

Version



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Geography A

40302H

(Specification 4030)

Unit 2: Human Geography (Higher)

Report on the Examination

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General

The paper differentiated well between candidates. Overall it was pleasing to see a higher proportion of candidates achieving level 3 compared to the relatively small entry last year. What was clear from this year's paper was that candidates scored marks if they could use a good case study or at least write detailed answers in clear English.

There was evidence that poor examination technique is still a concern in that it can result in candidates not achieving their full geographical potential. 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'. Candidates should appreciate that on this tier there may be more than one aspect of a topic examined or that the existence of a plural means that more than one has to be covered. It was disappointing to see how few candidates highlight or underline these command words and key words or phrases. It is not possible for a candidate to access the maximum number of marks available in a particular question if they have not answered all parts of the question. The generic descriptions of the three levels should be made clear to candidates, as well as the fact that they do not have to go through each level to get to the highest. It is useful for centres to know the descriptions used by examiners when marking levels of response question, and for candidates to be aware of the criteria against which their level of response answers will be judged.

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.

Level 3: Detailed

Knowledge of accurate information appropriately contextualised and/or at correct scale

Detailed understanding, supported by relevant evidence and exemplars

Well organized, demonstrating detailed linkages and the inter-relationships between factors

Clear and fluent expression of ideas in a logical form; uses a wide range of specialist terms where appropriate

Accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Text is legible

Level 3 does not always equate to full marks; a perfect answer is not usually expected, even for full marks.

Candidates should always write in linked statements which will give them the necessary clarity to jump directly to level 2. The use of the 'so what' scenario is useful here. Detail is the key to level 3. Even where a case study is not a requirement of the question, information candidates have learned from it can be useful to exemplify or clarify points. A case study should show the reader that it represents a particular scheme or location on the earth's surface. This means it should give precise statistics, place names and other details. The mere name of a place is not sufficient, especially if the details that follow are largely generic and therefore could refer to anywhere. It was pleasing to see some excellent case study exemplification, particularly on sustainable urban settlements and tourist destinations. Centres should take particular notice of those parts of the specification specifying a need for up to date information. These include government initiatives for inner cities which was a question that was poorly answered on this year's paper. This recent information was a requirement for access to the highest level in these questions. 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. 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. These include an atlas type map such the population density map of Indonesia used in question one.

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 seemed approximately equal in popularity.

Question 1 Population Change

Candidates had no difficulty identifying the stage of the Demographic Transition Model in 1(a)(i). Part 1(a)(ii) proved to be a good discriminator. The key to the answer was a consideration of the natural increase in poor countries. Only the very best candidates recognised that this represented the difference between the birth and death rates, in other words the area between the lines shown on Figure 1. This was the trigger to allow access to level 3. The majority of candidates concentrated on the fall in the birth rate. There were some good answers to this and so top of level 2 was achieved. Creditworthy also was an appreciation of the reasons for the fall or at least the levelling off of the death rate. Here was a case where if candidates had highlighted 'natural increase' it might have directed them more closely to the main area the question was testing. Some candidates misread the question as "why is the population falling?" Candidates generally were able to correctly identify the years of the three population pyramids. Part 1(a)(iv) was not so well done. Too many candidates did not realise that this was a basic skills question, and concentrated on the reasons for the shape of the 2030 pyramid, with references to changing birth and death rates when the question was only concerned with its shape. The questions related to transmigration were generally answered well with appropriate use of the stimulus material. Those who merely lifted information from figures 3a and 3b without any development or elaboration remained at the lower end of level 1. The better candidates developed the information and accessed level 2 by linking the differences in population density to the need for movement. This question was testing one of the geographical skills listed on page 35 of the specification booklet, namely *recognising and describing distributions and patterns of both human and physical features on atlas maps*. Centres should realise that geographical concepts may well be tested in the context of geographical areas or countries which are unfamiliar to candidates. Candidates were not expected to have knowledge of Indonesia to answer these questions. Candidates showed sound knowledge of the problems caused by migration in their answers to 1(b)(ii). Centres could perhaps note however that the transmigration policy of Indonesia which has recently been strengthened is an excellent case study to illustrate the part of the specification dealing with strategies employed by countries coping with rapid population increase which are not based on birth control programmes. Other good examples could be land reclamation as in Singapore, or industrialisation as in the former 'cubs and tigers' of S E Asia. Question 1(c) showed a pleasing use of case study exemplification in a number of candidates though this was not a specific requirement. France was the most popular choice but there were other examples, including Russia. Centres must ensure that candidates are trained to use their case studies to the best possible effect. There was some evidence of model answers being learnt and regurgitated and not being tailored sufficiently closely to the needs of the question. Candidates needed to make links between their obvious knowledge and the subject of the question, i.e. increasing the birth rate. Where they did not they remained in level 1 despite having the factual knowledge to answer the question. There were on the other hand some candidates who misread the question and described an ageing population and its problems.

