



# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2020

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In Geography (4GE1)  
Paper 2: Human Geography

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## **Principal Examiner Feedback**

### **International GCSE Geography**

#### **Paper 2**

#### **4GE1\_02**

### **November 2020**

#### **Overview**

This was only the third series of the revised Pearson / Edexcel International GCSE in Geography Paper 2 – Human Geography component, but only the second time the exam paper was completed by candidates given the circumstances of summer 2020. The first series took place in summer 2019 so schools should have now had some experience delivering this qualification and navigating its assessments.

The paper has a total of 105 marks. The exam includes a mixture multiple choice, short answer, data response and open-ended questions. Each of the questions is mapped to one or more of the Assessment Objectives (AOs). Comments on the overall quality of response and particular issues related to questions across the exam paper are considered in this report.

The paper has proved to be accessible to a range of candidates. The paper provides question choice in each section, and candidate choices seem pre-determined on the basis of topic teaching decisions in centres. Questions on economic activity and energy (Q1) and urban environments (Q3) were equally the most popular, while fewer candidates chose to respond to the rural environment (Q2) question. This pattern was mirrored in the fieldwork section where popularity was split between investigating economic activity and energy (Q6), as well as investigating urban environments (Q8) while significantly fewer responded to the investigating rural environments question (Q7). In Section C fragile environments and climate change (Q7) was clearly the most popular question, with significantly fewer attempting globalisation and migration (Q8) questions, and very few answering the development and human welfare question (Q9).

Examiners noted a number of issues related to how candidates responded to different types of questions:

- As in the 2019 series the breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding demonstrated by candidates was varied across the paper, particularly when

trying to draw on key theoretical concepts. This variation was particularly noticeable in the fieldwork sections of the paper.

- The material in the resource booklet was not always used effectively by candidates. Although stimulus response material was provided many candidates are still not applying their knowledge accurately or in a way relevant to the question. Many candidates still have problems in using evidence directly from the resource (an AO3 skill) in order to be able to generate a successful answer.
- Some candidates had a poor knowledge and understanding of the fieldwork questions, especially **Q4(e), Q5(e) and Q6(e)** when there was a tendency to write very generally about methods and techniques rather than giving a focus on the part of the enquiry pathway that was being examined. For this question, some failed to get into the L2 or L3 mark band as their answers were too general and did not provide enough detail.
- In addition, there was often a lack of fluency and structure in the longer answers, many candidates just describing and explaining, rather than a focus on assessment, evaluation or discussion (depending on the question). The balance of the AOs is very important for this revised assessment. It was felt that candidates were not always recognising how to tailor their answer to the command word in the question (for assess, evaluate or discuss questions).

### **Recommendations for centres based on this exam performance:**

- Centres should review the specification content alongside the sample assessment materials and previous live papers to ensure they are familiar with the range of key vocabulary that candidates need to recognise and understand, and how they can be used in different types of questions. Related to this, it is important that centres ensure the teaching of the 'integrated skills' is incorporated into their delivery. These can be found below the subject content in each section of the specification.
- Ensure that candidates are familiar with the different command words used in this specification. For example, the difference between what is expected for 'examine' and 'evaluate', and what the key components of an answer for this type of question should include.
- In questions that refer to a resource, either in the paper or resource booklet, it is important that evidence from the resource is used to answer the question in some way. There will be specific marks available for the interpretation of these resources. Candidates may find it useful to refer to the resources clearly in some of the open-ended questions, making clear reference to the resource in their responses.
- Some questions ask for a particular number of responses e.g. one way, or two strategies, it is important to ensure candidates develop their responses

accordingly and provide sufficient development of their responses to achieve the marks in the question. These will differ depending on the command word, and how many marks relate to the question.

- Centres should ensure candidates have a good understanding of the geographical enquiry process, both recognising how to conduct fieldwork but interpret unfamiliar fieldwork resources. In particular candidates should be able to recognise strengths and weaknesses in geographical enquiries, this will help candidates to prepare for the extended response question in Section B.
- For calculation questions candidates should be reminded to pay close attention to the commands in the question carefully. For example, if the question states, 'answer to one decimal place', this must be done to access full marks.

