General Certificate of Secondary Education

# Geography 4035
*Specification B*

**40352H   Hostile World**

# Report on the Examination

*2010 examination - June series*

**General Comments**

The paper proved to be an effective discriminator of geographical ability. It allowed candidates of all abilities at this tier to demonstrate positive achievement. The majority of candidates gave good responses to the range of data provided. Geographical skills such as interpreting bar graphs, line graphs, pie charts, climate graphs, maps of various scales and diagrams were good. Opportunities for extended writing were given in one or more parts of each question, and the less able candidates at this tier were able to offer a response, which demonstrated some good geographical understanding. The more able candidates offered high quality, well developed responses, demonstrating excellent understanding of geographical issues, backed up with the correct use of geographical vocabulary and good use of case study examples in some instances. They were able to apply their knowledge and understanding well in unfamiliar contexts.

There were differing numbers of candidates completing Sections A and B of the examination paper.  A vast majority of candidates opted for Section A - Living with Natural Hazards, while few chose Section B - The Challenge of Extreme Environments.

The vast majority of candidates completed the paper and there were relatively few parts of questions that were not attempted.

**Section A - Living with Natural Hazards**

Question 1 was well answered, the subject matter appearing to be the most familiar to the majority of candidates.

**Question 1**

For part (a)(i) most candidates were able to accurately complete the pie chart. However, some candidates lost a mark by not completing the key. In part (b)(i) a significant number of candidates only gained one mark for stating that earthquakes and volcanoes occurred near a plate boundary. Only a quarter of candidates were able to describe the distribution more fully and gain both marks.

Part (b)(ii) was answered well by a majority of candidates with good interpretation of the data and some well constructed responses, some of which referred to the recent Icelandic eruption to exemplify the points made. In part (b)(ii) a significant number of candidates did not follow the command to use Figure 2 and gave general effects of volcanic eruptions, or merely stated that there was an ash cloud without giving the effects of this, but a majority of candidates were able to use the resources to good effect and gain two marks. Part (b)(iii) elicited a range of responses. The less able of the candidates at this tier didn't give  more than a simple idea of plate movement and/or named the tectonic plates with poor knowledge of physical process and use of geographical terminology. However, many gained a Level 2 mark by referring to the processes taking place at a destructive plate boundary, with some referring to similar plate boundaries they had studied. A considerable number of candidates did not explain why earthquakes **and** volcanic eruptions occur in Alaska and therefore could not access a Level 3 mark. Some candidates did correctly sequence tectonic processes along with good use of geographical vocabulary to support answers with some referring to similar plate boundaries they had studied as exemplars.

Part (c) was answered well by a majority of the candidates. They were able to develop responses to give a clear explanation of actual schemes with good use of case study examples

and many candidates were able to sustain this and reach the maximum mark. There remains a misunderstanding among a significant number of candidates that earthquakes can be predicted within a very short time frame and that sufficient early warning systems can be set up to enable the evacuation of entire cities. Some candidates did not describe ways in which the damaging effects of **either** earthquakes **or** volcanic eruptions could be reduced and wrote about both, limiting the opportunity to gain a Level 2 mark.

### Question 2

Part (a) was answered well by many of the candidates with good use of the resource. Most were able to interpret a map of the storm path in part (b)(i) in order to gain one or two marks. The best candidates described changes in direction and used the key to describe changes in strength. They also described the changes between named points or used latitude and longitude. Where candidates did not score, they tended not to describe changes, but the conditions at one particular point on the map. In part (b)(ii) most candidates were able to offer one or two simple suggestions as to why people should or should not evacuate their homes; only a small amount were able to interpret the zone of uncertainty well and apply their own knowledge and understanding to this unfamiliar context and gain the maximum mark.

Part (c) was generally well answered with more than half of the candidates able to offer a valid suggestion and then develop it further to gain both marks. Where candidates did not score, they simply offered vague statements such as *it will help them to know what to do in a tropical storm*, or *it will help them to know where to go in a tropical storm.* Part (d) produced a wide range of responses. Most candidates were able to offer more than just simple reasons for their chosen viewpoint, but those who only described the data provided and/or made a simple reference to global warming or climatic fluctuations remained in Level 1. These were however, valid statements and many candidates were able to gain top Level 1 and score 4 marks. However, most of the candidates did develop these ideas further to gain a Level 2 mark through good use of the resource along with the application of their own knowledge and understanding in constructing an argument for or against the issue. Relatively few of the candidates sustained the development of their argument to gain a Level 3 mark. Where candidates did sustain development of the argument, this was often through building up a case that the number of tropical storms would not increase due to climate change, but the severity and/or range would and then backing this up with reference to actual storms that they had studied. Others referred to El Nino or La Nina events to support their argument and gave detailed effects of these.

### Question 3

An error was found to be contained in Figure 7, which made Question 3(a)(i) and (ii) unanswerable. After careful consideration, AQA determined that the most appropriate way to protect the interests of all candidates who had attempted this question would be to discount it and scale candidates' marks appropriately. Errors like this are very rare. We apologise sincerely and assure you that we have taken steps to ensure this type of error does not happen again.

Part (b)(i) was answered well by a majority of candidates with almost half scoring both marks, although where candidates only scored one mark, this tended to be due to mistakes in reading the length of wildfire season graph. Part (b)(ii) did not prove problematic for a majority of candidates, but some failed to score. This was generally due to candidates referring to one element of the graph or giving reasons why the number of wildfires may increase during the spring or summer, rather than stating the relationship between the two data sets.

