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Examiners' Report

June 2011

GCSE Geography 5GA2F 01

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Introduction

This the Natural Environment unit requires the candidates to answer a question on a physical geography topic (Coastal, River, Glacial or Tectonic landscapes) in section A and an applied topic (Wasteful or Watery World) in section B.

The foundation tier was once again well received and there was an indication that centres had taken advice from previous sessions. The Coastal and Tectonic landscape questions proved to be most popular in section A while the Wasteful world topic was marginally more popular in section B. It is still disappointing to see so few centres attempting the Glacial landscapes topic.

Performance by the candidates was, on the whole, better in section B than it was in section A. There was evidence that some candidates would have been more suited to taking the higher tier rather than the foundation. Below are a list of general areas for improvement across the paper:

- i) On landform questions candidates should attempt to include a full sequence of the formation. Candidates could learn the formation in a series of stages to help achieve this.
- ii) On questions requiring description from a resource, candidates should be careful not to explain.
- iii) When drawing pie charts or a graph, please use a ruler and be as precise as possible.
- iv) On case study questions try to include specific information or fact to allow you to reach full marks.

On an administrative note if candidates make a mistake on the paper, can they clearly signal this to the examiners so that they know you have provided an alternative answer elsewhere on the paper. An asterisk is not always sufficient.

Question 1 (a) (iii)

In this multiple choice word fill most candidates scored well. The main mistakes came in the last two spaces as candidates confused Scotland and Anglesey.

Question 1 (a) (iv)

Many candidates understood a range of wave characteristics, however, were not so good at making clear the differences. Often they would outline one set and then outline the other without even implicit recognition of the differences. Most candidates knowledge extended to swash and backwash and wave size or power.

(iv) Outline the differences between constructive and destructive waves. (3)

Constructive waves have a stronger swash than ~~sea~~ backwash this means it pushes beach material up the beach ~~and~~ however destructive waves have a weak swash and strong backwash so it pulls material off the beach into the sea.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a good example of a candidate who knows a couple of wave characteristics of each wave type, but uses the word 'however' to tie them together.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Practise comparing wave characteristics/coastal processes in class to show the similarities and differences.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

The concept of slumping proved to be a little too much for some foundation candidates, and there were frequent references to erosion. Stating the impact on the coast was even more challenging. Some by chance got the correct answer, with references to loss of land, though many found this a struggle with answers such as 'makes the area look nice'. Learning of terminology here would help.

(ii) State **one** impact of slumping on the coast.

(1)

houses are getting closer to the cliff
end and some are taken into the sea



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Examiner Comments

Here is a good example of a candidate who may not have been sure of the answer but applied common sense and gained credit.



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Examiner Tip


Learn the terminology of the weathering, erosional and mass movement processes.


Question 1 (c) (ii)

One of the toughest processes to understand. Spit formation was often confused with coastal erosion and many candidates thought it was associated with headland and bay formation. For those on the right track some interesting diagrams of spits perpendicular to the coast ensued. Most candidates who gained credit could associate spits with longshore drift, and some with deposition. Few found this easy to get full marks as they found the temporal aspect difficult to quantify. Use of labelled diagrams often added to answers and would be a suggestion for the future.

(ii) Describe the formation of a spit.
Use a diagram in your answer. (4)

(1) 

(2) 

(3) 



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is an example of a candidate who clearly understands the process and the sequence. To gain full marks candidates needed a full sequence, from beginning to the end of the formation. The diagram serves as a good addition to the candidate's answer.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Use diagrams which show the landform formation in stages. This way the examiner can see that you understand how a landform develops over time.

Question 1 (d) (ii)

Although many candidates could tell what hard engineering was, not all focused on their advantages; in fact some focused on the disadvantages. Good answers gave reference to durability, low maintenance costs or protection against erosion. Some simply stated what a sea wall or a groyne was.

(ii) Describe the advantages of hard engineering.

(3)

Hard engineering is more effective than soft because it protects the coast line better. Rock groynes stop long shore drift and keep the beaches existing.



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Examiner Comments

Here the candidate recognises that hard engineering works better than soft, that it protects against erosion and that it can stop longshore drift, thereby scoring full marks. A description was required therefore this level of detail was sufficient for full marks. However, the answer is specific and focused.