## **Individual Question Feedback**

### **Section A**

#### **Questions 1,2 and 3**

There was some mixed performance in this Section, with some excellent responses but equally those that were very weak. Questions that incorporated resources and application tended to discriminate the most.

1(a) & (c) The multiple-choice questions clearly provided an accessible introduction to the paper. Candidates usually were able to successfully identify the connection between energy from plants and biomass energy, and were able to identify a source of non-renewable energy.

1(b) demonstrated that most candidates understood the concept of energy conservation and were able to provide a definition.

1(d) required candidates to use evidence from a figure in the Resource Booklet. This question was answered very well by most candidates. Many candidates were able to identify basic evidence from the resource to explain why the port and its related economic activity could be located here. Common responses focused on accessibility and it being a relatively flat area of land suitable for freight and port activities.

1(e) Most candidates could provide an example of primary employment with farming being the most common response.

1(f) The response to this question was variable. This question required candidates to consider the link between population and resource consumption. Whilst most candidates could recognise that there was a clear correlation between increasing population and increased consumption of resources fewer candidates were able to provide two distinct ways these were linked. There were many examples where students gave two distinct reasons e.g. by explaining the influence of wealth/development on the consumption of resources. However, there were also a lot of examples where candidates mirrored their reasons about population/resource increase and decrease. They needed to provide different reasons to meet the demands of the question.

1(g) Most candidates scored marks on this question demonstrating good understanding of why changes to secondary employment can take place. The question required candidates to refer to a particular change taking place, either an increase or decrease in secondary employment. There were some candidates who did not specify which change or even which country/region they were referring to, making no reference to the figure which meant that many candidates achieved two marks. There were also candidates that provided several different reasons rather than focusing their response on one reason, and providing some development, as the question required.

1(h) There was a varied response to this question. Most candidates were able to identify a suitable megacity, although there were some surprising cities mentioned that are not even close to megacity status. However, there were many examples with really specific reasons with very clear place specific detail using their case study detail well.

1(i) Responses to this question were variable. The best answers for this question recognised the command word and began to analyse by giving specific reasons for why a certain fuel source was dominate e.g. coal was easily accessible and affordable in the past and therefore was widely used' or 'renewable have increased as technology has developed and countries have signed up to agreements like the Paris agreement'. They made frequent reference to the figure and made distinctions between countries to demonstrate their own knowledge (e.g. China uses lots of coal because they have big reserves and they are a rapidly industrialising country). The vast majority of answers did not address the command word 'analyse' predominantly describing the changes in the figure and providing some basic reasons for why which limited a lot of answer to Level 2 marks. There were a considerable number of pupils who were not able to interpret the figure

correctly and this reduced marks that could be awarded for AO4. Students need to ensure they can correctly interpret cumulative data sources.

2(a) & (c) The multiple-choice questions clearly provided an accessible introduction to the paper. Candidates usually were able to successfully identify the meaning of the term suburbanisation and the meaning of the term IGO.

2(b) Most candidates were able to provide a suitable definition for negative multiplier effect

2(d) Many candidates were able to suggest a suitable factor and provide adequate development of their answer for 2 marks

2(e) This question required basic recall of knowledge and most candidates were able to do this, with the most popular answer being fertiliser.

2(f) Candidates responded strongly to this question, often providing two well developed reasons. Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of why farm employment has taken place in some developed countries with the most common answers explaining about a shift to tertiary sector and mechanisation of remaining agricultural activities.

2(g) As with other questions in this section which required the use of a figure from the Resource Booklet, there were many candidates who did not do so effectively. Candidates needed to provide a reason for a particular trend, showing some indication that the resource had been used to formulate their response.

2(h) This question was answered well by many candidates, often achieving 4 marks. Where candidates did not achieve marks it was because they did not understand the term 'diversification', and instead tended to write about strategies to increase agricultural production instead.

2(i) Many candidates found it challenging to meet the demands of the question with the majority of answers just describing the Figure in full sentences and this limited responses to maximum of level 2 marks depending on depth of detail e.g. whether they made links to the type of vegetation. There were not many but a few candidates did remember to make comments like 'precipitation plays a significant role because wet places have lots of trees and vegetation e.g. rainforests and dry places have sparse vegetation'. Some candidates did achieve level 3 marks because they made links to the impact on how the vegetation has adapted e.g. trees with needles in the taiga biome but trees with big leaves in the rainforest but they didn't

always explicitly link this to temp/rainfall. But overall the 'analyse' part of this question was not addressed by most candidates.

