Pearson Edexcel

# Examiners' Report
# Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Geography B (1GB0)
Paper 01: Global Geographical Issues

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## Introduction

This paper forms Component 1 of the linear assessment series for the Edexcel B (9-1) Geography specification. Paper 1 is an issues-based paper, covering a range of physical and human geography content. It is a 90-mark paper, broken into three 30-mark sections, with each section covering one topic within the specification. Four additional marks are allocated to the extended writing question within Question (Q) 02 – the Development Dynamics section. These marks are for correct spelling, punctuation, and the accurate use of grammar and specialist terminology (SPGST). The questions are designed to increase in difficulty within each section, culminating in an 8-mark extended writing question. The 'ramp' resets at the beginning of each section. All questions are compulsory. The exam includes multiple-choice questions, short open response, calculations and 8-mark extended writing questions. The exam command words, which are used in this paper, are defined on page 49 of the specification. Each of the questions is mapped to one or more of the Assessment Objectives (AOs).

Candidates performed well given the significant disruption they faced during their GCSE course. Centres should be congratulated in the progress their candidates have made in such extenuating circumstances.

There was evidence that candidates were well prepared in terms of time management with very few candidates being unable to attempt the extended mark questions. There was improvement in the ability of candidates to score well in the ‘explain two’ questions with evidence that they had been well prepared to make and fully develop two separate points.

A further positive feature was that candidates demonstrated a good understanding of subject specific terminology which enabled them to access both shorter responses questions as well as the 8 mark questions.

In general, the assessment of application and interpretation (AO3) and the addressing of the command words associated with the 8 mark questions, 'assess' and ‘evaluate’ continues to seem to be challenging for a significant proportion of candidates. This is an area to focus upon to improve performance across all ability groups but particularly the lower and middle ability candidates.

This report will provide comments for a selection of questions. However, it must be considered that with fewer than 50 candidates sitting the November 2020 series any conclusions are tentative given the small evidence base.

***Question 1b***

Although most candidates were able to identify a cause of a plate movement, which was encouraging, far fewer were able to fully explain why plate movement occurs.
The majority of those receiving full marks were credited for the identification of the cause, which was almost ubiquitously 'convection currents' with further explanatory points identifying the cause of convection currents and the effect they have on plate movement.

***Question 1ci***

Many candidates found it difficult to gain full marks. Although they were able to identify points on the graph they did not engage fully with the term 'trend'. Instead, they pointed out key points on the graph in isolation without relating their answer to the forty-year time-period mentioned in the question. Typically, this involved stating that in 1978 there was 16.3 million $km^2$ of ice and in 2018 there was 14.3 million $km^2$ of ice. There was very little use of the 1978-2018 average line which enabled a small number of candidates to make clear reference to a trend.
Where candidates engaged with the term 'trend' and used data, they produced good answers, with many candidates achieving three marks.

***Question 1ciii***

There were plenty of good initial points made as to how decreases in Arctic ice coverage can have consequences for people although a proportion of candidates were unable to fully develop their initial point.
Candidates who gave answers that related to sea level rise and coastal flooding were the most successful whilst others were able to adequately explain impacts on people outside of the Arctic region. A surprising number of answers focussed on positive impacts of Arctic ice decrease which were equally acceptable.

***Question 1d***

Responses included a variety of pieces of evidence demonstrating natural climate change, most commonly historical records and ice cores. A

disappointing number of candidates referred to the effects of enhanced global warming in their answers.

***Question 1f***

Like 1ciii, candidates were expected to identify and extend two points. This question was answered well by candidates at the top end of the ability range, Typically, the idea of storms reaching land and no longer having a water source along with storms moving into cooler waters and losing energy was the most common route to full marks. At the lower end of the ability range, candidates attempted to attribute energy loss to storms encountering physical obstructions scoring no marks.

***Question 1g***

Answers commonly focussed on differences in the level of development accounting for contrasting levels of vulnerability although weaker, level 1 candidates were unable to explain why poorer countries often are more vulnerable.

