AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Geography 3038 Short Course
Specification C

3038/F   **Foundation Tier**

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

3038/F

General

Very few candidates failed to complete the examination paper, indicating time clearly was not a problem. The majority of candidates appear to be well prepared for the examination. General responses to the examination papers and the spread of marks suggest that both papers were accessible and a sound reflection of the specification. In most cases, candidates are identifying the commands of the questions. The use of locational or knowledge-based examples was variable. Candidates who developed their responses by using examples often scored highly. It was evident that a small number of Foundation Tier candidates would have coped with the Higher Tier paper.

Focus for development

There are now a number of past papers available from the publications department and the AQA website and these clearly reflect the style of the examination. The use of these papers to ensure that candidates are familiar and comfortable with the style and layout of the paper is vital.

Given that candidates face only one examination paper it is important to fully appreciate that it has to be used to cover the whole range of the assessment criteria. As such, there will be skills based questions, use of data and the need to show knowledge and understanding. This demands both quick thinking and changes to thinking patterns. Candidates do not always find this easy, especially in a pressured situation, so practice is an essential part of the preparation for this paper.

The specification is essentially based on identifying issues and considering the management of issues. An issue-based teaching approach that generates thinking skills and careful use of resources is good preparation for the final written assessment.

The use of locational examples is important, especially in the Higher Tier examination paper where it is often a differentiator. Encourage candidates to learn one example for each unit. Practise using questions where the answer can be built around the locational example rather than giving a general answer and tacking a place name on at the end.

Ensure that candidates are aware of the locational context of questions. The most common errors are mixing up MEDCs and LEDCs or rural and urban areas.

The testing of terminology is often done by using definition boxes on the Foundation Tier or using specific terms in Higher Tier questions.

Identify the key terms through the specification and build up a key definitions page as you work through the course.

There will always be a small element of issues-analysis in the examination paper - often expressed through the decision-making exercise (DME) topic. Identify the key ideas from the DME topic and ensure that candidates have a clear understanding of them.

It is clear that a small number of candidates are not properly equipped for the examination. Encourage candidates to make sure that they have pens/pencils/rubber/ruler and perhaps some coloured pencils. They may have to draw or complete graphs and there could be a question where an annotated sketch /diagram might be useful.

The use of a revision grid for each sub-section is a helpful technique. The grid could be used to identify the key words or definitions. It might then be used to identify problems/challenges and suggestion management strategies. Locational or topic-based examples could be added.

Question 1: Managing Change in the Human Environment

In part (a)(i), the majority of candidates showed a good understanding of the idea of rural-urban migration with a significant number using information from Figure 1 to enhance their definition.

In part (ii), most candidates used Figure 1 effectively to identify both push and pull factors of migration. A small number mixed the two terms up and in a very small number of cases it was clear that candidates had not even looked at Figure 1.

Part (b)(i) presented few problems and the majority of candidates scored full marks. It was evident that candidates had read the resource in Figure 2 carefully. On a number of scripts key words had been highlighted on Figure 2, indicating sound preparation skills.

In part (ii), candidates showed a sound general understanding of the question and were able to offer clear links between living conditions and health. Responses varied from generalised observations about 'pollution' and 'disease' to more sophisticated points which drew out the links in more detail. Observations about lack of water and sewage systems creating the opportunity for water-borne disease were frequently used, as were comments about the link between population density and the spread of disease. In a small number of cases more diverse observations were made, for example the lack of jobs leading to crime and a general lack of safety and security.

In part (iii), a number of candidates failed to appreciate the choice within the question and consequently made observations about both 'self-help' and 'local authority schemes'. This was often self-limiting. Most candidates showed an understanding of what was mean by improving living conditions, but generally failed to base their response on a particular example. Consequently observations were often generic points about improving housing or services and lacked specific detail.

The majority of candidates completed the graph accurately in part (d)(i) and consequently scored full marks on this question.

In part (ii), the majority of candidates had a good understanding of what is meant by the 'rural-urban fringe' and were able to offer an appropriate definition.

Responses to part (iv) varied from general points about 'pollution' and 'taking up countryside' to a more sophisticated appreciation about habitat loss. A small number of candidates developed the theme by suggesting that many residents of urban-fringe developments would be commuters and consequently there would be added demand for roads and increasing congestion problems. These types of 'linked' approaches often led to very successful responses.

Question 2

In part (a,) candidates did not always make the distinction between why National Parks are popular and why their popularity has increased, which was the focus of the question. Consequently, responses that simply made points about the 'scenic beauty' or the 'lakes and mountains' were not appropriate. Key ideas about 'growth' were required. The main observations focused on points about 'improved infrastructure', 'more people have cars', 'people have more time or money', etc. A small number of candidates brought in observations about the increase of facilities in National Parks attracting more people or about the growth of National Parks giving increasing numbers of people easier access.

In part (b), the majority of candidates identified the theme of 'footpath erosion' as a major problem. From this point responses varied from simply repeating the idea of erosion in different ways to developing it in terms of habitat loss or the costs involved in managing footpath damage. A small number of candidates identified 'different types of user' as a problem which might lead to conflict – a thoughtful and often productive approach to the question.

Part (c) presented few problems. It was clear that the majority of candidates were familiar with the terminology expressed in the question or were able to show their understanding by working out the correct responses.

In part (d), most candidates showed a good general appreciation of the issues involved in managing Lake Windermere. The choice of 'yes' or 'no' was fairly evenly split and either choice gave candidates a good opportunity to develop their understanding. Responses generally varied from largely copied observations from the resource with no real development to carefully selected observations which were used to develop a more thoughtful answer.

Question 3

Part (a) presented few problems. It was clear that most candidates were familiar with the concept of global warming and were able to show their understanding by working out the correct responses.

In most cases candidates were able to offer basic descriptions of change in relation to carbon dioxide emissions in part (b). General observations about 'increasing' or 'decreasing' were common, with a considerable proportion of candidates developing this theme further by offering more detailed observations from Figure 7.

In part (d), a number of candidates failed to appreciate the choice within the question and consequently made observations about both 'international agreements' and 'technology'. This was often self-limiting. It was clear that very few candidates had any real understanding of 'international agreements' and in most cases small scale, local initiatives such as congestion charges, were mentioned in this context. Those candidates who focused on technology often did much better and frequently produced some excellent responses. The most popular considerations were alternative energy, non-fossil fuel based vehicles and carbon neutral housing.

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