Question 1 (d) (iii)

Many candidates confused the question requirements and subsequently wrote about coastal erosion therefore limiting marks. Centres need to provide students with case studies on both erosion and methods to reduce coastal flooding. Some good answers focused on the work of the Met Office or even wrote about the Thames Barrier, the Netherlands or Bangladesh. Over-reliance on the course texts made it difficult for some candidates.

(iii) Outline how the effects of coastal flooding can be reduced.

Use examples in your answer.

(4)

~~one example of a~~
Coastal flooding can be reduced by putting in sea walls and sea defences and not building homes by the sea if possible and having flood plan in place. Also you could have flood wardens to listen to the weather and look out for flooding.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Here the candidate has three separate ideas relevant to coastal flooding, however has no specific information and is therefore held at three marks.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Ensure you use specific facts or detail in your answer to enable you to reach full marks.

Question 2 (a) (iii)

Many candidates were able to access full marks on this Multiple Choice word fill question and understood how a waterfall is affected by erosion.

Question 2 (a) (iv)

This question presented a challenge to some foundation candidates as they did not understand the terms upper stage and lower stage. Subsequently many answers focused on the differences between parts of a waterfall or some even gave a description of waterfall formation. For those that did understand similar mistakes were made to the equivalent coastal question which was little comparison was made. Many candidates just listed off features of the upper course and then features of the lower course of the river. References to landforms and process were allowed as this question referred to characteristic features, not just characteristics.

(iv) Outline the differences between the upper stage and the lower stage of a river valley. (3)

upper stage
upper

- V-shape valley
- Steep
- less chance of flooding

lower stage

- lower
- less steep
- more chance of flooding



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Examiner Comments

This was a typical example of an answer where the candidate has the correct idea but lists an answer. Lists were held at max two. However even so, the candidate makes no attempt to compare the features.



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Examiner Tip

Practise comparisons using words such as 'whereas' or 'however'.

Question 2 (b) (ii)

Many struggled with the concept of 'impact on the landscape', though some did get credit by chance. The idea of land loss was common answer but so were many answers that lacked relevance.

(ii) State **one** impact of mass movement on river landscapes.

(1)

Causes embankments to collapse.



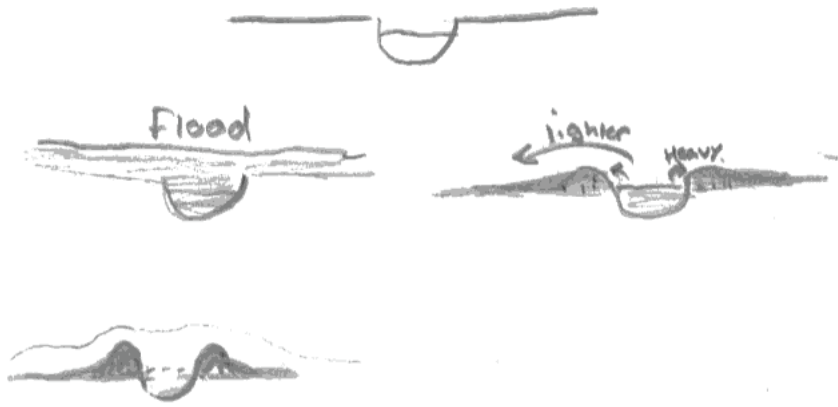
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Examiner Comments

This is a little generalised but gets there for one mark.

Question 2 (c) (ii)

Most candidates had an idea of what levees were, though few were able to give a full description to gain maximum credit. Many candidates got as far as linking their formation to floods and deposition, while some confused them with river cliffs. Some candidates referred to the artificial levees, however, these were not credited. Use of diagrams in stages could have helped a candidate show sequence over time.

(ii) Describe the formation of levees.
Use a diagram in your answer. (4)



levees. are formed when a river floods. This happens when mineral deposit at the sides of the embankments when the heavy rocks are deposited first and the lighter, finer minerals are deposited last and ~~the~~ further away from the river.



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Examiner Comments

This was an interesting answer which was greatly helped by the diagrams which show a clear sequence and a build up of material over time. Additionally the candidate was able to refer to the concept of sequential deposition and therefore was able to secure full marks.



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Examiner Tip

Set your diagrams out in stages, to show the various stages of the landform formation.

