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Examiners' Report
June 2010

GCSE Geography 5GB1F

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Introduction

This report covers responses from the Foundation tier paper of GCSE Geography Specification B. The unit one paper is one hour long. The paper comprises of four compulsory sections and two optional units. Each section starts with a resource based activity, followed by one or two extending questions. The question paper has been designed to be progressively more difficult. The aim of the unit / paper is to provide candidates with a broad and varied understanding of the natural environment. Question paper completion will require candidates to apply a range of skills. Candidates will need to be able to interpret and read maps, diagrams and charts.

Question 1(c)

Overall, this question was answered well by the majority of candidates. To achieve full marks candidates were required to describe two ways a region could prepare for future earthquakes. Common mistakes included answers that referred to volcanic rather than seismic activity. Some Candidates dropped marks by trying to identify more than two strategies, but offering little or no description. Although the question didn't ask for case study related information, credit was awarded to candidates who linked statements to real life examples, e.g. "You could earthquake proof buildings, such as the Pan American building in San Francisco". There appears to be some confusion about the idea of houses being built on stilts... one of the text books shows a diagram of a building which looks like it is on stilts when in fact they are deep foundations.

(c) Describe **two** ways a region affected by earthquakes can prepare for this hazard.

(4)

1 a region affected by earthquakes can prepare for this hazard by strengthening buildings so they are not so badly damaged after this hazard has occured.

2 people can also be moved out of this region to prevent the earthquake from killing people. this would stop /help people from loosing their lives

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Examiner Comments

Although the candidate identified two appropriate strategies (earthquake proof housing and evacuation procedures) both statements are vague and failed to score any additional marks.

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Examiner Tip

Questions like this are best answered by using destination specific information. Candidates who described how Japan or California had attempted to reduce earthquake damage tended to score full marks as the case study element often lead to extended descriptions.

(c) Describe **two** ways a region affected by earthquakes can prepare for this hazard.

(4)

1 Have daily drills, so the region knows what to do in the event of an earthquake, like they have previously done in Japan.

2 Build building with metal poles inside the concrete walls, and have deeper foundations, so the buildings sway and move ~~with~~ with the earthquake instead of collapsing.

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Examiner Comments

This response scored full marks. One point was awarded for suggesting the use of earthquake drills, three marks were scored for an in depth description of how buildings can be designed to withstand the pressure of an earthquake.

Question 2(a) (ii)

Although this question was answered well by the majority of candidates, a significant minority failed to score by either giving 'causes' and identifying an economic rather than environmental impact.

Question 2(b)

This question asked candidates to identify two potential impacts of climate change in Britain. Impacts could have been economic or environmental, positive or negative. Although most candidates scored well on this question, a considerable minority lost marks for referring to countries other than the UK. Candidates also lost marks by providing insufficient answers such as, "hotter".

(b) State **two** possible impacts of climate change in the UK.

(2)

1 The temperature will rise so it will mean better tourism and helps the economy.

2 sea levels could rise, increasing the chance of flooding.

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Examiner Comments

This was an excellent response as the candidate clearly identifies two impacts. This answer was particulary strong as the candidate links direct (e.g. hotter temperature) and indirection (e.g. tourism growth) impacts together.

