AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Geography 40302

Specification A

40302F   Full Course

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

General

There was evidence that the relative immaturity of the Year 10 candidates impacted on their overall performance. This was largely reflected in poor examination technique and unfamiliarity with the style of the question paper. Candidates should be encouraged at an early stage of the course to practice deconstructing a question by highlighting or underlining keywords and phrases. Command instructions particularly 'describe' and 'explain' should be given special attention.   It was disappointing to see how few candidates highlighted or underlined these command words and key words or phrases. It is not possible for a candidate to access the highest level available in a particular question if they have not answered all parts of the question. The generic descriptions of the two levels should be made clear to candidates and the fact that they do not have to go through each level to get to the highest. It is perhaps useful for centres to know the descriptions used by examiners when marking levels of response questions.

Levels Marking - General Criteria
Where answers are assessed using a level of response marking system the following general criteria should be used.

Level 1: Basic
Knowledge of basic information
Simple understanding
Little organisation; few links; little or no detail; uses a limited range of specialist terms
Reasonable accuracy in the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar
Text is legible.

Level 2: Clear
Knowledge of accurate information
Clear understanding
Organised answers, with some linkages; occasional detail/exemplar; uses a good range of specialist terms where appropriate
Considerable accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar
Text is legible.

Candidates should be encouraged to write in linked statements. Frequently they give a number of correct basic statements that with the addition of some form of connective word would show an element of development or elaboration and so gain access to Level 2. The use of the 'so what' scenario is useful here. The evidence of this year's cohort is that few appeared to be able to reach level 2 successfully. There was evidence that it was not always their geographical understanding and knowledge which was letting them down. To access the highest mark ranges in this tier and be awarded a grade C a candidate clearly must answer the question set. Too many candidates answer the question that they think has been asked and so there is an obvious need for centres to concentrate hard on examination technique. The need to read the question carefully is fundamental here. Centres should also be reminded of the need to use geographical terminology, i.e. North and South rather than top or bottom!   Case studies are explicit in this new specification and it is important that candidates are prepared thoroughly in this aspect as many questions will undoubtedly require one. Centres should make a point of choosing case studies that cover a variety of topics (both physical and human) and that candidates are made fully aware of which case study exemplar is relevant to which topic. A successful approach to the choice of case study is to choose as many as possible from one country. Not only does this avoid a scattergun approach which confuses many candidates on this tier but it will contribute to a greater 'sense of place', something which is undoubtedly missing among many students of geography.   To be creditworthy a case study needs to appear

to the examiner to be valid. Candidates can do this by providing precise statistics, actual place names and other specific details that relate to real world examples of schemes or locations. The mere name of a place is not sufficient, especially if the details that follow are largely generic and therefore could refer to anywhere. As Ordnance Survey maps are no longer a guaranteed part of Paper 1, it is hoped that this skill will not be undervalued as a map could appear in any part of the human options paper too. Candidates should be familiar with a variety of scales and also be introduced to the map types specified in the geographical skills section of the specification. Photographs are still not used well and centres would be advised to give as much time to their use in their schemes of work as they do to other forms of graphicacy. Centres should take particular notice of those parts of the specification requiring a need for up to date information, such as government initiatives for rural areas and inner cities as well as the changes to China's One Child Policy from the 1990s. The effective use of stimulus material is a problem noted by examiners. Candidates should appreciate that they gain very little credit by merely lifting information from a figure. Most questions based on stimulus material are now worded to show that candidates are required to 'use your own knowledge' in addition to using the figure. Centres should warn candidates that no credit will be given for re-using words in the stem of a question.

Tourism was the single most popular question answered but was often the weakest. The other popular options were Population and Changing Urban Environments. The least popular option was Changing Rural Environments. Globalisation and The Development Gap were approximately equal in popularity.

