



# **General Certificate of Secondary Education**

## **Geography 3031** *Specification A*

**3031/1F      Full Course**

## **Report on the Examination** *2008 examination – June series*

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## 3031/1F

### General

The responses, although varied, indicated that candidates had generally been entered for the appropriate level of paper. There were a number of rubric errors and this appeared to be at least partly centre related. It is clearly important that candidates know exactly what questions they are required to answer so that they can spend the necessary amount of time and produce answers of appropriate quality. Encouraging candidates to attempt more than the required number is not good practice and does not ensure a better outcome for the candidate. It was encouraging to see candidates use case studies, even when these were not specifically required e.g. in Question 4 part (c), and these undoubtedly enhanced the quality of the answers.

Some key issues are evident. There is clearly a need for candidates to answer the question asked and obey the command word stated. Thus, in Question 3 part (b) for example, there was no requirement for explanation as the command was 'describe', but a significant proportion of candidates considered this. Some actually focussed on this element – to the detriment of their answer.

The map work sections indicate the need for such skills to be integrated into the content, where possible and not just to consider the skills in isolation. There is always a need to apply the skills, although specific terminology is not required. Candidates need to be proficient and confident in their use of 4 and 6 figure grid references, direction and distance and regular practice of such skills would increase proficiency. Similarly, candidates should be advised again of the need to support their answers with reference to evidence provided on map extracts – or any other resource given.

The labelling of diagrams proved problematic for some. There is a need to ensure that the arrow connects the label with the feature and that the labelling required is that which is used, e.g. in Question 10 part (a)(i), candidates had to say something about the leaves, branches and roots, not merely point to them. The recognition of landforms in Question 8 part (b)(i) proved problematic for some, as did the identification of relevant features in Question 6 part(a)(i) and Question 7 part (a)(i). Candidates need to be aware of the need for precision here and of the requirement of an appropriate landform of landscape, not just anything visible from the photograph. Again, integrating such material into the content as frequently as possible should lead to improvement in this sphere.

## Section A

### Question 1

In part (f), some candidates struggled to explain the impact of the river on the shape as they had failed to identify it in part (e). Many candidates sought to explain why the river was an advantage for the site of Lincoln, rather than appreciate its negative impact on the shape – as shown by the lack of buildings adjacent to it. Some were aware of the presence of the flood plain and some perceived that the town had been cut in half. These were more perceptive answers.

## **Question 2**

A minority of candidates confused the two figures in part (b) and so identified the reverse of what had actually happened. Some failed to use the key effectively, noting that there were more ducks on the pond in 2006. The best engaged with the question and looked for changes and were aware of the presence of the new road, the A46, the roundabout and the nature reserve especially.

In part (c)(i), candidates generally scored either 0 or 2. Many merely shaded in the 2006 area. Others shaded whole squares. Those who sought greater precision gained the two marks and many of those accurately displayed the built up area of Birchwood in 1980. Most noted that it had got bigger and provided some general evidence of this in part (c)(ii); often they considered the presence of some services. Some focussed on the A46 road pattern – following on from part (b), but really it was the roads within Birchwood for which there was credit here. The best answers carefully considered the changes in the settlement of Birchwood and cited relevant evidence – noting the relative increase in size (tripled) and the direction of growth (southwards) and noting with precision the changes in services.

## **Question 3**

Most candidates obtained at least one mark in part (a). The failure to be awarded both marks was due to failing to convey that the number of visitors was in the thousands. Occasionally, the scale did not take into account the required range.

Part (b) was often answered in a mechanical, month by month review – without perceiving the overall trends during the year. This question discriminated well, with better candidates recognising the peaks and troughs and providing evidence in support. Some quoted visitors in single figures and many drifted into explanation – although this was not needed here.

## **Section B**

### **Question 4**

This was probably the most popular question in Section B.

In part (b)(iii), a significant number of candidates unnecessarily listed all the activities given in Figure 8; some believed that lighting a fire would cause an eruption. The most common responses recognised that an active volcano was dangerous and the best explained why or related instead to the impact on the recovering environment.

In part (c), candidates often used a case study to good effect here, although there was no requirement to do so. Some incorrectly substituted secondary effects with responses to an earthquake, whilst others failed to differentiate or were confused by the difference between primary and secondary effects. Those who answered the question most successfully had a variety of clearly distinguishable primary and secondary effects or realised the link between them e.g. that it is the rupturing of the gas mains (primary effect) that lead to fires (secondary effect).

