



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Geography B

40352F

(Specification 4035)

Unit 2: Hostile world (Foundation)

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

The paper proved to be a very 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 line graphs, pie charts, climate graphs, maps of various scales, photographs, sketches and diagrams were good. Opportunities for extended writing were given in one or more parts of each question, and even the least able candidates were able to offer a response which demonstrated some geographical understanding. The more able candidates were able to offer more developed responses, demonstrating good understanding of geographical issues, backed up with some correct use of geographical vocabulary and some use of case study examples. They were able to apply their knowledge and understanding in unfamiliar contexts.

As in the two previous series, there was an imbalance between the 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, whilst very few chose Section B - The Challenge of Extreme Environments.

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

Section A - Living with Natural Hazards

Question 1

Part (a) (i) did not prove problematic for the large majority of the candidates, most of whom were able to interpret the maps. Part (a) (ii) was not always well done; use of direction is a problem for some candidates at this tier. This is an area for future development. Part (a) (iii) was correctly answered by most candidates. Part (b) elicited a range of responses. Many candidates seldom gave 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, 31% of candidates gained a Level 2 mark. These candidates referred to the processes taking place at destructive, constructive or conservative plate boundaries, with some referring to similar plate boundaries they had studied. There remain a significant number of candidates who did not focus on the demands of the question and described the effects of earthquakes or mitigation strategies. Some candidates explained the causes of wildfires or tropical storms. Underlining commands and key terms in the question can help candidates to give a focused response. It was pleasing to note that relatively few candidates wrote about both earthquakes **and** volcanic eruptions.

Question 2

In part (a) (i) most candidates correctly named the state in which Mount St. Helens was located, but many were not able to accurately use distance and direction. This is an area for future development. Part (a) (ii) was well done by the majority of candidates, with most candidates able to interpret information from Figure 2. A significant number of candidates gave more than the two responses asked for in the question, or gave responses not from Figure 2, and a small number gave the effects of the eruption. In part (b), many candidate listed advantages from the resource and/or from their own knowledge without describing these further. As a result, these candidates stayed in Level 1. Only 15% of candidates developed the points and gained a level 2 mark. Some candidates misunderstood the question and gave the advantages that the area offered for tourists and not local people.

Question 3

15% of the candidature failed to attempt Part (a) (i). It is clear that many did not understand the instruction to "Complete Figure 3", and this is an area for future development. Of those candidates who did attempt the question, most were able to complete the climate graph. However, some candidates reversed rainfall and temperature, and some inaccuracies were as a result of candidates not using a ruler and/or a sharp pencil to complete the rainfall bar. Part (a) (ii) was not always well answered with many candidates gaining only one or two marks out of the four available. Errors arose

as a result of candidates not completing Figure 3, and few understood the term 'range of temperature'. Part (b) was well answered. Those candidates who developed responses from Figure 3 scored well. The less able at this tier offered simple undeveloped lists of suggestions, the more able developed at least one response to clearly show the link between climate and wildfire development and 43% of candidates scored three or four marks. Some candidates gave very general suggestions such '*it is quite warm*' and did not get credited with a mark, others did not score as they gave human causes of wildfires such as '*campfires cause wildfires*' without linking this to the climate. Part (c) elicited a range of responses. The majority of candidates offered limited elaboration of the methods shown in Figure 4, or stated other methods by which damage from wildfires could be limited and gained Level 1 marks. Those who merely lifted information such as '*make a wildfire emergency plan*' from Figure 4 failed to gain any credit. A quarter of the candidature did use case study exemplars and/or gave a full explanation of how various methods worked, along with use of technical terms such as 'back burning' and gained a Level 2 mark.

Question 4

Part (a) (i) did not prove problematic for a large majority of the candidates with most being able to interpret the graph. Part (a) (ii) was not always well done however. Many candidates gained one mark for recognising that the number of tropical storm days fluctuated, but only 36% gave evidence for this to gain both marks. Some candidates gave general statements such as 'the number of tropical storms has increased' without reference to any pattern and scored no marks. Others failed to score as they gave reasons for an increase in tropical storm days. Part (a) (iii) did not prove problematic for a large majority of the candidates with most being able to interpret the graph. In part (b) (i) a majority of the candidates were able to correctly label Figure 7. However, a significant number of candidates labelled the left hand box as 'Typhoon Ketsana reaches the coast'. Part (b) (ii) was not always well done. Over half of the candidates gained only one or two marks for stating simple effects. Many candidates listed numerous effects when the question clearly asked for two; relatively few were able to describe an effect more fully and gain three or four marks. A significant number of candidates failed to score as they either described the path of the tropical storm or its life-cycle. Others failed to score as they described the weather a tropical storm may bring, when the question clearly states that the effects of a tropical storm are required. Part (c) elicited a range of responses. Most candidates chose to agree with the statement and gave only simple reasons for their chosen viewpoint; these were often taken directly from the data provided or were lists of methods of management used in either developed or less developed countries. These were valid statements, and many were able to gain a top Level 1 and score 4 marks. Only 12% of the candidates did develop 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. These tended to be clear descriptions of methods of management or a clear argument that even though the statement was true, there is always something that a less developed country can do to protect itself. There was far less evidence of the use of case study exemplars than on the H tier, but some candidates did refer to Hurricane Katrina and to schemes in Bangladesh.

