



Examiners' Report

June 2022

GCSE Geography A 1GA0 03

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Introduction

This was the fourth series of examinations for Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography specifications, but the first one to be sat by a full entry since June 2019. This Examiner's Report is intended to provide an insight into performance on Paper 3 – Geography Investigations: Fieldwork and UK Challenges component (1GA03) – in particular, analysing the majority of questions in terms of what went well, where misconceptions / errors were common and where underperformance was particularly evident. Exemplar responses from actual scripts have been used to exemplify good practice, how the mark scheme was applied and highlight common pitfalls encountered by candidates. The structure of the paper was different for the June 2022 series: in September 2021, the Department for Education published the outcomes of the consultation on proposed summer 2022 adaptations, confirming the removal of familiar fieldwork questions in 1GA03 and an overall reduction to the number of questions and total marks available:

Normal structure

Students answer questions on:

- **Section A:** River and Coastal Landscapes (Candidates answer either Q1 or Q2)
- **Section B:** Urban and Rural Landscapes (Candidates answer either Q3 or Q4)
- **Section C:** UK Challenges

Structure for Summer 2022 only

Students answer questions on:

- **Section A:** River and Coastal Landscapes (Students answer either Q1 or Q2) – **Number of questions reduced and only on unfamiliar fieldwork**
- **Section B:** Urban and Rural Landscapes (Students answer either Q3 or Q4) – **Questions only on unfamiliar fieldwork with no 8-mark question**
- **Section C:** UK Challenges – **No change**

Therefore, the adapted paper for 2022 required candidates to answer sections A, B and C but with a reduced number of marks in both Section A and B, worth a total of 48 marks. As usual the paper included multiple-choice questions, short open, open response, calculations and 8 mark extended writing questions. The exam command words which are used in this paper are defined in the specification. Each of the questions is mapped to one or more of the Assessment Objectives (AOs). At the time of writing this report, data indicates that the size of the cohort sitting this paper had increased by approximately 7% in comparison to 2019; performance on this paper was broadly similar to 2019, with a mean mark of 24/48 (50%) compared to 31/64 (49%) in 2019.

Question 1 (a)

In this question, candidates were asked to describe one fieldwork method the students could have used to investigate the river landscapes. Most candidates were able to identify a suitable fieldwork method which was usually measuring the width, depth or velocity of the channel. Where candidates didn't achieve full marks this was usually because there was no development about the detail of the fieldwork method.

Chosen fieldwork method

measuring the velocity

The student's should place 2 poles 10m away from each other on the river bank. They should then drop an orange at the first pole and use a stop watch to record how long it would take to reach the 2nd pole.



This response scored 2 marks. The candidate has identified a suitable data collection method and developed this to describe how this method would be conducted.

Chosen fieldwork method

Find how the width varies along a river downstream.

Use systematic sampling. ~~Use~~ ^{pond} Every 500m use a measuring tape to measure ~~one side of~~ from one river edge to the other. Repeat this process every 500m to show how ~~the~~ the width of a river changes as you move downstream.



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This response achieved 2 marks. The candidate has described how the students could have measured the river width 'using a measuring tape from one river edge to the other' plus development of how this would be carried out.

Question 1 (b)

This question proved challenging for candidates with a large proportion of responses scoring either 3 or 4 marks. Many candidates provided a narrative of the fieldwork methods the candidates might have conducted at this location, referring to river processes with reference to the Bradshaw Model rather than evaluating which of the enquiry questions would be most suitable. Where candidates did consider the suitability of the enquiry questions this was not always backed up by evidence from the OS map which limited the number of AO4 marks awarded. The best responses that considered the suitability of the enquiry questions at this river landscape tended to focus on the lack of settlements, the number of tributaries affecting discharge and the relief of the land. Candidates would benefit from greater use of different OS maps at a variety of river landscapes to consider the kind of questions capable of being investigated through fieldwork linked to stage one of the enquiry process.

Question 2 (a)

In this question, candidates were asked to describe one fieldwork method the students could have used to investigate the coastal landscapes. Most candidates were able to identify a suitable fieldwork method which was usually measuring the beach gradient or sediment analysis. Where candidates didn't achieve full marks this was usually because there was no development about the detail of the fieldwork method. In some responses candidates got confused with the difference between a fieldwork method and a sampling strategy with some describing systematic, random or stratified sample.

Question 2 (b)

This question proved challenging for candidates with a large proportion of responses scoring either 3 or 4 marks. Many candidates provided a narrative of the fieldwork methods the candidates might have conducted at this location, referring to coastal processes discussing how groynes disrupt the natural coastal system rather than evaluating which of the enquiry questions would be most suitable. Where candidates did consider the suitability of the enquiry questions this was not always backed up by evidence from the OS map which limited the number of AO4 marks awarded. For this type of question where candidates are expected to use evidence from resources within their response to be awarded AO4 marks these need to be more explicit rather than implicit. The candidates who did score higher marks for AO4 made explicit reference to the Figure in their response through using grid references and key features relevant to the location. The best responses that considered the suitability of the enquiry questions at this coastal landscape tended to focus on the impact of the groynes on the coast landscape. Candidates would benefit from greater use of different OS maps at a variety of coastal landscapes to consider the kind of questions capable of being investigated through fieldwork linked to stage one of the enquiry process.