3(a) & (c) The multiple-choice questions clearly provided an accessible introduction to the paper. Candidates usually were able to successfully identify the meaning of the term urbanisation and brownfield site.

3(b) Most candidates were able to provide a suitable definition for rural-urban fringe.

3(d) Generally candidates were able to interpret the resource effectively and suggest suitable evidence from the photograph, usually focusing on building density.

3(e) Candidates were usually able to identify a suitable group, and the responses reflect the diversity of experience of which groups are involved in managing urban challenges.

3(f) Many candidates were able to achieve marks here, but often not full marks because two distinct reasons for variations in urban land use values were not provided. Candidates should try to avoid providing mirror answers where two answer are required.

3(g) As in similar answers in Q1 and 2 candidates didn't always make reference to what change was being shown in the figures and so were not able to achieve full marks. The question asks for one reason, and there were quite a few answers that instead of developing one reason, would instead provide several reasons which means they couldn't achieve the three marks available.

3(h) Usually candidates were able to achieve some marks here. There were some strong responses here where candidates detailed place specific strategies that were distinctly different for Health and Education using their case study knowledge well. Candidates need to make sure they name a developing/emerging country to avoid limiting their marks/ There were also a number of candidates that provided a developed country or in some cases city, rather than a developing or emerging country as outlined in the question. While there were some good, developed responses, there were also those that provided very limited ideas, such as 'they have built more schools', 'they have built more hospitals' which while valid did not provide sufficient detail to explain *how* the health and education had been improved.



3(i) Candidates responses to this question were quite variable. The command word for the question was to 'analyse', but on the whole this was not addressed by many candidates. Where pupils did give reasons these were often fairly basic and the command word 'analyse' was not met well with very few students considering which factors play a bigger/lesser role. Stronger responses provided at least some hint of analysis by discussing the role of development and how this changes the proportion of rural/urban. Some candidates were also able to comment on the fact that the resource showed a continent, a region of a continent and a country to demonstrate some analysis that way. There were a number of examples where students simply lifted information off the figure and described the data given to them, which significantly limited their answer as the data was written onto the figure and so there was no geographical skill demonstrated in just copying the figures. Students need to remember the word 'reasons' in the question to ensure they are using the figure to give reasons for the pattern rather than just describing the pattern.

## **Section B**

Questions 4, 5 and 6

In this section, candidates were required to answer one out of the three fieldwork questions available. The questions mirrored each other across the three options, and the strengths and weaknesses of response followed similar patterns across each of these. The first part of this section (a-d) were familiar fieldwork questions drawing on candidates own fieldwork experiences. The second part (e) presented an unfamiliar fieldwork context for candidates to evaluate. There were clearly many candidates who found writing about fieldwork for either familiar or unfamiliar contexts challenging. Candidates were given space at the beginning of the question to state the title of their geographical enquiry. Those who wrote a clear and appropriate title tended to be those who performed better in this section, creating a sense that they had understood fieldwork processes, and the relevant concepts and techniques involved.

(a)(i) and (a)(ii) Many candidates were able to successfully identify a suitable type of primary data used in geographical enquiry. The most common response was questionnaire. Usually candidates were able to provide some explanation about a way this helped their investigation. There were occasions where candidates mixed up primary and secondary types of data.

(b) Candidates interpreted this question differently. Some chose to provide a specific location of their fieldwork site, whereas other chose to provide a more general response such as 'a small hamlet' or 'a large city'. While we had expected

candidates to provide a specific location, many were able to provide a suitable explanation of why this was suitable.

(c) Explanations of how secondary data was used were less clear suggesting they either weren't clear about the distinction between the two types of data, as has been the case for some candidates in part (a), but also about recognising how these different types of data contributed to the enquiry. Although there were lots of candidates who did this well giving a specific secondary data source and developing one reason well. Candidates need to make sure they understand the difference between 'primary data' and 'secondary data'. Candidates should also be encouraged to give specific sources of data, rather than just 'the internet'. There were also candidates who provided more than one reason but didn't develop any of them sufficiently and so were not able to achieve the 2 marks.