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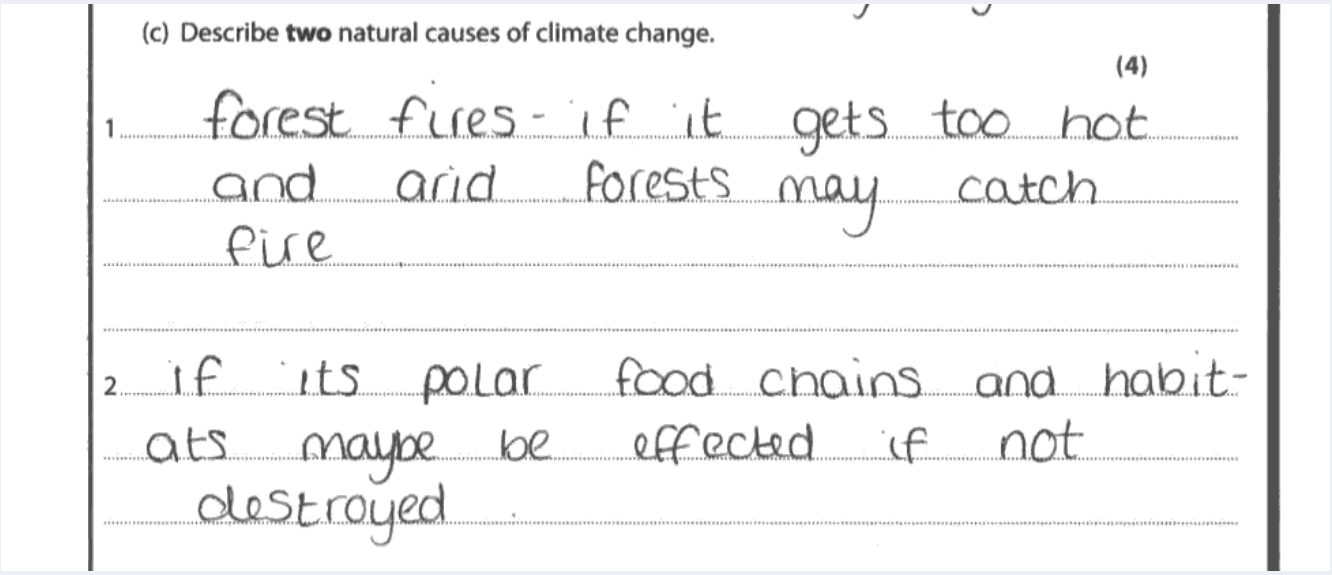
Examiner Tip

A common mistake was for candidates to identify impacts on a country other than the UK. To avoid mistakes like these, it is often a good idea to underline the key words in a question before you start to answer.

Question 2(c)

This question covered natural causes of climate change. This is a new area of content for most teachers. Candidate responses suggested that this aspect of the specification needs to be tackled in more detail by some centres. Although there many strong responses, over half of all the candidates failed to score on this question, many leaving it blank! Common incorrect answers included references to methane from cattle ranching and heat from forest fires. A considerable number of candidates described man-made causes of climate change. The best responses tended to refer to volcanic eruptions and the Earth's changing orbit.



(c) Describe **two** natural causes of climate change.

(4)

1 forest fires - if it gets too hot and arid forests may catch fire

2 if its polar food chains and habitats maybe be effected if not destroyed

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Examiner Comments

This candidate made a common error by identify effects of climate changes rather than natural causes.

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Examiner Tip

Natural causes of climate change refer to physical processes that we (humans) have no impact on, or control over. Methane from cattle is incorrect as the global cattle population has increased because of changes in farming, not because of natural processes.

more money.

(c) Describe **two** natural causes of climate change.

(4)

1 Volcanic erruption: When volcanoes errupt They release certain Toxic and poisonous chemicals which are released into the atmosphere adding to greenhouse gases and enhancing the greenhouse effect.

2 Sunspot activity: The sun has certain black spots and it is said that the more spots the hotter the sun and its output. Therefore when the sun has alot of sunspot activity the climate gets hotter.

