

Examiners' Report

June 2013

GCSE Geography A 5GA1H 01

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Introduction

This was another paper which exposed both the best and the weakest responses. Excellent case-study knowledge (which was focused on the questions set) saw generally high marks for many in the last section of the paper. Importantly however, this had to be combined with a response which actually answered the question, eg 'explain'. In marked contrast, Section A once again revealed very patchy skills with OS map-skills especially weak. The fact that the map was based in a popular area of North Wales seems to have worried some candidates (they were perhaps expecting maps always to be based on an English extract). Of course map skills can be examined irrespective of geographical location. It would be a good idea for centres to try and integrate these map skills into general teaching and learning of topics rather than seeing them as a stand-alone unit of work.

As is often the case, the greatest discriminator was often a lack of clarity about what to do, with command words too often ignored and problems of scale and context all too apparent when looking at the map extract.

There were a few candidates who looked as if they may have run out of time since there were some blank responses on occasion towards the end of the exam. Please remember to advise candidates that they really should only need to use the answer-space provided, and not over-write.

This was the second series to see the introduction of SPaG. This additional 4 marks (Question 4(b)) is based both on the technical quality of written communication, eg sentence structure, full-stops, capitals, as well as the complexity of writing and the use of technical geographical language and / or complex terms. It is worth a reminder that a candidate who provides a zero response for the answer (ie it is incorrect) would normally be given zero for the SPaG since there is a requirement to write in the 'context of the demands of the question'.

Question 1 (a) (i)

In this question, when completing the table for letter C (Name of building) a large number of candidates apparently simply guessed at Post Office or Public Convenience; others provided random features that were not actually on the map. Disappointingly, basic maps skills were sadly lacking in terms of relating map to ground features and evidence from the image.

Question 1 (a) (iii)

This question was a good discriminator. A number of candidates completely failed to answer the question, instead describing land use, shape of settlement etc. Other candidates failed to use map and / or photo evidence in a meaningful way.

This answer was awarded 3 marks.

(iii) Describe the shape of the valley shown in Figure 1a.

Use the OS map extract and the photographic evidence in your answer.

(4)

The valley is flat and strait, at about 220 metres above sea level
It follows the path of the river. There are steep slopes on the east
and west sides of the valley.



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Examiner Comments

This brief response is worth 3 marks for straight, steep slopes and east west.

No credit was given for height, as it does not refer to shape.

There was no credit either for the valley is flat; it needs to be quite clear it is the valley floor which is flat (see the reject column in the mark scheme).



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Examiner Tip

There is no need to fill up all of the white space in the response boxes. Brevity should be encouraged!

Question 1 (b) (i)

Many candidates struggled to make sense of the cross-section, once again finding it difficult to link the cross-section to the map extract. These very basic map skills were absent from a worrying number of candidates. Those who were able to measure the cross-sections both accurately and precisely scored well and found the task straightforward and accessible.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

Similarly some candidates found this activity complex, even though the mark scheme allowed for some flexibility in terms of the positioning of the 'R'. Once again, these basic skills should be strongly embedded as part of KS3 and KS4 geography teaching.

Question 2 (a) (i)

As a matter of good geographical practice, candidates should be encouraged to use a ruler when completing questions such as these. Clearly marks are awarded for accuracy as well as correct scales / widths (hence the need for a ruler in this exam). Again, regular exposure to a range of graphs and diagrams should form part of the regular teaching and learning in good geography lessons.

Question 2 (a) (iii)

This type of question has appeared in different formats on a number of previous exam papers. Whilst the majority of candidates were able to recognise the fact that it showed multiple pieces of information for example, others reverted to generic ideas, such as 'easy to draw', which were not given credit. In questions such as these candidates need to be encouraged to look in more detail at the diagram / resource and to think more clearly about specific geographic / spatial reasons, rather than general ideas.

This answer scored 2 marks.

(iii) Outline **one** advantage of using flow-line diagrams such as Figure 2 to show movement of people.

(2)

clear indication of how many people are moving in a certain direction. easy to compare different places and how used the transport links are.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This response is worth 2 marks, but the candidate has really written too much (in terms of the range of ideas) and spread themselves a little thin. Credit is given for 'how many people are moving in different directioneasy to compare different places'. Examiners allowed 2 marks since it was felt that these two ideas were linked and the answer was therefore allowed the development mark.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

If more than one advantage is described then credit will be given for the best part of the response.

Question 2 (a) (iv)

It was pleasing to see some good responses provided by many candidates with a number of valid reasons. There perhaps would have been some stronger responses if they had used clearer evidence from the OS map and resource (for example specific grid references and places, roads and other features), as well as quoting actual flow data when giving reasons. Again, this is a generic skill which should be embedded within geography teaching and learning.