Question 2 (d) (ii)

Most candidates were able to recognise features from the photograph, and made excellent use of the resource. Some lower scoring candidates often dreamt up effects that were clearly unrecognisable from the photograph. Candidates need to ensure that the effect they are describing is feasible from the resource provided.

(ii) Describe the effects of the flooding shown in Figure 2b on the people who lived there.

(3)

The effects of flooding on the people who lived there are that nobody can get anywhere for the water, which the level comes halfway up a house. Also peoples belongings will be destroyed by the water, some even swept away. As well as this, things such as cars or trains will be effected, and alot of damage will be done.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A good answer that has three clear points; access issues, damage to property/ possessions and damage to vehicles, therefore securing full marks.



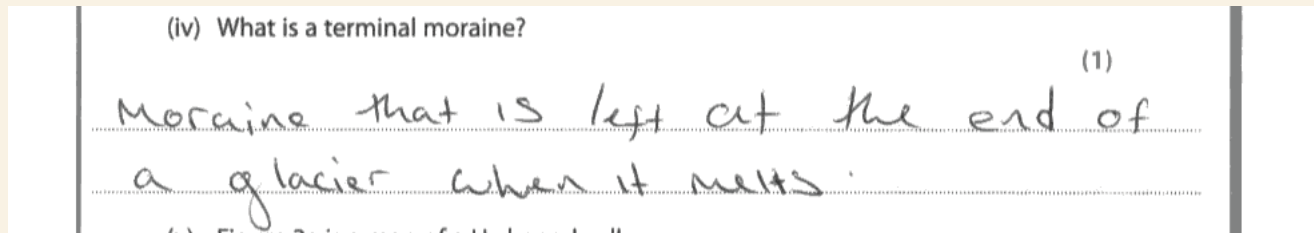
ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

State what you can see in the photograph/ diagram when asked to use a resource.

Question 2 (d) (iii)

Most candidates were able to offer reasons for how river flooding can be reduced. Many gained three marks but were limited by their inability to use specific points from case studies. The river Nene was a popular example which enable full marks. A large focus here was on defenses, however, it was pleasing to see references to land-use planning and forecasting.

Question 3 (a) (iv)



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Examiner Comments

This answer was given one mark, and was one of the better ones. Any reference to material left at the end of the glacier was credited, even if the phrasing was ambiguous.



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Examiner Tip

Learn the terminology associated with processes and landforms.

Question 3 (a) (v)

This question provided a range of answers as candidates found it different to find an answer beyond 'U-shaped'. Good answers referred to steep sided walls, hanging valleys, flat bottomed valleys or misfit streams. Some were able to give this information in a diagram, even though that was not asked for. Overall this question scored well.

(v) Figure 3a is a map of a U-shaped valley.

Describe the features of a U-shaped valley.

(3)

It is U-shaped, before it was a V-shaped valley, they have a curved bottom, steep sides.



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Examiner Comments

This was a typical answer in reference to curved bottoms and steep sides. Many candidates struggled to get beyond this.



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Examiner Tip

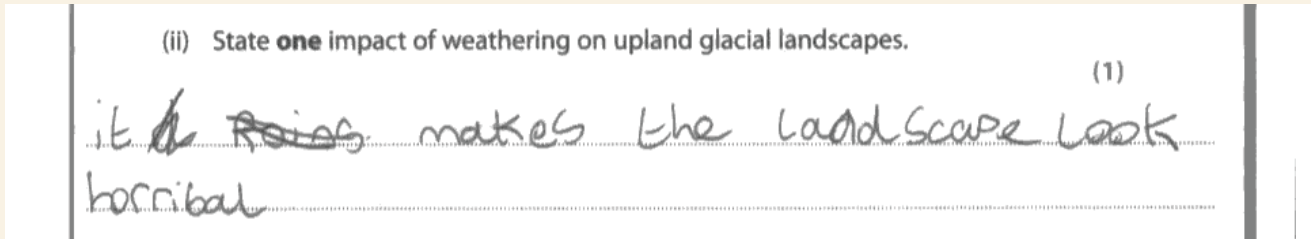
Use an annotated diagram to help with your answer, this will help you visualise the features.