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Examiner Comments

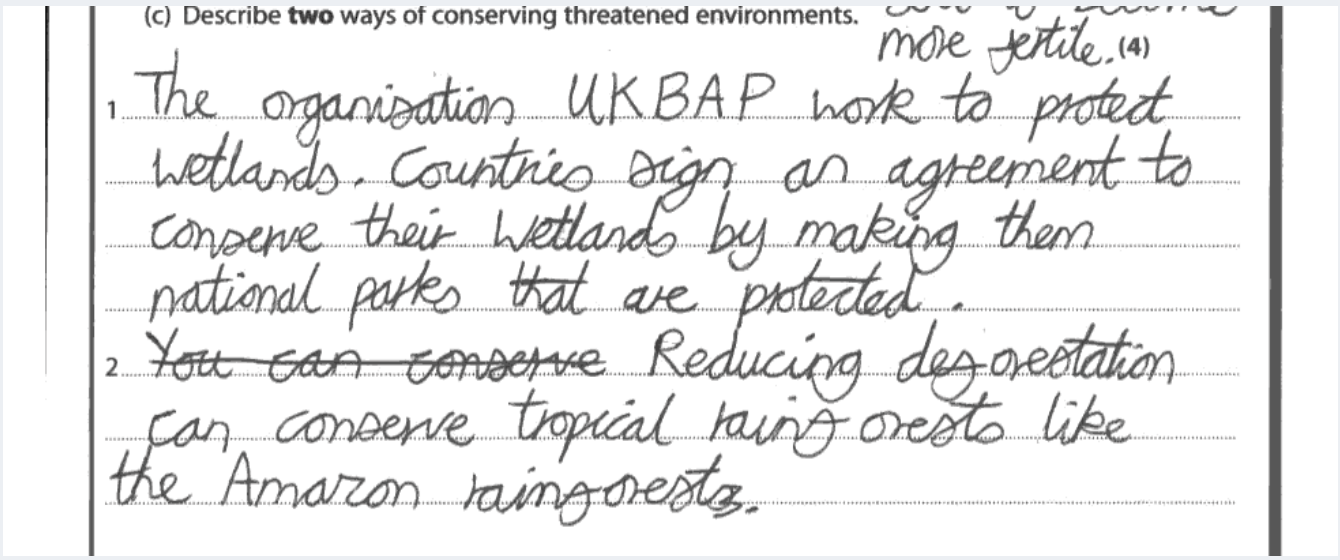
A superb answer. Two natural causes identified and clearly described. Volcanic eruptions are an interesting option as, depending on the nature of the eruption they can either cool the planet (by emitting ash that blocks the sun's rays) or warm it (by releasing greenhouse gases).

Question 3(b)

This was another new content area for most centres. Candidates appeared to struggle to understand the difference between a 'service' and 'good', with goods being listed by over half the candidates. Goods are usually items that can be collected from a biome and taken elsewhere, such as timber or fruits; whereas services are usually processes which can't be seen, including climate regulation and nutrient cycling. Statements referring to 'carbon sinks' and 'oxygen production' were the most common correct answer.

Question 3(c)

Although candidates were often able to identify ways of conserving threatened environments, they often failed to include adequate detail to be awarded the additional marks. Sometimes candidates struggled to provide description as a result of their chosen strategy. The best responses were usually related to 'national parks' or 'eco-tourism' as these approaches are familiar and understood.



(c) Describe **two** ways of conserving threatened environments. more fertile. (4)

1 The organisation UKBAP work to protect wetlands. Countries sign an agreement to conserve their wetlands by making them national parks that are protected.

2 ~~You can conserve~~ Reducing deforestation can conserve tropical rainforests like the Amazon rainforest.

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Examiner Comments

In order to gain full marks, this candidates needed to develop the second point by highlighting how deforestation can benefit the rainforest.

Question 4(a)

Although generally well answered, a significant minority of candidates lost marks by applying their own knowledge rather than using the resource. As the question asked candidates to 'use figure 4', only benefits selected from figure 4 were accepted. Part 'a' questions are always resource based and usually require interpretation rather than knowledge application.

Question 4(b)

This question was successfully tackled by most candidates. A small number mixed-up water quality with water shortages, whilst some candidates identified causes rather than effects.

(b) Give **two** effects of water pollution.

(2)