### **Question 5**

In part (b)(iv), some candidates noted relevant features, such as the stream, but failed to explain its importance regarding a water supply for the settlement. This was essential, given the use of the command word 'why'. Few used appropriate specialist terminology, such as spring line here. Many candidates wrote about the (economic) uses of granite e.g. as a building stone, for kitchen worktops which were not required in this question. Intermediate responses noted quarrying as a valid land use generally. There were some very good answers where candidates referred to quarrying, tourism and pastoral farming.

### **Question 6**

This question was a frequent choice on the paper.

Candidates had to engage with the concept of location in part (b)(iii). There were many possible answers to this, of which the most frequent related to the city centre and adjacent to particular rivers. Part (b)(iv) was generally well answered. Candidates could generally identify the relevant features such as the rivers meeting, the heavy rain and the built up areas. Fewer could develop their answers and follow the sequence through recognising the significance of these characteristics, e.g. the town creating an impermeable surface and increasing the speed with which the water got to the river.

### **Question 7**

As in part (b)(iii), candidates had to engage with the concept of location in part (b)(i). The map had to be referred to in order to identify where the hotel and conference centre was located. Often, points noted were vague – near to rather than next to and the map was inadequately used overall. Weaker answers to part (b)(ii) mentioned the presence of snow and ice, rather than referring to the map and noting the dry ski slope that was proposed. Better answers noted the (steep) slope and the best were aware of the scenery present and how this would be advantageous. Candidates were able to engage with a variety of reasons relating to opposition to the proposed development. Level 1 answers gave generic responses relating to litter, traffic etc., whilst Level 2 noted the impact on the cost of housing in Llanberis, overcrowding and congestion in the local area.

### **Question 8**

This was a popular question choice. Most candidates answered part (b)(ii) effectively. Many recognised the sequence in the formation of the sea stack and referred to the processes involved. Most identified an appropriate coastal erosion process in part (b)(iii); the most common related to reference to longshore drift. Most successful in obtaining both marks, including one for the elaboration, were those candidates who referred to hydraulic action. Abrasion was the second most successful, although there was some confusion in the elaboration with attrition.

Most candidates described the methods shown in Figure 17 in part (c). Some were unaware of the different ways in which they operated to protect the coast, but the best showed a good understanding of the complimentary roles of the two methods. The rock groynes were described with regard to the prevention of longshore drift and the rock armour was seen as protecting the base of the cliff from erosion.

## Question 9

In part (a)(iii), there was some confusion with the centre of the low pressure, with some candidates placing the 'L' at the centre of the low pressure system. Where candidates recognised that light winds occur where the isobars are further apart, the 'L' was correctly placed. The description of the weather as the warm front passes overhead was poorly done in part (a)(iv). Often, the only correct aspect identified was the increase in temperatures. Many wrongly believed that there would be clear skies and little, if any, rain indicating that few had any real idea as to the actual conditions that would be experienced.

Part (c) proved to be accessible to all candidates. Those who selected correct information from Figure 18 to give a précis of what happened obtained marks in Level 1, whereas those who clearly began to use it entered Level 2, recognising why the residents of New Orleans felt hard done by and realised the unfairness of the situation, the lack of preparation etc.

## Question 10

This attracted a significant proportion of candidates.

In part (a)(i), too many candidates simply labelled the branches, leaves and roots without identifying specific characteristics of each. There was some confusion with tropical rainforest. The best responses did develop points such as the needles for leaves, the downward sloping branches. There was again some confusion with tropical rainforest in part (a)(ii), with candidates talking about drip tip leaves for example. There was some good awareness, however, of how the vegetation had adapted to the climate with an understanding of features such as the needles leading to less water loss, thick bark protecting from the cold winters, etc.

There were varied answers to part (b)(i), with most candidates recognising a valid reason for deforestation. Similarly, most identified the storing of the nutrients in the leaves, trees in part (b)(ii) although some wrongly believed that the answer was the soil or the roots. Part (b)(iii) was well answered with reference to leaf fall and decay. Often simple rather than developed points, saw candidates respond to part (b)(iv) with reference to the impact of the rainfall after the trees had gone. Better responses developed more of a sequence in their answers.

Most could recognise that the supplies would last in part (c) and the sustainability idea seemed better understood. Fewer candidates were able to obtain the second mark, often by looking at the reduced impact on the environment.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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