In part (c) many candidates were able to give two reasons for the increasing cost of damage from wildfires, but almost half of candidates were only able to offer one valid reason and many lost marks as a result of giving vague statements such as *the population is increasing*, or *there are more buildings*, without reference to location.

### Section B - The Challenge of Extreme Environments

Candidates were most successful overall on Question 5, the subject matter appearing to be the most familiar to the majority.

### Question 4

For part (a)(i), most candidates were able to accurately complete the graph. For part (a)(ii), less than half of the candidates could not read the precipitation value from the climate graph. This basic skill is an area for development. Part (e) was not well done with nearly half of candidates failing to score any marks. The effect of latitude on temperature was explained in very simplistic terms and only some candidates could offer two explanatory points or fully develop one point. This is another area for development.

Part (b)(i) generated a range of responses. A minority of candidates seldom gave more than a list of simple problems such as *oil spills* or, *animals will be threatened* without further elaboration, but many candidates did gain a Level 2 mark by developing these answers further. These tended to focus on case study examples. Some candidates did not reach the maximum mark as they failed to describe the effects on people **and** the environment. In part (b)(ii), a majority of candidates were able to offer two valid threats to the environment of Antarctica, with some being able to develop the description of each and gain the maximum mark.

Part (c) was not always well done with a third of the candidates gaining a Level 1 mark through listing simplistic ideas without referring to examples of actual schemes. However, many candidates were able to develop responses to give a clear description of actual schemes and there was good use of case study examples. Where this was the case, candidates showed some understanding of the role of the Antarctic Treaty, fishing quotas, limiting tourist activity and the role of the ANWR, but only some of the candidates who sat Section B were able to sustain the development of points and give sufficient detail to case studies to reach Level 3.

### Question 5

Part (a) was not well answered by a majority of candidates. Often the sequence of events and the processes were confused and some candidates focused on the effect of the climate on the vegetation. Few candidates were able to explain the pattern well enough to gain three marks.

In part (b)(i) a majority of candidates gained only one or two marks as they did not follow the mark allocation and describe a sufficient number of changes to the amount of tropical rainforest. Only a small number were unable to interpret the maps and pie charts well enough to score the maximum mark. Many candidates found part (b)(ii) challenging and most scored one or two marks by referring to the risk of mudslides or landslides, relatively few could sustain their answer to score all three marks. Almost half the candidates did not score any marks as many concentrated on the effects on the tropical rainforest itself.

Part (c) was well answered with most candidates showing a good understanding of methods such as reforestation and conservation, but ecotourism and ethical shopping were less well understood.

Part (d) elicited a wide range of responses. Most candidates were able to offer more than just simple reasons for their chosen viewpoint, but those who only described the data provided and/or made a simple reference to the effects of deforestation on the tropical rainforest or the need for less developed countries to *earn money* remained in Level 1. These were however, valid statements and many candidates were able to gain top Level 1 and score 4 marks. More than half of the candidates did develop these ideas further to gain a Level 2 mark through good use of the resource along with the application of their own knowledge and understanding in constructing an argument for or against the issue. Some candidates sustained the development of their argument to gain a Level 3 mark. Where candidates did sustain development of the argument, this was often through a detailed case study example of damage to/economic exploitation of a named location in an area of tropical rainforest.

**Question 6**

In part (a) there was good use of the resources with most candidates being able to interpret the climate graphs.

Part (b)(i) was not well answered, with most candidates being unable to read the pie chart with reasonable accuracy. Most candidates were able to interpret the scatter graph in part (b)(ii). In part (b)(iii) there was good use of the resources and most candidates were able to offer developed points as to why many places in Africa have a very high risk of desertification. Almost half of the candidates who sat Section B were able to clearly develop points and reach Level 2.

Part (c) did not prove problematic for most candidates.

**Some general points for development**

The resources used in the examination papers for Unit 2 are designed to act as a stimulus for candidates to help them respond to questions. They are also provided as prompts for candidates to enable them to apply their knowledge and understanding to unfamiliar contexts and also to assess their understanding of geographical skills.

Unit 2 is one of four components upon which the overall assessment of candidates following Specification B is based. The Assessment Objectives for the course and individual units are found on page 42 of the Specification.

It is worth noting that for Unit 2, only 10 of the 50 marks available are for AO1 (recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of places environments and concepts), whereas 20 marks are for AO2 (apply knowledge and understanding in familiar and unfamiliar contexts) and 20 marks are for AO3 (select and use a variety of geographical skills, techniques and technologies to investigate, analyse and evaluate questions and issues).

For all of the GCSE Geography B papers, candidates are instructed at the beginning of each section to 'Use your case studies where appropriate.' We do not repeat this instruction on every question part where candidates *can* use their case studies. We do include the instruction 'use your own knowledge' where candidates *must* do this in order to access marks. However, candidates can introduce their own knowledge in any written response.

Centres should encourage candidates to become comfortable with using a range of resources such as maps, photographs, tables of figures, graphs, diagrams and text etc. They should encourage candidates to be able to explain patterns, trends, relationships, causes, opinions etc by applying their own knowledge and understanding to these contexts.

There is a need for accuracy when answering skills questions e.g. reading graphs and pie charts. Where appropriate, figures should be cited and units should always be given

The best answers directly address the demands of the question. A well focused, planned answer helps to avoid the inclusion of peripheral information, or giving causes when effects are required by the question. A long preamble is not necessary e.g. the causes of an earthquake do not have to be described before the candidate goes on to describe the effects, or the effects do not have to be described before the candidate goes on to explain how damage can be reduced. This leads to the excessive use of additional writing sheets. When additional answer sheets are necessary it should be clear which question part is being answered.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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