Question 3 (a)(i)

This question prompted candidates to consider a suitable fieldwork method that the students could have conducted at this urban location. Many candidates were able to identify a suitable fieldwork method that could have been conducted at this location with the vast majority of responses referring to either a pedestrian count or questionnaire. However, candidates struggled to extend their description to add any detail about the fieldwork method, limiting the response to 1 mark. Some candidates referred to sampling strategies rather than a fieldwork method. Candidates would benefit from going through the different stages of the enquiry process and having a clear understanding of the difference between a fieldwork method and a sampling strategy that could be used to conduct the method.

Question 3 (a)(ii)

In this question, candidates were asked to suggest one problem that the students might have experienced when collecting data at the survey site. A large proportion of candidates focused on the problem associated with the data collection method described in the previous question, identifying a problem with the associated method and then developing this to say how this might have created a problem when collecting the data. Where candidates achieved one mark this was usually because they had offered a problem, such as the 'site is busy' but didn't develop this further.

(ii) Suggest **one** problem that the students might have experienced when collecting data at this sampling site.

(2)

Many people may not have wanted to speak to them. This could lead to the students only having a small sample of data which may not represent the overall opinion.



This response achieved 2 marks. The candidate has suggested a problem associated with the students collecting data for their questionnaire and extended their point to say how this might have created a problem.



In this two mark 'suggest' question, encourage candidates to develop their initial point to achieve full marks.

Question 3 (b)(i)

The vast majority of candidates were able to successfully plot the data onto the divided bar chart to achieve the full 3 marks. Where candidates did not achieve full marks, it was often because they tried to plot the data in a different order, or didn't complete the key correctly. Very few candidates didn't complete the graph at all which was pleasing to see.

Question 3 (b)(ii)

This question was answered well by most candidates who were able to offer a limitation of using a divided bar chart. Where candidates didn't achieve the mark this was because the response didn't focus on the data presentation technique but instead on the data that was collected.

Question 3 (b)(iii)

In this 2 mark question, candidates were asked to suggest an alternative presentation technique that the students could have used to present the data. A large proportion of candidates suggested a pie chart with some development about its suitability over the divided bar chart. Some candidates offered an alternative but were unable to develop this any further, limiting them to 1 mark.

Question 4 (a)(i)

This question prompted candidates to consider a suitable fieldwork method that the students could have conducted at this urban location. Many candidates were able to identify a suitable fieldwork method that could have been conducted at this location with the vast majority of responses referring to either a pedestrian count or questionnaire. However, candidates struggled to extend their description to add any detail about the fieldwork method, limiting the response to 1 mark. Some candidates referred to sampling strategies rather than a fieldwork method. Candidates would benefit from going through the different stages of the enquiry process and having a clear understanding of the difference between a fieldwork method and a sampling strategy that could be used to conduct the method.

Question 4 (a)(ii)

In this question, candidates were asked to suggest one problem that the students might have experienced when collecting data at the survey site. A large proportion of candidates focused on the problem associated with the data collection method described in the previous question, identifying a problem with the associated method and then developing this to say how this might have created a problem when collecting the data. Where candidates achieved one mark this was usually because they had offered a problem, such as the 'site is busy' but didn't develop this further.

Question 4 (b)(i)

The vast majority of candidates were able to successfully plot the data onto the divided bar chart to achieve the full 3 marks. Where candidates did not achieve full marks, it was often because they tried to plot the data in a different order, or didn't complete the key correctly. Very few candidates didn't complete the graph at all which was pleasing to see.

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Question 4 (b)(iii)

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Question 5 (b)

Candidates were asked to state two advantages of regenerating brownfield sites.

Most candidates answered the question well and were awarded 2 marks. Where candidates failed to score marks, it was usually because their answer was too generalised. For example, they wrote 'cheaper' and 'help the environment', with no clarification of the context for brownfield sites. It is important for future series that candidates are encouraged not to use isolated statements.

Question 5 (c)

In this question, candidates were asked to explain two disadvantages of building on brownfield sites.

Most candidates were able to offer two disadvantages demonstrating a sound understanding of the issues that can arise when building on these sites. A large proportion of responses focused on 'timescales', 'potential pollution' and 'cost' associated with previous developments on the site. Where candidates didn't achieve full marks it was usually because they didn't develop the initial point to say why this would be a disadvantage for building on brownfield sites. In this type of explain question it is useful to get students to think of it as the 'what' and 'why'. What is a disadvantage of building on these sites and why is this a disadvantage.

(c) Explain **two** disadvantages of building on brownfield sites.