Question 3 (a) (vi)

This Multiple Choice word fill presented a few difficulties, mainly as candidates did not have sufficient understanding of the terms lodgement and ablation. Most candidates gained some credit, but few gained full marks.

Question 3 (b) (ii)

The impact of weather on glacial landscapes proved to tricky for some foundation tier candidates. Some were able to recognise the demands of the question, and give answers such as moraine or scree, others simply struggled to understand the meaning.



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Examiner Tip

This a typical example of a candidate who stuggled to understand the meaning of the question.

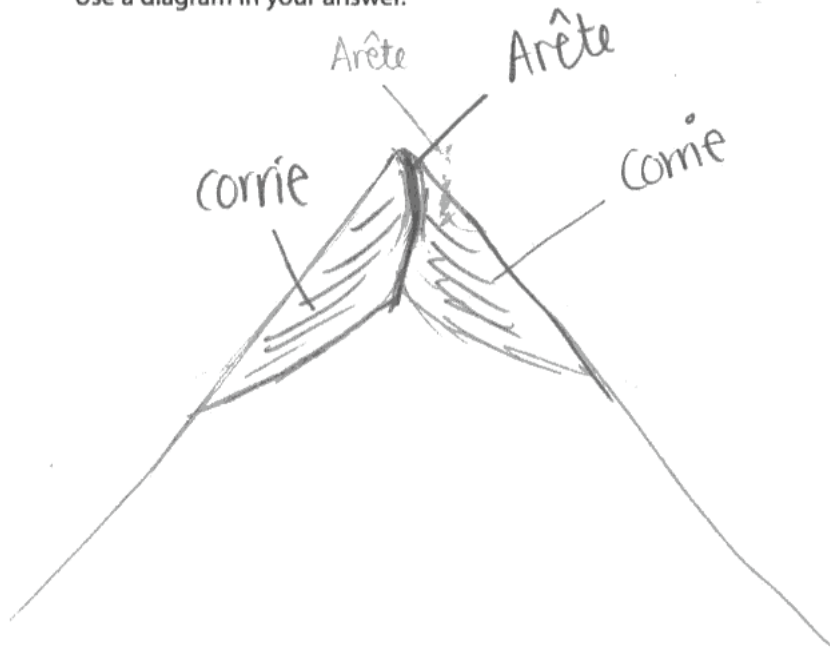
Question 3 (c) (ii)

Arête are a tricky landform to understand at both higher and foundation tier. Many simply described what they look like. Few were able to offer more than a 'ridge between two corries'. Diagrams emphasised the confusion and were often irrelevant. This was a shame, as the intention was to provide a common glacial landform. Candidates should attempt to learn arête as a development of corries.

(ii) Describe the formation of an arête.

Use a diagram in your answer.

(4)



An arête is formed when two corries are back to back and these two corries form a sharp ridge which is called an arête. The hollower the two corries are the sharper the arête is going to be. The corries become hollower by plucking and abrasion which can make the corrie larger and the arête sharper.



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Examiner Comments

This was a good answer where the candidate has most of the sequence and some process. A full sequence is required for full marks.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Use a series of diagrams in stages to show the development of the landform over time.

Question 3 (d) (i)

Most candidates were able to gain some credit and recognise that sound from the instruments or vibrations were the contributing factor to an avalanche. Candidates generally showed a clear focus on the resource.

Question 3 (d) (ii)

Many students were able to offer ways to reduce an avalanche, but were limited at 3 marks for not including specific information or case detail. There was an over-reliance on the course texts for this question which limited the candidates as they do not provide specific facts on this question. This highlights that centres should not wholly rely on the course texts for their information.

(ii) Outline how the effects of avalanches can be reduced.

Use examples in your answer.

Putting SNOW FENCES to flap the layers⁽⁴⁾ of
the ~~avalanche~~ snow to stop a layer collapsing
also build big earth mounds to divert an
avalanche and lastly a big enclosed avalanche
proof building with no windows and a shaped
Roof.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This was a typical answer where a candidate provided a series of methods to minimise the effects of avalanches but failed to give any specific information and was therefore held at 3 marks.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Use specific information in your case study answers to enable you to access full marks.

Question 4 (a) (ii)

The vast majority of candidates were able to identify that the plates were moving apart, though few gave any more information than this. On description questions, candidates should try to identify the trend, then use data - it was surprising that so few managed this. Many instead proceeded to give good explanations of the plate boundary, but this was not credit worthy.

