

# **Geography**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE J085**

## **Report on the Units**

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**June 2010**

**J085/R/10**

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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 specification 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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# **Chief Examiner's Report**

## **General Comments**

There are opportunities for centres to enter candidates for assessment in January and June. However, very few centres took the opportunity to enter candidates for A771 (Controlled Assessment) in January 2010, but entered the work in the May submission. These candidates then took the terminal Key Geographical Themes examination (A772) in June.

For all centres this new assessment was a step into the unknown. There was the requirement to apply new controlled assessment regulations on levels of control. Centres had to produce work on tasks for the Fieldwork Focus provided by the examination board rather than their own fieldwork titles. Centres are reminded that these tasks along with those of the Geographical Investigation will change each year and centres need to be aware that the titles correspond to the year of submission, which may not be the same as when the task was undertaken. Centres also had to decide upon their individual approach to Geographical Investigation.

The Key Geographical Themes examination is based on two units of specification J385, namely Rivers and Coasts and Economic Development. Centres may enter candidates at either the foundation or higher tier of entry.

The varied nature of the assessments allowed all candidates to demonstrate their strengths and there were some 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. However, there was evidence that a minority of centres was entering candidates for assessment in Year 9. Whilst this is acceptable it is worth bearing in mind that the assessment is focused on the ability of a 16 year old student. There was evidence that some candidates were not fully prepared for the Geographical Enquiry or Terminal Examination with basic flaws in approach and examination techniques.

With all the changes centres need to study the reports of the various assessment components carefully as they give many pointers to how candidates, in general, may improve their chances of success. The reports are based on the comments of examiners and moderators who were responsible for judging the work of candidates.

## **A771 – Geographical Enquiry**

In this second session for entry for this new specification for controlled assessment for B562 and A771 there has been a combined entry of nearly 50 centres and 2000 candidates. These are centres which have either completed their assessment early in Year 10 or have completed the short course in Year 9. We anticipate much larger numbers to submit in Year 11 next January and June sessions.

Administration by centres has been mixed, which with a new specification could be expected. There were some late entries and difficulties with e-mail addresses. Some centres did not use the official assessment grids or did not complete them fully with candidate numbers and titles of the investigation. This made moderation unnecessarily difficult. Some centres did annotate the grids allowing moderators to see why credit was given for the various objectives and this was appreciated.

The Enquiry involves centres selecting one Fieldwork Focus title and having a choice of 18 titles for the Geographical Investigation. The Fieldwork Focus titles were evenly selected and most centres correctly split the title into appropriate key questions. Those who did not experienced problems in providing a focus for data collection, analysis, evaluation and making substantiated conclusions. Most centres selected one title for their candidates to research in the Geographical Investigation. The favourites were the 2012 Olympics, Fair Trade and Malaria. There were some centres who allowed their candidates a free choice. The vast majority of candidates chose to write a research report, while others did a powerpoint presentation. Some centres provided some sources for their candidates, the vast majority allowed candidates access to the internet for their research which was recorded in a diary.

The standard of marking was mixed as one might expect for a new specification with some centres having attended INSET and others not fully understanding the requirements of Controlled Assessment. There were some adjustments in a downward direction. The majority were in the short course where centres need to remember the assessment expectation is what can be expected from a sixteen year old and have they met the criteria specified.

The Fieldwork Focus on the whole was marked closely to match the assessment criteria. Centres that did not do this did not split the title into key questions, provide a methodology table, collect sufficient primary data or present data in a variety of graphs. They also had students analysing their findings in a superficial manner and not giving any reasoning. However there were some good examples of candidates doing this well and providing substantiated conclusions and realistic evaluations.

The Geographical Investigation was not always marked closely to the assessment criteria. Only a few centres had candidates write a "thought shower" to help them plan their investigation in a logical manner with key questions. The majority of centres did insist on a research diary and the best had candidates acknowledging sources and evaluating their validity. They acknowledged images directly and linked them to a bibliography. Some, however, had very few images, maps, quotes and often did not identify their source. The amount of research varied, but the best had eight or more sources focusing on "stakeholders". The analysis, conclusions and evaluation was often hand-written and obviously under exam conditions. High level candidates analysed their sources directly and did not spend too much time on giving their own views. Conclusions at a high level were substantiated and evaluations looked at the validity of their sources.

