



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
January 2011**

Geography B

40352H

(Specification 4035)

Unit 2: Hostile world (Higher)

Report on the Examination

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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 even 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, in some instances, good use of case study examples. They applied their knowledge and understanding well in unfamiliar contexts.

As in June 2010, there were differing numbers of candidates completing Section A and B of the examination paper. The vast majority of candidates opted for Section A – Living with Natural Hazards, the minority chose Section B – The Challenge of Extreme Environments.

The 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

In part (a) a significant number of candidates only gained one mark for stating that earthquakes in and around Japan occurred near to the Eurasian/Pacific plate boundary. Few candidates were able to describe the distribution more fully and gain both marks. Part (b) elicited a range of responses. The majority of candidates gave a simple idea of plate movement and/or named the tectonic plates, with poor knowledge of physical process and use of geographical terminology. However over half the candidates gained a Level 2 mark, referring to the processes taking place at a destructive plate boundary, with some referring to similar plate boundaries they had studied. Relatively few candidates were able to continue the explanation of tectonic processes in order to provide the level of sequence and detail necessary to gain a Level 3 mark. This is an area for future development. Part (c)(i) was not always well done, with some misunderstanding of the term 'location'. Less than a quarter of the candidates gained both marks through the use of direction and distance. In part (c)(iii) many candidates gained the maximum mark. When marks were lost it was due to confusing primary and secondary effects, or candidates ignoring the command to use Figure 2 to answer the question.

Question 2

In part (a) the majority of candidates used the resources to good effect and gained maximum marks. Part (b) was correctly answered by most candidates. Part (c) elicited a range of responses. Those who developed responses from Figure 4 scored well but those who merely lifted information such as 'low-lying coastal plain' from the map without stating the significance of this, gained no credit. Marks were also lost when candidates described the cost of rebuilding, rather than focusing on the potential for damage. However, over half the candidates developed at least one point more fully to gain 3 or 4 marks. Part (d) posed few problems for the majority of candidates and most were able to accurately interpret the graph. Part (e) was very well answered by a majority of candidates with responses dealing with the possible effects of climate change and/or a natural cycle of changing ocean temperatures, gaining a Level 2 mark. There were many references to El Nino and La Nina events.

Question 3

Parts (a) (i), (ii) and (iii) elicited a range of responses with candidates scoring well on parts (i) and (iii). However the use of direction is a problem for some candidates, even at this tier, with over half wrongly answering the question. This is an area for future development. Part (c) was well answered by the majority of candidates although some lost marks by giving responses that contained references to the costs of housing, possessions and insurance claims, as opposed to the cost of fire fighting. Part (c) drew wide range of responses. Some candidates were able to offer only simple reasons for their

chosen viewpoint; these were often taken directly from the data provided or were lists of either natural or human causes of wildfires. There were also some references to global warming. These were valid statements and many candidates were able to gain a top Level 1 and score 3 marks. The majority 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 their own knowledge and understanding in constructing an argument for or against the issue. These tended to be clear descriptions of either natural or human causes of wildfires or a clear argument that the cause of many wildfires is a combination of both sets of factors. Relatively few of the candidates sustained the development of their argument to gain a Level 3 mark. Half the candidates sustained the development of an argument and this was often through building up a detailed case study of the natural/human causes of a specific wildfire(s), or a detailed account of the combined causes of a specific wildfire(s).

Question 4

In part (a) the majority of candidates gained both marks. Some candidates lost marks by simply restating the methods shown in the figure without suggesting how they helped to protect homes. It was gratifying to note that in part (b) relatively few candidates wrote about both hazards. In part (b) a small numbers of candidates were only able to offer vague, general responses such as 'listen to the radio' and did not elaborate on how this would help with preparations and were therefore limited to Level 1. A large majority of candidates gained a Level 2 mark through the description of specific schemes/methods and uses of case study examples, but few were able to sustain the development of the points and gain a Level 3 mark.

Section B - The Challenge of Extreme Environments

Question 5

In part (a) the majority of candidates accurately described the changes in the graph with many citing figures in order to support their description. However, a significant number at this tier did not read the graph with sufficient accuracy and this is an area for future development. In parts (b)(i), (ii) (iii) and (iv), the majority of candidates were able to respond well to the data and the questions were well answered. In part (b)(vi) over half the candidates offered at least two valid suggestions, but far fewer were able to sustain the development of the points beyond the information on the climate graph, or offer further points and gain more marks. In part (c), as with tier F, there was some confusion with the environment of Alaska and some candidates were only able to offer vague, general responses such as 'it will affect animals', or discussed possible effects on people. Almost half the candidates did gain a Level 2 mark and they tended to focus their answer on over-fishing and its effect on the food chain and the marine ecosystem.

Question 6

Part (a) did not prove problematic for the majority of candidates with many interpreting the bar graph accurately. Part (b)(i) was well answered with most candidates reading the pie chart. However, a significant number at this tier failed to read the chart with sufficient accuracy. Part (b)(ii) was well done, as the majority of candidates were able to give a number of ways in which deforestation damages the natural environment and were also able to sustain the development of these points in their explanation. Over half the candidates gained a Level 2 mark. There was some good use of case study examples. Some candidates lost marks by giving the effects of deforestation on people, or by giving solutions to the problems caused by deforestation. Part (d) was not always well answered, with some candidates failing to show a good understanding of the economic opportunities provided by use of the tropical rainforest environment. Many candidates produced lists of simple benefits such as 'sell the wood', 'provides jobs' or 'can grow crops' but nearly half of candidates gained a Level 2 mark by developing answers further. These tended to focus on case study examples or how logging raised capital for governments. Relatively few candidates gave sufficiently detailed explanations or detailed case study examples needed to gain a Level 3 mark.

Question 7

Part (a) (i) did not prove problematic for a majority of the candidates and part (a) (ii) was well done with the majority of candidates gaining the maximum mark. Part (b) produced a wide range of responses. Some candidates offered only simple reasons for their chosen viewpoint; these were often

taken directly from the data provided or were lists of either natural or human causes of desertification, there were also some references to global warming. These were valid statements and the candidates were able to gain a top Level 1 and score 3 marks. However, a significant number 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 their own knowledge and understanding in constructing an argument for or against the issue. These tended to be clear descriptions of either natural or human causes of desertification or a clear argument that the cause of much desertification is a combination of both sets of factors. The more able candidates at this tier sustained the development of their argument to gain a Level 3 mark. A small number of candidates did sustain the development of an argument and this was often through building up a detailed case study of the natural/human causes of a specific wildfire(s), or a detailed account of the combined causes of a specific wildfire(s).

Question 8

In part (a) the resource was not always well used with many candidates simply restating the information in the figure without saying how it helped to protect a cold environment. Many listed general, simplistic ideas without referring to the ANWR. However, a quarter of the candidates who sat Section B were able to suggest three valid points and reach the maximum mark. Some candidates failed to score because they described problems found in a cold environment; this was also the case in part (b). Part (b) elicited a wide range of responses. Some candidates were only able to offer some simple references to conservation, reforestation, animal husbandry, crop rotation and other schemes and gained a Level 1 mark. However, majority of the candidates did develop these ideas further to gain a Level 2 mark. This was often through the clear description of the scheme or method, or use of a case study example of a scheme in a named location in an area of tropical rainforest or on the fringe of a hot desert. Almost small number of candidates did sustain the development of the description of schemes or gave very detailed case study examples to gain a Level 3 mark. It was pleasing to note that in part (b) relatively few candidates wrote about both environments.

Some general points for development

The resources used in the January 2011 examination papers for Unit 2 act as a stimulus for candidates to help them respond to questions and to be of value for teachers in centres to help prepare candidates for future examinations. They are 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. 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.

The Assessment Objectives for Specification B are weighted so that 30% of the total marks are awarded for candidates being able to recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of places environments and concepts (AO1). 30% of the total marks are for candidates being able to apply their knowledge and understanding in familiar and unfamiliar contexts (AO2). 40% are for candidates being able to select and use a variety of geographical skills (AO3). In Unit 2, only 5% of the 50 marks available are for AO1, whereas 10% are for AO2 and 10% are for AO3. Given this weighting, only 10 marks can be allocated to test knowledge and understanding, whereas 20 marks are allocated to test the application of knowledge and understanding and 20 marks are allocated to test the understanding of geographical skills. In other Units, e.g. Unit 1, there is a much greater emphasis on the assessment of knowledge and understanding (20 marks out of the 50 marks available).

In terms of AO1, there are questions on both sections of the examination papers that directly test knowledge and understanding e.g. 4 (b) and 8 (b). These test candidates' recall without the use of a resource as a prompt. Some use of case study examples would also be a good strategy in responding to this style of question.

In terms of AO3, there is a need for accuracy when answering skills questions e.g. reading graphs and pie charts, especially on the higher tier. Where appropriate, figures should be cited and units should always be given.

In terms of AO2, case study exemplars can be introduced in order to support points made by the candidate in the application of their knowledge and understanding. An example would be question 1 (b) on Section A where candidates are given a resource showing an area that may be unfamiliar to them (Japan) and are asked to explain why earthquakes occur in this area. The resource acts as a prompt by showing plate boundaries etc and candidates have to then apply their knowledge and understanding of tectonic processes to this area. There is a need for detailed knowledge of physical process in order to access Level 3. In Section B, there is a need for detailed knowledge of the reasons for the climate of cold environments and hot desert environments as an aid to the understanding some of the human issues found in these areas.

Some use of case study examples would also be a good strategy in responding to the Decision Making question (questions 3 (c) and 7 (b)). The instruction 'Use your case studies to support your answers where appropriate' appears at the beginning of each section of the examination paper.

Candidates should use an answer plan and try to develop points by giving as much depth as possible on one point before moving on to the next point.

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.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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