1 Any lifeforms living in the water will die.

2 The water will become contaminated.

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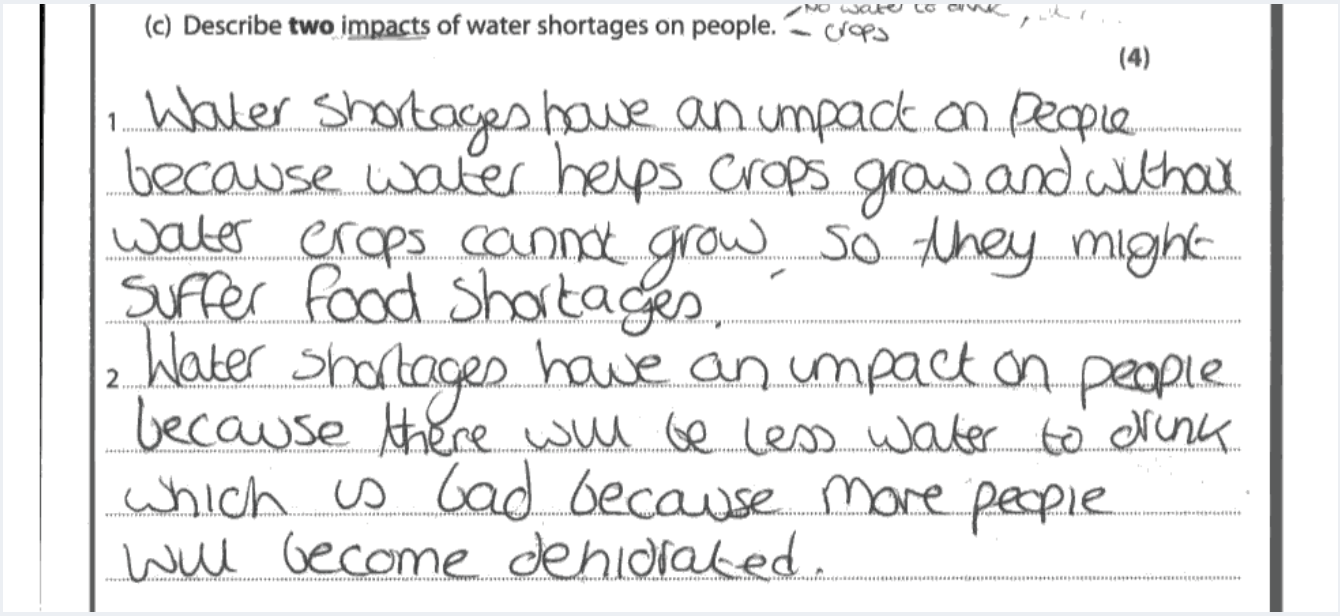
Examiner Comments

This candidate dropped marks as his second response is just a 're-wording' of water pollution. To gain full marks the candidate needed to explain the effects of contaminated water e.g. illness if drank.

Question 4(c)

There were some good responses to this question. Most candidates were able to identify two impacts of water shortages, although a significant minority failed to provide the additional description needed for full marks. Candidates also lost marks by referring to environmental rather than people related impacts, i.e. water shortages can lead to river levels falling and fish habitats being destroyed.



(c) Describe **two** impacts of water shortages on people.

(4)

1 Water shortages have an impact on People because water helps crops grow and without water crops cannot grow. So they might suffer food shortages.

2 Water shortages have an impact on people because there will be less water to drink which is bad because more people will become dehidrated.

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Examiner Comments

A good response. The candidates scores additional marks for identifying the knock-on consequences of the original impacts.

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Examiner Tip

Carefully read questions and watch out for command and key words. Many candidates lost points on this question by failing to focus their response on people impacts.

Question 5(c)

This question proved a challenge for most candidates, although the candidates that had a clear understanding of spits often reached level 3. A significant minority of candidates got stacks and spits mixed-up. Due to the nature of the specification, 'process' was the main focus of the mark scheme, with a clear explanation of longshore drift moving candidates into level 2. Top level responses required candidates to 'explain' at least one spit feature (i.e. the marsh or curved tip). Although these were features were highlighted by some candidates, most did not offer an explanation as to why they formed.

*(c) Explain the formation of a spit. Use Figure 5b to help your answer.

(6)

