



# **General Certificate of Secondary Education**

## **Geography 40304**

### *Specification A*

**40304F      Short Course**

# **Report on the Examination**

*2010 examination - June series*

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## General

There was a relatively small entry for this component so any conclusions drawn from the evidence of this year's candidates' work should be treated with caution. Candidates entered for this tier found the examination quite testing, not particularly because of their lack of geographical knowledge and understanding but more to do with poor examination technique and unfamiliarity with the layout of the paper. This resulted in many rubric errors. Candidates should be encouraged at an early stage of the course to practise deconstructing a question by highlighting or underlining keywords and phrases. Chief among these will be the command instructions particularly 'describe' and 'explain'. 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 to 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 marks in this tier and be awarded a grade C a candidate 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

entered for 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 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 geographical 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

The Restless Earth and Tourism were the most common sections attempted

### **Question 1 Restless Earth**

(a)(i) This was answered well by most candidates. (a)(ii) Many candidates correctly identified the plate boundary as a destructive boundary, though a significant number identified it as a constructive one and a few as a conservative one. (a)(iii) Most candidates correctly identified at least two of the missing words with a number correctly identifying three. However, fewer candidates scored full marks. (b)(i) A wide range of responses were evident. Few candidates accurately identified the epicenter of the earthquake, though a larger number located letter 'X' within the required margins. (b)(ii) Letter "Y" was accurately located by most candidates; however, few candidates accurately located letter "Z". (c)(i) Few candidates recognised that a tsunami resulted from an earthquake and/or that the earthquake was the primary effect. (c)(ii) A wide range of responses were evident. The best answers focused on 'effects' resulting from a tsunami, with reference to a specific example, whereas weaker answers focused more on 'causes' and/or 'responses'. A few candidates unfortunately referred to an earthquake event rather than a tsunami! However, many used the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami as their example, though too few were linked to specific case study information, referring instead to such generic effects as damage to property, deaths, injuries, etc.

### **Question 2 Water on the Land**

(a)(i) Most candidates correctly identified at least two of the statements as true or false but few identified all four correctly. (a)(ii) Generally answered well, with most candidates correctly identifying at least two of the missing words. (b)(i) A plunge pool was identified by some candidates and a few noted a gorge or the descent of the waterfall in two steps. However, overall this question was poorly answered with few candidates scoring more than one mark. (b)(ii) Poorly answered by most candidates. Most diagrams were very basic and few candidates included clear well developed and linked labels. (c)(i) Answered well, with most candidates able to calculate correctly the peak rainfall and peak discharge values. However, very few candidates were able to calculate the lag time correctly. (c)(ii) Poorly answered. Many candidates erroneously referred to the difference in rainfall or the size of the river as affecting discharge. Few candidates gave a valid explanation, such as the difference in the permeability of the rock, and even fewer further developed their responses to gain a second mark. (d) Most candidates made brief references to dams and/or reservoirs and some to the increasing use of washing machines/dishwashers etc but there were few developed Level 2 answers.

### **Question 3 The Coastal Zone**

(a)(i) Most candidates correctly identified one true or false answer. (a)(ii) Poorly answered. A small number of candidates correctly identified one landform, but few identified more. (a)(iii) Overall poorly answered. Few candidates referred to wave attack between LWM and HWM or to the formation of a wave-cut notch. However, a larger number of candidates did recognise the

collapse of an overhang and/or the resulting cliff retreat. (b)(i) Many candidates referred to either global warming and/or melting of ice sheets but few candidates achieved full marks. (b)(ii) Most responses referred briefly to loss of property and/or businesses but only a few described the economic effects in a case study specific context. (c)(i) Poorly answered. Too many candidates simply lifted labels from the diagram with little attempt to give any explanation for why Lyme Regis is under threat from the sea. (c)(ii) Many candidates referred to the disadvantages of cost or visual impact but most failed to develop their answer any further.

#### **Question 4 Changing Urban Environments**

(a)(i) Most candidates answered correctly. (a)(ii) Few correct answers. Many imprecise responses such as 'large' increase or quoted figures of '3-5 billion'. A few candidates identified migration into cities as a reason for an increase in urban population, with many more referring to large number of babies born/lack of contraception. However, overall a large number of candidates failed to identify either. (b)(i) Most candidates were able to identify, from the photographs, at least one problem of an inner city area (either shops or factories closing), some candidates identified two problems but very few achieved full marks. (b)(ii) Most candidates identified/referred in brief to two or three strategies used by the UK government to improve inner cities, but few candidates developed their responses and linked them to specific policies. (c)(i) Well answered. Most candidates referred to the location of the squatter settlement with reference to the river and either its location with reference to the railway and /or the steep embankments. (c)(ii) Most candidates identified one problem for people living in squatter settlements but few correctly identified two problems. (c)(iii) Most candidates were able to identify some improvements made in the squatter settlements by people living there but few candidates developed their answer beyond simple statements. (d) Poorly answered. Few candidates referred to relevant aspects of sustainability in an urban context.

#### **Question 5 Changing Rural Environments**

(a)(i) Most candidates answered this correctly usually referring in the most cases to a desire to live in more attractive countryside areas. (a)(ii) Generally well answered with most candidates identifying at least two changes to the village. (a)(iii) Generally well answered with most candidates identifying one reason why the village grew more quickly after 1970. (a)(iv) Generally well answered with most candidates able to identify potential disagreements between newer and longer established residents, although these responses were not always further developed. (b) Poorly answered. Few candidates were able to respond with specific details related to any of the issues listed. (c)(i) Most candidates were able to identify one reason why a traditional farmer in the tropics will stay poor but few candidates were able to identify two. (c)(ii) Poorly answered. Few candidates scored more than one mark. (c)(iii) Many candidates were able to refer at a simple level to the effects of forestry and mining on traditional farming practices but there were few developed answers.

#### **Question 6 Tourism**

(a)(i) The vast majority of candidates correctly completed the graph. (a)(ii) Most candidates answered correctly, though a significant number of candidates incorrectly identified North America as the top earning continent from tourism. (a)(iii) Generally well answered, with most candidates achieving two or more marks. Not all candidates however referred specifically to how external factors affected how much the UK earns from tourism. (b)(i) Well answered, with many candidates achieving full marks. (b)(ii) Mostly well answered with many candidates referring either to money earned and/or jobs created or in danger of being lost. (c)(i) Many

candidates identified the location of new tourist areas close to the main bathing beaches but few referred to locations identified, such as west coast, using compass directions. (c)(ii) Most candidates scored one or two marks but few included sufficient detail/explanation to achieve a second mark for each factor. (c)(iii) Generally well answered, with most candidates able to identify a number of disadvantages of large numbers of tourists using a tropical tourist area. However, fewer responses were fully developed with linked statements.