(ii) Describe the movements shown along this plate boundary.

(3)

The movement along the Mid Atlantic plate boundary at point v is diverging 23mm per year, at point w 25mm per year, point x 26mm per year, at point y 38mm per year & all four points are all diverging from each other along this constructive plate boundary.



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Examiner Comments

This is an example of a good answer which shows the variations in the plate movements along the boundary and clearly uses evidence, as well as noting that the plates diverge.



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Examiner Tip

Always use data or evidence from the map in support of descriptions.

Question 4 (a) (iv)

Many candidates were able to recognise correct features for convergent plate boundaries, though many were confused or lacked understanding of conservative boundaries. Most candidates gave answers which referenced the plate movements or one of the landforms found e.g. trench, at the plate boundary.

(iv) State **two** features found at a convergent plate boundary and **two** features found at a conservative plate boundary. (4)

Convergent plate boundary features

- 1 plates move towards each other
- 2 earthquake and volcanoes both happen here

Conservative plate boundary features

- 1 plates move along side each other
- 2 only earthquake happen occur here



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Examiner Comments

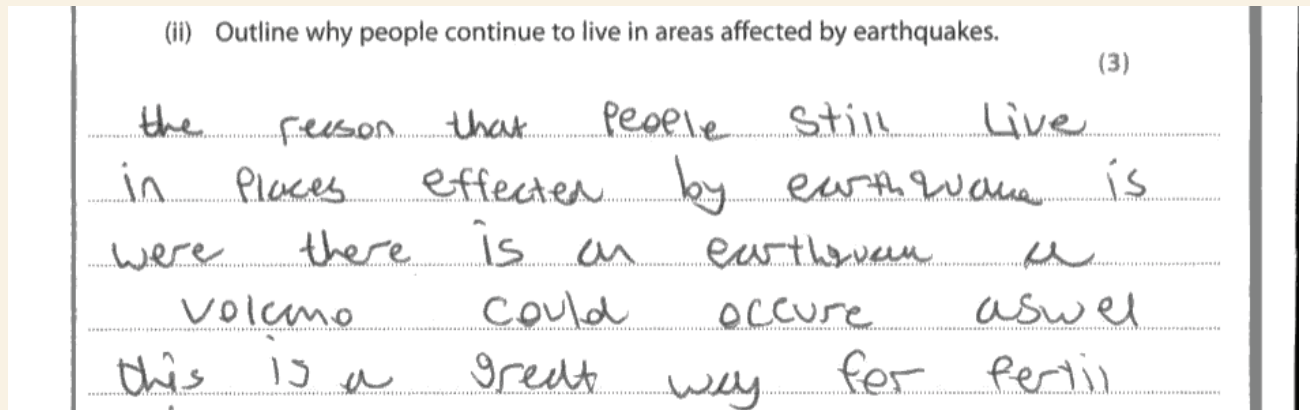
This was a good answer with clear understanding of the differences between each plate type. This scored full marks.

Question 4 (a) (v)

This Multiple Choice word fill question proved the most challenging of all of the section A word fill questions. Although many understood that the plate moved apart, and that magma rose, few grasped the idea of the plate doming and cracking before magma was released onto the surface, hence many only scored 3 marks.

Question 4 (b) (ii)

This question posed few problems and many were able to score full marks. Though many answers were a little simplistic such as 'too poor to move' or 'didn't want to leave family and friends'. Some candidates confused their answers with those relevant to volcanic eruptions such as fertile soil or mineral rich rocks. Candidates need to be able to clearly differentiate these reasons.



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Examiner Comments

This was an answer typical of those which confused the reasons for living in an earthquake zone with those for living near volcanic eruptions. This obviously limited scoring.



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Examiner Tip

Know the differences between reasons for living in earthquake zones and reasons for choosing to live near volcanic eruptions.

Question 4 (c) (ii)

Most candidates answered this question well and provided answers such as building design (some with elaboration) or practising drills, as in Japan, and were therefore able to access full marks. However, some candidates were under the impression that earthquakes could be predicted reliably and therefore everyone could be evacuated!

(ii) State how planning before the event can reduce the effects of an earthquake.