This response scored full marks (5/5).

(iv) Suggest possible reasons for the pattern of tourist movement to the summit of Snowdon in August 2012.

Use evidence from both the OS map and Figure 2 to support your answer.

(5)

The largest movement of tourists is from Llanberis path and snowdon mountain railway⁽²⁰⁰⁾. This is because these are the routes from Llanberis which is a town so will have plenty of hospitality like hotels and campsites to host tourists. The Rhyd Ddu⁽¹³⁰⁾ path also receives a lot of tourists as it is the nearest parking space to Beddgelert so people staying there are most likely to use this over the snowdon ranger path as it is the closest. The Pyg track and mines track receive a fair amount of tourists as they are near the A4086 which is a busy road. However pyg track receives so more tourists per hour as it is the shorter route of the two.

(Total for Question 2 = 10 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This gained a clear 5 marks, as there were a good range of developed ideas using map evidence.



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Examiner Tip

Note - there was a maximum of 2 marks for description of data, without clear reasons.

This response was also awarded all 5 marks.

(iv) Suggest possible reasons for the pattern of tourist movement to the summit of Snowdon in August 2012.

Use evidence from both the OS map and Figure 2 to support your answer.

(5)

Less people may use paths such as the miners' track and Snowdon ranger path because from the OS map you can see that the relief changes drastically, making it steep & hard to walk on. ~~Over~~ 150 people may use the Rhyd ddu path per hour because it is near the road A4085 & also has parking close by for easy accessibility. There may also be a large number of tourists using the Snowdon mountain railway because it is much easier to use & will be accessible to lots of people. The Llanberis path may have 250 people an hour because it is from the village so lots of ^{people} will have access to it.

(Total for Question 2 = 10 marks)



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This is another good response developing a range of ideas and successfully blending map evidence with reasons to produce a complete answer.

Question 3 (a) (i)

Many candidates achieved 3 or 4 marks by linking improved public transport to a reduction in emissions, noise pollution and a reduction in congestion. The best answers also linked their ideas to increased tourism or investment in jobs. Some candidates went off on a tangent slightly by explaining the benefits of reduced CO₂ to climate change, which is not what the question required. There were some responses with a misconception that money goes to the council from public transport.

This answer was awarded 3 marks.

SECTION B – CHALLENGES FOR THE PLANET

Answer ALL questions in this section.

- 3 (a) Study Figure 3 (photographs) in the Resource Booklet which shows two types of public transport.
- (i) Explain how the development of more public transport can help improve urban areas.

(4)

Development of more public transport can help improve urban areas as if more people travel by bus/train there will be less carbon emissions being released. Also as there will be less cars people will be able to get to places faster due to less traffic congestion.



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Examiner Comments

This response gets 3 marks. 1 mark was awarded for 'less carbon emissions', 1 mark was awarded for 'get to places faster' and the third mark was awarded for 'less traffic congestion'.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

It's a shame there is no further development of ideas to bring this up to a maximum of 4 marks.

Question 3 (a) (ii)

A common mistake was for candidates to write about two schemes, when the instructions explicitly required just one scheme. Congestion charging and 'Boris Bikes / Barclay's Bikes' were popular responses. Candidates who wrote about public transport, eg 'more buses' did not get credit for this part of their answer. Note the focus of the question was how the scheme led to improvements, not a description of the scheme or how it worked. It seemed that some candidates had been expecting a slightly different question.

This answer was awarded all 4 marks.

(ii) Increasing public transport is one way of managing traffic in urban areas.

Explain how **one other** transport management policy can improve urban areas.

(4)

You can introduce a congestion charge zone, like in London, where you pay £9 to £12 to drive through. This has resulted in a 6% increase in bus passengers and there have been 65,000 less car journeys through per year, reducing emissions. It also raises over £148 million pounds which is used in the local area to improve its sustainability.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a response which clearly develops factual data about the benefits of the London Congestion Charge Scheme. There is sufficient range and depth to generate maximum marks for this answer.

There was a tendency for some candidates to over-write in this section, perhaps hoping this was a 6-mark question!



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Factual data adds realism and depth to an answer like this and it is generally rewarded as part of development.