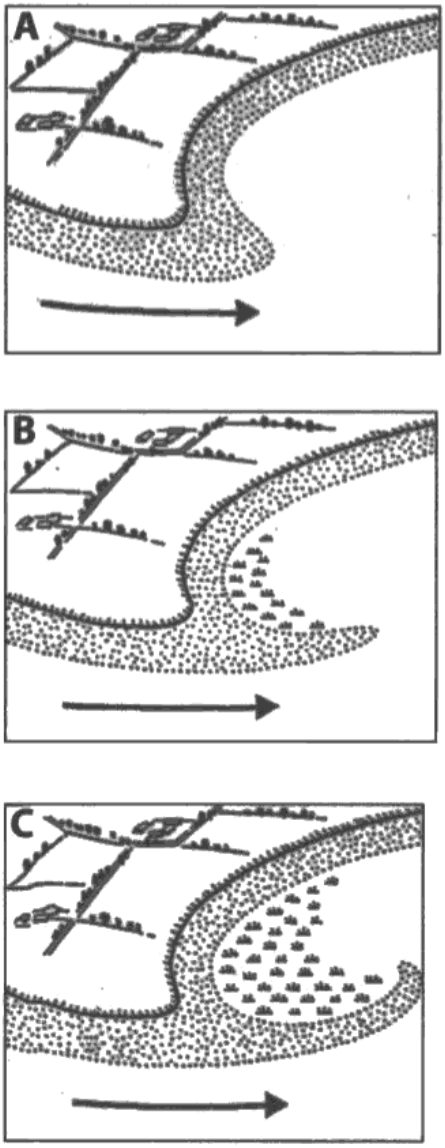

Figure 5b – Spit formation

Long shore drift is a process which moves and deposits sediment, sand and stone, along the beach via swash and backwash where the sea travels up the beach depositing sediment, backwash is when the water moves back down the beach, dragging sediment with it. If this process reaches a gap, say a cone, then the sea will deposit sediment at the edge of the beach, this continues until a small land mass is created. Spits often fill up with sediment until salt marshes begin to grow.

(Total for Question 5 = 9 marks)

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Examiner Comments

A clear understanding of longshore drift moved this candidate up to level 2. For level 3 the candidates needed to explain why the marsh forms behind the spit, rather than just identifying it.

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Examiner Tip

Take advantage of diagrams when they are provided. Credit is given for adding annotations and additional details. It is often easier to explain physical processes in pictures than it is in words.

*(c) Explain the formation of a spit. Use Figure 5b to help your answer.

(6)

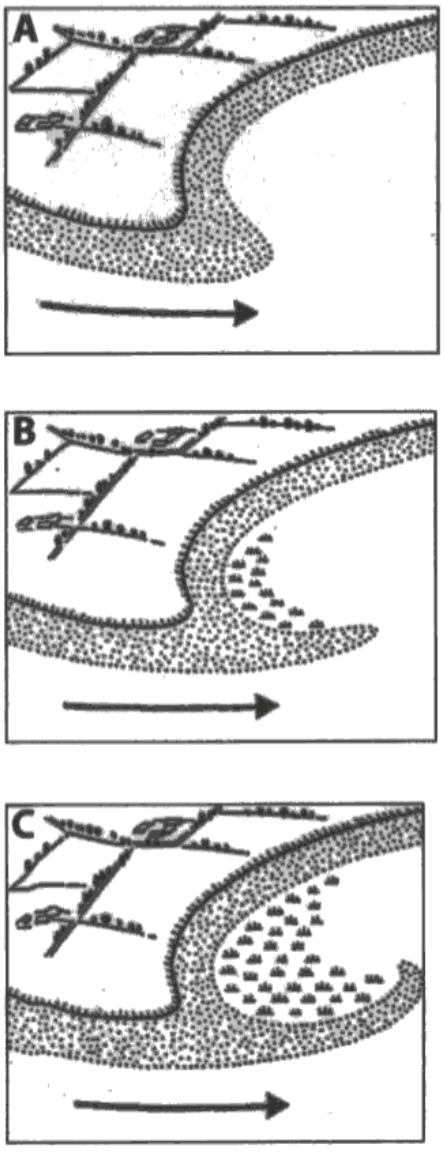

Figure 5b – Spit formation

The spit Gets made when sand Gets deposted by longshore drist at the end or a beach Eg: River Humber at the mouth.

It then starts to collect up and form the spit but forms marsh land behind it.

Then the spit is formed and will Grow due to long shore drift forming bigger marshes behind it.

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Examiner Comments

This response gave a clear description of the diagrams provided, but failed to offer the explanation needed for level 3.

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Examiner Tip

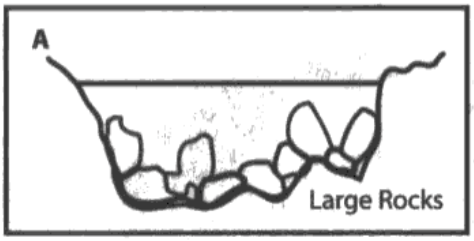
Candidates should be encouraged to use the mnemonic 'PST' – indicating 'processes, sequence, technical terms' – candidates should be encouraged to check they have included these elements in any landform development answer, such as spits and stacks.