(2)

It can reduce the
damage done by earthquakes
by building earthquake proof
buildings



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Examiner Comments

This candidate offers one valid reason therefore scores one mark. They could have improved this by developing the point on earthquake proof buildings by giving an example e.g. cross bracing.

Question 4 (c) (iii)

Candidates seemed happy with this question and many were able to gain three or four marks. Good answers often referenced an example and the commonly used ones were Izmit and Haiti earthquakes or Icelandic or Montserrat volcanic eruptions. The main problem was for candidates who gave detail on both volcanic eruptions and earthquakes as this did not meet the needs of the question. In future candidates should also try to get away from starting with a half page introduction on the detailed of the event and just cut to the main effects, thereby maximising use of space.

(iii) Outline the effects of a volcanic eruption or an earthquake.

(4)

Earthquakes can cause a lot of devastation. For example, the Izmit Earthquake. This earthquake happened on the Anatolian Faultline. There were around 17 000 deaths and over half a million more people injured. Around ~~200~~ 5000 buildings were damaged or had collapsed. The earthquake also caused an oil refinery to explode, releasing harmful gases into the atmosphere. The Izmit had a magnitude of 7.4 on the richter scale and resulted in a Tsunami

(Total for Question 4 = 25 marks)



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This was an excellent answer which included a series of specific facts and had a range of effects. This was well outlined.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Try to include specific facts or examples in your case study answers to give your answer purpose and focus.

Question 5 (a) (i)

Pie chart production was not a forte of some candidates, especially as they decided to do it freehand. Many were able to correctly label their diagrams and most got the correct position for the lines. However some felt that precision was not important which let them down therefore many scored one mark.

5 (a) Look at Figure 5a.

It is a pie chart showing types of waste in Surrey.

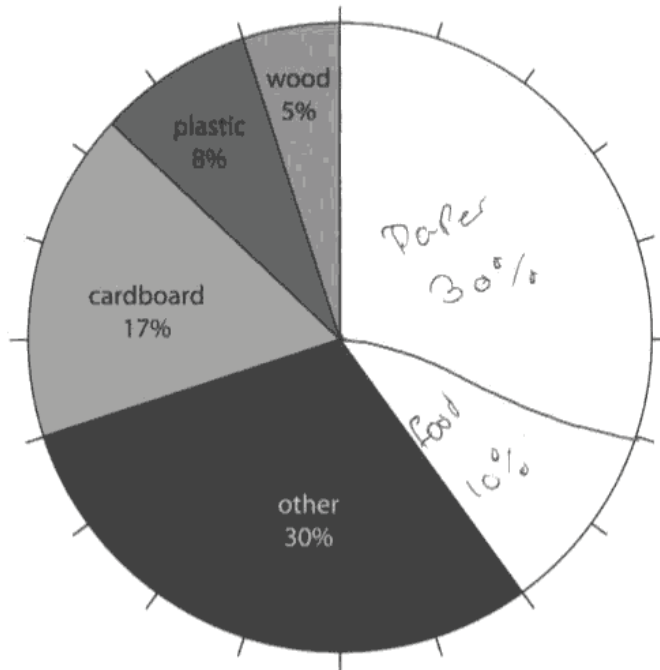


Figure 5a

(i) Complete the pie chart.

Use the data in the table below.

(2)

Type of waste	Percentage (%)
Food	10
Paper	30



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Examiner Comments

This is a good example of the line being drawn in the correct place but without a ruler. It was a good attempt at getting it straight but it did not quite pay off.



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Examiner Tip

Be as precise as possible and use a ruler.

Question 5 (a) (ii)

This Multiple Choice box fill question presented little difficulty for candidates, who mostly scored 4 or 5 marks.

Question 5 (a) (iii)

There were a mix of answers to HIC domestic waste disposal. Some simply referred to bin collections on a very localised or individual scale, while the majority elaborated on recycling, landfill and incineration as expected. Some used an example in their answer, most commonly Germany, which gave the answer clear focus.

(iii) Outline how HICs dispose of domestic waste. (3)

HICs dispose of domestic waste by landfill, incineration and recycling. ^{are the main} ~~but the ma~~ ones



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate listed their answers therefore was limited to 2 marks. As the question required an outline candidates who listed responses were limited at 2.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Understand the difference between outline and list. When referring to waste disposal an example will help give your answer some focus.

