# GCSE

# Geography A

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1986**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE 1086**

# Report on the Units

# June 2007

1986/1086/3986/MS/R/07

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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**GCSE Geography A (1986)**
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**General Comments**

The fifth examination of the specification with its three different components proved to be a genuine test of candidates' geographical knowledge, understanding and skills application. The successful candidates had learned a comprehensive body of knowledge that they could use to support their understanding of key geographical concepts. They had also acquired the ability to apply their geographical skills both in practical situations and through map and data interpretation.

The comprehensive nature of the examining system allowed all candidates to demonstrate their strengths and there were many excellent examples of high calibre geography. Many centres have obviously put a great amount of time and effort into preparing their candidates and they are to be commended on this.

This report on the examination is based upon comments from the many examiners and moderators who were responsible for judging the work of candidates. Hopefully its use to teachers will be the advice it contains which they can pass on to future candidates, so that they can also maximise their examination performance.

Candidates, particularly in the higher tier paper, coped well with the questions which were marked by using levels criteria. Centres are reminded that all case study sections and extended answers are marked in this way. The work done at INSET meetings to illustrate how the marking criteria are applied has proved very valuable. Many candidates included place-specific information in their case study examples and therefore accessed the highest level. Where candidates are still writing vague, general answers they need to be taught how such answers can be improved. The use of case study templates is illustrated in the revision guide which has been published to support the specification.

Although the examination system is perpetual it must be remembered that in each year the examination is a unique experience for that group of candidates. Consequently the following advice may be useful to candidates about to embark on their final preparation for the 2008 examination.

- Obey the rubric instructions in paper 2;
- Read each question carefully;
- Pay particular attention to key words which are often emboldened, also 'command' words and words which set the context or scale of the answer;
- Recognise any change of emphasis within the question focus;
- Recognise that questions are usually based around a theme which will provide a link between sections;
- Do not repeat the same answer in different sections - such answers do not gain double credit;
- Be precise when using information from maps, graphs and diagrams;
- Relate questions to examples and identify appropriate case studies which have been learned;
- Learn the details of case studies to give them authenticity;
- Use the number of marks available for a section as a guide to the number of points needed;
- Develop ideas and extend answers in order to increase the marks which can be awarded;
- Re-read and check the answers if there is time at the end of the examination;
- Ensure that the correct equipment is brought to the examination including pen, pencil, ruler, rubber and calculator. (Centres should ensure that some loose-leaf paper is available for purposes such as measuring).

The following books have been published by Hodder Murray to accompany the specification:
- A New Introduction to Geography for OCR Specification A
  ISBN 0-340-74707-2
- A New Introduction to Geography for OCR Specification A Revision Guide
  ISBN 0-340-87643-3
- A New Introduction to Geography for OCR Specification A Foundation edition
  ISBN 0-340-88674-9

Some centres continue to ignore instructions concerning the examination. These are a great cause for concern from examiners as it makes their task more difficult. Two requests from examiners of paper 2 in particular to speed up their marking process are:

1    Insist that candidates record the number of the questions that they have answered on the front page of the answer booklet.
2    Attach any extension sheets to the main answer booklet with a treasury tag. Do not merely insert loose papers inside the answer booklet.

**1086/01 Paper 1 (Foundation Tier)**

As in previous years there was evidence of some excellent work with the most able candidates demonstrating use of initiative either following their own line of enquiry, using ICT to integrate graphs and tables into written work or providing detailed annotation of photographs and maps. Although candidates entered for this examination continue to represent the whole ability range, this year's cohort mirrors that of last year with fewer gaining marks in the top quartile or obtaining full marks. About 53% of the 32 centres entered less than 10 candidates and there seem to be fewer large centres offering the full course; only three centres entered over 50 candidates. About 30% of centres results covered the full mark range.

The majority of the coursework units prepared by the centres were appropriate, allowing a range of both primary and secondary data to be collected. Most coursework units provided either a clear hypothesis or an investigation title; both options allowing candidates to test a structured set of tasks. In a small minority of centres, candidates were encouraged to devise their own hypothesis on different topics. There were a minority of centres who, however, provided no title or it was very unclear what the title actually was. Several units still tend to be teacher led, and centres should avoid giving candidates a series of questions to answer which do not encourage them to develop their own line of enquiry. Some units provided extension exercises, allowing candidates to reach the top levels by either collecting additional data or completing a similar survey of another area. Where this was evident, clear guidance given and coursework was well structured, candidates were reaching the top levels in all marking criteria. The lack of an extension option limits candidates, who tend to produce similar, standardised work. To reach top levels, candidates should be encouraged to use their initiative by carrying out a mini enquiry demonstrating independent research. Some centres cater for this by giving a choice of hypothesis/investigations or a question specifically requiring them to undertake an individual investigation. When applied, these methods usually work quite successfully, allowing candidates to achieve well at their ability level. This provides the more able candidates with the opportunity to reach the top levels of the marking criteria. The majority of centres demonstrated a clear link between coursework set and the teaching programmes outlined in the specification. Centres requiring assistance to link their units more closely to the teaching themes as outlined in the syllabus (page 29, section 6.1, para. 1).are able to consult/take the advice of the Coursework Consultant.

72% of investigations were linked to urban studies. Others included environmental investigations (several being based on tourism), and river studies. Some innovative ideas this year included investigations into potential sites for the 2012 Olympics and the selection of premises for a businessman. Examples of good quality work continue to be most evident in urban studies. It is apparent that the more able candidates extend their enquiry by either carrying out their own additional investigation or by collecting additional/different data. Many coursework units suggested extension tasks designed to allow candidates reach the top levels. Although the majority of these studies did provide this opportunity for the collection of primary data, some candidates did not take advantage of this and their research was limited (e.g. simplistic questionnaires, downloaded unannotated maps and photographs etc). Popular investigations within this urban theme remain unchanged with the application of urban models, CBD functions and shopping surveys again topping the list!  Others were related to urban growth, environmental quality surveys and transects. Those centres who base their coursework on urban models should advise the candidates to apply the theory to the urban area they are studying, rather than give a description of the model (preferably Mann's model of the British city, rather than those such as Burgess, referring to American cities). There were some good examples of successful attempts at representing and analysing the data for both environmental and river studies.

Most centres encourage candidates to collect primary as well as secondary data. Candidates should be encouraged not to copy or download information and submit it instead of their original work. Those centres that do not encourage the collection of primary data deny candidates the

opportunity to use their initiative and to reach the top levels. There are coursework support materials available in addition to the services of the Coursework Consultant. Centres which experience difficulties in planning coursework should seek advice from the Consultant. It is encouraging to note that candidates are improving their work by placing more emphasis on methodology. This year greater use was made of charts and matrices to identify limitations/ problems/solutions for primary and secondary data collection. This is recommended as an excellent way to depict the range and type of data collected and not only reduces the word count, but enhances the evaluation of data collected.

Coursework submitted represented the whole ability range, but there continues to be an imbalance in the entry. There are more candidates in the middle to lower ability range than at the top end. The continued improvement in preparation and support for students of all abilities was evident from centres. There was pleasing evidence demonstrating candidates' initiative in the preparation of individual questionnaires, data collection and processing. Although data was processed in graphical and cartographical formats (e.g. choropleth maps and overlays); there still remains less evidence of the use of statistics (e.g. Rs). It seems that more candidates are making good use of ICT skills, although not all maps, graphs and digital annotated photographs are integrated within the text. There were fewer candidates providing numerous pages of photographs and/or field sketches without annotation or reference to the text this year; however some candidates still provide pages of graphs on single sheets, often all of the same type.

Candidates are becoming more selective in their use of primary data collection, with less reliance being placed on the use of questionnaires. It is essential that the results are processed using a variety of different techniques such as tables, graphs, pictograms etc integrated into the written analysis. The results should be not only analysed, but evaluated. Some weaker candidates rely heavily or totally on the inclusion of downloaded material (e.g. maps, photos, text) from the Internet and in a few cases this was inappropriately credited with several marks. Such materials must be carefully selected, annotated and referred to in the written text or appendix in order to gain marks.

