

Version



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

Geography A

40302F

(Specification 4030)

Unit 2: Human Geography (Foundation)

Report on the Examination

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General

The paper allowed widespread differentiation and proved to be accessible to students, although centres may now be entering a smaller proportion for the Foundation tier as fewer high quality papers were seen this year. This could reflect the pattern of entry or the fact that more were entered for the Higher Tier. On the other hand, it seemed that most students made an effort to answer most or all of each question. The question most frequently not attempted was 2(c)(ii) on sustainable urban living. There were no spoiled or unsavoury answers. The most successful students had sound examination technique and took notice of the mark allocation for each question. They responded to specific examination command words and structured their answers accordingly, making use of appropriate geographical language and technical terms. Case studies were relevant with place specific detail and students made an attempt to tailor the information closely to the needs of the question. Most wrote in sentences and the quality of writing was an improvement on previous years. Centres should encourage their students to develop each idea rather than give lists of simple basic points. It is better to fully develop one or two ideas rather than try to cover a greater spread with little or no development or elaboration. For this reason, the use of bullet points should be discouraged.

The most popular questions were 1, 2 and 6 with very few centres teaching the rural environments topic. There were poor responses to questions based on stimulus material where students were required to make use of the information, whether in a photo, map or diagram. These were often totally ignored or used as the basis for straight lifts without any attempt at development or elaboration. There was evidence to suggest that some students did not bother to look at the colour copy of a figure in the insert when there was a of the black and white photo in the examination booklet. Graphical skills were generally answered well. Rubric offences were relatively rare and, when present, often by very weak candidates attempting questions on topics which they had not been taught.

SECTION A

Question 1 Population Change

This proved to be a popular question and was relatively high scoring. Students felt confident with the One Child Policy and there were good answers to 1(a)(i). Question 1(a)(ii) was reasonably well answered with quote 2 most commonly attempted. There was some misconception that the rural areas of China were sparsely populated and it was therefore realistic that a higher birth rate to be allowed. Where the need for farm labour was recognised, the mark was achieved. Centres are reminded that the specification is quite clear that emphasis on the One Child Policy should be concerned with the position since the 1990s. The quotes in the examination paper were chosen to reflect the major changes from that time. Overall, there were a good set of answers to 1(a)(iii) and students showed clear understanding of a range of problems associated with the policy, and so accessed level 2. It was this question that made apparent that some centres had concentrated too much on the earlier versions of the policy at the expense of the more recent changes. The table in 1(b)(i) was completed correctly by the majority of students, showing an understanding of the different factors encouraging migration. In 1(b)(ii), there was some misreading of the question with the answers reflecting the effect on the UK rather than on the source region of the migrants. Those who read the question correctly scored 2 marks relatively easily but failure to develop points meant that the top marks were not achieved. Part 1(b)(iii) was surprisingly poorly answered with many answers concentrating on 'social' or 'economic' push or pull factors, showing a lack of understanding of the forced nature of push factors leading to refugees leaving their home countries. Some students could identify war or natural disaster as a factor but gave no indication as to why these would make them move. The number of students in 1(c)(i) who could not identify continents correctly was disappointing. The topological map proved to be problematic, suggesting that students were not familiar with this kind of diagram. Many changed the wording to compare the size of the population rather than the annual population growth. Centres should ensure that their candidates are prepared for both the subject content and the skills checklist in the specification booklet. On the other hand, a significant number were able to show a good understanding of the relationship between an improved level of women's education and the reduction in population growth.

Question 2 Changing Urban Environments

Another popular question but probably not as highly scored as question 1. The drawing of the isoline was inaccurate in almost all cases. It is, perhaps, a more demanding skill but it is clearly identified as one that needs to be mastered in the geographical skills checklist. At most, the line went through the 6 but then took no notice of the relationship to the 5 and 7 points. Many ignored it or joined up all the dots. Part 2(a)(ii) was better answered although there were incorrect references to the CBD and inner city. Most students could recognise the decline in pollution moving out from the centre of the map but remarkably few noted the impact of the roads on air pollution. In 2(a)(iii), many were able to identify a problem correctly but few developed their answer to get the second mark. Some, unfortunately, continued to discuss air pollution. Traffic solutions were understood and some good answers were produced with park and ride, congestion charges, increased use of public transport and pedestrianisation as the most commonly suggested solutions. This question was an opportunity for case study information despite not being a requirement of the question. Centres should encourage the use of case study information wherever possible as it is a good way of achieving the clarity required in a level 2 answer. Students could have quite easily picked up the two marks for 2(b)(i) from the stimulus material. Many students in 2(b)(ii) appreciated the impact of contaminated water and were able to develop their answer to gain the full 2 marks. A high percentage recognised the significance of a lack of funds in poor world cities on their attempt to reduce water pollution but failed to develop their answer sufficiently. In 2(c)(i), failure to gain the full marks was the result of students taking straight lifts from Figure 7 and failing to show how that contributed to Dubai being an unsustainable city. There were some excellent answers in 2(c)(ii) making use of Curitiba or BedZed as a case study but all too often answers were purely generic, with general references to recycling, public transport and renewable energy, or missing the point all together. Several discussed sustainability in rural environments or even wrote about the problems of squatter settlements. This was the question most commonly left unattempted.