Question 5 (c) (iii)

Many candidates were able to identify the disadvantages of renewable energy. There was some confusion with non-renewables which limited marks, however this was not common. If candidates associated their disadvantages with specific types of renewable energy their answers tended to have more weight, and if they can also avoid generalisations such as 'cheap' then they stand more chance of gaining credit.

(ii) Describe the distribution of nuclear power stations in Great Britain.

Use evidence from Figure 5b in your answer.

(3)

There are lots of nuclear power station
Spread around in Great Britain and
most of these produce 1000-1250 MW
of power and only 3 produce just
below 500 MW of power



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Examiner Comments

This answer has specific reference to the distribution and uses map evidence well to gain marks. Many candidates secured marks by counting numbers of types of power stations around different parts of the country. Some candidates however did not recognise Anglesey as part of Wales.



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Examiner Tip

When describing distribution, look for the general trend, any anomalies, use of data, and differences in different parts of the map. Remember also not to explain.

Question 5 (d) (ii)

Question 5dii was a 6 mark levels based question which required some explanation to get into Level 3 marks, thereby drawing parity with Level 2 marks on the higher paper. This question gave the candidates freedom to comment on reducing energy wastage at any scale in the UK but the majority chose to focus on local or domestic methods. Greater focus on national or regional scale measures by centres would make for more balanced answers. Many answers were generic, relating to switching off lights or installing insulation, but very few were specifically focused on the UK. Equally few candidates gave specific facts or indeed explanation to allow them to access Level 3 marks. Therefore these are two areas of focus for centres.

*(ii) Explain how the UK can reduce its energy wastage.

(6)

Companies such as the Live Simply Campaign are trying to encourage schools to think more about energy wastage.

Posters were put up around schools in order to encourage students and teachers to turn off lights.

Places such as hotels are now only washing robes and towels when the staff are asked.

This is to save water and energy from washing machines.



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Examiner Comments

This is a descriptive answer, specifically focused on energy wastage, which therefore accesses Level 2 marks. Named schemes need to be backed up with detail which makes it clear that the candidate understands the scheme.



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Examiner Tip

Ensure that you try to include both explanation and specific facts in the 6 mark questions to enable you to access Level 3 marks.

Question 6 (a) (i)

Pie chart production was not a forte of some candidates, especially as they decided to do it freehand. Many were able to correctly label their diagrams and most got the correct position for the lines. However some felt that precision was not important which let them down therefore many scored one mark.

6 (a) Look at Figure 6a.

It is a pie chart of domestic water usage in Canada, a High Income Country (HIC).

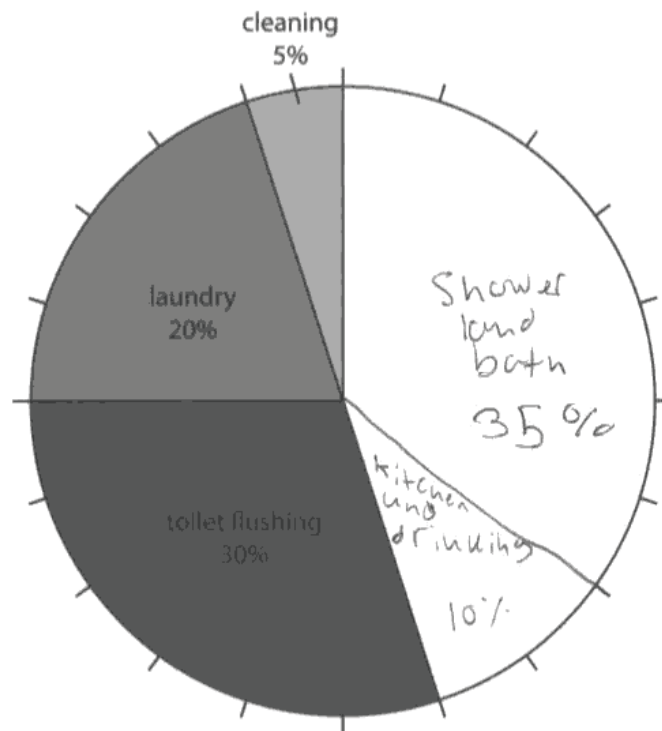


Figure 6a

(i) Complete the pie chart.