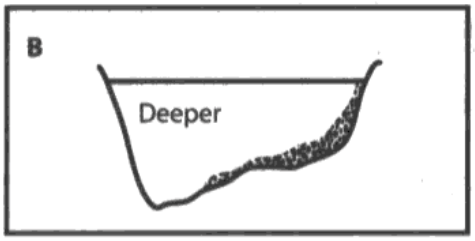
Question 6(c)

Although candidates appeared to find this task difficult, most were able to score and a large minority reached level 3. A common mistake was for candidates to identify 'valley' rather than 'channel' changes. For level 3, candidates were required to clearly describe changes in shape, velocity and bedload. Level 3 could also be achieved by explaining how these factors interlink. i.e. As the channel size increases the stronger current becomes stronger and leading to bedload erosion. Credit was given to candidates who identified channel landforms, such as meanders or waterfalls at the appropriate stage. Velocity comments were often confused, with many candidates stating that speed decreases downstream.

*(c) Describe how the shape and characteristics of river channels change from source to mouth. Use Figure 6b to help your answer.

(6)





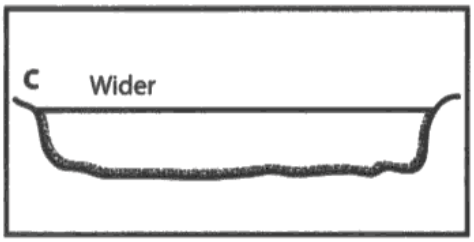


Figure 6b – Channel change

in the upper course of the river the channel will be reasonably shallow and not very wide, some of the ~~characteristics~~ characteristics of the upper course may be waterfalls, gorges and large ~~f~~ rock.

further down a river in the middle course there ~~will be~~ river would have ~~deepened~~ got deeper and wider, ~~with~~ there will be a few meanders in this part of the river, and the ~~+~~ large rocks will now be sediment of pebbles.

in the lower course of a river the channel will be wide and deep with many meanders, ~~the~~ sede and maybe an ox-bow lake, the pebbles and sediment would be small grains now

(Total for Question 6 = 9 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 9 MARKS

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Examiner Comments

Candidates provides a clear description of how the channel shape and load changes along the river's course. The candidates also identifies a range of channel landforms, suggesting good background knowledge.

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Examiner Tip

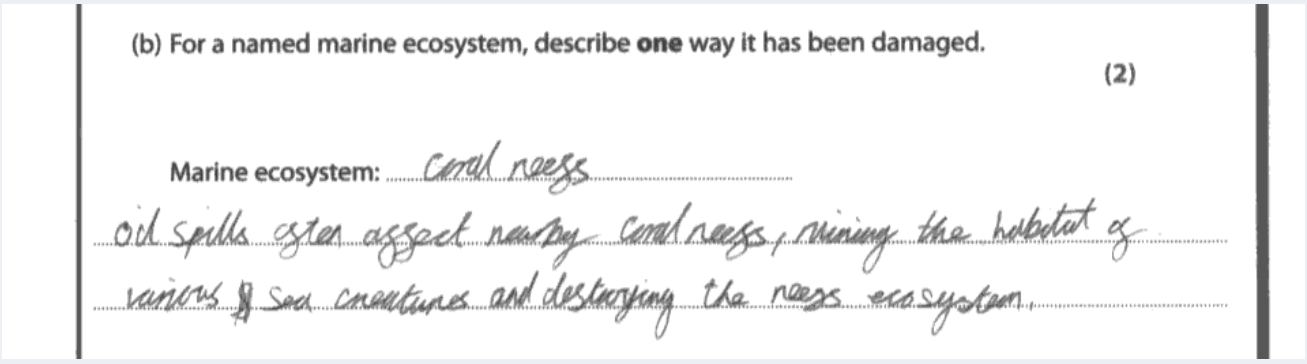
When diagrams are given to assist your answer, it is often possible to reach level 2 by providing a detailed description of the resource. However, to reach level 3 you are usually required to add information not illustrated on the accompanying diagrams.

Question 7(a)

Although the majority of candidates scored on this question, there were a number of common mistakes. A significant number of candidates referred to the impact on 'Killer Whales' rather than 'Blue Whales'. Other candidates described the impact of a declining Krill population on phytoplankton. A number of candidates clearly didn't understand how species in a food web are connected, with numerous answers suggesting that the Krill eat Blue Whales.

