

Version



**General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short  
Course)  
June 2011**

**Geography A**

**40304H**

**(Specification 4031)**

**Unit SC1: Physical and Human Geography**

***Report on the Examination***

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## SECTION A

### Question 1

- 1(a) This was a well answered question, with most candidates identifying two differences between continental and oceanic crust.
- 1(b)(i) This question was well answered by most candidates. However, whilst the majority correctly drew a sketch as required, a significant number drew a cross-section. The most common correct labels included crater, ash or steep sides of the volcano, although some candidates mistakenly viewed this as a shield volcano labelling the sides as gentle. A common error was to include labels more usually linked to a cross sectional diagram of a volcano, such as 'vent' and 'layers of lava and ash', rather than referring specifically to the photograph as required.
- 1(b)(ii) Generally this was a well answered question. Most candidates noted that the plates were moving apart, with a few referring to convection currents driving this movement. Many candidates noted that magma rising from the mantle filled the gap and also that the resulting formation of a volcano built up from hot molten material reaching the surface. Common errors included confusion between the terms 'magma' and 'lava' and the failure to note that the volcano was formed through a successive build up of layers of solidified lava.
- 1(c)(i) Most candidates scored at least one of the two possible marks. Whilst the vast majority of candidates accurately described the size of a supervolcano, fewer candidates correctly described its shape, for example referring to a crater rather than a caldera.
- 1(c)(ii) This question was answered well by the majority of candidates, with references to an ash cloud over Europe and subsequent impacts on global temperatures, farming and international flights. However, a significant number of candidates failed to convey these global effects, focusing rather on the impact of a supervolcano eruption on a single country, most commonly the USA.
- 1(d) Most candidates referred to land uses shown in two or more of the photographs, with many providing accurate descriptions, most commonly related to farming and HEP generation. Descriptions, however frequently lacked specific details and were often generic in form rather than being more closely linked to a case study example. As a result, very few candidates accessed Level 3.

### Question 2

- 2(a) This was well answered, by most candidates with many achieving full marks.
- 2(b)(i) This question was well answered, with most candidates achieving two or three marks, most commonly by identifying correctly a meander and either an oxbow lake or the floodplain. Sometimes the lack of precision in placing the arrow point led to marks being lost.
- 2(b)(ii) This question was answered well by a number of candidates. Most candidates drew a cross section as required, although a significant number drew a plan instead and/or failed to label the inside/outside part of the bend. A small number of candidates further confused the processes and features, showing them on the opposite side of the bend to where they should have been located.
- 2(b)(iii) This was a generally well answered question, with many candidates providing well sequenced explanations of the formation of an oxbow lake. However, whilst most candidates referred to the narrowing of the meander neck, why this was happening was not always made clear. Similarly, most candidates referred to the river cutting across the meander neck and taking a straighter course, but this was not always linked to a period of high discharge.

- 2(c)(i) This question was well answered, with most candidates scoring at least two, and a significant number all three marks. A few candidates did however refer to causes not referred to in the newspaper cuttings, such as snowmelt.
- 2(c)(ii) A wide variety of responses was seen in this question. At a basic level candidates described one or two strategies such as the building of dams and levees as examples of hard engineering, without necessarily explaining why this was a better option. On the other hand, some candidates fully justified their choice, often with reference to case study examples which included reference to quantitative data to support their argument, for example with reference to the Three Gorges Dam. Interestingly, some candidates also used this example well to argue that a soft engineering approach was a better option for many rivers.

### Question 3

- 3(a)(i) There was a wide variation in the quality of the sketches drawn, with many candidates failing to distinguish between the land and the sea and/or to show the direction of the prevailing wind. However, most candidates included one correct label and many two, with swash and backwash most commonly identified. A common error was the failure to clearly show which of these two labels linked with the arrows illustrated on their sketch.
- 3(a)(ii) This was poorly answered by a majority of candidates, with most only able to identify one reason to explain why deposition occurs at certain places along the coast.
- 3(b)(i) Many candidates were correctly able to identify one or two landforms, most commonly headlands, bays and cliffs. A significant number of candidates described a coastal scene in general rather than specifically the features shown in the photograph, and very few candidates located the features in relationship to the actual photograph.
- 3(b)(ii) This was generally well answered. The majority of responses were well sequenced and referred to soft rocks being eroded more quickly to form bays, and hard rocks being eroded more slowly and therefore protruding into the sea in the form of headlands. However, whilst the concept of differential erosion was understood by most candidates, relatively few referred to the importance of the alternate bands of rock and their alignment at right angles to the sea in this formation.
- 3(c) The majority of candidates were able to identify reasons why some areas of coast collapse into the sea, most commonly through reference to a combination of destructive waves impacting on soft rocks and/or reference to failing coastal management strategies. Case study areas were identified, such as Holderness, but then frequently followed by descriptions/explanations which might have been applied almost anywhere around our coasts. The best responses however provided linked statements with more specific case study detail included.
- 3(d) This question was well answered by relatively few candidates. Whilst most recognised that continuing erosion was predicted for the future, few used Figure 7 to identify that this coast would become one of headlands and bays or to identify specific areas of erosion such as between Mableton and Withernsea. In contrast, many candidates did recognise that where sea defences had been built to protect settlements less erosion was expected in the future, and some recognised that these defences can also have an adverse effect further along the coast.