The highest-performing candidates distinguished between physical, social and economic vulnerability, supplementing their answers with specific locational detail. This high quality AO2 knowledge enabled candidates to be more specific when making judgements. It was evident that these candidates were well prepared for this type of question, assessing the reasons throughout their answer.

The 8 mark questions in paper 1 are weighted AO2 4 marks and AO3 4 marks. Those candidates who did not engage with the assess element of the question were limited to Level 2, because they were unable to access AO3.
In weaker Level 1 responses, a significant number of candidates did not respond to the question asked. Instead, they discussed the impacts of a tropical storm in one location and in doing so, did not offer reasons for different levels of vulnerability between countries.

***Question 2b***

On 2-mark explain questions there is no reward for description.
At the lower end of the cohort ability range the question was inaccessible because of a lack of understanding of ‘fertility rates’.
Stronger responses focussed on improvements in education leading to improvements in the rights and opportunities for women.

***Question 2cii***

In this 3 mark 'explain' question, candidates were required to explain a stage of the Rostow model. Two further marks were available for the explanation of subsequent stages. There were some very good answers where candidates clearly related development to the Rostow model. There were also a large proportion of answers which simply attempted to describe the diagram in the previous question with little or no understanding of the individual stages of the model.

***Question 2d***

Candidates at the lower end of the ability range found this question challenging as they were not familiar with the term 'intermediate technology'. The wording for all questions in the series will come directly from the specification. It is therefore important that candidates are encouraged to learn key geographical terminology.
Several candidates successfully identified that intermediate technology can be inexpensive and accessible even for the poorest members of society.

***Question 2fi***

Calculating the interquartile range of a dataset proved to be a challenging mathematical skill for many candidates. A common error was for candidates instead to calculate the range for the data given, subtracting the HDI for Sabah from that of Kuala Lumpur. Some candidates calculated the correct answer but not all showed their working, which was a disappointing way to forego 1 mark.

***Question 2fii***

Most candidates were able to identify a relevant data presentation technique, with a bar graph being the most common answer. However, many of these candidates went on to state that this technique would allow the data to be displayed in a clear way rather than describing how the technique would look on paper, for instance by mentioning labelling on the x and y axis. A common pitfall was the suggestion of a line graph, which would be more suited to temporal change rather than being used to compare data from different locations.

***Question 2g***

This was another 2x2 question requiring the identification of two ways economic development can lead to water pollution with each point explained as to how development has an impact on water pollution. This question was answered well by candidates at the top end of the ability range, with a significant number reaching 4 marks.

At the lower end of the ability range, candidates merely stated ways in which water can be polluted and were unable to link this to the process of economic development.

***Question 2h***

The A02 element was stronger than the A03 element in almost all cases with India almost ubiquitous as the chosen case emerging country.

Most candidates scored 3 or 4 marks (low level 2). Many did not include sufficient detailed knowledge of their named emerging country to progress beyond low level 2. Rather their answer was very generic and could be applied to many emerging nations. A further issue was that some answers were imbalanced, typically preferring to focus almost entirely on the positive role TNCs have on the development of a nation.

At the lower end of the ability range, some candidates misinterpreted the question, instead focussing on the reasons why TNCs locate in emerging nations rather than the role they play in their development.

Candidates who progressed through level 2 and into level 3 offered evaluative comments, often focussing on job creation and the multiplier effect whilst balancing this with details of sweatshop environments, wage suppression and profits being channelled overseas. Answers were supplemented by well-reasoned conclusions.

***Question 3bii***

A disappointing proportion of candidates misinterpreted this question and rather than suggesting reasons for the variations in rates of annual urban growth between countries instead gave reasons why urban growth occurs within a country. In doing so, no reference was made to other countries and why variations exist. This form of response was self-limiting to 1 mark.

The best answers made use of Figure 7 and identified that South Africa has a lower rate of annual urban growth as its population is already considerably more urbanised than the other countries in the figure. Other successful responses identified that some countries are more attractive destinations for TNC investment and therefore will attract more rural-urban migration.

