

Examiners' Report
June 2016

GCSE Geography A 5GA1F 01

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Introduction

As in previous series, this paper demonstrated both the best and the worst answers from candidates. Excellent case-study knowledge (which was focused on the questions set) saw generally high marks for many candidates in the last section of the paper, but explanations were mostly absent. Section A, once again, revealed patchy skills with OS map-skills especially weak from some candidates. Competency in understanding the relevance of technology, census, GIS etc. and its application to how it could provide additional data / information were also notably absent from many responses (Question 3). Many candidates seemed very prepared for AO1 questions where there was basic recall, but failed to make the broader geographical linkages required for AO2 and AO3.

Once again, 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. In this year's exam, Question 5(b) had a high tariff at 6+4 marks so it should have been attempted if at all possible. Please remember to advise candidates that they really should only need to use the answer-space provided, and not to over-write.

This was the fourth series since the introduction of SPAG. As before, remember that the 4 SPAG marks are based both on the technical quality of written communication, e.g. sentence structure, full-stops and capitals as well as the complexity of writing and the use of technical geographical language and / or complex terms. A candidate who scores a 0 response for the answer, i.e. incorrect, would normally be given 0 for the SPAG since there is a requirement to write in the "context of the demands of the question".

Compass skills are the "bread and butter" of this part of the exam, yet there were a number of candidates who were unable to link the map to the ground evidence from the photograph. This is clearly a skill that needs continual practice from Year 7 upwards. This will also be an essential skill for the new 2016 GCSEs as well.

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and/or comments, for a selection of questions. The exemplification will come mainly from questions which required more complex responses from candidates.

Question 1 (c)

Many candidates struggled with being able to use the map to identify the original reasons the settlement was chosen to develop in this area. The physical geography (evidenced from the map) perhaps provided the strongest clues. Roads were the first thing most responses highlighted, followed by flat land and water supply. Relatively few responses identified the fact it is in a valley. The decision was made to accept the accessibility aspect of roads as a component part of site.

(c) Suggest why the site of Little Stretton (4491) may have been chosen for a settlement.

(2)

It is on flat ground so it is easier to farm, it is near a water source for water supplies & transportation and it is surrounded by large hills so it is easily defended.

(Total for Question 1 = 9 marks)



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Plenty of map evidence was included as part of the answer.

2 marks were awarded.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates should be encouraged to always use grid references wherever possible.

This response was also awarded both marks.

(c) Suggest why the site of Little Stretton (4491) may have been chosen for a settlement.

Because the relief of the land is fairly flat, meaning it's easily built on for residential buildings, also there is water sources: Ashes Hollow. ⁽²⁾

(Total for Question 1 = 9 marks)



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This is another strong response with development and map evidence (Ashes Hollow).

Question 2 (a) (ii)

This is a basic map skill – information from the map to understand cross sections (Topic 2, page 13 in the current specification). Yet the 'V' appeared all over the place, this is clearly a skill that a majority of candidates find challenging. There were also a number of candidates who seemed to have rushed at this and missed the question.

Question 2 (b) (i)

It was pleasing to see most candidates attempting this question and being able to correctly use the data in the table to accurately plot their points. In this instance a cross provides a more precise plot point than a dot and is probably a better way to show understanding and technical accuracy.

This exemplar response was awarded both marks.

- (i) Complete the scatter graph (Figure 2c) for sites 5 and 6 using the information in Figure 2b.