It was encouraging to see the continued and excellent use in ICT, including reference to websites and inclusion of scanned photographs and maps (see below). The majority of work from a wide variety of centres is now word processed and the use of ICT is good in the majority of centres. Although many candidates are making good use of graphic packages, centres should monitor the appropriate use of these. There is a tendency to either produce just one type of graph or to use nearly every graphics package available whether or not it is applicable. The misuse of line graphs was also common again this year, even amongst those reaching the top levels. It was common to find maps scanned in from the Internet, however only the minority were annotated and had titles and figure numbers. Centres should monitor the use of ICT closely and ensure that candidates do add appropriate annotations. In some cases candidates produced good research, good evidence of data collection, good data representation and analysis, yet provided brief conclusions and evaluations. Candidates should be reminded that these provide the basis for a substantial number of marks. It is useful if a model and mini hypotheses are included in the introduction for candidates to refer back to in the conclusion and evaluation.

Coursework that allowed positive achievement was well structured, tasks were appropriate and concise hypothesis(es) were investigated. Good fieldwork techniques were practised, allowing candidates to collect, collate and process data. It is essential that a fine line does have to be drawn to ensure there is a balance between providing guidance and being too teacher led. Examples of good practice were evident from centres that encouraged the candidates to include results tables, associated graphs (reduced in size) and written analysis all on one page. Most candidates now produce work that is orderly and well presented using clear headings from contents, aim, hypotheses, etc through to conclusion, evaluation, bibliography and appendix.

Centres are reminded of the suggested 1500 word limit for coursework (page 13, section 4.6 and page 29, section 6.1 in the specification). Some candidates are writing more than is necessary, especially those who are more able or have to answer several hypotheses. The use of annotated diagrams, charts and tables can prove to be an effective alternative to lengthy prose, and enables candidates to use a greater variety of skills in recording and representing data.

This year the application of marking criteria by 23% (compared to 44% in 2006) of centres was inaccurate and adjustments had to be made. Those centres whose marks were adjusted tended to be too generous in awarding marks at all levels against the criteria stated in the specification. Centres should be thoroughly familiar with the guidelines set out on pages 33 - 36 of the specification. Application of assessment criteria caused problems for some centres. The assessment objectives are highlighted on page 31 in the specification. Centres should read these sections carefully, together with the grade descriptions (pages 15 & 16) before marking commences. There was evidence of over marking for each of the three criteria. With respect to understanding, candidates often merely listed what they intended to do in their study, but did not explain why.

Collection and selection of primary and secondary data did not pose as many problems for marking, although candidates should be encouraged to extend their research independently in order to reach a high level. The annual problem occurred as some centres were too generous with their marking for representation of data. Level 2 or 3 marks were awarded when only a limited range of techniques had been used. As in previous years evidence suggests that many candidates do, however, need to include more annotation and add keys and titles to their maps, field sketches, photos and models. Many items such as these were included, but reference was not always made to them in the written text by the weaker candidates. In order to gain the marks awarded at the top levels it is essential that candidates use a greater range of techniques to represent data and include integration of maps, graphs etc into written work. The inclusion of an annotated map integrated into the introduction would set the scene at the start,

Marks were sometimes generously awarded for analysis, interpretation and conclusions. Among weaker candidates, answers tended to be descriptive and they did not analyse their findings in enough detail. More reasoned conclusions and evaluation would provide a higher level response. In order to access the highest levels candidates should acknowledge the limitations of their research and suggest improvements in their final analysis and conclusion.

It is very useful to receive detailed teacher comments and evidence of internal standardisation either on candidates' work or on the cover sheet as they are very helpful during the moderation process, providing relevant background information or details of special circumstances. This is particularly helpful when there is an indication as to the degree of help or the amount of initiative a candidate has used.

Centres are reminded that candidates' work should be sent in clearly labelled, flat cardboard files which are securely fastened, as most were this year. Each piece of work should have a completed cover sheet. It is not necessary to complete a copy of form CCS160 for each candidate. Only one per centre is required. All staff teaching the coursework should sign form CCS160. Candidates should not enclose each sheet of their work in plastic wallets or submit work in hardback clip folders. This year most of the sample coursework was sent by return (within the three day deadline), arriving before half term; this was appreciated. Copies of the coursework units and guidelines are useful when moderating. The moderation process would be enhanced if centres could send MS1 and coursework assessment forms together. There are still a few centres who record 0 instead of A when a candidate has withdrawn from the exam.

If candidates are to achieve the highest level, centres should set tasks and provide a coursework structure which allows candidates to reach level 3 for all marking criteria. It is not possible for copied source materials or highly structured work, with little opportunity for candidates to show independence or initiative, to merit high marks.

At the end of the eleventh year of the course (in its original and present format) it is evident that the use of ICT is now being used by the majority of candidates and that they are organising their work more effectively. The guidance developed in many centres has facilitated this improvement. The whole mark range was used even though only a small proportion of the cohort achieved 100%. There was again evidence of good quality Geography in the work produced.

**1086/02 Paper 2 (Higher Tier)**

**General Comments**

The paper was related to the Paper 2 of specification 1986 and contained two common questions. It would be useful if this report were read in conjunction with the report on Paper 2 of specification 1986.

One key difference from 1986 is that candidates are allowed to choose two questions from four that cover each unit of the specification. It is therefore vital that candidates obey the rubric regulations and do not waste valuable time answering too many questions. There was a tendency in some centres for candidates to answer too many questions. Candidates need to be advised of the rubric before they start the examination. Of the four optional questions question 1 was the most popular with question 2 the least popular.

Examiners felt that some weaker candidates did not understand what was required in some questions because they did not take notice of key words such as 'natural environment', or they did not understand terminology used in the question, for example 'sustainability' and 'diversification'.

The examination is shorter than 1986 paper 2 and candidates must guard against spending too much time on their choice questions so that they do may leave sufficient time to answer the compulsory question 5.

**Comments on Individual Questions**

1    (a)    Some candidates had problems identifying the two processes. More knew transpiration than groundwater flow.

     (b)    (i)    This question was poorly answered by many candidates. A common error was that they did not refer to the information given in Fig 1b. Consequently they began to answer the next section by mistake.

            (ii)    The question differentiated well. Weak answers such as *overland flow is greater so it floods* failed to make reference to impermeable surfaces. Such answers failed to explain why flooding occurred. In contrast the better answers did link cause and effect.

     (c)    Candidates generally answered this question more competently. The main focus of answers was less money therefore the country lacked preparations, precautions, aftercare, clean up capacity etc.

     (d)    Many candidates wrote good accounts of the measures taken to prevent flooding. Common rivers used as case studies were the Rhine, Mississippi, Lyn and a more recent example, the River Calne in Essex. Many answers were not place specific in their details but included general measures such as levees, embankments, spillways etc.

2    (a)    Most candidates described the trend shown in the bar graphs but few used the data to recognise more subtle changes over time in order to gain the second mark.

     (b)    (i)    Candidates generally made good use of the map to guide their answer. Most recognised the potential for employment and also the advantages of a water supply and developed transport links.

(ii) This question was also well answered. Candidates generally understood the pressures on urban areas in LEDCs and a variety of problems were included.

(c) The case study was well known to many candidates who had clearly learned this material. Most candidates based their answer on favelas either in Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo. Answers included extensive descriptions of self-help schemes and government intervention

3 (a) (i) Most candidates correctly interpreted the pie graph.

(ii) This question was generally answered poorly. Candidates stated that *there are lots of attractions in Europe* but did not give examples, or that *the climate is good for holidays*. These ideas were too vague and did not differentiate Europe from many other parts of the world. Another common answer was that *there are many countries to go to*, but that also applies elsewhere. More acceptable responses referred to specific cities or tourist attractions.

(iii) Most candidates correctly ranked the three areas. The most common error was the use of 1995 data.

(b) This question was well answered with many candidates using the ideas suggested by the photographs to explain about jobs and income and then went on to extend their answers into different cultural and social issues. Some candidates drifted into irrelevant answers about impacts on the natural environment.

(c) Candidates showed good awareness of the damage tourists can cause to the natural environment. Popular ideas included scaring animals by approaching too near to them, clearing land for hotel construction, and air pollution caused by tourist vehicles.

(d) Where candidates understood the idea of sustainability they frequently scored high marks. Case studies of Menorca were particularly detailed, with reference being made to limitations on the height of hotels, language used on signs, etc. However, some candidates scored zero because they thought the idea of managing tourism for sustainability meant building more hotels, an airport and nightclubs to attract even more tourists. Another common error was to take an example from a non-EU area, most commonly Kenya.