Question 7(b)

A surprisingly high number of candidates scored no marks on this question as they were unable to identify a marine ecosystem (e.g. coral reef, continental shelf, or mangrove forest). Where ecosystems were identified candidates had a tendency to 'list' damaging activities rather than describing a single activity.



(b) For a named marine ecosystem, describe **one** way it has been damaged.

(2)

Marine ecosystem: coral reefs

oil spills often affect nearby coral reefs, ruining the habitat of various sea creatures and destroying the reefs ecosystem.

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Examiner Comments

This candidates scored maximum marks. They identified an appropriate ecosystem, highlighted pollution (in this case oil spills) as the means of damage, and described its impact (habitat destruction).

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Examiner Tip

Always try to identify the command term before answering a question. This item was a 'describe' question. In order to score full marks on a describe question you need to add some depth to your response. The question clearly states 'one' so listing several will score you no extra marks.

Question 7(c)

A mixed performance on this question. A significant minority attained level 3, whilst a considerable number scored 0. The question asked candidates to base their response on an example(s). These examples could have been specific destinations, named ecosystems or specific management methods. However, the best responses tended to be when candidates referred to case study regions.

*(c) Using examples, describe how marine ecosystems can be managed sustainably.

(6)

marine conservations can be built in marine hotspots to give the sealife a chance to develop and breed again, like in Lundy Island. The amount of fish that fishermen are allowed to fish per year can be decreased, and fish net mesh size can be made larger, so only large fish are caught, and if a small fish is caught, it can easily escape without any harm.

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Examiner Comments

The candidate briefly explains what hot spots are and gives a real life example. Most of the marks are scored for explaining how they work. This candidate has described two strategies, quotas and laws on net size. For the second strategy, the candidate also explains its impact - pushing the response up to level 3.

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Examiner Tip

When a question refers to using example(s), it is often simpler to attain level 3 by using a number of examples, as a single case study will need to be very detailed to achieve this level.

Question 8(b)

Although well answered by most, a considerable number of candidates simply stated that it's 'too hot' or 'too cold'. As the question is about extreme climates we know that the temperature is unlikely to be a positive feature, so such comments are just stating the obvious. To score marks candidates needed to identify the problems created by a climate that is too hot or too cold, i.e. illness (sunstroke / hypothermia). There were some excellent responses referring to the need to build on stilts or gravel in Alaska to avoid melting the permafrost, or to conflict caused by disputes over water supply in the Middle East.

Question 8(c)

Candidates found this question difficult. A considerable number of candidates misinterpreted the question, describing the present difficulties associated with living in a hot arid or polar region. The question, however, asked candidates to identify future problems/benefits that could develop due to climate change. Climate change is a key aspect of the specification and candidates should expect at least one climate change question per paper. Candidates also limited their score by failing to identify a suitable region. A large number of candidates chose 'Africa' as their case study region, this made it difficult to achieve level 3 as clearly not all of Africa is arid and therefore it was difficult for the response to be focused and region specific.

*(c) For a named hot arid or polar region, describe how climate change could threaten people and natural systems.

(6)

Name of region: Sahel

The Sahel is a hot arid region and struggles with water shortages if there was climate change it would impact it massively because the people there will have to addapt to the changing climate and the animals will because their habitats will change but in worst ways desertification will occur this means less rainfall and much hotter and this leads to no vegetation.

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Examiner Comments

This response reached level 2. Marks were awarded to recognising that climate change could lead to diversification, and that this could lead to habitat change and problems for wildlife. The response doesn't refer to the impact on people, and was therefore unable to achieve level 3.

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Examiner Tip

When a question refers to two factors, in this case people and natural systems, both must be included in your response to achieve level 3.

Paper Summary

Overall the paper appears to have differentiated well. The early sections of the paper were well answered, with the optional units proving more difficult for candidates. Foundation tier candidates often struggled to provide the detail necessary to attain full marks on the part 'c' questions. Candidates often listed a wide range of factors rather than focusing in and providing greater detail. Where candidates were asked to use examples or named regions, candidates often struggle to select appropriate examples / destinations.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	50	30	25	20	15	10	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	69	60	50	40	30	20	0

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