



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
January 2012**

**Geography B**

**40351F**

**(Specification 4035)**

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

***Report on the Examination***

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## 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.

### **Question 1 (a)(i)**

The majority of candidates were able to identify the Indian Ocean as the correct answer.

### **Question 1 (a)(ii)**

This question presented few difficulties. The majority of candidates showed a sound understanding of latitude and longitude and were able to identify the correct answers. A limited number of candidates failed to attempt the question.

### **Question 1 (a)(iii)**

The majority of candidates were able to identify the correct answers in order to complete the paragraph accurately.

### **Question 1 (b)**

Those candidates who based their response around a well-chosen example generally produced sound answers, often bringing in a range of economic activities to illustrate the idea of coastal areas being “multi-use” areas. Those that did not use a specific example generally produced vague answers, often using a narrow range of possibilities, or in some cases only one main idea (often tourism). This was generally self-limiting. It was evident that a number of candidates did not fully appreciate the multi-use nature of coastal areas, and in some cases it was also evident that some candidates did not understand the idea of “economic activity”.

### **Question 1 (c)(i) (ii)**

The majority of candidates used Figure 2 effectively to identify the correct answers to these questions. It was evident that a small number of candidates did not understand the word “area”.

### **Question 1 (c)(iii)**

Most candidates either knew the correct terminology or were able to work it out. A small number of candidates failed to attempt the question.

### **Question 1 (c)(iv)**

Those candidates who used Figure 2 effectively and took care when completing the graph were able to score both marks. In a small number of cases simple or careless errors were made, resulting in the loss of marks. This is a relatively simple skill at this level so there is a need for a high degree of accuracy.

### **Question 1 (c)(v)**

The great majority of candidates identified an overall increase. A significant proportion of candidates then went on to identify particular parts of the upward trend or used data to express specific change.

### **Question 1 (c)(vi)**

A significant proportion of candidates used Figure 2 effectively to identify pressures that might be found in coastal areas. This often provided the basis for a good general understanding of the question. A number of candidates developed their ideas further by expressing some understanding of how different demands in coastal areas might conflict, with the consequent need for management. At the highest level, candidates developed their ideas further by expressing observations about the challenge of satisfying the differing demands found in coastal areas. These candidates often produced thoughtful and perceptive responses which showed a good general understanding of the concept of “sustainability”.

It was evident that a small number of candidates had very little understanding of the pressures and conflicts found in coastal areas and no real appreciation of what is meant by “sustainability”.

### **Question 1 (d) (i) (ii)**

A significant proportion of candidates selected the correct answers, suggesting that they had clearly learned the geographical terminology.

### **Question 1 (e)(i)**

A significant proportion of candidates used Figure 3 effectively to correctly identify the labelled features. A small number of errors were made in relation to “wave-cut platform”.

### **Question 1 (e)(ii)**

There was a generally poor understanding of what was required in this question. It was evident that the majority of candidates had no real understanding about the link between rock type and coastal features. A significant number of candidates showed a lack of understanding of what is meant by “hard” or “soft coastlines”, often quoting a rock type in the wrong context (also in question 1(f)). A number of candidates described the features shown in Figure 3, often in considerable detail, but were not able to offer any real explanation. Responses to this question suggest that there is a need for a more detailed understanding of how the type of rock and its structure play a part in the shape and profile of the resulting cliff.

### **Question 1 (f)**

Candidates showed some appreciation of the characteristics of soft coastlines but were not always able to explain the processes that operate on them. A considerable number of candidates saw marine processes as the key factor, often virtually ignoring the effect of rainfall and percolation in making soft coastlines unstable. Those candidates who did bring in some appreciation that slumping was the result of a combination of factors generally produced sound answers. A small number of candidates used diagrams to explain slumping, usually very effectively.

### **Question 1 (g)(i)**

This question presented few problems. The majority of candidates were able to identify the correct terms and complete the diagram accurately. A small number of candidates failed to attempt the question.

### **Question 1 (g)(ii)**

This question was a test of the knowledge of basic terminology associated with coastal processes. The majority of candidates were able to give the correct answer, although a significant proportion either got it wrong or simply did not attempt the question, suggesting a lack of appreciation of what is quite fundamental terminology.

### **Question 1 (g)(iii)**

The majority of candidates were able to identify the two correct answers. A small number of candidates did not attempt the question or ticked more than two boxes.

### **Question 1 (h)(i)**

The majority of candidates showed some appreciation of the question and were able to consider both physical (risk of flooding) and human (cost of damage) factors. A number of candidates produced more sophisticated ideas related to answers such as vulnerability due to rock type or topography, potential loss of life and infrastructure, and the need to protect vulnerable inland environments. It was evident that a number of candidates did not fully appreciate the idea of “protection” in this context, often drifting into ideas about nature reserves etc. A small number of candidates failed to identify the command “why”, instead focusing on “how” coastal areas are protected.

### **Question 1 (h)(ii)**

It was evident that the majority of candidates had a sound understanding of what is meant by “hard engineering”. Many candidates gave a detailed description of hard engineering methods, often linked to well documented and appropriate examples. In some cases annotated diagrams were used, at times very effectively. However, describing the methods did not fully address the question which demanded an understanding of “how” the methods actually reduce wave energy and protect areas from erosion or flooding. Those candidates that did fully address this idea generally produced excellent answers, using detailed knowledge and appropriate geographical language.

### **Question 2(a)(i) (ii)**

These questions presented few problems. The majority of candidates were able to identify the correct answers from Figure 4.

### **Question 2 (a)(iii)**

Those candidates who used Figure 4 effectively and took care when completing the graph were able to score both marks. In a small number of cases simple or careless errors were made, resulting in the loss of marks. This is a relatively simple skill at this level so there is a need for a high degree of accuracy. A number of candidates did not attempt the question.