4 (a) (i) The question was well answered with the majority of candidates scoring two marks.

(ii) Candidates were able to give a range of causes of deforestation.

(b) (i) Candidates understood what is meant by 'input' and made a correct selection from the diagram.

(ii) The term 'leaching' was not generally understood. Some candidates stated that *it is when nutrients are taken from the soil*, but this could be by trees and so it was not credited. Some candidates also thought that nutrients are given out in transpiration. However, most candidates did give an acceptable definition of the term.

(iii) The concept of nutrient cycling was well understood and candidates generally wrote at least two creditable ideas.

(c)    The most common responses focussed on protection of vegetation. Ideas such as stopping mining and logging were frequent. Only the better answers referred to protection of species in National Parks or biological reserves. There was little reference to the Indian Reserves and the whole issue of how the sustainability of traditional lifestyles in the rainforests can be improved was not well understood. Most candidates, despite it being a focus of past questions, did not consider the value of ecotourism.

(d)    Many case studies showed good knowledge of the effects of acid rain, but some were rather general without a great deal of place specific information. The exception was usually when the case study referred to Scandinavia when the best answers included specific detail. Some candidates considered at length the cause of Norway's problem in terms of prevailing winds etc and what needs to be done to help solve the problem. These ideas were irrelevant to the question. Two more common errors in candidates' answers were the statements that *buildings and statues are still being eroded by acid rain* and the detailed consideration of eutrophication and its effects.

5    (a)    (i)    Most candidates correctly identified the type of farming shown in the photograph. The most popular supporting evidence was flat land and suitability for machinery. A few candidates described farming as 'commercial' but this was not accepted.

(ii)    Again most candidates correctly identified the camping and caravan site symbol. A small minority instead referred to the woodland.

(iii)    The reason suggested by nearly all candidates was extra income. The other popular reason for diversification was set-aside land.

(b)    (i)    This proved to be a difficult question with a range of incorrect villages being named.

(ii)    Most candidates completed the bar graph accurately. Occasionally candidates did not gain the mark because their bar was too wide.

(iii)    This question allowed candidates the opportunity to use their map reading skills, which many did to good effect. To get maximum marks candidates had to develop an idea as well as giving an appropriate grid reference. For example *an attraction of living in Welton is the presence of local services such as the school at grid reference 014793.*

(c)    The final question allowed candidates to write at greater length about attitudes to rural change. The question proved to be a good discriminator with candidates suggesting a variety of reasons at both levels 1 and 2. To gain maximum marks it was necessary to suggest possible opinions both for and against the development. A few candidates got rather carried away in their suggested opinions referring to the problems of new town development and the positive or negative multiplier. They rather lost site of the fact that only six homes were replacing one. Nevertheless, candidates considered a variety of attitudes.

**1986 Chief Examiner's Report**

**General Comments**

The fifth examination of the specification with its three different components proved to be a genuine test of candidates' geographical knowledge, understanding and skills application. The successful candidates had learned a comprehensive body of knowledge that they could use to support their understanding of key geographical concepts. They had also acquired the ability to apply their geographical skills both in practical situations and through map and data interpretation.

The comprehensive nature of the examining system allowed all candidates to demonstrate their strengths and there were many excellent examples of high calibre geography. Many centres have obviously put a great amount of time and effort into preparing their candidates and they are to be commended on this.

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Candidates, particularly in the higher tier papers, coped well with the questions which were marked by using levels criteria. Centres are reminded that all case study sections in papers 1 and 2 and extended answers in papers 3 and 4 are marked in this way. The work done at INSET meetings to illustrate how the marking criteria are applied has proved very valuable. Many candidates included place-specific information in their case study examples and therefore accessed the highest level. Where candidates are still writing vague, general answers they need to be taught how such answers can be improved. The use of case study templates is illustrated in the revision guide which has been published to support the specification (see below for details).

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## 1986/01 – Geography Specification A Paper 1

Paper 1 was considered to be appropriate for the ability range of foundation candidates. Differentiation was achieved across the paper, as evidenced by the wide range of marks. There were plenty of opportunities for the C and D grade candidates to demonstrate their abilities, and the resources and structured tasks provided all candidates with the opportunity to achieve positively to some extent, as candidates were able to access information from the diagrams, maps, photos and graphs provided.

There continues to be variation between centres in the quality of preparation which candidates have been given, and this particularly can be seen in answers to case study questions. From some centres there were some good quality, detailed, case studies this year. A large number of candidates had remembered a correct example but not as many could give place specific information. The better candidates gave detailed answers or a limited number of good place specific points in a short answer. At the other extreme, poorer candidates either could not remember examples, or gave inappropriate examples, left the questions blank or wrote bullet points which failed to give enough information. Well prepared candidates were able to access most questions, and the quality of their written answers was generally good and legible. It appeared that all candidates had enough time to complete the paper, those sections that were left blank were done so due to the candidate being unable to answer the question, or not possessing the motivation to do so, as opposed to not having enough time.

As in recent years there was little evidence of candidates being entered for this tier who would have been better entered for the higher tier. The continual reduction in the percentage of entries for foundation tier suggests that centres now mainly enter those candidates who they expect to gain Grade D or below for this tier, using the higher tier for most candidates who they expect to gain Grade C or above.

## Comments on Specific Questions

1   (a)   (i)   Most candidates could define a 'plate boundary' effectively though a significant number could not offer an alternative word such as 'edge' or 'margin'. Some however simply stated that it is where 'earthquakes occur' whilst others went into too much detail and started to explain how earthquakes are caused.

     (ii)   Most correctly identified the direction as North-East.

     (iii)   This differentiated well. There were high quality responses which scored full marks recognising the convergence of the two plates, the resultant build-up of pressure and the subsequent sudden release. Some candidates could offer little more than a meaningless copy of the phrase 'area of subduction' from Fig 1a. whilst others gave completely irrelevant accounts of volcanic eruptions.

   (b)   (i)   A significant number of candidates simply made no attempt to place a cross on the scatter graph, presumably many in their haste to finish had not noticed the question. Where there was a response most could place the cross on the 25,000 deaths line but frequently placed it too far left or right of 6.6 on the horizontal scale. Where reasonable care was taken, candidates achieved the necessary accuracy.

     (ii)   This was well answered by the majority of candidates, who recognised that the scatter graph showed no clear relationship between the number of deaths and the power of the earthquake.

(iii)    Many candidates correctly identified factors such as the population density, the wealth of the nation (usually by using the terms LEDC or MEDC), the strength of the earthquake and the quality of the buildings or emergency services. Some candidates wasted space giving lengthy answers that were reversals of points already made instead of identifying three different factors. Some candidates interpreted the question as 'why do people die in earthquakes?' giving answers like 'buildings collapse on them' without any reference to the strength or type of building.

(c)    This differentiated well. Many candidates identified measures such as drills and other forms of earthquake awareness, along with earthquake-proof buildings, and some developing the latter point well with specifics such as shock-absorbers fitted in base of tall buildings, deep foundations, counter balances etc. Many answers included prediction, alarms and moving to safe shelters underground – if only it could be that simple!

(d)    There were some especially good and place–specific examples based on Kobe, with accurate death and homeless totals or named features such as the collapse of the Hanshin expressway. Other examples such as San Francisco tended to lack the same specificity with candidates referring to the collapse of bridges rather than sections of the Bay Bridge or the top deck of the Nimitz Freeway. There were as usual plenty of candidates who could only offer brief general points, often presented as bullet points, such as people died, or buildings collapsed, which could be about any earthquake and this restricted their answers to Level 1.

Most common mistakes were giving a whole country as the example (e.g. Indonesia, India, Japan) but a few referred to a volcanic eruption, typically Mt. St. Helens.

2    (a)    (i) and (ii)    Almost all candidates completed these simple tasks accurately, although a few put the dot in the wrong sector in (ii).

(iii)    Generally answers to this were disappointing, most candidates writing in brief or vague terms about price, quality and preferring specific shops. A large number of candidates seemed to have no understanding about the relationship between service order and distance. Far too many wrote about the need for more space for things like golf courses or simply copied from the diagram (e.g. people travel further for the cinema) without including reasoning. The minority of candidates produced excellent geographical answers (and terminology) referring to low and high order goods and spheres of influence. A significant number of answers were about why some people travelled further (they own cars, etc) than why they travelled further for 'some services than others'.