(2)

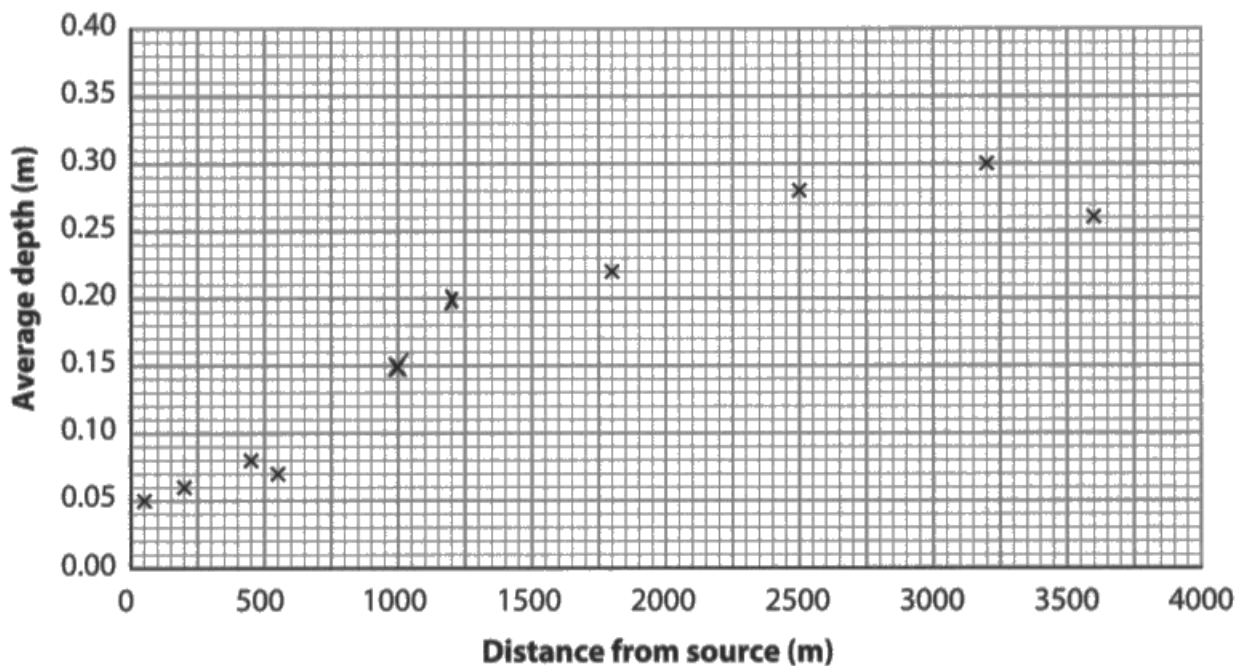


Figure 2c

A scatter graph of average river depth and distance from source



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The completion of this scatter graph had a high rate of success although site 6 seemed to be a little more challenging than site 5.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Candidates need to be confident with basic graphical as well as cartographical skills. However, this candidate, like many others, was able to get the 2 marks available.

Question 2 (b) (iii)

This was generally well answered; many candidates achieved the full 3 marks, usually with the pattern of general statement / data / anomaly. An encouraging number identified a positive correlation.

This response was awarded 3 marks.

(iii) Describe how the average river depth changes with distance from the source.

(3)

AS the distance from the source increases so does the average depth, however after 3500 there is a decrease in the average depth from 0.30 m to 0.21 m. The highest ~~depth~~ average depth of one river is 0.30 at ~~3200~~ 3200 m from the source.

(Total for Question 2 = 10 marks)



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This answer was like many: statement of change; uses data and also implies the anomaly. A clear 3 marks which demonstrates good practice.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Using the technical language of mathematical description (i.e. positive correlation) leads to better understanding and can pay dividends in the exam.

Question 3 (a) (i)

The pyramid was usually correctly identified as that for an aging population and this information was presented together with detail of the data which was accurately read.

Answers were not always expressed precisely: "more men aged 15-29" (more than what?) and "most people over 60" (35% is not most).

A number of responses described the pyramid in generic terms – "shows ages of men and women", which did not get credit as candidates needed to use the information in the resource.

This response was awarded 2 marks.

3 (a) Study Figure 3 in the Resource Booklet.

(i) Identify **two** characteristics of this population pyramid.

- 1 The percentage of male and female for over 60 years⁽²⁾ are the same.
- 2 The same percentages (15%) are for male and females between 0-14 years of age.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is no need to do anything more than just describe patterns in the data. The mark scheme includes a number of ideas.

Question 3 (a) (ii)

Many candidates failed to pick up the 1 mark allocated to this question. A high proportion of responses were either that the data was "unreliable" or "not 100% accurate" or "wrong". Other incorrect answers, quite frequently given, were that the data was "hard to read off" or "not precise" and other candidates seemed confused by what the question was asking, responding with "doesn't show how many people only %". Some candidates also focused on the census data taking "too long to complete" or being "expensive/costs more" and so scored zero. For those that responded correctly it was generally for noting that it was 10 years between census data collection and that the data was therefore "out of date" or "not up to date" or "old". Quite a few candidates also noted that "people may lie" on the forms or that "not everyone is included". These responses were able to be credited.

This response was awarded the mark.

(ii) State **one** problem of using census data as a part of geographical research.

(1)

its not ~~doing~~ ^{done} eve very often (10 years) so data can change.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

"Out of date" gets a mark, but few candidates were aware that the census is taken every 10 years. An important part of geography.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Working with census data can be very helpful in the development of quantification skills, and is useful preparation for GCE Geography.

Question 3 (b)

Most responses followed the pointer in the question to the internet – GIS, Google and Google Earth - but overall the responses were very general. Many candidates did not say how they would use additional data sources: they were more likely to describe the advantages of internet information. Few identified the additional information they might find. Some, however, referred to such as direct surveys or even visiting a library to read a book. Overall, Examiners felt that secondary / additional data remained a mystery to too many candidates.

This example scored 3 marks.

(b) Describe how you might use additional data sources (such as the internet) to find information about the people who live in this area of south Shropshire.

(3)

You may use GIS to find out more about the area. You can use layering from GIS (such as google maps) to find out how accessible the area is and which services the people of South Shropshire require, to find out more about them

(Total for Question 3 = 6 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 25 MARKS



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Knowing something about GIS (layering etc.) and how it might be used was an area that fortunately several candidates had prepared. Many relied on GIS to get marks on this question.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

GIS is more than just layers. Real GIS (not Google Earth) has the ability to interrogate data sets and to ask geographical questions. Many candidates seemed to be unaware of just how significant the technology is in a wide range of industries.

Question 4 (a) (iii)

Greenhouse gases from cars and fossil fuels were the most common answers, followed by methane from cows. Candidates could often develop their responses. A notable proportion of responses were expressed in terms of reducing the rate of climate change, which reflects which question the candidates wanted, rather than the question on the day.

This response was awarded 2 marks.

(iii) Outline **two** actions of people which contribute to climate change.

(4)

1. People using cars on a daily basis which is causing pollution, to prevent this we could use the bus, bike and walk places.

2. Keeping unused electricity switched on is another cause of climate change, to prevent this we could turn electricity off when not in use.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This was typical of many responses, lacking detail and development, and failing to link the action / activity to climate change.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Candidates need to "see" how the marks will be awarded for a response such as this. In a 4 mark question development is going to be required when two ideas are requested.

This response scored full marks.

(iii) Outline **two** actions of people which contribute to climate change.

(4)

1 Increase in demand of petrol, therefore more fossil fuels are burned releasing carbon dioxide which causes global warming which increases the earth temperature.

2 There is an increase in cows ~~therefore~~ due to people eating meat (beef), therefore there will be a greater number of cows which due to ~~that~~ them there is an increase in methane in the atmosphere.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This is a 4 mark response, fully linking climate change to the action.

Question 4 (b) (i)

There was considerable confusion here for many candidates. Most responses identified things emitted from a volcano – but often linked together emissions that had opposite effects, such as CO² and SO² so they did not develop them both accurately. However, ash was the most commonly identified emission, often developed to blocking the sun's radiation and cooling the earth.

(b) Study Figure 4b.

Volcanic eruptions 'contributed to global warming pause', scientists claim



Figure 4b

A newspaper headline linking volcanic eruptions and climate change

(i) Describe how volcanic activity causes climate change.