Use the data in the table below.

(2)

Water usage	Percentage (%)
Kitchen and drinking	10
Shower and bath	35



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Examiner Comments

Here is a candidate that has drawn their line in the correct place but failed to accurately draw it in. Therefore they received only 1 mark.



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Examiner Tip

Ensure that you use rulers and are as precise as possible when attempting graphical questions.

Question 6 (a) (ii)

Most candidates were able to score full marks on this Multiple choice box fill question on the differences in water usage between LICs and HICs.

Question 6 (b) (ii)

Describing distribution proved to be tricky for some of the candidates on this question. Some candidates tried to give reasons for water supply problems and then probably wondered why they were writing the same answer for the following question. Those that were focused found describing the description as relatively straight forward. Good answers recognised that there are fewer water supply problems further north with the exception of the south west.

Question 6 (b) (iii)

Some candidates realised that they had already answered this question in the previous answer and subsequently either ran out of ideas or rewrote the same answer again. Understanding the difference between describing and suggesting reasons for may help alleviate this. Equally the question asked the candidates to focus on why some areas have serious water supply problems and candidates then wrote about the low supply problems in the north. For those who got the correct focus the main answers reflected on the population rainfall imbalance. Reference to seasonal variability in this case was not credited.

(iii) Suggest reasons why some regions have serious water supply problems.

(3)

Some may have serious water supply problems because of a population, Rain imbalance in the south east. There is a particularly high population level with a low rainfall, ~~and~~ with less rain and more people consuming water this leaves a deficit of water. Leakage of pipes in London that are over 100 years old, variability of Rainfall.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate scored full marks for recognising the population and rainfall imbalance in the south east, but then adding information about the leaky pipe situation. This was one good way of achieving maximum marks.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Ensure that your answer has the correct focus. No two answers on the paper should ask for the same content.

Question 6 (c) (iii)

For those who read the words 'industry in HICs' this was well answered. Many candidates who did not focus their answers on domestic water management. Good answers related to recycling or indeed the Walkers Crisps factory as an example and the measures taken there. Some candidates limited themselves by stating how water is used rather than how it is managed.

(iii) State **two** ways water is managed by industry in HICs. (2)

1. Water is managed by having a saving meter in factories.
2. Also you can have the water recycled and cleaned then stored for factories.



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Examiner Comments

This was a simple but effective answer which focused on two relevant methods of water management in industry, thereby achieving full marks.

Question 6 (d) (ii)

Question 6dii was a 6 mark levels based question which required some explanation to get into Level 3 marks, thereby drawing parity with Level 2 marks on the higher paper. This question required explanation of a water management scheme, however many candidates chose inappropriate examples. As questions pertaining to conflict, appropriate technology and industrial water management have their own place on the specification they were only accepted up to Level 1. Any reference to larger scale schemes was accepted but to get beyond level 1 the focus had to be reasons for the scheme. The most popular answers referred to the Three Gorges Dam or Kielder water, yet even so many gave the impacts of the scheme not the reasons for it. Good answers were often related to Three Gorges as this case study had clear reasons.

*(ii) Choose an example of a water management scheme you have studied.

Explain the reasons for the scheme.

(6)

Chosen water management scheme: three gorges

The three gorges is a dam in china it was made to make clean hydroelectric power, to improve transportation on the river yangtze and to prevent flooding, it has the capacity to hold 22.15 million m³ of water making it able to withhold all major floods in the past 100 years, also attract lots of tourist in the last year they had 800,000 tourist visit making roughly ~~the~~ U.S \$16,000,000. but there are some disadvantages for example 1.4 million people had to move homes because the water was expected to rise another 175m, also it help contribute to the extinction of the yangtze river dolphin. although it has some negative effects over all I think the three gorges dam is a great plan because not only does it provide electricity and money from tourists in prevents floodings.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a good example of a Level 3 answer which states clear reasons and is supported by specific facts. This scores well even though it references the disadvantages of the scheme.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Ensure that you use the correct case study for the correct part of the specification on Watery World. There are so many!

Summary

On the whole, this paper was well received by candidates. Most are comfortable with the Multiple choice style questions and performance on case studies has improved. Well done to all who sat the paper in this session.

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