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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Geography 3032 Full Course
Specification B

3032/1H – Paper 1 Higher Tier

Report on the Examination

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3032/1H – Paper 1 Higher Tier

This paper produced a very wide range of responses. There were some excellent answers, but there were quite a number of candidates who should not have been entered for this tier, either because of a lack of ability or that they had gone into the examination room inadequately prepared. This resulted in many vague generalisations with a failure to give precise answers when required. As in previous reports it is important that centres make candidates fully aware that this specification is place specific and therefore there are many case studies which require detailed factual knowledge.   It is of concern that examiners saw virtually the same answer for questions 5(a)(iii), 6(a)(ii) and 6(c).   The answers were so vague that they could refer equally to a nuclear power station, a heavy chemical industry and a hi-tech industry along the M4 corridor.

Question 1
Specification B is unique among the GCSE specifications offered by AQA, in that it provides a list of geographical terms which candidates are expected to know.   Centres should ensure that their candidates are able to show their understanding of these terms by learning a precise definition for each of them. Part 1(a) did not present any difficulty. Very few candidates scored full marks on part (b). As two of the terms were industrial based, many candidates assumed 'attrition' came from the same topic. Centres should appreciate that Question 1 attempted to give wider specification coverage on a paper where there are no optional questions.   River erosion processes appear to cause some confusion among candidates.   Centres should discourage candidates from re-using a word from a question in their answers. The use of 'heavy' rather than a synonym in the definition of 'heavy industry' did not gain any credit. In part (c) most candidates got 'honeypot' correct but 'urbanisation' was frequently confused with 'sub-urbanisation' and the knowledge of the term 'gentrification' appeared to be centre specific.

Question 2
The word 'processes' proved difficult for the less able candidates and so they attempted to define the term 'conurbation' without attempting to show how they came into being. There were far too many vague answers to part 2(b) which could refer to any town. The most common choice was Blackburn indicating the influence of one particular textbook. Centres not in Blackburn could perhaps benefit from choosing a local urban area, with which their candidates would be more familiar. Centres could then perhaps encourage their candidates to make more use of their coursework enquires to build up factual knowledge on this topic. There were, surprisingly, candidates entered for this tier who did not appear to appreciate what was meant by a large urban area, as shown by their choice of the Lake District as the basis for their answers. Poor examination technique and the lack of careful reading of the question were often evident in the candidates' answers. The question was concerned with the growth of the urban area and examiners accepted reasons for both historical and modern growth. In spite of this wide interpretation candidates still did not score well. Many answers described the redevelopment of the city, particularly of the inner city areas, without relating this to the overall growth of the settlement. There were however some excellent answers with detailed information. It appeared that candidates scored more easily if a medium sized town was chosen rather than a large conurbation.

Question 3
The answers on East Anglian farming were of a higher standard than those seen in previous years. This is perhaps because there was no requirement for detailed knowledge of the physical conditions encouraging arable farming in this part of England.   It was pleasing to see that the majority recognised that part 3(a) had to be based on the aerial photograph. Candidates were generally able to recognise the characteristic features of arable farming shown on Figure 1. All but the least able candidates were able to gain credit in part 3(b).   There was

however a tendency to resort to generalities such as 'easy transport'. While candidates were not required to refer to specific crops in their answers, many had obviously been influenced by the TV advert for frozen peas, that boasted they are transported from the field to the freezing plant in less than 45 minutes.   The significance of the bulky nature of sugar beet was less well known.

Question 4
Many candidates did not recognise the significance of the term 'urban zone' in part (a)(i) and so there were relatively few who gave CBD as their response.   Many referred to the area as the shopping area, which made it all the more surprising that in part (a)(iii) they described a residential inner city area, without any reference to shops or shopping. Even their correct answers to part (a)(ii) did not clue them in to the fact that the question was concerned with the relative decline of the CBD as a shopping area. There were some good answers from those candidates who recognised that the question was best answered by a consideration of the impact of out-of-town retail parks. The growth of shopping on-line was also seen as important. Poor examination technique sometimes meant that able candidates failed to gain full marks in this question because they concentrated on the advantages of the new developments in shopping without relating these to the impact on the CBD. Centres should continue to train candidates to deconstruct questions, identifying key words so that they tailor their information closely to the needs of the question.

Question 5
This was the best answered short question.   Less able candidates were convinced that all nuclear power stations have the potential to explode, or at the very least were dangerous, without explaining why. There was not a requirement to make use of a named nuclear power station in part (a)(iii) but those who used a station like Heysham as an exemplar, invariably scored more highly.

Question 6
A minority of candidates chose farming as the basis of their system diagram and so limited the maximum mark possible in (a)(i) to one. There was some good detailed knowledge shown by those candidates who chose an appropriate example, like the chemical industry. Those who used terms such as 'footloose' or 'heavy' found it difficult to quote appropriate examples in the boxes. The Middle-Mersey was the most commonly quoted example, when a candidate was able to give one. There was a disappointing lack of specific detailed knowledge of their chosen named example. This question was far too often answered in a generalised manner with vague references to labour, transport and raw materials. Part (b) was poorly answered and even the more able candidates appeared to struggle on the question of government influence on industrial location. This is disappointing because it is probably the most significant influence on industrial location. The question on the M4 corridor provided the opportunity for conscientious students to show their knowledge. Although a very common one in recent years, those candidates who had not prepared for this topic suffered through lack of specific knowledge. Centres should ensure their candidates are fully prepared for the case studies listed in the specification.

Question 7
Map reading skills were generally sound. It was pleasing that the majority of candidates were able to recognise glacial features from their contour patterns. The use of annotated diagrams helped candidates to show the sequence in the formation of the glacial trough. Many candidates mentioned the glacial processes involved but failed to reach Level 3 by omitting to describe them in the detail required. A number of candidates confused a glacial trough with a corrie. The significance of command words is still not fully appreciated by many candidates. There is still a sizeable number who do not appreciate the difference between description and

explanation. This was seen in 7(c)(i) where many attempted an explanation of the distribution of second homes in the Lake District. A significant number of candidates did not appreciate that the key was given in terms of percentages and used words like more and less, not realising that the figures were not absolute values. If candidates were to achieve Level 2 in this question, both maps had to be used. There were some competent answers to the final section, but a minority of candidates dealt with general problems of tourism. Reference to overcrowding, footpath erosion and traffic congestion was not relevant in this question. There are still too many candidates who think that those who visit the Lake District are loud and irresponsible people who let their properties fall into disrepair, as well as causing litter and noise. This is so untrue of these visitors who have bought property in the National Park, that it is worthy of mention in this report.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.