Question 2 Changing Urban Environments

Part 2(a)(i) did not prove to be difficult for the candidates. Part 2(a)(ii) was a common question and did not cause the difficulty in the understanding of location that it did on the Foundation Tier. There was some evidence of carelessness or poor geographical knowledge letting candidates down, for example indicating that the area was west of the airport and the use of 'left of, right of' when giving directions. Directions are a basic geographical skill which all candidates, especially those on a higher tier should be able to cope with when describing a location. Part 2(a)(iii) was very well answered, often with good use of real examples to illustrate points and lift the answer to level 2. The majority of candidates mentioned social factors such as blood ties, language, and safety in numbers. Economic considerations were less common. While 2(a)(iv) was generally well answered with most candidates able to describe strategies supporting multicultural communities in broad terms sufficiently well to gain

full marks, it would have useful to see some specific or localised examples quoted. Part 2(b) was very poorly answered. The specification content is quite specific in the need for candidates to be made aware of recent government initiatives on inner city regeneration, and the four listed are the most significant. Urban Development Corporations arguably is not recent but they did carry on until the 1990s and so were included. The best answered were on the City Challenge, with reference to the Hulme area of Manchester or the LDDC. This was a case when candidates who knew an example did more than was necessary, considering the number of marks available and the space available for the answer. Most candidates wrote about general inner city regeneration irrespective of which of the strategies had been chosen. Question 2(c) was a prime example of candidates not deconstructing the question sufficiently carefully enough, and hence good geographical knowledge was wasted because it was not used to its best advantage to answer the question set. There were some good examples of Rochina, Kibera etc, but many candidates could not use the information to say how the problems of the squatter settlements were being reduced. The best answers used a combination of site and service and self help projects but even with these the improvements needed to be related to the problems they were addressing. Question 2(d) was very well done. Here it was possible for candidates to pour out all their detailed case studies with plenty of precise facts and figures. Candidates had excellent factual knowledge of Curitiba, BedZed and New Islington among others and level 3 was regularly achieved. This reinforces the view that many candidates have the geographical knowledge to reach level 3, if only their examination technique is good enough to tailor the information to the needs of the question.

Question 3 Changing Rural Environments

Question 3(a) saw many candidates merely lifting information from the table, by merely restating the figures. There was a need to do something with the figures, not least some simple arithmetic manipulation. The best answers compared the data sets, for example “the number of houses has declined because the population had fallen”. The work required for level 2 of the controlled assessment data interpretation criteria hopefully should have prepared the candidates for a question of this sort. Another problem with the answers seen to this question was where candidates started to give reasons for the changes, ignoring the requirement to merely describe the changes. 3(a)(ii) was generally well answered but there was sizeable minority who confused physical and human factors. Once again there was a tendency for some candidates to stray into explanations when only description was required. On the positive side map interpretation appeared to be fairly strong. There were some good answers on irrigation covering salinisation, water wars, shortage of drinking water, appropriate technology, fixing and setting up costs. A few got sidetracked into soil erosion, fertilisers and pesticides, and did not score well because of a failure to link them to irrigation. Some candidates wasted their time by describing methods of irrigation and/or describing the advantages of irrigation. Centres need to take care with case study selection – the Aral Sea is not tropical. Not all candidates were able to read a key to a map carefully enough. This was shown by their answers to 3(c)(i), and the knowledge of place within the UK is still woefully weak. Scotland was commonly introduced, despite not being on the map and west and east was commonly transposed. Once again there was distressing evidence of the use of non geographical jargon such ‘top’, ‘left’, ‘right’ of the map. There was evidence that some candidates confused production in terms of outputs with the area under production. Competition from global markets was not understood by many candidates and so 3(c)(ii) was badly answered. There were many possibilities as acceptable answers, including reducing imports, making the country more self sufficient and the need to diversify, or simply an inability to compete with overseas producers. A significant number of candidates did not read 3(c)(iii) carefully enough and merely described the negative effects of intensive agriculture. There were some very generic answers. The very best answers had learnt good policy detail such as Environmental Stewardship. There is a need for candidates to recognise when to use information from their case studies, even when the question does not explicitly demand it.

Question 4 The Development Gap

Question 4(a) was generally well done, with candidates showing a good appreciation of the limitations of the old north-south line. There were some woolly responses but generally level 2 was achieved. Most concentrated on why the north-south doesn’t work, using Saudi Arabia as a rich oil nation, China’s growing industrialisation or the poor ex communist states of Eastern Europe as exemplification. Weaker answers largely consisted of straight lifts from the table. Question 4(b)(i) produced some excellent answers showing candidates’ ability to make full use of information contained in the stimulus material. There was of course evidence of weaker candidates lifting information from figure 10 and nothing else. This is still a skill for these types of questions that centres

need to address. Generally candidates on this tier were able to define the two terms in part 4(bii). There were examples of candidates reversing the definitions as well of those who had no idea. The final part of part 4(b) was the most demanding but most candidates recognised the differences in expectations from the point of view of living in a relatively rich country. Both question 4(c)(i) and 4(c)(ii) were well answered. In 4(c)(ii) there were useful references to HDI as a way of explaining why GNP per head is not a good indicator of a country's development. There were some good answers to 4(d) with detailed geographical knowledge of contrasting industrial/agricultural economies, political systems or trading connections. UK/Germany versus Poland/Bulgaria were the most common examples chosen. There were some unsuitable examples chosen, including America, Asia, Bangladesh, Turkey, Ukraine, Peru and Brazil all appearing as examples of countries in the EU. Good exemplification was the key to success in this question.