SECTION A

Question 1   Population Change

There were few problems with part (a)(i).   Most candidates had some idea of 'moving'. Candidates were able to complete the pie charts but a reminder is needed that they should bring a ruler, pencil and rubber into the exam room as carelessness in completing a graph like this can lead to a loss of marks. The main weakness in this question was the failure to complete the graph using the correct shading shown in the key. It was pleasing to see that candidates were generally able to distinguish between push and pull factors. Part (a)(iv) was a prime example of candidates not reading the question with sufficient care. All appreciated that they had to show positive and negative effects which would have given them access to level 2. Too many, however gave information for the receiving country – usually the UK. Few really knew the effect on the migrants' home country. Too many candidates wrote about birth rates and death rates in part (b)(i) when all that was required was a description of the lines on the graph. Many tried to use numbers. The better answers could see the faster steeper rise and also the falling off on the lower prediction line. Question (b)(ii) was poorly answered; the only bullet point which was really understood was the increasing education available for women. Very few appreciated that the changes in farming and urbanisation tended to lead to a declining birth rate. Most candidates had a general idea about China's One Child Policy but there was a need for more clarity with some details in order to reach level 2. It was disappointing there was virtually no evidence of the newer changes to the policy with respect to the rural areas and ethnic minorities. It is hoped that centres have noticed that there is a need to make specific reference to the policy changes since the 1990s in their teaching. The imbalance between the sexes was the usual response to part (c)(ii).

Question 2   Changing Urban Environments

Most candidates recognised Mexico City as being the most polluted city. The misunderstanding of cause and effect was evident in (a)(ii). The majority of candidates recognised transport and industry as the main cause of pollution in these cities, however too many gave pollution types and their effects. There was plenty of good evidence of photo interpretation with the majority recognising the significance of the floral displays, the pedestrianised nature of the CBD and the general cleanliness. The answers to (b)(iv) were patchy. Shopping centres and shopping in all weathers, introducing security camera and safety were the usual responses but they failed to make the link to increasing the number of shoppers in the CBD. Very few had any idea how the fact that people were moving back in to the CBD to live would impact on the amount of shopping taking place in the area. In (c)(i) many candidates failed to recognise the importance of the phrase 'within a city' and so merely located a poor world city. There was however some evidence of the use of 'Slumdog Millionaire' as a teaching aid in the choice of Dharavi.   Money was seen as the only reason squatter settlement improvement proved difficult. The examiners were hoping to see reference to the rapid growth of these settlements and hence the difficulty in keeping up with the rate of rural-urban migration. Part (c)(iii) was very generalised with few candidates achieving level 2. There was little use of named case studies. Too many just described the usual features of any squatter settlement. There was little evidence of candidates making use of Figure 6 as an 'aide memoire'.

Question 3   Changing Rural Environments

Despite many candidates being able to complete the table in (a)(i), showing they could cope with grid references, few used specific map references in (a)(ii).   Here was a prime example of a lack of examination technique with a failure to answer all parts of a question.   Centres should appreciate that where a map extract is included it is there to satisfy the assessment objective testing geographical skills and that they are likely to be fully integrated with the subject topic, rather than being there merely to test the usual map conventions. These answers frequently referred to problems associated with population pressure, such as not enough schools for example. This was a common question with the higher tier and there was a very big difference in the understanding of conflicts on the rural-urban fringe between the two tiers.   Most candidates could cope with the cloze exercise. Like the similar parts of question 1 and 2, candidates failed to make the necessary link, in this case to the reduction of the environmental effects of modern farming practices. They merely explained the negative effects. There was a worrying number of candidates who failed to read the scale correctly in (c)(i). Many stated that 53 kilograms were lost from the middle slope, missing the point that this was the rate per year. Candidates should be encouraged to read the axes on graphs very carefully. Several tried to give figures from the graph in (c)(ii). The majority were able to see that more erosion took place on the cleared land. Only the better ones related this to the slope. The question on irrigation was poorly answered. Many did not even associate this with irrigation in tropical areas. They were often fixated with 'slash and burn' in Equatorial areas.