### **Question 2 (a)(iv)**

A small proportion of candidates made the observation about Australia already having a high percentage of urban population. Some simply mentioned that Australia was a more developed country, which did not fully answer the question. Where this idea was developed it became more creditworthy.

### **Question 2 (a)(v)**

The majority of candidates were able to identify at least two reasons for rural-urban migration, with many developing each of their ideas and consequently scoring full marks. A wide range of ideas were used, including both “push” and “pull” factors. A small number of candidates simply “reversed” their ideas (“lack of jobs in rural areas”, “more jobs in urban areas”). This approach generally only identified one clear reason and was consequently self-limiting. Where a question asks for a number of points or reasons candidates should be encouraged to look for ideas which are clearly different. Where a point or reason is worth two marks, simply identifying the idea will generally score 1 mark; some development or explanation is required for the second mark.

### **Question 2 (b)(i) (ii)**

These questions presented few problems. Most candidates were able to use Figure 5 effectively to identify the correct answers.

### **Question 2 (b)(iii)**

The majority of candidates were able to use Figure 5 to identify two additional natural hazards caused by the Sichuan earthquake. A small number of candidates clearly did not fully understand the idea of “natural hazard”, mentioning human factors or failing to address the question at all.

### **Question 2 (b)(iv)**

Most candidates correctly identified an appropriate problem, but a small number failed to develop their idea.

### **Question 2 (b)(v)**

The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of the question and clearly related their responses to appropriate urban areas. Ideas included general points about prediction, preparation and planning or in some cases more detailed observations about one of these aspects of hazard management. Either of these approaches enabled candidates to reach full marks when they were clearly related to the idea of reducing the effects of a hazard. The quality of the response was effectively determined by the level of detail, expressed in “explanation” rather than description. At the lower mark levels candidates often made generic and vague observations, sometimes with the name of an example tacked on at the end of the answer. Where candidates built their answer around a specific example, the level of detail was usually greater, which gave the opportunity to access the higher mark levels.

### **Question 2 (c)(i) (ii) (iii)**

While a significant proportion 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 (“land-use” was clearly not a familiar term for a number of candidates). Consequently, a significant proportion of candidates lost what might be considered to be fairly straightforward marks. The use of Ordnance Survey map extracts is a fairly common feature of this examination paper so practice and preparation in using them are essential for all candidates.

### **Question 2 (c)(iv)**

Responses to this question were variable. In general there were three main types of approach to the question. A number of candidates had a sound appreciation of how management can reduce traffic congestion and combined this with good use of the Ordnance Survey map to show how the identified transport developments might reduce congestion in the city centre. This approach usually scored full marks. The second approach either simply described the identified transport developments with limited reference as to how they might reduce congestion in the city centre or considered how public transport and infrastructure developments might reduce congestion in general terms with no real reference to the information on the map. In most cases this approach showed some understanding but often failed to fully address the question. The final approach was where candidates had limited understanding of the question, often making isolated simple points on the first part of the question, such as “more people would use buses” with no development or explanation, and in a number of cases not attempting an answer to the second part of the question.

### **Question 2 (d)(i)**

This question presented few problems. The majority of candidates were able to use Figure 7 effectively to identify two appropriate reasons why Govan may have needed to be redeveloped. The two ideas most frequently used were “run down housing” and “derelict industrial areas”. A small number of candidates simply copied any two points from Figure 7 with no real consideration of the question.

### **Question 2(d)(ii)**

The majority of candidates were able to identify evidence of environmental problems from Figure 7. A number of candidates simply restated those problems with only marginal attempts to develop an idea about how redevelopment might help to resolve them. While this showed some awareness of the issue it did not fully answer the question. Those candidates that both identified the environmental issues and then offered clear reasoning about how the Govan Action Plan might help to resolve them generally produced excellent answers that were thoughtful and well documented. Use of Figure 7 was generally good though reference back to the Ordnance Survey map was rather patchy. A small number of candidates simply wrote about any aspect of the Redevelopment Project, suggesting that they did not really understand what was meant by “environment”.

### **Question 2 (e)**

Candidates generally found this question quite challenging. A number of candidates referred to ideas expressed in Figure 7. Where these were clearly linked to socio-economic conditions, thoughtful and clearly appropriate points were expressed. However, points were often simply copied observations with no real development or clear link to the idea of improving socio-economic conditions. Those candidates that did not refer to the ideas expressed in Figure 7 (they did not have to) or to another example generally produced rather vague and unsubstantiated answers. The responses to this question raised two main issues. Firstly, it was evident that a significant number of candidates were not familiar with the idea of “urban redevelopment” and did not fully understand the idea of “socio-economic”. Secondly, the use of an “example” was generally poor or non-existent. A significant number of candidates used “eco settlement” examples which were not really appropriate to this question.

## **Question 2 (f)**

The majority of candidates were able to offer some suggestions about the features of eco-settlements. The most popular ideas appeared to be observations about energy conservation, water harvesting and more sustainable building techniques. The examples most commonly used were BedZed and Dongtan, at times with considerable detail which showed a clear appreciation about why these examples were considered to have elements of sustainable management. A number of candidates focused on more localised examples, in some cases very effectively while in others it was not always totally clear why they might be considered eco-settlements (a lot of new developments are sold as “eco-friendly” today and this can clearly be confusing for candidates). In some cases individual buildings were considered. While this offered some insight into the idea of sustainable building it did not really fully address the idea of “eco-settlements”. A small number of candidates took a broader view by using an example to consider a wide range of points, including socio-economic and environmental observations. This approach produced some excellent responses which were well documented and showed an impressive understanding of the key idea expressed in the question.