(d) The responses to this question were variable as there was some confusion for candidates as many wrote about presentation techniques rather than analysis. Candidates could still gain marks if they explained how some of these presentation methods such as bar charts could be used as part of analysis, but candidates should be encouraged to recognise the different stages of the enquiry process and the different techniques involved. Many answers were also quite simplistic and didn't really explain how the technique was used. There were a lot of answers that described drawing a bar chart to analyse data which does not explain anything about the analysis technique, while others explain how the bar chart was used for comparison. Candidates should be able to distinguish which elements of the enquiry were about data presentation and data analysis and the techniques involved.

(e) This part of the question required candidates to study some resources in the Resource booklet which included an extract from a student's conclusion and evaluation and an annotated photograph. Candidates were also given the aim of the investigation in the question paper. The question required candidates to evaluate the conclusion, evaluation and annotated photograph. Candidates should be reminded to pay close attention to the command word in these questions. This question was looking for candidates to critique the material that had been presented to them. Candidates who scored well on this section tended to take a systematic approach moving through the conclusion, evaluation, and annotated photography, with evaluative comments throughout. Some provided a summary comment at the end which reinforced the evaluation in the answer. However there were quite a lot of responses that simply rewrote text from the resources in their response without providing a suitable commentary to accompany it. Candidates clearly found it easiest to be critical of the annotated photography. Candidates

tended to focus on the negative aspects of the material presented, highlighting various ways the fieldwork could have been improved, although there were some more nuanced responses that recognised some of the positive aspects of the material presented.

## Section C

### Question 7, 8 and 9

7(a)(i) and (ii) The multiple choice questions clearly were accessible to most candidates usually recognising the human cause of climate change and the cause of deforestation from the options provided.

7(b)(i) Most candidates were able to provide a suitable definition of climate change.

7(b)(ii) This question required candidates to interpret a figure from the Resource booklet to identify the countries with the highest and lowest total carbon emissions. Most candidates seem to have found this straightforward.

7(b)(iii) While most candidates were able to score some marks here, there were similar issues as with earlier in the paper where candidates need to identify a pattern/trend and incorporate this in their answer. Candidates should also try to avoid mirroring their answers for example 'China is developed and has high carbon emissions as they have a lot of industry.' 'Argentina is less developed and doesn't have a lot of industry and so has low emissions.'

7(c) Many candidates provided strong answers to this question demonstrating a good understanding of the causes of desertification. In the vast majority of responses there were two really well developed and different causes provided.

7(d)(i) This question required candidates to calculate the mean change in global forest area. Marks were available for the method that was used to calculate the mean and the correct answer. Many candidates used the correct method to calculate the mean, although quite a few candidates did not follow the instruction to provide the answer to one decimal place.

7(d)(ii) Most candidates achieved a mark in this question but not always both marks. Several students wrote about regions not asked for in the question so ensure students read the question carefully. Some students refer to changes, but didn't specify which region they were referring to, or use any data to support their answer.

7(e) This question required candidates to assess different climate change impacts, some of which were displayed in Figure 7c. While many candidates were able to

draw on material from the figure to frame their answer the 'assess' focus of the question was not addressed by many candidates. Very few candidates discussed the significance of the impacts and tended to just describe them, limiting their answer to level 2 marks. Unfortunately, several students simply lifted text from the Figure and did not provide any additional content. The best examples made links between impacts shown on the Figure and to countries that could suffer the largest impacts – thus beginning to meet the 'Assess' demand of the question and accessing Level 3 marks.

7(f) In general candidates responded to this question well demonstrating a good knowledge and understanding of climate change. The responses on the whole were good with candidates able to discuss the issues between developed and developing countries and why this may make the statement correct. There was a considerable amount of AO2 in the strongest answers where they brought in examples e.g. the Great Barrier Reef, flooding or rice paddies in Bangladesh to support their viewpoint. It is important that candidates strike a balance between demonstrating their own knowledge and understanding but also draw on, and make links to, the resources that have been provided. The weakest answers often stated if they agreed or disagreed with a reference or two to the figures but no depth or detail or discussion. The strongest answers tended to take a stance at the outset of the answer and then referred to each figure and linked to examples from their own knowledge and understanding and then provided a summary at the end.