(3)

When volcanoes erupt they produce lots of soot / particulates. Such as Mount Pinatobit, which released so much soot, it blocked heat from entering the Earth's atmosphere and decreased the temperature of the Earth by 1°C for 5 years. This is global dimming.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a solid 3 mark response, stated with brevity. Luckily in this instance the exemplification is well linked to the response.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

The danger for some candidates might be to drift into a case study on this question. This could be irrelevant unless it is tied explicitly to the causal linkage and the science.

Question 5 (a) (iii)

There was lots of good information from candidates here, but often only a bit of it was related to the question. Candidates often ignored the word "limitation" and wrote about the benefits of an appropriate scheme. Even when an appropriate limitation was identified, responses were often not developed enough to achieve the full 3 marks.

No marks were awarded for this answer.

(iii) Explain **one** limitation of a sustainable urban transport scheme you have studied.

(3)

Name of scheme ~~London~~ Norwich

~~London~~ Norwich has introduced a park and ride scheme. People park their cars and then hop onto a bus, this reduces congestion in large cities, uses less fuel, less vehicles on the road and makes the road safer for people around.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This type of answer was very common - a description of a scheme, but no information about limitations.

(iii) Explain **one** limitation of a sustainable urban transport scheme you have studied.

(3)

Name of scheme Park & Ride

A limitation of park and ride is that not everybody uses it. This means that although it is decreasing CO₂ emissions there are still thousands of cars on the road ~~which~~ which makes the effects almost obsolete.



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Examiner Comments

This response managed to get to 3 marks for: not everyone uses it = 1, although it decreases CO₂ emission = 1, so limited effect = 1.

Question 5 (b)

A very mixed bag of responses was provided in this part of the exam: some were very good and others very poor (more often than not). There were lots of references to Costa Rica, but remember that case studies and examples can be taken from a range of texts and resources at different scales. There is absolutely no requirement to use material from approved textbooks or other accredited resources – material just needs to be geographically appropriate and fit for purpose. As usual, facts, figures and locational details are well rewarded and characteristic of work which is in the top-band. Too many candidates unfortunately chose to describe the impacts of TRF destruction, rather than explaining the management which was the focus of the question.

The response which follows was awarded a total of 9 marks.

*(b) Tropical rainforests are a rich source of natural resources which many companies wish to extract.

- Ecuador

Explain the different approaches to tropical rainforest management where resources are being extracted.

Use examples in your answer.

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(6)

Ecuador in South America use oil extraction, however this has leaked into the surroundings polluting rivers and fish, because tribes use them as food they have then got ill, to manage this Texaco have payed \$40 million to clean up the oil, and put in place a pipe line underground so the oil doesn't come into contact with the surroundings.

Cameroon, in Africa use deforestation, which and logging they have a road running through it for this however companies have used the road to kill animals, this means that they are coming extinct to manage this they now have a permit on logging and the Nature Conservancy have educated the local on protecting the Environment, this means that they will know it is wrong to hurt animals such as elephants. Novel Kempt National park in the Amazon rainforest have carbon credits on areas of land, which other countries can buy this means that as a developing country they can still earn money from the rainforest, which means that they will get more money into their economy.



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Examiner Comments

This was one of the few responses that showed good focus on the question, and used case study material to consider management. It was a real shame that many candidates seemed to ignore the word management all together and instead wrote about a range of impacts. In this instance many got 0 for their answer and also 0 for SPAG, missing out on this 10 mark high-tariff part of the exam.

Paper Summary

The new 2016 GCSEs bring a number of significant changes to this specification and others. Preparation will dictate that both teachers and candidates have a good understanding of the new modes of assessment, including the revised AO (Assessment Objective) balance. There is less need to “do” case studies, instead a blended focus on skills and deeper understanding should be targeted. This paper now most closely links with the new Unit 3, which includes fieldwork, skills and a new (unseen) decision-making exercise. Please remember as well there is now no tiering available.

The examiners wish you the best of luck as you start the teaching in September 2016.

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