(b)    (i)    This seemed such a simple task, as with all photo description questions of its type, until the quality of the response is seen. Far too many candidates failed to attach any adjectives to their lists of nouns such as houses, cars, road etc, all of which are clearly present but would equally be seen in an affluent suburban area. The word 'terraced' was conspicuous by its absence and/or myriad variations in spelling, and a significant number of responses stated that the houses were semi-detached or even detached. The industrial buildings on the right were often identified wrongly as offices or even flats. There were relatively few references to the age of the houses but many answers focused on minutiae such as the bin bags which are hardly a 'main feature' of the area. Some lost marks by describing the area's quality, using value judgements, rather than its features.

Well prepared candidates who had practised the skill of photograph interpretation were able, however, to score full marks with relative ease.

(ii)    Despite the presence of many vague answers about the decline of the area rather than particulars about the housing or its potential replacements, some excellent responses were seen. The best answers tended to describe either the problems of the existing houses (e.g. they may have fallen into disrepair or lack amenities) or suggest what could replace the houses (e.g. new houses, shopping facilities, office/retail developments and new/widened roads etc.)

(iii)    Again a good question for differentiation as some candidates produced good, perceptive answers, some even referring to regeneration and gentrification. Others failed to read the question fully and wrote about the locals wanting the houses improved without saying why. A number wrote about there being no need for these houses because the factories had closed down. Some candidates struggled to express ideas other than in the vaguest of ways such as 'they live there'. Very few scored full marks due, at least in part, to stating the same idea in any number of repetitive ways. Few said the houses look to be in good structural condition and would not require large sums to improve them.

(c)    There were some good place-specific answers based on Glasgow (kiss and ride) and London (congestion charging, Oyster Cards etc) and Nottingham (trams) but it was clear that many candidates were relying on naming their local town and then listing a few brief points such as 'traffic lights' and ' roundabouts'. Using a local example is fine however many gave simplistic responses, rarely describing how the measures improved traffic flows, and often nothing was included that could be regarded as place specific. In some cases this was because the place chosen was too small.

3    (a)    (i)    Most candidates who attempted the task completed the graphic accurately, although some candidates left it blank.

(ii)    Many candidates gained the mark for recognizing the predicted decrease in the percentage of tourists visiting Europe. Some stated there was an increase, which is hard to see how they could arrive at such a conclusion and some only gave figures without any interpretation, which failed to describe the change. Many correct answers also included wrong figures (a decrease of 4% being the most common) but this error was ignored in marking.

(iii)    Very few candidates scored more than one mark. Most answers tended to focus on the weather or other attractions of Africa which cannot be an explanation of the increase in tourism because it has always been hot and had exotic wildlife. Where candidates did focus on the change, they tended to explain it in terms of simple preference – tourists looking for a new experience. Few identified the increasing affluence of MEDC residents or changes in methods of travel such as faster jets with more capacity and therefore lower cost, although many were able to express the simplistic but credit-worthy point that holidays are 'cheaper'.

(b)    (i)    Virtually all candidates scored at least one mark here, although simplistic and poorly chosen wording often restricted them from gaining the maximum. For instance even at foundation level it is too simplistic to observe that Photograph E shows 'shops', there is no evidence that Photograph F is a temple, and to refer to the rather scrubby savanna in Photograph G as 'beautiful scenery' is a long stretch for the imagination. Likewise referring to the lion simply as an 'animal' doesn't really convey the attraction of a safari experience!

(ii)  Most candidates scored 1 or 2 marks on simple ideas of 'jobs being created' and 'money being earned'. Only the more able expanded convincingly on either what those jobs might be or what the money might be spent on to benefit the locals. Again poor or vague wording such as money from 'selling stuff/things' denied some from gaining further credit. More perceptive candidates went further by referring to the multiplier effect and specific benefits of the income from tourism.

(iii)  This differentiated well. Weaker candidates tended to score only on the simple use of the word litter, some putting it in twice for good measure. There were vague references to 'noise' and 'crime' without ever identifying any specific type or cause, such as loud discos or rise in pickpocketing from rich tourists. Weak answers about the natural environment consisted of the use of the same phrase with a simplistic 'destroy' or 'ruin'. Better answers referred to soil erosion by safari mini-buses and loss of natural habitat due to hotel-building.

(c)  This was one of the weakest case studies for many candidates. Some gave areas outside the EU (e.g. Kenya, Africa etc). Also many candidates wrote about the problems of tourism without even suggesting any remedies. The best answers were on Menorca, based on the endorsed OCR textbook, giving specific details such as the maximum height of new hotels being 2 storeys within 250 metres of the coast. Poorly prepared candidates tended to name a whole country, such as France or Spain, and wrote in the most extreme simplistic terms about banning tourists or only allowing so many in, without ever explaining how this could be practically achieved.

4  (a)  (i)  This was reasonably well done but some candidates referred wrongly to acid rain or the wind blowing one or both types of pollution to the river. Generally the farmland section was dealt with better than the industrial section. Virtually all candidates understood that fertilisers and other farmland chemicals run-off into rivers but the deliberate disposal of industrial waste was less well dealt with.

(ii)  Almost all candidates scored one mark for stating that fish or other aquatic life would die. Well prepared candidates were able to develop beyond this by reference top ideas such as food chains and/or eutrophication. Far too many described the impacts on human water supplies despite the focus of the question on 'natural environment'. Many candidates missed the significance of the word 'impacts' and described where the pollution was coming from and how it was getting there, which is what they should have done for the previous question.

(iii)  This was generally poorly done, with many unrealistic references to fences, walls and barriers. Some mentioned what ought to be stopped but failed to say how this could be achieved. More able candidates were able to suggest ideas such as the need for laws and fines for polluters, and that the water could be filtered or treated before it was dumped.

(b)  (i)  Most candidates got the distance correct but a significant number thought the sewage was on the beach when there was a pipe leading into the sea.

(ii)  There was a general misunderstanding of the requirements of this question, with many candidates not able to correctly identify the changes between the location of the sewage as a result of the new sewage pipe. Many identified an impact on the fish (death) or said simply that the sewage was 'in the fishing grounds' without using a comparative statement to establish the change in location, such as 'the sewage is now in the fishing grounds'.

(iii)   Many candidates gained no marks for the impact on hoteliers because they expounded at length about how awful the sewage would be for them when the stem of the question clearly refers to the new sewage pipe which takes it further out, thus potentially improving the situation in the resort. There were, however, some good answers gaining up to 3 of the 4 marks on the impact on fisherman (smaller catches, less money, unemployment, etc) but weaker candidates simply stated the impact on the fish (they die) without making any references to the fishermen.

(c)   Generally a poorly answered case study. Some candidates could not name an example and failed to get above Level 1 as they used bullet points or were vague in their descriptions. A number used mining areas but then wrote about the problems of the mines closing down (e.g. unemployment). Those that did give a good example usually scored well, however not many gained the full five marks as it was rare to see an answer with place specific detail. Many candidates could give one more developed statements (noise of blasting, dust causes asthma, etc) to gain level 2. The weakest candidates gave lists of very simple statements such as more jobs, noise, etc and quite a few described impacts on the natural environment which was irrelevant to the question.

**1986/02 – Higher Tier**

**General Comments**

The paper allowed widespread differentiation. There were many excellent answers in which candidates demonstrated a thorough grasp of geographical principles and a detailed knowledge of place specific case studies to support their argument. The mean mark for the paper was slightly lower than in 2006. However, it was suggested by examiners that some schools might still be entering candidates for the higher tier who may be better suited to the foundation papers. A strong characteristic of weaker candidates is vagueness in many of their answers, especially where case study knowledge is required. If candidates are to reach level 3 in case study sections there is a requirement that their answer is place specific in addition to being comprehensive. A good way to test this requirement is for candidates to read their answer and 'cover up' the name of the case study. A suitable answer will be recognisable about a particular place or event through the detailed references being made.

Where case studies were on familiar topics candidates scored well, as in questions 1 and 4. However, where case studies were not so well rehearsed, as in questions 5 and 7, answers were sometimes inappropriate or lacked detail.