Question 3 Changing Rural Environments

This was by far the least popular question on the paper. Atlas skills are clearly identified as one of the geographical skills that can be examined. The satellite image and atlas extract came from an atlas that is commonly found and hopefully used in many centres. The fact that the area of the satellite image was outlined on the atlas extract should have removed any difficulty for the candidates in relating the two figures to each other. Most candidates could identify that the deforested area was in Brazil but the description of the location was very poorly done. Many got the compass directions wrong, others wrote place names well away from the deforested area and so clearly showed an inability to effectively use an atlas map by referring to the relationship to named rivers and/or the road system. Surprisingly, the most common reason given for deforestation was the provision of housing which was not credited. Rainforest deforestation is such a common area covered at Key Stage 3 that it would have been thought that students could give mining or farming as the cause, especially as the next question should have given them a clue. Few answers in 3(a)(iv) demonstrated any understanding of the impact of mining and/or forestry on traditional farming practices. If any knowledge was shown, the answer was either about mining/forestry or slash and burn without any attempt to link the two. The fixation with animal habitats was evident in answers to this question. The questions on the graph in 3(b) were generally successful. In the cloze exercise part 3(b)(iv), the most common mistakes were manure for methane, fewer people needed to farm and higher yields. Part 3(c)(i) was poorly answered, with many vague answers about the farmers protecting the environment and poor knowledge of ANOBs, SSSIs or National Parks, for example. There was a mixed response to the final question. Many left it unanswered whilst others misinterpreted the question and wrote about how the needs of the developments in Figure 10 could be supported, but generally the stimulus helped most candidates to reach level 1. On the other hand, there was some evidence of students not bothering to look at the stimulus material at all.

SECTION B

Question 4 The Development Gap

Question 4 appeared to be about equal with question 5 in popularity. This question seemed to prove challenging to those who attempted it and was often the lowest scoring of the three questions attempted by a centre. Some students confused the temperature and precipitation scales and therefore quoted 34°C as the temperature in February. It was encouraging, however, to notice that the majority of answers did include units in addition to the number in their answer. The answers to 4(a)(iii) tended to be vague and generalised. There was some confusion between physical and human factors and, where students did recognise the differences, they failed to relate their answer to development. Part 4(a)(iv) was better with the impact of lower life expectancy and the high percentage employed in agriculture as the most common answers. Part 4(a)(v) was very poorly answered with little knowledge or understanding shown despite the topic being clearly identified in the specification. It is appreciated that there are large numbers of different policies coming out of Brussels but centres should study at least one in detail. CAP was the most common but other examples could include the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Urban II Fund and the European Central Bank. Due to its topicality, reference to the Euro crisis was anticipated to feature in answers but little evidence was seen of the attempts to solve the problems of Greece and Spain. Many referred to charity aid, including that sent to countries in Africa, thus ignoring the final two words of the question. Trade is an area which does not appear to be covered well if the answers to 4(b)(i) and 4(b)(ii) are representative. Students did not understand the relative significance of primary products and products with added value in world trade. The top two sections in the true/false table were incorrectly answered most frequently. Poor use of the figure was the most common reason for the lack of marks in part 4(c)(i). There were a great variety of development schemes cited in 4(c)(ii) but there was some indication that students did not know what 'features' meant. The mark scheme was widened to include a development scheme in any context or at any scale but, despite this, there was much vague generic information leaving the students in level 1. Some strayed into discussion of Fair Trade, presumably using the earlier stimulus

