General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011

Geography B   **40351F**

(Specification 4035)

Unit 1: Managing places in the 21st century (Foundation)

Report on the Examination

INTRODUCTION

Candidates had to answer either Question 1 (The Coastal Environment) or Question 2 (the Urban Environment). A number of candidates attempted both questions. This was generally self-limiting and usually resulted in both questions being unfinished or not addressed with an appropriate level of detail. The Coastal Environment option was the more popular choice with approximately 60-65% of the candidate entry attempting it.

GENERAL POINTS

- Very few candidates failed to complete the paper, suggesting that the timing of the paper was not an issue.

- Reports suggested that centres had found the examination a sound reflection of the specification and a good test of the knowledge and understanding embodied within the specification.

- It was evident that the majority of centres had prepared their candidates effectively. Teachers are to be congratulated on their efforts towards ensuring that candidates had a sound grasp of the concepts that underpin the course.

- The use of resources was generally good. A significant proportion of candidates used clearly and appropriately quoted evidence from resources in their answers. However, the use of the Ordnance Survey map extract in Question 2 was variable. It was evident that a number of candidates did not really understand the demands of map reading and interpretation skills. Consequently, what might be considered fairly easily gained marks were lost.

- The use of examples was variable. In many cases candidates brought in well-developed, appropriate case studies, while in others the instruction to include 'examples' or 'own knowledge' was largely ignored.

  (The instruction to include 'own knowledge' can be development of the ideas expressed in the question **or** locational knowledge (examples).

  Key point – remember the key instruction at the beginning of every examination paper. 'Use case studies to support your answers where appropriate.' Encourage candidates to do this – it is often one of the ways that the higher level marks can be accessed.

- The majority of candidates responded to the question comments effectively.

- The use of the mark allocations and writing spaces was generally good; the majority of candidates taking the opportunity of using the 'extra space'. A small number of candidates used a 'listing' approach to some of the longer questions. This was often self-limiting and should be discouraged unless time is an issue.

- It was evident that a small number of candidates were not properly equipped. The lack of a ruler can affect levels of accuracy when completing graphs or measuring distances. At this level, basic skills demand a high level of accuracy.

Questions

1(a)(i)(ii)(iii) These questions presented few problems. The majority of candidates used the resources effectively to identify or work out the correct answers.

1(a)(iv) The majority of candidates completed the graph accurately. It was evident that a number of candidates did not have a ruler and in some cases this resulted in the completed lines being unclear. Consequently, what might be considered to be relatively straightforward marks were lost.

1(a)(v) Virtually all candidates identified an increase in the number of residents in Florida between 1980 and 2010. A significant proportion of candidates used specific data to illustrate the increase or to make points about the rate of increase, comfortably earning both marks.

1(a)(vi) The majority of candidates were able to use the information given to identify the correct words. This enabled them to complete the paragraph accurately.

1(a)(vii) Those candidates who based their response around a detailed example generally produced sound answers which showed a good general understanding of the question and brought in some interesting ideas. However, a significant number of candidates tended to consider the question in generic terms, often identifying the idea of "environment" in relation to "pollution" and giving largely unqualified responses. This was generally self -limiting. At the higher mark level, points about habitat destruction linked to building development or damage to the marine environment (often coral reefs) due to waste being pumped into the sea or tourist pressures often produced useful responses. A small number of candidates considered "coastal environments" in a broad sense, using examples of community based pressures. When this slightly more holistic interpretation included clear observations about the physical environment the answers were very thoughtful and showed an impressive level of understanding.

1(b)(i) The majority of candidates had few problems with this question and were able to use the resource effectively to identify the correct answer. In a small number of cases candidates made an error in identifying the direction in which the arrows were pointing rather than the direction from where the wind was coming.

1(b)(ii) Many candidates used the resource effectively to identify those areas of high, moderate and low winds. Specific use of the map was variable.   However a significant proportion of candidates did use accurate direction or place names to identify the highest levels of wave energy. It was evident that a number of candidates did not understand the term "pattern", and often simply described one part of the map.