***Question 3ciii***

Candidates were asked to identify two reasons why there is a high percentage of people working in the informal sector in developing world economies and develop each of those initial reasons to score the full allocation of marks. There was a misconception that people in urban developing economies prefer to work in the informal sector rather than formal employment purely as a means of tax avoidance or to be their own boss. Successful responses identified the shortage of formal sector jobs as being a reason for people entering the informal sector because of rapid population growth, fuelled by rural-urban migration.

***Question 3dii***

Most candidates received at least one mark for this question, but only a small number went on to gain both marks. Those who scored 1 mark produced simplistic answers with comments such as 'they are near each other, near the road and near housing' – only one proximity mark was awarded to this type of answer. Candidates who scored both marks were able to make good use of the pointers available on the resource, such as the scale, compass point, and major transport infrastructure.

***Question 3diii***

This question examined the ability of students to interpret a resource identifying reasons why the Hudson's redevelopment site may be attractive for future redevelopment.
A frequent response was its location within Detroit's Central Business District is located nearby, making it an attractive area for business to locate as the area will already have high footfall. Proximity to the Detroit People Mover was also a common response, making the site accessible.
Some common mistakes were that candidates did not make sufficient use of the surrounding features on the resource or they mirrored their answer in scaffold two, limiting themselves to two marks by offering the same, or a similar, explanation twice.

***Question 3e***

This question examined the candidates' knowledge and understanding of the location of their chosen megacity and how the location has influenced its growth. The specification requires candidates to study a megacity in an emerging country. It was therefore disappointing to see many candidates choose a city which was neither a megacity nor was in an emerging country. Nonetheless, examples such as New York and London were credited provided they had valid locational factors. Many answers were generic with comments such as 'it's on flat land or it's close to the sea' and therefore scored 1 mark. Clearly, such comments can be applied to a whole host of locations and did not reflect a detailed knowledge of the megacity which had been studied. Others described infrastructure which has been developed as a consequence of the growth of cities such as Mumbai's international airport (or London Heathrow) rather than locational factors which have contributed to the growth of a megacity.

***Question 3f***

This question proved challenging for the lower end of the ability range with many answers either short or very generic answers. The major cities most discussed were Mumbai or Lagos with a small number of candidates attempting to use New York or London as their example despite the question asking for a megacity in a developing or emerging country.

Lower scoring responses typically were able to identify some ways that life in megacities varied, typically incomes and life expectancy however, a disappointing number of candidates at both the low and mid-ability range were unable to demonstrate much of an understanding of the term 'quality of life'. Few responses made reference to environmental factors leading to quality of life variations.

Some responses were very generic and could be applied to almost any location with little specific locational knowledge of different districts within a city. Others ignored the concept of quality of life variations within a megacity and outlined differences between regions of a country, typically between Maharashtra and Bihar.

Assessment was a feature of very few answers, limiting answers to low and mid-level 2. In the instances when this was done successfully, candidates often highlighted income as the root cause of quality of life variations with some answers being developed to highlight stark differences between areas within cities with the quality of life in Dharavi being contrasted to areas such as Malabar Hills in Mumbai.

**Page Summary**

Moving forwards, the following points may help guide future teaching and learning.

- Keep practising ‘assess’ and ‘evaluate’ style questions. Together, they account for 28 marks out of 94 on this paper. Focus on making balanced judgements supported by evidence to access AO3 marks.
- Case-study knowledge is important. In the 'Development Dynamics' section, there is a compulsory case-study of an emerging country. In the 'Challenges of an Urbanising World' section candidates must cover a megacity in either a developing or emerging country. Be prepared to use specific case study detail to support your answers.
- In questions in which candidates are asked to develop a single reason, it is important to ensure that the appropriate number of developmental points are made. The number of marks should be used as a guide to doing this.
- Ensure that all wording in the question is considered when producing answers. For example, in question 3bii the idea of variations between the annual rate of urban growth between countries was omitted from answers in many instances.
- Some questions such as 3diii will ask candidates to make use of a resource.
- Ensure that resources are studied carefully. Many resources will have a compass point and a scale. Try to make use of these in answers.
- it is important to remember how to perform different calculations (AO4). A full list of the required mathematical skills can be found on page 38 of the specification. 2 mark calculation questions often require candidates to fully show their working.

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