Examiners felt that some weaker candidates did not understand what was required in some questions because they did not take notice of key words such as 'natural environment' and 'population density', or they did not understand terminology used in the question, for example 'sustainability'.

The following advice may help candidates to improve the general standard of answer on this paper.
- Aim to develop each idea so that their answer does not emerge as a list of similar points.
- Read the entire question carefully before they begin their answer. Decide what is an appropriate case study and fulfils the requirements of the question.
- Take note of the key word, which may be emboldened, so that the answer is relevant to the question.
- Use the mark allocation as a guide to the amount of detail or number of responses required.
- Use resources such as graphs and diagrams carefully in order to make use of the information they include.
- Plan your time carefully as there was some evidence that candidates were rushing to complete their final answer or leaving it incomplete.

Questions 1, 3, 5 and 7 were more popular in each section. It is inevitable that given choice some topics in the specification will be more appealing to candidates than others. Nearly all candidates answered their four questions in numerical order and progressed through the four sections from A to D. There was little evidence of any attempt to evaluate questions before starting to answer them or to make rough plans for answers. Candidates are again advised to read through the whole paper before they begin their answers in order to pick out their best-known topics to start with. Also they should plan their answer in order to check relevance to the question before it is too late. Generally the answers to questions testing units 1 and 2 were higher scoring than those to units 3 and 4.

Very few candidates infringed the rubric requirement; however this breach of regulations tended to be centre specific. Candidates must be informed of the rubric at the beginning of the examination, particularly as there is no rubric requirement on paper 4. Time management may have been an issue for some candidates who appeared rushed in writing their fourth answer. Some candidates also lost marks by mis-reading or misinterpreting sections and consequently writing irrelevant answers.

**Comments on Individual Questions**

1  (a)  Many candidates showed full understanding of plate movements at a destructive boundary but some then concentrated their answers on the characteristics of each plate and why the Indian plate is subducted under the Eurasian plate. They then stated that subduction causes the earthquake without explaining how, and so did not explain fully enough to gain maximum marks. Weaker candidates incorrectly stated that the Eurasian plate is subducted beneath the Indian plate.

   (b)  (i)  The majority of candidates incorrectly thought that there was a relationship shown by the data. However, many did gain one mark because they identified anomalies and quoted figures from the table. Some candidates developed their answer to explain the difference in terms of economic development. This analysis was not required until the next section of the question.

       (ii)  Generally this question was well answered. A common focus was a lack of money in LEDCs to take appropriate measures. Weaker candidates tended just to state limited explanations such as *it depends on how prepared a place is*, or *it depends on where the epicentre is*. More detail was needed to gain credit. It was surprising that few candidates mentioned tsunamis. A common misconception was that MEDCs are able to predict earthquakes and evacuate the area likely to be affected.

   (c)  Case studies had been well learned and many answers were detailed and place specific. Many candidates included statistics. Specific businesses that were forced to close were named with reasons for their closure. Causes of death were given such as the collapse of named bridges or highways which prevented emergency vehicles reaching the injured. The economic focus of many answers was the cost of repair and again amounts were quoted. Some candidates discussed the ways a city prepares for future earthquakes, which was not relevant. The most common case studies were still Kobe and San Francisco. More recent earthquake locations that were described included Indonesia and Pakistan.

2  (a)  (i)  Features B and C were correctly identified by the majority of candidates.

       (ii)  Candidates who answered incorrectly did so because they did not look carefully enough at the scales on each map. Some candidates made the error of measuring the features but did not then rank the measurements.

       (iii)  Where included, diagrams were used to good effect and the process of longshore drift was well understood by most candidates. Common errors included incorrect zig-zag lines to show the movement of material, and an explanation that wind is responsible for spit recurvature.

   (b)  Most answers concentrated on the effects upon the human environment. In many instances developed ideas were lacking and answers dwelt on all the different human features that were at risk of falling into the sea. Answers that went on to include that this caused problems for residents in terms of gaining insurance, difficulty in selling properties, or reduction in house prices gained more credit. The rate of erosion varied from 1 – 200 metres per year showing a total misunderstanding by some candidates. In error some candidates wrote about measures taken to manage the coastline, not the impact of erosion. The best case study answers focussed on Holderness.

(c) Many candidates suggested a few factors but failed to develop their ideas and so gained little credit. There were many ideas suggested in Fig 2b so it was necessary to expand these points. Weaker answers just described what was built. A vague answer such as *it depends on the value of the land and how much it costs* did not gain any marks. Candidates who argued that *farmland was probably not worth saving and managed retreat was the best option, whereas high value residential properties and a tourist resort would need a more expensive and effective form of management* were awarded the marks. The main considerations suggested by candidates were cost and appearance of schemes.

3 (a) Many candidates lost marks because they did not refer to a unit of area in defining population density, and they failed to refer to gender in their explanations of population structure.

(b) (i) Most candidates accurately calculated the percentage within the accepted tolerance.

(ii) Many candidates succinctly identified three differences in structure. However, some candidates failed to state whether they were referring to the LEDC or MEDC and so gained no marks for their answer. Another common error was to answer in terms of birth rate, death rate and life expectancy without relating them to population structure. Some candidates wasted time by giving reasons for the differences they identified.

(c) (i) Most candidates used the scale well to estimate the distance within the limits of tolerance.

(ii) Most candidates had the right ideas but some failed to develop them as the question asked. For example, weak candidates wrote that *it is hard to get food.* The candidates obviously understood the problem but did not explain why. Candidates who expressed ideas that *the area was very dry with no vegetation which meant that it was impossible to grow crops or graze animals* gained the marks. Even better were those answers that developed the idea further by stating that *roads were very few and of poor quality and so bringing in supplies to the area was difficult.* A minority of candidates wasted time by considering the evidence of each resource in turn, this also resulted in repetition of ideas.

(d) Selected locations varied in scale from Africa to Castleton. The best answers usually focussed on small-scale areas, for example south east England, Newcastle or Port Talbot. There were some excellent answers which considered rural to urban migration in Rio de Janeiro or the attraction of London for high paying jobs in international companies that wanted to locate in a capital city. In contrast weak answers referred to flat land, fertile soil, shops and entertainment but failed to develop these ideas. Unfortunately some candidates did not read the question properly or failed to understand it. They wrote about China as having a large population and then turned their answers around to be able to discuss, at great length, the One Child Policy. Other answers were devoted solely to reasons for a high natural increase in population of a country. They missed the point that the question was about an area of high population density.

4 (a) Most candidates showed understanding of the term.

(b) (i) Generally the candidates were able to interpret the graph and describe accurately the relationships shown.

(ii) Similarly most candidates described why either of the two settlements were anomalies.

(iii) Candidates suggested a variety of possible reasons for the anomaly they had identified, showing good understanding of service provision.

(c) (i) Many candidates focussed on the characteristics of the current properties with detailed accounts of why and when they were built. Few suggested other uses for the site apart from new houses which was rather weak if they had already stated that these houses were run-down or lacked modern facilities. They needed to develop their answers to include more varied regeneration ideas.

(ii) This question was well answered with many candidates showing a good understanding of social issues, such as a loss of history or community, as well as perceived problems of possible alternative accommodation such as high-rise flats.

(d) Where candidates had learned an appropriate case study detailed answers were common, especially on Glasgow, Manchester and London. Candidates developed their ideas well by explaining the strategies and how they operated. Some candidates focussed on one particular development such as congestion charging in London or the BART in San Francisco. Whilst this was acceptable it was, perhaps, more difficult to develop three separate ideas. A common weakness was that candidates described generic traffic management ideas but did not relate them to particular locations to make their answers place specific.

5 (a) (i) Most candidates correctly interpreted the pie graph.

(ii) This question was generally answered poorly. Candidates stated that *there are lots of attractions in Europe* but did not give examples, or that *the climate is good for holidays*. These ideas were too vague and did not differentiate Europe from many other parts of the world. Another common answer was that *there are many countries to go to*, but that also applies elsewhere. More acceptable responses referred to specific cities or tourist attractions.

(iii) Most candidates correctly ranked the three areas. The most common error was the use of 1995 data.

(b) This question was well answered with many candidates using the ideas suggested by the photographs to explain about jobs and income and then went on to extend their answers into different cultural and social issues. Some candidates drifted into irrelevant answers about impacts on the natural environment.

(c) Candidates showed good awareness of the damage tourists can cause to the natural environment. Popular ideas included scaring animals by approaching too near to them, clearing land for hotel construction, and air pollution caused by tourist vehicles.

(d) Where candidates understood the idea of sustainability they frequently scored high marks. Case studies of Menorca were particularly detailed, with reference being made to limitations on the height of hotels, language used on signs, etc. However, some candidates scored zero because they thought the idea of managing tourism for sustainability meant building more hotels, an airport and nightclubs to attract even more tourists. Another common error was to take an example from a non-EU area, most commonly Kenya.

6  (a) Most candidates were able to identify two changes but the use of the pie charts to extract figures was often poorly done.

(b) (i) Candidates generally showed a clear understanding of the issues relating to renewable energy and most were able to gain maximum marks.

(ii) A variety of constraints were suggested, usually related to physical conditions. Weaker answers were characterised by answers such as *there is not enough wind.* A better explanation is that the wind does not blow constantly.

(c) Candidates showed limited knowledge of why the coal industry has declined. Many answers were simplistic including statements such as *there is no coal left* and *the miners went on strike.* Better answers did relate to foreign competition, other forms of energy and, occasionally, government policy.

(d) Where candidates had learned about specific colliery closures they often gained full marks. Details of the multiplier effect on local shops were described as were the social issues related to unemployment and the subsequent need to re-locate. Answers were often extended to include the creation of new industrial parks as having a further effect on the local economy. However, many candidates selected inappropriate case studies based on the closure of manufacturing industries, most commonly in Consett and Lynemouth.

7  (a) (i) The question was well answered with the majority of candidates scoring two marks.

(ii) Candidates were able to give a range of causes of deforestation.

(b) (i) Candidates understood what is meant by 'input' and made a correct selection from the diagram.

(ii) The term 'leaching' was not generally understood. Some candidates stated that *it is when nutrients are taken from the soil*, but this could be by trees and so it was not credited. Some candidates also thought that nutrients are given out in transpiration. However, most candidates did give an acceptable definition of transpiration.

(iii) The concept of nutrient cycling was well understood and candidates generally wrote at least two creditable ideas.

(c) The most common responses focussed on protection of vegetation. Ideas such as stopping mining and logging were frequent. Only the better answers referred to protection of species in National Parks or biological reserves. There was little reference to the Indian Reserves and the whole issue of how the sustainability of traditional lifestyles in the rainforests can be improved was not well understood. Despite it being a focus of past questions most candidates did not consider the value of ecotourism.

(d)   This case study produced a wide range of quality in the answers given by candidates. Two common errors were the inclusion of effects on the local population in terms of jobs and traffic problems, and a focus on quarrying in the Amazon forest. There was also confusion with a manufacturing case study where unemployment impacts on shops were suggested.

However, at the other extreme there were some of the most detailed and diverse examples. It was encouraging to read answers that considered how the effect of dust from blasting impacted on the ability of plants to photosynthesise. Other excellent answers considered the problem that the use of water sprays to control the dust often resulted in loss of river wildlife due to changing PH of the water, due to run off from limestone quarries. Others mentioned the positive value of the cliff faces created by the quarries for nesting sites for birds such as peregrine falcons.

8   (a)   (i)   This question was generally well answered with reference to both reasons such as smell, and effects of the reduction in tourists numbers.

(ii)   Generally candidates recognised the effect of the longer pipe on the distribution of sewage and scored both marks.

(iii)   Candidates found greater difficulty with this question. Many answers referred to *some people* rather than specific groups such as fishermen or local residents. Marks were usually gained by reference to the impact on fishing grounds and subsequently fishermen. Fewer answers included the benefits to local people involved in the tourist industry.

(b)   (i)   The formation of acid rain was well understood although there was some confusion about which gases contribute to acid rain and which contribute to global warming.

(ii)   Many case studies showed good knowledge of the effects of acid rain, but some were rather general without a great deal of place specific information. The exception was usually where the case study referred to Scandinavia when the best answers included specific detail. Some candidates considered at length the cause of Norway's problem in terms of prevailing winds etc and what needs to be done to help solve the problem. These ideas were irrelevant to the question. Two more common errors in candidates' answers were the statements that *buildings and statues are still being eroded by acid rain* and the detailed consideration of eutrophication and its effects.

**1986/03 – Geography Specification A Paper 3**

It was felt that the examination was wholly appropriate to foundation level, at which it differentiated fully between candidates within the grades catered for, C to G. Virtually the full range of marks was seen, with most candidates using their time well to score at least half of the available marks, with a generally comparable performance on both questions. All candidates appeared to have enough time to complete the paper and many attempted to write extended answers where required.

There was a clear variation in standard between centres, and this was most marked on question 2. This suggests that some candidates may have been better prepared than others to cope with the demands of this paper. Some centres may need to consider allocating more time to practising past questions in order to improve map and graph skills, and to allow greater insight into topics where understanding of an issue can be demonstrated by using a carefully chosen Ordnance Survey map extract. It is important for teachers to impress upon their candidates that this paper is not just a test of geographical skills. One third of the marks on the paper are allocated to understanding and its application, in this case urban land use and river processes.

**Comments on Individual Questions**

1 (a) (i) Most candidates could identify the direction accurately although a significant number gave NNE which would clearly miss the southern edge of the district. There was a wide variety of answers for the distance as many failed to read the requirement to measure to the centre of the housing area and gave answers around 2.5km. A few clearly did not convert from centimetres to kilometres.

   (ii) Most could identify that both Arboretum and Warndon had schools, and some that they both had churches. The difference was often less well handled with many candidates stating that Warndon had no churches at all which is incorrect. The presence of the college in Arboretum was spotted by surprisingly few. Clearly the word 'services' was not understood by all candidates as a significant number wrote about roads and paths. In addition some lost the mark by writing about the areas' proximity to other services such as the bus station rather than the services in that area.

 (b) (i) Usually drawn well though some were spoiled by excessively sloping and/or inaccurate dividing lines.

   (ii) Usually done well though there were occasional errors with incorrect shading.

   (iii) Usually done well although a significant number had not studied the scale carefully enough and placed the top of the bar at 4.25% or halfway between 4 and the next notch.

 (c) Clearly this question was testing candidates' familiarity and understanding of the differences between zones, not simply their ability to handle the skills involved. Overall it proved to be a good discriminator. In (i) many candidates successfully identified that Arboretum was shown in Photograph C (which displayed typical characteristics of an inner city) and in (ii) that St Peters was shown in Photograph A (showing characteristics of an outer suburban modern estate). Apart from those candidates who had not referred back to the graphs they had completed and simply made wild guesses, the most common error was to mistake Photograph B (which was taken in Warndon) for St Peters.

In (iii) there was a wide range of answers scoring full marks, with more able candidates providing convincing reasons for their choice. A significant minority of candidates limited their marks by resorting to value judgements even where a correct link was made. Candidates who wrongly identified St Peters as Photograph B sometimes identified features which would be relevant in both areas and were able to score two of the three marks available. Many weak candidates identified St Peters as Photograph C and candidates could only score 1 mark for simple observations from their chosen photograph, despite the lack of relevance to the chosen area.

(d)  (i)   Responses to this question varied significantly between centres. From some centres almost all answers were correct whilst candidates from others, irrespective of their ability appeared to be struggling with this basic Ordnance Survey map skill.

(ii)  The majority scored well for quoting evidence that the land alongside the River Severn is used for leisure activities. Most popular answers included rugby pitches, the race course and the camp site. A few explained their location which was irrelevant here, or listed only the various sports which could be played which was too narrow a focus to score full marks. A number of candidates seemed unsure of what constituted a leisure activity.

(iii)  This differentiated very well. Whilst it was rare to see answers worth full marks there were some notable exceptions where candidates effectively displayed their geographical understanding, of factors such as flat land, flood risk, proximity to housing or the CBD and transport links. Most at least identified the flood risk and explained that this meant the land was not suitable for houses. Far too many weaker candidates focussed on the use of the river, which was irrelevant to a question which clearly states 'the land alongside the river'. There were also many answers about being away from houses and roads and therefore safer/not likely to annoy people, which is clearly not a significant factor.

2   (a)  (i)   Apart from a minority who gave the abbreviation used on the map, or wrote about farms or villages, most correctly identified the public buildings. Because of the loose-knit nature of the village of Cotheridge, a range of heights between 20 and 40 metres were accepted, but a significant number relied only on the nearest spot heights rather than contours and included 47metrtes, which was clearly far outside the village's northern limit.

(ii)  This was usually correct although some weaker candidates named a farm.

(iii)  Bransford was correctly identified by many candidates but a variety of alternative wrong answers was given for Broadwas, including Lower Broadheath which does not satisfy the requirement for it to 'stretch along' the A44. Some gave the name of a nearby house or farm such as Broadwas Court or Broad Green, rather than naming the village.

(b)  (i)   Almost all candidates used the correct symbol and placed it reasonably accurately, though weaker candidates sometimes placed it in an entirely different square or did not attempt the task.

(ii)  Those centres which had practised the skill of plotting features onto base maps performed well. The quality varied considerably from centre to centre. Many at least scored one mark on a task which presented an element of difficulty in transposing the meander from a 1:50,000 map to 1;25,000 sketch map.

(iii)   Generally well answered though some missed this out altogether.

(iv)   Those candidates who remembered that a comparison requires either statements about the same aspect of both rivers or the use of a comparative word such as 'wider' or 'bendier' then full marks were scored. Some candidates failed to identify which river they were referring to ('one is ... the other is'), and some referred to features like paths which do not describe the differences in the rivers about which the question is asking. Differences in the direction of flow were acceptable, but not if they were expressed in terms of 'up and down and across' or 'horizontally and vertically'.

(c)   (i)   The task here was to use the evidence in the maps to 'describe'. A lot of candidates gave explanations and, while most scored for the simple idea that an oxbow lake has formed, few could go beyond that to say the river was straighter or shorter/more direct.

(ii)   This differentiated well. There were some excellent responses from candidates who clearly understood fully the process of oxbow lake formation, and were able to apply their understanding to this small area, whilst others apparently were expecting nothing other than skills to be tested in this paper. In order to score full marks candidates needed develop the relevant points which they made. Most candidates realised that the main process was one of erosion but could offer little beyond that, such as types of erosion, or where it was likely on the outside of the meander. Most could however make reference to the simple idea that an oxbow lake was formed, but few could effectively show their understanding of the relevant process, including that of deposition in sealing off the ends of the newly formed lake.

**1986/04 – Higher Tier**

**General Comments**

The overall level of performance of candidates was below that of 2006. Generally candidates scored better on question one. It is pleasing to report that candidates appeared to have enough time to complete the paper and include extended answers where required. They need to be reminded to check through their answers, if they have time. This may eradicate some of the careless mistakes. Disappointingly, the quality work of many candidates was inconsistent. Candidates who scored well on the more challenging questions failed to carry out some of the basic techniques, such as accurately measuring distance, giving a compass direction and locating a feature on an OS map. Some centres may need to give more time to practicing past questions in order to improve basic map skills.

It is important for teachers to impress upon their candidates that this paper is not just a test of geographical skills. One third of the marks on the paper are allocated to the understanding of geographical issues. This year the topics of urban land use and river processes tested this objective.

Examiners again expressed concerns about the failure by some candidates to understand a key geographical term such as site and a common instruction such as compare. Also some candidates lost marks by failing to use map evidence or give grid references when they were required.

Three pieces of advice that may help to raise the standard of candidate responses are:

• Read each question carefully and note the specific instructions and command words
• Read all questions in a section and plan ahead so that the correct focus is given in each answer
• Use the mark allocation as a guide to the amount of time to spend on an answer

**Comments on Individual Questions**

1  (a)  (i)  Most candidates were within tolerance, although a common mistake was to measure the distance of two kilometres rather than three.

   (ii)  Most candidates gave the correct direction, a few reversed the direction and answered 'south west'.

   (iii)  Most candidates gained some credit, usually by reference to density of street layout and street pattern. Good comparisons were made between curved and straight, and compact and plenty of space. Some candidates lost marks by comparing the housing not street layout.

   (iv)  There were varying opinions about the attractiveness of living in St. Peters. Correct answers commonly focused on road access, and proximity to the river. However, there were a variety of incorrect responses. Some candidates liked the idea of living near a battlefield whilst others failed to realise that a railway only provides access when there is a convenient station. Similarly, candidates referred to the motorway but failed to mention access or the proximity of the junction. Some candidates wrote about the attractions for tourists rather than the residents of St Peters, referring to facilities such as the caravan park.

(b) (i) Although many candidates correctly identified the two areas, a common error was to confuse the areas of residences in photographs A and B.

(ii) Having correctly identified the area many candidates scored well. They made good use of the photograph to identify the characteristic features of housing in the area, and utilised the information in the table well, not merely quoting the statistics but linking them to the characteristics shown in the photograph. For example, *In St Peters the houses are modern and expensive and so only a small percentage (4%) are without central heating*.

(c) As intended this question proved to be a good discriminator. Weaker candidates simply listed the types of land use found along the River Severn. In contrast more able candidates were able to explain why this land was suitable and support their answer with grid references. An example of a level 2 response is *The land alongside the river is flat which is suitable for a race course*. This example links the land use identified on the map with a plausible reason for it being located there. Errors made by candidates included reference to the use of the river itself, and some strayed away from the banks of the river to a National Trust building (failing to see the arrow on the map) and the cathedral.

2 (a) (i) This proved to be a difficult question with a large range of incorrect villages being named. Leigh Sinton was more commonly named correctly.

(ii) The term 'site' was not clearly understood by all candidates. . Many wrote at length about the situation of Cotheridge and the features (indicated by symbols) found there. Weaker candidates also referred incorrectly to roads, the river and services. The focus on site is a common question, but even more able candidates are still unsure of its meaning.

(iii) Most candidates could appreciate the differences in size between Bransford and Newtown, but *There are more houses in Bransford* is not a reason for it being a bigger settlement. The best answers focused on accessibility and used supporting evidence from the OS map. Whilst many candidates recognised that Bransford is nearer to Worcester, some failed to explain why this might be an advantage. Weaker candidates tended to over-emphasise the significance of services such as the golf course near Bransford. Such candidates were also characterised by an answer such as *Bransford has good transport*.

(b) (i) & (ii) These two questions were good discriminators as the quality of responses varied a great deal. Whilst most candidates were 'in the right area' when plotting the golf course, accuracy was key to gaining the mark. This included the correct location, and an appropriately sized correct symbol. Generally the river was drawn reasonably well but often the meander did not have the right shape and the overall accuracy was variable. Candidates need to practice this skill to increase their level of accuracy.

(c) (i) Most candidates used the scale appropriately and were within the tolerance allowed for part or full credit. As in the previous question measuring had to be accurate to score both marks.

(ii) Candidates generally answered this question well and many scored both marks by identifying that section P – Q had more meanders or *the river twists and turns more,* and contained an ox-bow lake, unlike section Q – R.

(d)   The final question gave candidates the opportunity to produce some extended writing. The question allowed for good differentiation. The best candidates wrote coherently and were able to explain fully the processes of erosion and deposition. They then linked these ideas to the meander cut-off or ox-bow lake shown on the River Teme. In contrast weaker answers were characterised by a failure to explain where and why erosion and deposition take place and their role in the formation of the ox bow lake. A common misconception is that erosion occurs on the inside of the meander and deposition on the outside. Whilst most candidates understood what had happened in the course of the river many failed to explain it fully or accurately.

**Report on Coursework 1986 2007**

Rather like the geographically interesting journey of the armada of yellow plastic ducks that spilled into the Pacific from a container ship in 1992, coursework has journeyed, sometimes struggled along, but is now a seasoned traveller.  The coursework component of 1986 is a known process in which standards are not expected to change significantly from year to year.  Excellent rounds of INSET continue to confirm the standards expected by OCR and for the majority of Centres the process is well established and quality works dominates.

Moderators will always approach their work with the thought of a 'no change' uppermost in their mind.  Given the variety and nature of coursework a tolerance of plus or minus six is employed, so for well over 90% of the work seen no adjustment is necessary.  The moderator's role is to check, as a detached outsider, that the coursework was conducted according to OCR guidelines, that administrative procedures were carried out effectively and that a Centre's overall levels of assessment for the worth of the work of their candidates is in line with standards used in other Centres for this Specification.  The moderator confirms that the majority of the totals given to the Centre candidates are reasonable, taking into account quality of work produced in relation to levels of teacher guidance, candidate initiative, amount of work undertaken and its complexity.  In other words are the marks realistic?