Question 3 (b)

Once again, examiners reported that there was a considerable amount of over-writing. A number of candidates (as in previous series) failed to correctly read the question and wrote about the impacts of resource extraction, rather than how it was being managed. Others wrote general things about CO2 for instance which had little, if any, linkage to resource extraction. The most popular management schemes were deforestation and oil mining in Ecuador and the Amazon. A few of the best answers mentioned ethno-mapping and agro-forestry, as well as empowering local people to take control of the way their habitat is used. The Texaco clean-up bill and court case was mentioned in the vast majority of higher mark answers. This is obviously a 'case-study' type question, but development of ideas was needed to access the higher marks.

This response was not awarded any marks.

(b) Explain how the effects of resource extraction can be managed to reduce the impact on the environment. (5)

In Ecuador workers drill for oil. This has negative effects as it means that miscarriages are more common and stomach cancer is five times more common because of hydrocarbons in river water. Also deforestation is a big issue in ~~more~~ many countries. If there was less of a demand on these resources they would not be extracted or ~~cut down~~ occur as often. ~~We can~~ to manage it, we can use congestion charges and ~~over~~, so there is less oil needed.

(Total for Question 3 = 13 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This kind of response was all too common - candidates discussing the problems of resource extraction and then drifting-off at the end in desperation. Unfortunately this answer gained no marks.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Candidates must be encouraged to fully read and answer the question set, and not write about what they 'want' it to be about.

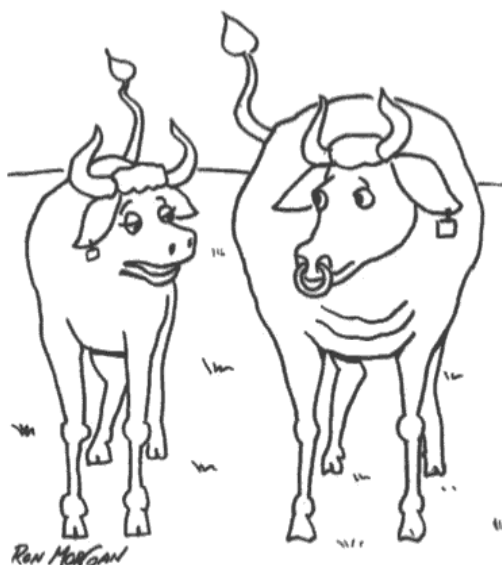
Question 4 (a) (i)

Once again, examiners commented on lots of over-writing here when there were only 2 marks available. Pleasingly, the vast majority of candidates recognised that cows were a source of methane (1 mark), but many failed then to make the link with climate change which was needed for the second mark. They needed to say more than simply it was a greenhouse gas, but instead describe how this gas contributed to global warming, eg role in trapping re-radiated heat energy etc.

Both marks were awarded for this response.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in *(b).

- 4 (a) Study Figure 4 which shows a cartoon about climate change.



'Your contributions to global warming are becoming rather tiresome darling!'

Figure 4

- (i) Outline how cattle contribute to global warming.

(2)

Cattle produce Methane gas in their bawels as they break down grass. They release Methane gas, a greenhouse gas ~~with~~ which makes up 18% of total greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The added methane traps heat radiation in the earth's atmosphere.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a clear and well-developed answer, which links together methane and its effects on the atmosphere ('traps heat radiation' idea).

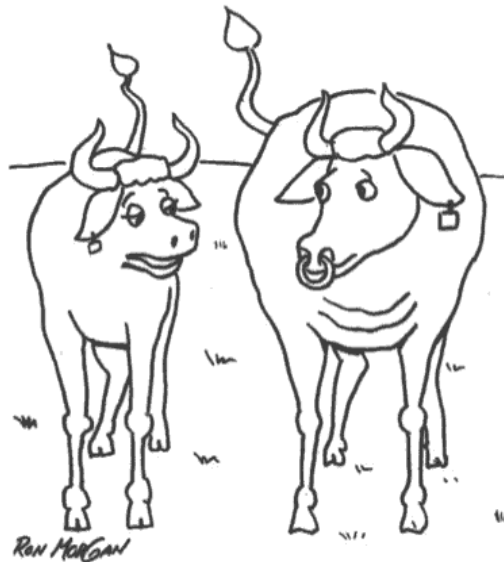


ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Cartoons are commonly used resources in exam papers. Candidates should be encouraged to be able to utilise them in a variety of different contexts.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in *(b).

- 4 (a) Study Figure 4 which shows a cartoon about climate change.



'Your contributions to global warming are becoming rather tiresome darling!'

Figure 4

- (i) Outline how cattle contribute to global warming.

(2)

Cattle release Methane into the atmosphere as a waste gas. The amount of gas released is increasing because of the increasing number of cattle needed in Western society.



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Examiner Comments

This response was only awarded 1 out of a possible 2 marks as the candidate had not indicated the link between methane and global warming, ie its role as a powerful greenhouse gas.