1(b)(iii) Responses to this question were variable. It was evident that a number of candidates were not clear about the relationship between wind energy and wave energy, or the fact that some areas are sheltered from the prevailing wind and consequently wave energy might be reduced.

1(c)(i) This question presented few problems. The majority of candidates were able to identify the correct names of the landforms from the list above Figure 3. The landform that caused the most difficulty was the wave-cut platform.

1(c)(ii) The majority of candidates had a good general understanding of the processes of erosion and were able to describe how the sea had affected the headland shown on Figure 3. The general sequence of erosion was appreciated by a significant proportion of candidates. At the higher mark levels candidates increasingly used more specific geographical terminology and were able to explain in some detail how particular types of erosion and weathering had been significant in producing the headland features shown on Figure 3.

1(d)(i) Candidates generally understood the idea of "coastal defence", and a significant proportion were able to identify the groynes on Figure 4.

1(d)(ii)   At the most basic level candidates recognised that the beach in Zone A was more extensive than in Zone B. This type of simple recognition did not fully address the question which asked for a description of the beach in each of the zones rather than a comparison. It was evident that a small number of candidates had clearly not used the key and had subsequently not identified the beach at all.

1(d)(iii)   A significant proportion of candidates were able link the shape of the beach and volume of beach material to the presence of groynes. A number went further by also linking the importance of longshore drift to the accumulation of beach material, often producing detailed responses to what was only a short answer question.

1(d)(iv)   The majority of candidates used Figure 4 effectively to identify a town, holiday centre and a main road close to the beach in Zone A. A significant proportion of candidates then went on to consider that these functions would be badly affected if the area were to flood so there was clearly a need for some form of coastal defence. A number of candidates suggested why there were no coastal defences in Zone B. This was not part of the question and was consequently not creditworthy.

1(e)(i)   Responses to this question varied. There were clearly a number of candidates who had very little idea of what was meant by "soft coastal engineering". Consequently they could not answer the question. Those that did understand the basic terminology generally addressed the question in one of three ways. A number of candidates simply named soft engineering techniques without really defining what is meant by soft engineering. The second approach was to offer definitions, many of which were quite vague. The third approach, which was often quite impressive, offered both a clear generic definition of soft engineering and named particular soft engineering techniques.

1(e)(ii)   The majority of candidates were able to describe different types of soft engineering techniques effectively. A relatively small proportion of candidates were able to explain effectively how soft engineering techniques actually protect coastal areas. In some cases it was clear that the idea of "protecting" coastal areas was not fully understood.

1(f)   Many candidates found this question quite challenging. There was a reasonable understanding about how rising sea levels might create problems such as flooding and erosion but the idea of management was not always well considered. A small number of candidates saw this question as a shoreline management question, and talked about hard engineering rather than seeing the broader picture and considering future coastal zone management. Some candidates did consider coastal retreat as a long term planning strategy in relation to rising sea levels, often producing very effective and well documented responses.

2(a)(i)(ii)
(iii)(iv)   These questions presented few problems. The majority of candidates were able to use Figure 6 effectively to identify the correct answers.

2(b)(i)   The majority of candidates were clearly familiar with the terminology and were able to work out the correct answers.

2(b)(ii)   The idea of urbanisation was clearly understood by the majority of candidates, most of whom were able to give two appropriate reasons why people might be attracted to urban areas in less developed countries. A wide range of reasons was given, many of them focusing on economic and social opportunities.

2(c)(i)   The use of Figure 7 was variable. Those candidates who were able to use the resource effectively and develop their ideas by bringing in other examples often produced very thoughtful and well documented answers. Those that did not use the resource effectively generally used generic ideas such as "pollution" or focused on describing urban slums. Slum areas were used by most candidates as a "problem", at times very effectively when they got beyond the purely descriptive and began to consider why they might be considered a problem. A small number of candidates brought in broader ideas such as water or air pollution, lack of services and links to disease, problems of dealing with

waste and traffic issues. These responses often produced sound answers which showed a good level of understanding, at times backed up by some excellent locational knowledge.