In both assessments one common problem was the word count which was often exceeded. This is one issue which will have to be addressed by centres and at INSET in the future.

### *Report on the Units taken in June 2010*

Overall there were several issues highlighted in this first large submission for controlled assessment. However, there were some excellent examples of centres who had understood the controlled assessment requirements and where candidates enthusiastically took the opportunities offered in the fieldwork and secondary research in the investigation. They showed initiative, imagination and independence at a high level. It was also encouraging to moderate complete pieces of work, even from weaker candidates, where they had attempted all elements of the assessments. Centres and candidates deserve great credit for their undertaking in the new world of controlled assessment.

## **A772/01 (Foundation Tier)**

### **General Comments**

This was the first examination for the new Short Course. A relatively small number of candidates, just over 180, sat the examination. The Principal Examiner and Examiner agreed that the examination was at an appropriate level of difficulty for Foundation candidates. The clarity and quality of the Resource Booklet Insert enabled most candidates to access the geographical resources and evidence to demonstrate their skills and understanding.

A wide range of performance and achievement was noted. The strongest candidates were well-prepared for the examination. They showed an awareness of examination technique, knowledge of exam question command words and followed the rubric to select their strongest two questions to answer. These candidates applied their sound geographical understanding to the question requirements. They selected relevant case studies and were able to apply their knowledge in a concise, relevant and focused manner. In particular they were able to produce some stunning landform sketches for questions 1 and 2 of almost textbook quality.

By contrast the weaker, lowest scoring, candidates answered as many questions as they could irrespective of the rubric to choose from question 1 or 2 and question 3 or 4. Their success was limited to picking up random marks across the paper. They had no relevant case study knowledge and the majority did not attempt the case study questions. In the event of rubric error, all answers are marked. The two highest scoring answers which meet the rubric are counted.

In terms of knowledge and understanding of the Specification Themes, ideas about the impact of flooding and coastal erosion on people's lives were well covered. Some knowledge of flood management and coastal erosion management methods were clear and convincing. Less secure was the knowledge and understanding of physical processes. This included drainage basin stores and transfers and processes of weathering, erosion, transport and deposition and how they affect landforms.

With respect to the Economic Development Theme there was some understanding of the benefits of aid projects, employment structure and how MNCs operate. There was a lack of convincing knowledge of how development can be measured and very little understanding of how sustainability can be applied to an aid project.

In preparing candidates for future examinations it would be useful to focus on the following:

- Candidates should practise close reading entire questions under examination conditions and choosing the best questions to attempt from the paired choices given. Question selection success criteria could be shared, with having a relevant case study at the top of the list.
- Candidates should tailor the length of their answer to the type of question, mark allocation and answer space in the examination booklet.
- Candidates should be aware of the range of command words used in the examination and how they indicate the level of thinking required and the length of response needed. Command word glossaries can be produced and candidates should be encouraged to look for and highlight command words during the examination.

- Candidates should realise that the skills question at the start of each question can usually be answered with very short responses such as a number, place name or example. Some candidates wasted time by writing full sentence responses for only one mark.
- Candidates need to be aware of the two types of four mark question. For open questions which do not specify a number of responses, simple descriptions of four relevant ideas will achieve full marks. For questions which ask for two responses, both must be developed with detail to secure full marks. In addition to the eight mark case study question, there will be a two mark knowledge recall question which will usually involve a definition of a geographical term. These could form the basis of quizzes and key word glossaries.
- Candidates should be aware of the requirements of the eight mark case study. A relevant example is needed, with correct, detailed, information supplied for each section of the question. Where candidates are asked for a specific named example, some place-specific detail will be needed to achieve full marks.

## **Comments on Individual Questions**

### **Section A Rivers and Coasts**

Candidates should compare the two questions to note how similar ideas and concepts from the Specification Theme are covered and assessed.

#### **Question 1**

The question assessed knowledge and understanding of hydrographs, drainage basin stores and transfers, river flooding and flood management, river landforms and processes. The resources were a hydrograph and rainfall graph and a photograph of a flooded settlement.

- a) Candidates were required to read and extract number data from the rainfall graph and hydrograph. They either scored zero or all three marks. This was dependent on understanding the words 'peak' and 'lag time' rather than graph reading skills alone.
- b) Two reasons were needed to explain the lag time shown. Very few candidates produced any relevant ideas. A small number were able to name correct stores and transfers and explain how they slowed the transfer of rain water into the river. Interception and infiltration were the most common of these responses.
- c) Most candidates scored at least one mark for their definitions of floodplains. The weaker candidates explained the flood part of the word. The more able defined the plain aspect as well.
- d) This was well-answered by nearly all candidates. The effects of flooding included references to property and possessions, the psychological impact, infrastructure and economic activities. Some candidates focused on LEDCs with loss of life, hunger, illness and problems with relief operations as part of their answers.
- e) Some candidates used correct geographical terms for flood management strategies and were able to explain how they worked. Levees, dams, afforestation, monitoring/warning systems were most common. Building away from floodplains, houses on stilts and using sandbags in emergencies were also credited. Weaker answers gave vague ideas about barriers and walls without any convincing explanations.



- f) There were some exceptional labelled sketches produced by the best candidates. Waterfalls were the most common, followed by meanders and oxbow lakes. Sketches usually showed a sequence of change and had pertinent features correctly labelled such as layers of hard/soft rock and plunge pools. Clear labels also showed where relevant processes were taking place, such as erosion on the outer bend of a meander. The best answers also included separate text which explained how the landform was shaped by the process(es) or how the processes operated to change the landform. Credit was given to less able candidates who were able to draw a basic sketch for a named landform but without any information about processes. A small number of candidates misread or ignored the river landform command and produced creditable responses based on coastal landforms. However they were not awarded any marks.

## **Question 2**

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of coastal erosion processes, the management of coastal erosion, coastal landforms and processes. The resources were a map of the Holderness Coast and a photograph showing evidence of coastal erosion.

- a) Candidates were more successful with these relatively straightforward map reading skills.
- b) Most candidates were able to describe the evidence of coastal erosion shown in the photograph. Evidence included the steepness of slope, the loss of garden/fencing, the proximity of the house to the cliff edge. Some candidates misinterpreted the question and gave definitions of coastal erosion or described evidence not present in the photograph.
- c) In a similar way to the Rivers question (d) most candidates scored well. The effects on property, property value and insurance levels were common along with worrying about the future. More able candidates broadened their responses to cover the impact of erosion upon the tourist industry and the costs of managing coastal erosion.
- d) As with the Rivers question (b) knowledge of processes was generally weak. Some candidates achieved a mark for writing about waves hitting the coast or cliffs. Few described processes clearly and fewer still used correct terms with confidence, such as corrasion, hydraulic action and corrosion. Weathering and cliff slumping were also credited for full marks if described clearly.
- e) Most candidates who scored marks focused on hard engineering methods with sea walls and rock armour being most common. Some mentioned beach replenishment. No credit was given to answers which focused on managed retreat as this does not protect the coast. Weaker answers had vague ideas about walls and barriers without any correct explanation.
- f) In common with the Rivers case study the best answers featured accurate and detailed sketches. The most common showed the sequence of headland erosion from crack to stack. Features such as caves, arches and stumps were often included and labelled. Some candidates focused on coastal spit formation and some used the Holderness map to add accurate detail to their sketches. Ideas about processes were less convincing and many simply described the sequence of change shown in their sketches. Very few explained how processes operated or how they affected their chosen landform. Weaker candidates were given credit for drawing and naming a recognisable coastal landform.

## **Section B Economic Development**

Candidates should note how, unlike the questions in Section A, Questions 3 and 4 are quite different in their make-up, although there is some overlap with references to multi-national companies.

In general the case study responses were weaker than those given for Question 1 or 2.

### **Question 3**

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of an aid project, sustainability, how development can be measured and the location of an economic activity in an LEDC context. The only resource was an aid charity flow diagram of an aid project.

- a) Most candidates were able to state the animal and the outputs featured in the diagram. No credit was given for meat and money as these were not stated outputs in the diagram.
- b) Most candidates were able to list relevant benefits for the family. Some copied large chunks of text from the diagram. Answers needed to focus on improvements in health and how money earned could pay for education to gain full marks.
- c) Very few responses showed an understanding of how sustainability criteria related to the project shown. Most candidates who attempted this question repeated ideas about how the family's quality of life would improve. A few did focus on environmental sustainability with manure being used to increase future soil fertility. Some covered social sustainability with reference to sharing of skills and knowledge or education securing a better future. Some wrote about how breeding spread the benefits of the project and helped to foster economic sustainability.
- d) Most creditable responses focused on the cow dying or similar. Very few candidates considered the wider issues associated with small-scale aid of this type such as its limited impact on economic development or the dependency on MEDC aid charities to kick start the project.
- e) Many candidates failed to achieve any marks for this question. Some scored two marks by stating correct statistical measures, such as life expectancy. Some described what could be measured, such as how long people will live for. Very few combined a correct measure with an indication of how a high or low score would measure development, such as high life expectancy could show good levels of health care.
- f) This case study question yielded the weakest responses. Nearly all candidates failed to give any location information. Successful responses included general references to tourism in an LEDC or plantation crops for export. Vague ideas about climate and natural features were given as location factors. Other creditable answers covered the operation of MNC sweatshops in countries like India and Bangladesh. Some wrote about the Nissan car plant near Sunderland. These answers were capped at Level 2 as an LEDC example was not given. Some candidates wrote about aid or charity projects, no doubt triggered by the term LEDC. Unless clearly linked to an economic activity these answers were not awarded any marks.

#### **Question 4**

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of employment structure, how this is linked to economic development, child labour in LEDCs, and how an MNC affects people in a country in which it operates. The resources were a set of employment structure pie charts and a photograph of shoe-shine boys in an LEDC city (La Paz).

- a) Most candidates were able to read the pie charts and give the correct names and data.
- b) The majority of responses which scored marks gave basic, relevant ideas either about Nepal's employment structure or how Brazil/USA compared. Very few candidates linked these points to economic development such as a lack of technology or investment.
- c) Some candidates got part (i) wrong by stating primary or secondary but gained a mark in (ii) for stating the child workers were cleaning shoes or providing a service.
- d) A generally well-answered question which focused on poverty and lack of opportunity as the main reasons. Helping out the family and lack of money/provision for school were the most common ideas. Some candidates also considered how child workers were ripe for exploitation in the labour market, especially by MNCs.
- e) This idea of exploiting cheap labour was a common reason given to explain why MNCs invest in LEDCs. Many gave the potential to treat workers badly as a follow-up reason. Few answers considered other economic factors such as cheap resources, tax incentives, less stringent pollution controls and expanding LEDC markets.
- f) This case study yielded better responses than Question 3. Sportswear and clothing MNCs operating in Asian LEDCs were the most common examples. Coca Cola in India was also given and the Nissan car plant near Sunderland. This time the latter could achieve full marks as an LEDC example was not stipulated. Most candidates who gave a creditable case study only provided basic ideas such as jobs created as an advantage and lower wages/exploitation as a disadvantage. Like Question 3, most answers were of a very general nature with very little place-specific information given.

## A772/02 (Higher Tier)

### General Comments

Candidates generally did not perform in line with expectations. The very small entry cannot be regarded as typical for the paper and it is expected that, as numbers increase in future years, so will the quality of response.

Case studies, particularly, were weak with many answers only at level 1 and virtually nothing was seen at level 3. Candidates did not appear to be prepared for the demands of the paper in terms of knowledge and understanding. Question 2 was more popular than question 1 ; Questions 3 and 4 were approximately the same in popularity.

A small minority of 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. Time-management did not appear to be an issue. A more likely explanation for nil response to questions was lack of knowledge or understanding.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Question 1

- a)
  - (i) This was a straightforward introductory question answered correctly by most candidates.
  - (ii) Few candidates gave a correct definition of lag time. They failed to identify the link between rainfall and discharge.
  - (iii) Usually candidates were able to pick out two effects of the storm on discharge. However, many did not make accurate use of data from the graph to support their points. The main focus was on the rising limb, but many ignored the falling limb.
- b)
  - (i) Most candidates identified the impact of reduced discharge. However, few identified a change in lag time or more consistent or regulated flow.
  - (ii) Most candidates made a reasonable attempt at this question. They identified the effect of less discharge and gave plausible reasons for this. However, candidates did not refer to how lag time will increase or why.
- c) Surprisingly many candidates did not seem to understand how urban development increases the likelihood of flooding. Answers were limited to simple ideas about more roads and houses or less vegetation but with no further development.
- d) Few candidates developed ideas to Level 2. Indeed, some candidates were unaware of what a river landform was and had very little understanding of how they were formed. The classic landforms of meander, oxbow lake or waterfall were rarely attempted and, where they were used, the answer lacked a systematic approach and basic geographical understanding.

## **Question 2**

- a)
  - (i) Candidates did not use specific information from the map. Most answers were very general such as land or villages were lost, but there was no indication of how much land or how many villages.
  - (ii) Most answers correctly interpreted the map.
- b)
  - (i) Most candidates gained two pieces of evidence from the photograph.
  - (ii) As in the previous question candidates showed a reasonable understanding of the impacts of coastal erosion. Most gained marks through a number of simple ideas rather than developing one or two ideas.
  - (iii) Candidates could usually describe two ways of protecting the land but often they gave the same explanation as to why it was needed, thus restricting their maximum mark to three.
  - (iv) Candidates generally scored well on this section. The most common reasons given against coastline management were its impacts further along the coast, expense and visual impact.
- c) As in question 1 few candidates developed their ideas to Level 2. Some candidates were unaware of what a coastal landform was and had very little understanding of how they were formed. Diagrams lacked purpose and many were simple sketch maps of Holderness copied from the resource booklet. Very little knowledge or understanding was shown beyond a basic level. Thus a statement such as 'the spit was formed due to longshore drift' was not developed beyond Level 1.

## **Question 3**

- a)
  - (i) Most candidates identified three benefits from the diagram.
  - (ii) Most candidates had an understanding of sustainability. They referred to the fact that cows bred and were passed onto other families. Some better answers included the assertion that this was self-sustaining with little in the way of external input. Few candidates commented on how such aid may lead to improvements in peoples' lives or prospects.
- b)
  - (i) Most candidates understood the basic idea of short-term aid and how it was different to long-term aid. They scored marks generally through quite simple statements. There were no answers which focused on bi-lateral or non-governmental aid.
  - (ii) Few candidates had a clear understanding of the term 'quality of life indicator'. They usually referred in general terms to education or health. Often when candidates did identify such an indicator they did not explain how it could be used to measure the success of aid projects.
- c) Answers were usually restricted to the idea that aid did not get to where it was needed but most candidates did not explain why this was the situation. Ideas such as tied aid, inappropriate aid or increased dependency were not mentioned.

- d) Farming was the most commonly used example of an economic activity. Most candidates did not develop their ideas sufficiently. Answers lacked detail on why the activity was there in the first place and wrote very little about why they may stay there in the future or choose to move away. The best examples used the location of sweat shops and clothing manufacture to look at both location and possible movement.

#### **Question 4**

- a)
  - (i) Most candidates correctly defined the term.
  - (ii) Candidates could usually identify two changes in the employment structure from the pie charts.
  - (iii) Many candidates simply wrote that the reason was because one was an MEDC and the other was an LEDC. They failed to explain how this would affect investment, mechanisation and technology. Many candidates gained one or two marks for ideas about subsistence farming and mechanisation of farming.
- b) Surprisingly few candidates scored full marks on this question, although many gained at least half marks. The main reason suggested for child employment was that it was the only way to make money to support the family. Few candidates included the ideas that little investment in equipment or training was needed.
- c)
  - (i) Most candidates successfully described two features of multi-national companies.
  - (ii) Most candidates did not understand the concept of globalisation of industry and so many only gained one mark for the idea that industry is spread across the world. Most showed no real understanding of what globalisation is and why it has happened.
- d) As in previous case study questions most answers were at Level 1 and few candidates developed ideas to Level 2. Ideas usually focused on job creation and making money but often the case study knowledge was limited and so answers were very generic. Three multi-national companies that were used as examples were Nike, BMW and Coca Cola. Again the better answers drew on the ideas of sweat shops associated with the fashion industry.

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