Section B - The Challenge of Extreme Environments

Question 5

Part (a) (i) was well done by the majority of candidates, with most candidates able to interpret information from Figure 9. Part (a) (ii) was not always well answered. It is clear that many candidates did not understand the term 'higher latitudes' and most candidates scored two marks. Part (a) (iii) did not prove problematic for the large majority of the candidates. In part (b), the majority of candidates opted to explain the formation of the hot desert environment. For many candidates, their knowledge and understanding of climatic reasons for the formation of extreme environments was often limited to basic statements with little real explanation. Many candidates simply described the climatic conditions. There were many responses that focused on non-climatic factors, and this is an area for future development. Very few candidates were able to develop responses and gain a Level 2 mark.

Question 6

Part (a) (i) was well done by the majority of candidates, with most candidates able to interpret information from the maps. In part (a) (ii) many candidates could only come up with global warming as

a reason for sea ice changes, and over half only scored one mark. In part (b), many candidates were only able to offer vague, general responses such as 'it will affect animals', but 32% were able to develop the points made and gain a Level 2 mark. There were some good responses that focused on threats to ecosystems, but limited use of case study exemplars. A number of candidates failed to score as they described the causes of climate change and not the problems caused.

Question 7

Parts (a) (i) and (ii) did not prove problematic for a large majority of the candidates with most being able to interpret the pie chart. In part (a) (iii) a majority of candidates were able to describe the differences between Africa and South America and gain both marks, but some lost a mark or failed to score as they merely described one continent or focused on Asia. In part (b) (i), almost 70% of candidates were able to correctly label both boxes on the sketch. Part (b) (ii) was not well answered, with many candidates failing to score as they restated, without elaboration, the information provided in Figure 12. Over 40% of candidates gave one or two simple causes of desertification, but only the most able at this tier were able to sustain the development of these points and gain higher marks. Part (c) elicited a range of responses, with 20% of the candidates developing answers well to gain a Level 2 mark. Those candidates who offered limited elaboration of the methods shown in Figure 4, or stated other methods by which damage from wildfires could be limited, gained Level 1 marks. Those who merely lifted information such as '*build earth bunds*' from Figure 13, failed to gain any credit. Many candidates did not focus on the management of desertification and gave general advantages of the methods such as '*animals can drink the water in the dam*' or '*trees produce oxygen*'.

Question 8

13% of the candidature failed to attempt Part (a) (i). It is clear that many did not understand the instruction to "Complete Figure 14" and this is an area for future development. Of those candidates who did attempt the question, most were able to accurately complete the climate graph. However, some candidates reversed rainfall and temperature, and some inaccuracies were as a result of candidates not using a ruler and/or a sharp pencil to complete the rainfall bar. Part (a) (ii) was not always well answered with many candidates gaining only two or three marks out of the four available. Errors arose as a result of candidates not completing Figure 14 and few understood the term 'range of temperature'. Many candidates found part (b) challenging and a majority could not identify one factor affecting vegetation. Even with Figure 15 as a prompt, fewer than 50% of candidates gave one or two simple ways that climate affects vegetation. Only a relatively small number of the more able at this tier were able to sustain the development of these points and gain higher marks. Part (c) also elicited a wide range of responses, but was generally well done. Most candidates chose to agree with the statement. Some candidates gave simple reasons for their chosen viewpoint; these were often taken directly from the data provided or were lists of problems caused by deforestation or low levels of economic development. These were valid statements and many were able to gain a top Level 1 and score 4 marks. However, over 50% of the candidates did develop 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. These tended to be clear descriptions of problems caused by deforestation or low levels of economic development with occasional exemplars, with some candidates contextualising their responses with initiatives in the rainforests of Borneo.

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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