2(c)(ii)   The majority of candidates were able to offer some ideas about how conditions in urban areas in less developed countries are being improved. Responses ranged from general observations such as "improving houses" or "putting in clean water", to more detailed descriptions of self- help schemes or government improvement schemes. At the higher mark levels candidates based their responses around specific case studies, usually housing or infrastructure improvement schemes. Where candidates both described their chosen scheme and explained how it might improve living conditions answers were able to show a thoughtful awareness of the question.

2(d)(i)(ii)
(iii)(iv)   While the majority of candidates were able to score most of the marks on these questions it was evident that a number of candidates had very poor map reading skills or simply did not understand the questions. Consequently, a number of candidates lost what might be considered to be fairly straightforward marks. The use of an Ordnance Survey map is a fairly common feature of this examination paper so practice and preparation in using them should play a part in any revision programme.

2(d)(v)   The idea of "land use" was not understood by all candidates. Those that did understand the terminology generally scored the two marks, unless they used an incorrect grid square.

2(d)(vi)   Use of Figure 8 was variable, some candidates using the map as a basis for much of their answer while others simply used it as a stimulus to generate ideas. Most candidates showed some appreciation of "environmental hazards". Responses varied from basic, unqualified references to "pollution", through to detailed points about specific types of pollution linked to particular activities, often identified from the map. A relatively small proportion of candidates developed this theme by expressing why this might constitute a "hazard". A number of candidates drifted into ideas about natural hazards. In some cases this allowed candidates to make tentative links to the idea of environmental hazards and gain some credit, but often this approach was self-limiting.

2(e)   Most candidates showed a good level of understanding of the question and were able to name two different methods of reducing traffic congestion in urban areas. A significant proportion of candidates went on to offer a brief explanation of their two chosen methods. A number of candidates considered pedestrianisation as a method of reducing congestion in parts of urban areas. This was an imaginative and thoughtful idea which is clearly relevant to some areas.

2(f)(i)   The majority of candidates completed the graph accurately. It was evident that a small number of candidates did not have a ruler and in some cases this resulted in the completed lines being unclear. Consequently, what might be considered to be straightforward marks were lost.

2(f)(ii)   The majority of candidates were able to use the information given to identify the correct terms. This enabled them to complete the paragraph accurately.

2(f)(iii)   It was clear that a number of candidates were not familiar with the idea of "quality of life". Consequently they failed to identify an appropriate type of information that could be used to measure it. Those that did understand the terminology or were able to use the ideas expressed in Figure 9 effectively were generally able to identify an appropriate measure of quality of life.

2(f)(iv)   A number of candidates expressed their ideas in very basic terms, at times not going very far beyond simply repeating the stem expressed in the previous question about "being useful to measure the quality of life". A number of candidates developed this theme or made linked points such as, " where there is high unemployment people will

have less money to spend on food". This was a useful approach which usually allowed candidates to achieve both marks.

2(g)   A number of candidates clearly did not really understand the concept of "sustainability" in relation to urban management. In general there were three approaches to this question. The most basic approach identified one or two simple generic ideas, often about energy (production or conservation) or resource management. These responses showed some awareness of conservation techniques but did not show any real appreciation of why these techniques might be considered to be part of a sustainable management strategy in urban areas. The second approach used specific examples and identified a wider range of factors which might be considered part of a sustainable management strategy in urban areas. In adopting this approach candidates often showed some awareness of the concept of sustainability. The third approach used detailed examples such as Bedzed or Eco-towns/cities and made clear observations about how socio-economic and environmental management was being used in order to ensure long term community sustainability. This approach enabled candidates to produce thoughtful, often impressive responses which brought in a wide range of ideas and showed a detailed appreciation of the question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion