

Candidate Style Answers

GCSE Geography A

OCR GCSE in Geography: J380

Unit: A671 Higher Tier

These candidate style answers are designed to accompany the OCR GCSE Geography A specification for teaching from September 2009.

GCSE Geography A

Unit A671 Extreme Environments (Higher tier)

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCSE specifications and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

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As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded “medium” or “high” to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

2b) Fig. 3 suggests that desertification is a major global challenge. Explain why it creates problems for the environment and people. (6)	
<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiner's commentary</i>
<p><i>The long periods of drought dry out the soils and it is difficult for subsistence farmers to grow crops and find suitable grazing land for their animals. Many die of starvation or dehydration or have to migrate to nearby cities where they have to live in refugee camps. The soils are exhausted of nutrients and the herds of animals soon overgraze the poor pasture and the soil is left bare. Soil s are then blown away by the wind and natural vegetation in the area becomes very sparse. Ecosystems are threatened as the food chains are broken.</i></p>	<p>High level answer.</p> <p>It demonstrates an excellent understanding of the problems desertification may cause for both people and environment, and the ideas expressed are developed.</p>

3b) Describe and explain how physical processes have shaped the landscape of the area which you have studied. You may use a diagram to illustrate your answer. (6)	
<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiner's commentary</i>
<p><i>The landscape in mountain regions like the Himalayas has been shaped by ice. The ice erodes the landscape as glaciers carve out deep valleys with steep sides. When the glaciers melt the bare rock is weathered and scree slopes are formed by the loose rocks falling to the foot of the slopes..</i></p>	<p>Medium level answer.</p> <p>The candidate shows a basic understanding of two processes which occur in mountain regions, glacial erosion and weathering/mass movement.</p> <p>The answer could be improved by fully explaining the processes of glacial erosion and weathering. The processes of abrasion/plucking by the glacier ice, and freeze thaw weathering for example, could have been elaborated. The question invites candidates to use a diagram and this would have been an ideal way of showing a detailed understanding of such processes. When using diagrams candidates should ensure that they are as fully annotated as possible, with information which adds to, rather than duplicates, that which is in the written text.</p>

3c) Explain why your chosen environment is challenging for different groups of people. (6)	
<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiner's commentary</i>
<p><i>The environment in mountain regions is challenging for people who live there and for people who visit the area.</i></p> <p><i>One group of people who live there are the Sherpas, an ethnic group from the most mountainous region of Nepal, high in the Himalayas. There is so little employment that Sherpas have to earn much of their income from being employed as guides for mountaineering expeditions in the Himalayas. They are elite mountaineers and experts in their local terrain, however even for the local people the environment is challenging. They need to have good physical endurance and resilience to low temperatures and high altitude conditions.</i></p> <p><i>Mountaineers who visit the Himalayas do so because it is the most challenging mountain range to climb in the world, including the highest mountains, Mt Everest 8848 metres high and K2, 8611 metres high. They face many dangers, such as altitude sickness, sub zero</i></p>	<p>High level answer.</p> <p>The candidate shows an excellent understanding of how the mountain environment poses challenges for two different groups of people, and this is elaborated through the use of specific examples and detail.</p>

temperatures, icy conditions and strong winds. Everest has claimed the lives of 210 climbers, including eight who died during a storm in 1996 high on the mountain. Conditions are so difficult in some parts that bodies have been left where they fell, and because of the cold temperatures they do not decompose.	
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4b) In what ways do you think your chosen extreme environment may change in the future? Describe and explain the impact of these changes. (8)	
<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiner's commentary</i>
<p><i>My extreme environment is Antarctica. I think one of the main changes which is likely to take place in future is the increase of tourism in the area. Sightseeing cruise ships are going to Antarctica now and there are likely to be more going there in the future. At the moment the ships do not land but in future some parts will be developed and ports will be established where visitors will go ashore for expeditions to look at the local wildlife.</i></p> <p><i>The impact of this will be bad for the environment of Antarctica. There will be visual pollution and noise from the ships and the visitors will scare the animals. Pollution in the water from fuel from the ships, and fumes in the atmosphere will kill wildlife and affect food chains.</i></p>	<p>Medium level answer.</p> <p>It demonstrates an understanding of a relevant and realistic future change, based on the present day situation. The likely impacts of the change are described, though in limited detail.</p> <p>The answer could have been improved with greater attention to detail. For example reference could be made to specific parts of Antarctica which could be threatened by the development of sightseeing cruises, and how exactly these parts might be developed for tourism. The visual impacts could be elaborated, along with the impacts of the various types of pollution on the natural environment. Specific examples of fauna could be mentioned along with developed reasoning as to why species will be threatened. The effect on food chains could also be elaborated.</p>