Question 4 (a) (ii)

There was notable confusion by some candidates about sulphur dioxide and its role within climate change etc. Note the following are recognised as greenhouse gases: water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone and CFCs.

There was also some bad geography of volcanoes causing warming through SO₂ - it is a gas which, indirectly, causes tropospheric cooling. Few wrote about the importance of ash in the context of cooling through reflection and back-scattering of incoming solar radiation. Instead they wrote about case studies, which were at best only partially relevant to the question. This question exposed insecurities in terms of more technical knowledge and as such this question was a good differentiator.

Question 4 (b)

It was pleasing to see some well-developed answers from many candidates. But a significant number failed to explain the effects of climate change, instead providing a list of sometimes apocalyptic impacts. It is essential that candidates are provided with correct and up-to-date information about climate change, eg the likely range of temperature rises (IPPC 2007 report and the Met Office are good sources for example), plus accurate models of sea level rise (estimated to be somewhere between 80-100cm over the next hundred years or so). Often published facts and figures that exist in textbooks are somewhat dated and as a result are less reliable than the most current estimates. Good teaching and learning should always be supported by the most up-to-date information relating to this dynamic part of the specification.

The SPaG marks tended to be in the mid-range, with simple errors like missing capital letters or not checking responses after they had been written, bringing marks down. A good range of vocabulary was demonstrated with terms like crop-yield, coral bleaching and thermal expansion mentioned regularly. Structure is also helped by use of paragraphs. There is no need to include formal introductions or conclusions.

*(b) Explain how climate change can have negative effects.

Use examples in your answer.

(6)

Climate change causes ice caps to melt and this means that the sea levels will rise. At the moment the sea levels rise between 1-3mm a year and from 2003-2006 they rose by 3.3mm. By 2100 this would mean that the sea levels would be 88mm above present. Rising sea levels causes a number of problems:

Glaciers are retreating and if the Greenland glacier retreats it could divert the gulfstream. Experts predict that the Great Barrier Reef will be dead in 30yrs due to rising sea temperatures

and if sea levels rise by 1m Bangladesh will lose 17.5% of its land. These are negative effects because many ~~species~~ ~~species~~ breeds of fish and other marine life could be dead because of the change in climate.

(Total for spelling, punctuation and grammar = 4 marks)

(Total for Question 4 = 16 marks)

breeds of fish and other

marine life could be dead because of the change in climate.

If Bangladesh loses 17.5% of its land it could mean people lose their homes and there will be less land to farm on.

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 29 MARKS

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 54 MARKS



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Examiner Comments

There are explanations of at least two negative effects of climate change. Examples are well-supported by factual information (and location). There is development through range and depth. This information is well-communicated with good use of geographical terminology. 6 marks were awarded for content and 4 marks for SPaG.



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Examiner Tip

'Explain' questions do need proper explanation embedded within the response. It cannot just be a listing of negative effects of climate change.

This is another very competent response.

3/4
floods
Holland
Bangladesh
Tanzania

*(b) Explain how climate change can have negative effects.

Use examples in your answer.

(6)

Climate change can cause flooding an example of where this has happened is in ~~the~~ Tejujshara Bangladesh where 10,000,000 people were affected by floods and had no where to go so lost their homes, crop and cattle as there was no where to escape to.

It can also cause droughts. For example, ~~in~~ the ~~Meaning~~ deserts can expand for example the Sahara could expand by meaning a loss in habitat. 30%. Also, in Tanzania they could lose 50% of their maize yield due to droughts, this means farmers will lose their income, which results in the country as a whole earning little ^{money}.

Another cause is sea levels rising when 3/4 of the worlds population live on or near the coast. If they rise by 2 metres (Holland) will cease to exist. This means people will lose their homes and flora and fauna will lose their habitats.

(Total for spelling, punctuation and grammar = 4 marks)

(Total for Question 4 = 16 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This answer was awarded the maximum of 6 marks for content and 4 marks for SPaG.

Paper Summary

Once again, the paper this series revealed some inconsistencies in candidates' performance.

There were some excellent answers linking together knowledge and understanding through case study material, eg longer answers in Questions 3 and 4, but this was in marked contrast to the performance on the skills elements of Questions 1 and 2.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- practise developing your map skills since this was a real area of weakness on this paper, even from candidates who did well on the rest of the paper
- it is important to revise carefully ways of displaying and interpreting data since this too seemed to be a weakness (Question 2(a) was an example of this problematic understanding)
- some candidates found it particularly difficult to grasp the idea of scale and distribution, it is important therefore to take time to practise these ideas.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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