Question 5 Globalisation

Part 5(a)(i) was generally well done but candidates have a fixation about global warming and attempted to get it into as many of their answers, including this one, as possible. There was good knowledge shown about changes in disposable income and the lack of seasonality for food nowadays. The main weakness in the answers to this question was a failure to link the points made to the idea of the increasing number of food miles. Question 5(a)(ii) showed good photograph interpretation which has not always been the case with GCSE candidates. Part 5(a)(iii) was surprisingly poorly answered, with few able to articulate the increased energy demands of industrialised agriculture. Some candidates seemed to think that once plants grew inside a greenhouse there was no link to the outside, and that CO₂ used by plants inside would not affect the general climate. A number used transport and the increased transport costs in terms of fossil fuel use as an example incorrectly. Carbon credits are specifically mentioned in the specification content yet part 5(a)(iv) was very badly answered, and there were some very confused answers. The meaning of TNC did not cause any difficulty. Case study exemplification was in evidence in part 5(b)(ii). Nike, Walmart, Toyota and Siemens were the most common examples used. The question differentiated well between those who, even if a named TNC was quoted, gave generic descriptions which did not specifically relate to the named example, and those who made effective use of detailed factual information to answer the question. The advantages and disadvantages could have been for the TNC, the country where the TNC has its HQ or countries where it has branches. Weaker candidates in answering 5(c) repeated information from the photograph and/or the map. Stronger candidates used detailed case study knowledge to take their answers beyond the stimulus material. The Exxon Valdes and the recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico were used to advantage by these candidates. Centres need to make their candidates aware that using the stimulus material is important but they need to show greater knowledge and interpretation skills. Weaker candidates who referred to the map did sometimes have some confused ideas on the distances between the pipeline and the National Parks, and on oil spills at sea affecting the National Parks well inland.

Question 6 Tourism

Lack of precision in answering the question was of concern in part 6(a)(i). Many candidates just simply listed the attractions of the chosen tourist area and did not write about strategies to maintain or improve it in order to maintain a successful tourist industry. There were many generic answers that did not fit the named place, such as building by-passes to avoid towns in the Lake District and even putting bus lanes through villages. Blackpool and the Lake District were the most common examples chosen, but even if detailed knowledge was shown, the emphasis was on the attractions of the area rather than the strategies for future development that should have been the main thrust of the answer. Where the need for such strategies was given, the reasons were depressing to say the least. Blackpool is riddled with decay and the Lake District overrun by litter, cars and broken footpaths according to candidates. Some attempts at suggesting strategies included historical examples like the building of the Tower and creation of the illuminations in Blackpool. The examiners were hoping for strategies such as the diversification of farms, the managing of footpaths and zoning into honeypots and more remote areas where a National Park was chosen, and the building of conference centres, a concentration on the luxury end of the market and the creation of indoor facilities at a coastal resort. There were some good answers on footpath maintenance and Blackpool's creation of new roller coaster rides and the attempt to gain permission for a super casino. The rise of foreign holidays and the British climate were the most common answers given in 6(a)(ii) for the decline in the popularity of tourist areas. Once again the use of stimulus material was weak in some answers to 6(b)(i) with straight lifts from figure 14 without any development or elaboration. Candidates could use the figure to

answer part 6(b)(ii) but they were not required to restrict their answers to Kenya. Many did, as often Kenya had been used as a case study, and this was evident when they moved on to details of the safari parks. The emphasis was on 'how' so candidates needed to say for example how tourists damaged the coral reef not merely that they visited it. Some wrote about the effects on the economy or the culture and so gained no credit since they had failed to see that the question was based on their understanding of the damage to the environment. Part 6(b)(iii) was not well answered with many writing the usual answers covering money and jobs. Money was only accepted as an answer if the candidate showed that the money used could be spent on improving or repairing the environment. In 6(c)(i) direct definitions from standard text books scored the mark, but vague statements about preserving the environment did not. There were some good answers to 6(c)(ii) which described the practices of ecotourism, and linked these to the future. The use of exemplification from a case study was an effective way of reaching the highest level. Many were unable to do more than describe the ethos of ecotourism in terms of sustainability or merely described what was shown on figure 15. There was also a tendency to produce vague statements about 'saving the world' for future generations or relating it to the need for a reduction in global warming and the resultant climate change.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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