Once again this year some outstanding pieces of coursework were seen which would not have been out of place as AS submissions.  Some very interesting and different enquiries were seen from Centres operating truly individual investigations.  From a moderators point of view it is always refreshing to look at individual enquiries but we appreciate that for a large Centres individuality is not an option.  A note of caution is appropriate for Centres who do operate individual enquiries - watch the titles that you allow.  Avoid 'project' type pieces of work and encourage a question or hypothesis.  The other main point to remember is that primary data collection is a requirement.  Enquiries which rely simply on secondary data do not meet the requirements of the specification.  Secondary data should supplement the primary data that has been collected, not replace it.  There has been an escalation in the amount of leaflets and downloaded internet material.  In many cases this material was beautifully presented but added nothing in terms of the worth of the work.

It is disappointing to report that for a handful of Centres a downward adjustment has been made for the second year in succession.  Centre staff are encouraged to read the report sent to the Centre when the results are published in August.  If marks have been reduced the reason behind the adjustment will be clearly stated.  Very often it will not take much to rectify the situation.  For example where the nature of the enquiry is sound and data collection appropriate yet data representation is the weak link, it should be possible to ensure the same mistakes are not made year on year.  If you do not see the coursework report ask your Examinations Officer for a copy... In many cases moderators and Centres have been working together for several years and it is always rewarding to see that advice given in the previous session has been taken and improvements to the submissions made as a result of moderator comment back to the Centre.

When a Centre is pushing the tolerance limits they will receive a warning to that effect.  If then the following year no notice has been taken in the assessment by the Centre a downward adjustment is likely. This was the case for approximately half the downward adjustments this year.  In only a very few cases did the moderator have to send for a second sample.  This is done to ensure that the initial view of a significant downward adjustment is justified.  The most significant changes this year were again made to Centres with a small entry (often less than ten candidates).  The situation is often clear – the geography teacher is working in isolation or the member of staff regularly changes.  As a result the standard expected for grade C work and above is not always appreciated and the assumption is often made that the work of the best candidate is worth a grade A - sadly this is frequently not the case.  Where Centres have seen

major adjustments they are urged to seek the advice of coursework consultants who can iron out problems before the candidates suffer further.

At least 90% of all Centres work is a pleasure to moderate.  Administration is efficiently and accurately undertaken, requested samples dispatched quickly and background information supplied.  Of the remaining 10% there is still room for considerable improvement.  The most common administrative errors continue to be:

- Sending all the MS1 documentation to the Moderator; the top copy should go Cambridge, the middle copy to the Moderator and the bottom copy (yellow) is retained by the Centre.  As the Moderator copy is a carbon it is helpful to make sure that the marks can actually be seen.  Inability to see the marks awarded on the MS1 was a significant problem this year
- Not meeting the deadlines; May 15th is the final date for the submission of coursework marks to OCR and the Moderator.  In a small minority of cases there will be a genuine problem and Moderators will be sympathetic to this but increasingly it is the same small minority of Centres that simply fail to get themselves organized.
- Arithmetical errors;  the most common problem being that the MS1 mark was different to that shown on the cover sheet of the individual piece of work.  Please check transcripts carefully as it is often the candidate (and hence the Centre's) results that will suffer.
- Not indicating on the MS1 which teaching set candidates are in.

Many Centres set the scene in a letter to the moderator or on the front of each candidate cover sheet.  This is always helpful and gives the moderator a clear insight into the circumstances of the coursework setup.  A vast majority of Centres also include copies of any material issued to the candidates.  There are certainly some very impressive guides to writing up a good piece of coursework and this clearly helps candidates understand what they are expected to do.  Weaker candidates benefit from having the security of a framework from which to work - often weaker candidates fail to show positive achievement when they are clearly working in the dark and not sure what they should be doing.  Help and guidance are expected and you should not be concerned about telling the moderator that guidance has been given.

Despite similar comments in previous years there are still Centres that could easily boost their marks via data representation.  It is most frustrating when data collection is varied and then only presented using pies and bars.  Why not put a blanket ban on pie and bar charts to encourage candidates to think about a variety of data representation techniques?  It is perfectly acceptable for Centre staff to advise on data representation which should encourage both a variety of techniques and those of a more complex nature.  When candidates rely on using IT packages to produces various graphs it is always a good idea if they know how to use them properly.  All too often the axes are labelled series 1 and series 2 which is not helpful.  One of the most popular methods of data collection is the use of questionnaires.  When these are well structured and pose valid questions the results can be displayed in a variety of ways and lead to detailed analysis, however, when questionnaires are poorly planned and dominated by yes / no answers they are of little value.  There is no need to take a photograph of everyone who answered a questionnaire as one Centre encouraged – several candidates asked well over 100 people and included a photograph of each one 'just to prove my results aren't all made up'!

One area that has continued to improve is in the writing up of the methodology.  Most candidates now include clear details about the data collected – when it was collected, why it was collected and how it was collected.  This inevitably gives them a greater understanding of what they aim to achieve and gives the fieldwork a greater sense of purpose.  Spatial awareness was also significantly better this year.

Every year it is hard to imagine that the quality and skill of ICT used will improve but it has again been outstanding.  Just occasionally candidates do try to get too clever.  There is always a place for a well drawn, annotated and integrated field sketch, but when using fancy IT packages to generate the field sketch from a digital photograph it holds much less value.

As in previous years the topic areas were many and varied.  Urban based investigations remained the most popular, notably CBD investigations, surveys of residential areas, shopping enquiries and spheres of influence.  Also popular were those studying the impacts of tourism and consequent management.  Physical enquiries are gaining in popularity with coasts now the top choice followed by rivers.  The physical enquires tend to work well provided that a clear structure for data collection is in place and that analysis and conclusions go beyond the descriptive.

The hoped for eradication of plastic wallets and ring binders has failed.  Isolated cases were reported from Cornwall to the Humber but a widespread epidemic was seen in the Midlands.  Light hearted as these comments may be there is a serious message.  Please do not allow your candidates to encase every page of their enquiries in plastic and do not send samples in bulky ring binders.  Parcel Force and DHL make money, moderators just become grumpy.

There is much to be proud of with regard to coursework.  The majority of Centre staff work hard to encourage and get the best out of their candidates.  The positives far outweigh the annual gripes but they still need to be addressed if all Centres are to strive for a continual improvement in the standard of work achieved.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Geography (1986)**

**June 2007 Assessment Series**

**Component Threshold Marks**

| Component | Max Mark | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Paper 1 | 80 | - | - | 51 | 43 | 35 | 28 | 21 |
| Paper 2 | 80 | 52 | 43 | 35 | 24 | - | - | - |
| Paper 3 | 40 | - | - | 26 | 22 | 18 | 15 | 12 |
| Paper 4 | 40 | 25 | 20 | 16 | 12 | - | - | - |
| Coursework | 100 | 79 | 67 | 55 | 43 | 32 | 21 | 10 |

**Specification Options**

**Foundation Tier**

| | Max Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Threshold Marks | 200 | - | - | - | 119 | 100 | 82 | 64 | 46 |
| Percentage in Grade | - | - | - | - | 22.7 | 26.1 | 22.3 | 15.7 | 7.8 |
| Cumulative Percentage in Grade | - | - | - | - | 22.7 | 48.8 | 71.1 | 86.8 | 94.6 |

The total entry for the examination was 7179

**Higher Tier**

| | Max Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Threshold Marks | 200 | 154 | 133 | 112 | 91 | 67 | - | - | - |
| Percentage in Grade | - | 16.2 | 25.6 | 28.4 | 20.6 | 7.8 | - | - | - |
| Cumulative Percentage in Grade | - | 16.2 | 41.8 | 70.2 | 90.8 | 98.6 | - | - | - |

The total entry for the examination was 15145

**Overall**

| | A* | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage in Grade | 11.0 | 17.4 | 19.3 | 21.2 | 13.7 | 7.8 | 5 | 2.5 |
| Cumulative Percentage in Grade | 11.0 | 28.4 | 47.7 | 68.9 | 82.6 | 90.4 | 95.4 | 97.9 |

The total entry for the examination was 22280
Statistics are correct at the time of publication.