(4)

1. The land could be contaminated. This means that dangerous chemicals could be released harming the environment/people.

~~2. knocking down buildings could be expensive~~
Brownfield sites often involve knocking down the previous building. This could mean that the cost increases as knocking buildings is expensive.



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This response achieved 4 marks. The candidate has identified two disadvantages of building on brownfield sites and developed both points to say why this would be an issue.

Question 5 (d)

Candidates were asked to describe the trend in the number of houses built on greenfield sites based on the graph provided. The vast majority of candidates were able to identify that there had been an increasing trend and used data to support this point. When candidates didn't achieve the marks this was usually because they didn't use data from the graph or wrote about brownfield sites.

Question 5 (e)

Candidates were asked to suggest one reason why some people are against development on greenfield sites.

Most candidates were able to suggest a reason based on the evidence from the resource. The best responses provided clear evidence of the candidate using one of the statements from the stakeholders and developing their response to say why people are against development on greenfield sites. Some candidates merely lifted information from the resource without any development, or didn't use the resource at all to suggest a reason. Where candidates did achieve full marks it was evident there was a clear understanding of the associated issues, with many referring to 'lack / reduction in biodiversity' when writing about wildlife habitats.

A small proportion of candidates tried to suggest two reasons with neither developed to achieve either 2 or 3 marks. Candidates should be reminded to read the question carefully to ensure they fully understand what is expected. In this case, only one reason was asked for.

(e) Study Figure 5c in the Resource Booklet.

Suggest **one** reason why some people are against development on greenfield sites.

(3)

One reason to be against development is that it leads to natural habitats being destroyed. This means that animals will be forced to migrate to another area. Therefore this could ruin biodiversity in the area as the ~~both~~ amount of ~~an~~ species and animals in the area will decrease.



This response achieved full marks. The candidate has suggested one reason 'loss of natural habitats' and developed this further through a chained reasoning of why this means people would be against development on these sites.

Question 5 (f)

In this 12 mark, extended writing question, candidates were asked to discuss the view that 'The building on greenfield sites is needed to meet the growing demands of the UK population.'

A significant proportion of candidates scored between 6 and 9 marks for this question.

The overall responses seen by examiners demonstrated candidates were able to use the resources provided to extract information to formulate an argument around the potential of building on greenfield sites to meet the demands of our population. A large proportion of candidates opted to put forward a discussion which looked at both sides of the argument and drew their discussion to a close with a conclusion. However, most of this discussion was focused purely on the greenfield/ brownfield debate with limited development beyond the resources provided, or considering other factors that could meet the growing demands. This is a key part of this question where candidates are expected to draw in evidence from across their geography course to support their discussion. In the case of this topic, candidates could have drawn evidence from their Paper 2 topics to support the argument they put forward which would have provided a response that represented marks at the higher end of the 12 marks available. Centres should encourage candidates to not see the resources as the only evidence to be used in their essay and to broaden the breadth and depth of their response.

In terms of spelling, punctuation and grammar, most of the cohort tended to perform at an intermediate level, scoring 2 or 3 marks. The marks were determined by the relative difference in the use of paragraphs, sentence structure and geographical terminology.

Paper Summary

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

- When answering 2-mark fieldwork questions that ask candidates to name their method in the question stem, candidates must develop their sentence to achieve the marks. For example, measuring the width of a river using a tape measure by placing it on either side of the channel.
- For the extended 8-mark fieldwork questions that ask candidates to interpret evidence from a resource through evaluation, they must use explicit rather than implicit evidence to achieve higher marks for AO4. This is because this question has an equal weighting of 4 x AO3 marks and 4 x AO4 marks. Many candidates struggled to achieve higher marks for AO4 because references to the resource were implicit. Centres would benefit from providing candidates with a range of unfamiliar fieldwork resources across the different stages of the fieldwork enquiry process to develop the skill of interpreting evidence. Alongside this, candidates would benefit from using phrases like, "Figure x indicates..." or "As demonstrated in Figure x" to encourage them to be more explicit with evidence in their response. It would also be beneficial for candidates to spend time considering what it means to 'evaluate' or 'assess' for this question type. Many candidates didn't demonstrate evidence of 'evaluating' in this 2022 8-mark question which impacted on the number of AO3 marks awarded.
- Where questions ask for a double development 'explain one...' or "suggest one..." for 3 marks, candidates should practice developing their points through chained reasoning in order to achieve the full marks. This can be achieved through phrases like "this means that...", "this leads to...", "this results in..." or "a consequence of this is..."
- Ensure that candidates have been exposed to every type of graph listed in the specification; in 2022, the graph in Question 3bi and Figure 5 was misinterpreted by some candidates.
- Centres are encouraged to use the Past papers (from 2018-2022), Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) and specimen papers to help familiarise candidates with the structure of the paper and questions types – including the tackling of the 8-mark extended open response questions. Centres should spend time reviewing the examples in this report, and other support materials via the qualification page on the Pearson website. This will help candidates become more familiar with the range of command words and how they are attached to different Assessment Objectives.

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