## SECTION B

### Question 4

- 4(a) This was well answered by relatively few candidates. Most candidates were able to explain at a simple level how their chosen plans would improve the housing, most commonly in terms of providing additional residential homes, for example in plans 4 and 5. However, there was little development beyond this and very little consideration of improvements in quality brought about, for example through the modernisation of terraced housing.

- 4(b) This question produced a wide range of responses. Most candidates were able to identify two or three sustainable features of the city of Dongtan, most commonly linked to the use of renewable wind power or the recycling of water. Fewer candidates were then able to develop these points from simple statements into more detailed linked statements, though there were a number of well structured and detailed responses which accessed Level 2 marks.
- 4(c)(i) This question was poorly answered. The majority of candidates defined urbanisation in terms of rural-urban migration rather than the increasing percentage of people living in urban areas.
- 4(c)(ii) Most candidates recognised that rates of urbanisation were high in the LEDW and made reference to push/pull factors linked to rural-urban migration. In addition, some candidates made reference to the high rates of natural increase in LEDC cities. However, rates of urbanisation in the MEDW were often not clearly considered by candidates although it was implicitly suggested by some that they were less rapid; and relatively few candidates referred explicitly to the process of counter urbanisation. In contrast, the best answers provided accurate figures for present day rates of urbanisation in both parts of the world and explained in detail, and in a balanced way, the reasons for these differences.
- 4(d) The vast majority of candidates were able to describe a number of characteristics of a squatter settlement with some reference to its effects on the lives of the people living there. Many of these candidates also demonstrated an ability to move beyond the inclusion of simple, generic points to link these statements and/or to provide further elaboration/detail.

## Question 5

- 5(a)(i) This was well answered by all candidates.
- 5(a)(ii) Whilst there were a few detailed and well structured responses, overall this question was poorly answered. Many responses remained in Level 1 and comprised of simple statements, most commonly and almost exclusively linked to accessibility and cheaper land. Many candidates also failed to give specific details relating to the availability of large areas of land on the edge of the city and why this was required, or to provide details relating to the nature of the road network.
- 5(b) Most candidates scored at least two out of a possible four marks, being able to explain at least at a superficial level the reasons for two different changes in commercial farming in the UK. A number of answers however lacked further elaboration in order to access additional marks.
- 5(c) This was poorly answered. Few candidates moved beyond the inclusion of simple Level 1 points, and most commonly and almost exclusively these were linked to loss of jobs and lack of facilities. References to case studies were often absent or very weak.
- 5(d) Varied responses were seen for 5(d). Most candidates were able to describe at a basic level the advantages of irrigation, most commonly in terms of higher yields/more profits. Fewer candidates developed their answer further to establish a clear link between the advantages of irrigation for tropical agriculture.

## Question 6

- 6(a) This was a well answered question, with a large majority of candidates scoring at least three out of a possible four marks. Candidates had clearly responded with reference to the OS map, often giving grid references or details related to the actual location of the various attractions.
- 6(b)(i) Most candidates were able to identify at least two negative effects of tourism on an extreme environment, most commonly related to litter, visual pollution and destruction of habitat. The best answers linked statements and included more specific detail often with reference to case study areas such as Antarctica.
- 6(b)(ii) Most candidates responded correctly.

- 6(b)(iii) Examiners saw a wide range of responses, with the outcomes often determined by the choice of case study area. The best responses referred to extreme environments such as Antarctica which allowed candidates to include specific details related for example to the size of ship, number of passengers aboard and the numbers allowed on land. In contrast, the weakest responses referred to named areas such as the Lake District.
- 6(c) Again there was a wide variety of responses, with outcomes often determined by the choice of the named area. Most candidates were able to identify at least two ways in which ecotourism can benefit the lives of local people, most commonly related to the protection of their environment and their culture, and many of these were able to link statements and include more specific detail about the lives of the indigenous people. The best answers focussed this response with reference to their named area, for example Alto Floresta in the Amazon jungle of Brazil.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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