	12.3
	23	6.0
Productive Activity	24	5.0
	25	17.0

Markers thought that the questions enabled candidates to demonstrate their knowledge easily. However, candidates generally had more difficulty with the structured questions related to the Broadsheet than with the unstructured alternatives to these questions. While the structured questions give candidates more direction, many find it difficult to address all the directives and parts of the structured question.

It appears that some candidates do not understand directive terms such explain, discuss, analyse, evaluate. Very few candidates can evaluate effectively. This lack of understanding means that candidates do not address the main points of the question and are disadvantaged when they fail to address all directives in the question. Teachers need to continually stress the differences between the many directive terms, which may be used in examination questions.

Teachers also need to emphasise that if candidates are asked to refer to the Broadsheet or to stimulus material, they must refer directly to this information as frequently as possible in order to demonstrate their ability to read and interpret the material. For instance, candidates may:

- quote or calculate statistics from graphs, tables or articles
- identify places, land uses or spatial patterns illustrated
- quote grid/area references related to locations on a topographic map
- calculate distances between points on a map
- refer to directions related to points on a map or an aerial photograph
- describe population density or transport patterns from an aerial photograph
- relate photographs to locations on maps or to other photographs
- synthesise information gained from the variety of stimulus material presented
- draw precise maps of topographic maps or photographs in order to illustrate relationships between geographic features.

Teachers need to carefully interpret the language of the syllabus and to concentrate on the topic outcomes in their teaching. In order to maximise their marks, candidates need to be trained to interpret the question and to develop the skill of applying the body of their knowledge to the needs of the question. Careful deconstruction of extended response questions is the key to success in broad outcome-based questions.

Case studies need to be selected carefully so as to enable candidates to demonstrate all outcomes. They need to be supported by current data and statistics. Quality fieldwork gives candidates the advantage of detailed and applied knowledge. Better responses substantiate generalised statements with specific examples from case studies and/or fieldwork.

If candidates draw sketch maps, these maps need to be large enough to read clearly, to show useful and relevant information, be well annotated, show place names and direction if relevant and be meaningful to the question. Similarly, clearly drawn diagrams, sketches and flow diagrams are valuable additions to extended responses if they are relevant and linked to the question.

3 Unit (Additional)

General Comments

The following table indicates the selection of questions within and between the three 3 Unit Options.

Option	Question Number	Percentage of total responses
Biophysical Studies	1	14.90
	2	22.90
Development Geography	3	14.95
	4	28.75
Political Geography	5	2.70
	6	15.80

Examiners thought that the general standard of responses was high throughout the 3 Unit paper.

Better Responses

- Sustained a sophisticated and logical argument and addressed the question directly - especially the directive term in the question.
- Substantiated arguments with detailed statistics, examples and sample studies, references to current sources of information and contemporary issues where relevant.
- Used and explained geographic terminology throughout responses.

Weaker Responses

- Did not address all parts of the question.
- Were more descriptive and often failed to establish relationships and linkages.
- Needed to consolidate generalisations by referring to specific sample studies and /or issues.
- Prepared answers on topics related to the options but did not adjust these prepared responses to the set questions.