SECTION B

Question 4   The Development Gap

Part (a)(i) did not prove a problem but a surprising number gave Germany rather than Brazil as their answer to part (a)(ii). There was some indication that GNP suffered from being solely concerned with wealth, and the multifaceted nature of the HDI was more appropriate. Part (a)(v) saw some good use of the Boxing Day tsunami or the Haiti earthquake. There was

enough factual detail to give the answers some clarity. The weakness came with a failure to relate the impact that the cost of the immediate repairs necessitated by the natural disaster had on the future development of the country involved. There was evidence of some guess work in part (b)(i) but it was clear that conservation swaps were not understood – a feature seen on the higher tier, suggesting that this new part of the specification is not being given enough attention. Sustainable development is a difficult concept for candidates at this level, most merely suggesting that it 'went on for a long time'. There was not much evidence of knowledge of a development project. Too many gave either a city or a country as an example. Many confused it with aid, so there were many references to Band Aid, Comic Relief and Water Aid and of course, disaster aid. Shopping centres in the rich world were also given as examples. The majority understood the features of world trade shown on Figure 10. However many tried to use specific countries or continents rather than richer/poorer. Trading Groups were not understood and so are perhaps are another new area not given sufficient emphasis.

Question 5   Globalisation

Part (a)(i) was generally well done but the non-use of a ruler did mean some did not get the mark, as the line was too inaccurate. Candidates were able to make appropriate links in (a)(ii) and so achieved the clarity necessary for level 2. If only this could be achieved in other questions. The standard jobs and money response proved an acceptable answer to (a)(iii). Part (a)(iv) was not well answered. The best ones related to the MP with reference to such ideas as unemployment, redundancy, and a lack of jobs leading to a decline in the wealth of the area. This was an example of a question where there was too much direct copying from the stimulus, hence gaining no credit. Good understanding was seen in (b)(i) with the tick chart being answered well   The majority of candidates could gain one mark in (b)(ii) but struggled to develop the point they had made and so gain the second mark. Most were related to a specific type of renewable energy, usually wind power. Candidates could get the direct figures from the compound graph and on this tier were not faced with understanding the changes over time which caused difficulty for the higher tier candidates. Part (c)(iv) proved difficult. Many gave the results of having too much carbon produced rather than why international agreement was necessary. The best ones gained at least one mark for recognising that it was a global problem. There were some general ideas as to why industry has developed in China although there were few case study details. Too many felt it all related to the existence of cheap labour. This is one of only two specific named case studies required by the specification (along with China's One Child Policy in the population section) so centres are advised to ensure that a specific study of this industrial giant is covered.

Question 6   Tourism

There were some interesting arrows drawn in part (a)(i). Many could not draw it to scale and some did not even go in the direction of Alaska from Canada. Part (a)(ii) was well answered which showed a good geographical understanding of the similar climate and environment. Part (a)(iii) was not well answered. Many wrote in terms of unqualified pollution which gained no credit. There was concern for the disturbance to the animals and their habitat. The better answers included the results of this, such as the young dying and the interruption of breeding patterns. Too often the problem for the tourist was outlined.   A misreading of the question was evident in (a)(iv) with many descriptions of the problems and not how the area was coping with the increasing numbers of tourists. The need for an appropriate case study is explicit in the specification and there were some good references to Antarctica and Machu Picchu, but many considered Blackpool, Italy and the Lake District as being examples of tourist destinations in extreme environments. Most could correctly cite Germany and France as the answers to parts (b)(i) and (b)(ii).   Although there were some good answers to (b)(ii) too many compared the

attractions of France with those of Germany. They also gave the impression of just choosing the top and the bottom ones with no overall viewpoint. Perhaps this was another example of misinterpreting location and reading it as meaning a specific place or country. Some candidates appreciated the warmer nature of Southern Europe in (b)(iv). Part (c) was better answered, although again lack of specific detail precluded access to level 2. Many used Blackpool as their coastal location and this was better answered than those who chose city locations. London and Liverpool were the most commonly chosen cities but few went much further than historic buildings, museums and shopping opportunities. The concept of ecotourism was not understood in part (d). The majority gave the benefits as money or jobs. The better answers used a 'multiplier' effect to good use. Case study exemplification helped achieve higher results here, although Kenya appears to fit all kinds of tourism whether it is being used as an example of the disruptive nature of mass tourism or environmentally friendly eco-tourism.