8(a)(i) and (ii) The multiple choice questions clearly were accessible to most candidates usually identifying the role of the IMF and the meaning of voluntary migration.

8(b)(i) Most candidates were able to provide a suitable definition of mass tourism.

8(b)(ii) This question required candidates to interpret a figure from the Resource booklet to identify the countries with the highest and lowest trade per person. Most candidates seem to have found this straightforward.

8(biii) Most candidates were able to provide two developed and distinctly different reasons for this question.

8(c) Candidates displayed strong awareness of the negative impacts of the rise of global tourism, and while it was not required, they often provided country examples to support their answers.

8(d)(i) This question required candidates to calculate the mean tourist spending. Marks were available for the method that was used to calculate the mean and the correct answer. Many candidates used the correct method to calculate the mean, although quite a few candidates did not follow the instruction to provide the answer to one decimal place.

8(dii) Most candidates were able to describe the changes in tourist spending effectively and many used data to support their answer.

8(e) This question required candidates to 'assess' the factors that have contributed to globalisation with several provided in Figure 8c. As with other (e) part questions in this section of the paper, the 'assess' part of the question was poorly met despite the factors being ranked in the Figure to prompt students to consider their significance. There were several responses that just lifted the different factors from the resource but did not provide any relevant commentary with them. The best examples met the 'assess' command and chose 3-4 factors and discussed their role in globalisation and how important they were. Several answers chose factors in a different order to the Figure which effectively showed they had chosen the significance for themselves, and often explained why they had a different order.

8(f) Generally responses for this question showed a good understanding of globalisation, and there was evidence of some good AO2 in the best answers whereby students were able to begin discussing the influence of global institutions (WTO, UN, EU) and made links to the figures to determine their significance. There was some evidence in a few responses of students beginning to consider whether it was global institutions or another factor that plays the biggest role. However, a number of answers missed the last two words in the end of the quote 'global institutions' and so they didn't really discuss the influence of these therefore, missing the focus of the question to an extent as global institutions were not mentioned in their answer but they did refer to the figures and bring in their own knowledge so they often still achieved level 2 despite this omission.

9(a)(i) and (ii) The multiple choice questions clearly were accessible to most candidates usually identifying the correct factor that could be used as a measure of development and the meaning of HDI.

9(b)(i) Most candidates were able to provide a suitable definition of water security.

9(b)(ii) This question required candidates to interpret a figure from the Resource booklet to identify the countries with the highest and lowest income inequality. Most candidates seem to have found this straightforward.

9(biii) Most candidates were able to provide two developed and distinctly different reasons for the patterns shown.

9(c) This question was answered by many candidates, often demonstrating a clear understanding of the term 'bottom-up' development and being able to give two specific and distinct reasons. While it was not required many answers provided specific details suggesting they were drawing on case study knowledge.

9(d)(i) This question required candidates to calculate the mean percentage change for GDP. Marks were available for the method that was used to calculate the mean and the correct answer. Many candidates used the correct method to calculate the mean, although quite a few candidates did not follow the instruction to provide the answer to one decimal place.

9(dii) Most candidates were able to describe the differences in GDP for the time period identified, and often used data from the figure to support their answer.

9(e) This question required candidates to assess the different factors that have contributed to uneven global development. The strongest answers here met the 'assess' command to consider which factors play the biggest role although this was not demonstrated often. The majority of answers just described the factors in the Figure rather than 'assessed them despite a suggested ranking being given for them in the Figure.

9(f) Candidates performed well in this question, there were a number of responses who discussed this quote in depth demonstrating they had a clear understanding of the complexity of measuring development. Most were able to bring in detail about why using composite measures like HDI were better than a single measure, but still not perfect. There were candidates who also used 9b rather than 9a as indicated in the question. It is important that candidates read the question carefully to ensure they are drawing on the correct resources. As with 7 and 8(f) candidates need to be aware of the AO weighing to ensure the majority of their answer is not spent giving AO2 detail to avoid missing AO3/4 elements.