Question 5 Globalisation

The understanding of the meaning of 'control of a water supply' was insecure for many students with the control of flooding as the most common answer but less appreciation of the need to maintain an adequate supply of good quality water. Answers could have related to the need for irrigation or the production of HEP. Students who were unaware that most rivers flow towards the sea struggled with part 5(b), although most could identify that three countries were involved. Even if they recognised the source of the rivers in Turkey, many merely quoted the number of dams in Turkey and failed to recognise the impact this would have on Syria and Iraq. Part 5(c) was poorly answered with students either writing just about irrigation or subsistence farming. The idea of wasting water was common. Stacked graphs have sometimes proved to be problematic in the past but this year's cohort were generally able to give the correct answers to parts 5(d)(i) and 5(d)(ii). In 5(d)(iii), students were able to develop some of the listed facts but very few went on to level 2 by clearly linking them to their impact on industry. Weaker answers talked about the factors from a Rich World perspective, referring to safe working environments protected by health and safety regulations. Most students managed to get some marks from question 5(d)(iv) but there was much confusion with crossings out and messy lines. Centres should encourage students to use a pencil and rubber in order to erase any mistakes and make their final attempt clear to the examiner. Case studies were better used in 5(e) than in other questions on the paper and the concepts of global influence and the distribution of TNCs were generally well understood. The mark scheme allowed all aspects of a TNC although the majority wrote about either TNCs geographical distribution or their advantages and disadvantages, both of which were acceptable. Where there was a named TNC, the details were often very generic so the top of the mark range was only occasionally achieved.

Question 6 Tourism

This was by far the most popular question on the paper but frequently it was the one which the students did least well in. There remains a tendency for them to fail to learn the material in sufficient detail resulting in vague, simplistic and generalised answers with a lack of understanding of the geography of tourism. There was carelessness in the completion of the pie chart, particularly with the completion of the shading even if the line separating the segments was correct. The shading that candidates needed to use for their answer was deliberately chosen by the setting panel to be either vertical or horizontal on the grounds that this would be the most straightforward for the students. However, this appeared not to be the case and many were drawn at an angle that could have represented Singapore or Shanghai. On the other hand, most candidates were able to correctly give the percentage for Bangkok. 6(a)(iii) was generally well answered although some students thought that tourists go to cities because of their climate which seems unlikely. Question 6(b) indicated quite a degree of carelessness. Many did not read the question carefully enough and labelled features on both photos instead of choosing one. Examiners were required to be strict when marking the position of the labelled feature and students gained no credit if the head of the arrow or line did not touch the feature being identified. There was also evidence that students had not looked at the colour photo since the green roof of the building to the right of the photo was often labelled as the beach. This was perfectly obvious on the colour photo but not so clear on the black and white reproduction within the examination booklet. The Ferris wheel was given several names including the London Eye. There were some students who had merely written 'physical' or 'human' without specifying what the feature actually was. Part 6(b)(ii) was generally well answered with a suitable choice of location. However, many gave answers that were over concise or simply a list of activities. Blackpool was the most common resort and the Lake District the most common National Park, with coastal resorts being more popular. There were several incorrect locations such as Antarctica or theme parks. In 6(b)(iii) relating to National Parks, there were many level 1 comments about footpath erosion and restricting access for either cars or people. For the coastal resorts, many students wrote a list of the attractions offered at the resort which did not answer the question. The better answers showed a clear understanding of how measures such as improving footpaths stopped erosion or discussed how coastal resorts were improving access, for example. In 6(c)(i) there were many correct answers but many also tried to give explanations as to why tourists went to the Caribbean. Antarctica was quite often used as an example of a tropical tourist area in 6(c)(ii). Examples taken from outside the tropics were limited to level 1 but eco tourist locations, such as the Galapagos Islands, were accepted on the grounds that, although in absolute terms the numbers are not large, they are relative to the carrying capacity of the tourist area. However, although students were able to use eco-tourism on this occasion, they would be well advised to read the question more carefully when choosing their case study exemplification. Centres need to be reminded that case studies can have a number of applications and a lesson on this would be advisable as part of a revision programme. There were still too many references to nice beaches

and hot weather without any attempt to give representative climatic statistics. The best case study details came from the use of Kenya and Jamaica. In the final section, pollution and litter was often unqualified and hence gained no credit. There was also a tendency for students to cover social and cultural impacts rather than merely environmental ones. Good answers related air pollution to air transport or migration of wildlife due to noise or tourist infrastructure being developed.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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