

OCR Report to Centres

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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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General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course)

Geography B (J085)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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Overview

General Comments

Many centres built on the experience of the previous year when this new assessment was a step into the unknown. Centres have become more confident in applying the new controlled assessment regulations on levels of control. Centres had to produce work on new tasks for the Fieldwork Focus provided by the examination board rather than their own fieldwork titles. Centres are again 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.

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 were entering candidates for assessment in Year 10. 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.

A771/01/02

Administration

Administration by centres has improved with many centres submitting their marks well in advance of the 15 May deadline. Only a few centres made errors on the MS1 forms and nearly all sent the CCS160 form promptly. The majority of centres completed assessment grids fully and included appropriate annotation indicating where credit was given. A continuing problem is the secure attachment of both the Fieldwork Focus with the Geographical Investigation. This should be done with a treasury tag. Only a few centres included their instruction sheets for candidates for the two components. This is to be recommended along with candidates indicating their word counts.

Moderation

The Enquiry involves centres selecting one Fieldwork Focus title from four and a choice of 18 titles for the Geographical Investigation. The Fieldwork Focus titles were all selected but the majority were Rivers and Coasts. Nearly all centres split the title into several appropriate key questions and this provided a focus for primary data collection, analysis, evaluation and making substantiated conclusions. Most centres selected one title for their candidates to research in the Geographical Investigation. The favourite titles chosen were pirates, water, trainers, wind energy and tourism.

There were some centres who allowed a free choice or one from four titles. The vast majority of candidates chose to write a research report. A few power-point presentations, booklets/posters and oral interviews were seen. 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 vast majority of centres used ICT extensively in both their fieldwork and reports for research and presentation of their work.

The standard of marking was much better this year as one would expect centres to have responded to the reports provided by moderators last June. It was obvious that centres had attended INSET and fully understood the requirements of controlled assessment. There were fewer adjustments in a downward direction and only a few in an upward direction. The reasons for these changes were many and are mentioned below.

The Fieldwork Focus on the whole was marked closely to the assessment criteria. Centres that did not were those where candidates did not; split the title into key questions, provide a methodology table, collect sufficient primary data or present it in a variety of graphs. There were some examples of excellent use of maps and photographs to locate study areas. This certainly did set the scene and gave a sense of place. Once again there were some instances of poor sketching and labelling rather than annotating. Work from some centres did refer well to theories such as the Bradshaw model and discussed the wider context of their study. There were many examples of candidates analysing their findings in depth. There were some excellent examples of candidates who had combined maps, photographs, graphs and their analysis on one page. They also made substantiated conclusions and realistic evaluations. Some however, did have some over use of tables to try and reduce the word count.

The Geographical Investigation was also marked closely to the assessment criteria. Some centres did encourage their candidates to write a thought shower to help them identify key questions and give their report a logical structure. The majority of centres continued to insist on a research diary and the best of these had candidates acknowledging sources and evaluating their validity. They also acknowledged images directly and linked them to their bibliography.

Only a few candidates however, had no images, maps, quotes or graphs. A few made no reference to acknowledge their sources and made no mention of stakeholders. However, many did provide tables or speech bubbles to show stakeholders views. They also analysed these views and tried to explain them. High level work made substantiated conclusions, looked to the future where appropriate, expressed candidates' own opinions and showed extensive research of sources.

In both assessments one common problem continues to be the word count which in some centres was exceeded significantly. This meant that their work lacked focus, precision and succinctness.

Overall there continues to be an improvement in the quality of the work produced and it was very encouraging to see candidates enthusiastically take the opportunities offered and demonstrate high levels of ICT skills. They showed initiative, imagination and independence at a high level. Once again it was also encouraging to moderate complete pieces of work, even from weaker candidates, where they had attempted all elements of the assessment.

A772/01 (Foundation Tier)

General Comments

The clarity and quality of the Resource Booklet enabled candidates to access the geographical resources and demonstrate their skills, understanding and knowledge.

All the examination team agreed that the examination was at an appropriate level of difficulty for Foundation candidates.

A wide range of performance and achievement was noted. The best 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 and were able to formulate credible explanations. They selected relevant case studies and were able to apply their knowledge in a concise, relevant and focused manner. They also showed a clear understanding of geographical terms and specification specific vocabulary.

Key words affecting performance for the 2012 examination were:

Q1: *input, transfer, output, landform, processes, erosion, deposition*

Q2: *factors, erosion, managed retreat, landform, processes, erosion, deposition*

Q3: *infant mortality rate, long-term development, aid project*

Q4: *tertiary (industry), economic activities*

The most successful candidates made informed question choices and focused their thinking on producing good quality responses.

By contrast the lowest scoring candidates answered as many questions as they could irrespective of the rubric to choose from Q1 or Q2 and Q3 or Q4. 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 preparing candidates for future examinations it would be useful to focus on the following.

Candidates should practice close reading examination questions and selecting their best two under examination conditions. Question selection success criteria should be shared with case study knowledge at the top of the list.

Candidates should be familiar with commonly used command words, such as describe and explain, and how they indicate the thinking required for a successful response. They should be encouraged to look for and underline command words during the examination.

Short, sharp, focused answers should be given to the skills questions. This reduces unnecessary writing time.

Candidates should be aware of the two types of four mark questions. For open questions which do not require a specified number of responses, four basic ideas can achieve full marks. In addition some candidates gained four marks for two developed responses and/or three marks for a well developed response and a basic idea.

By contrast, for questions which specify two responses, each idea must be developed with detail to gain full marks. Candidates could highlight the word 'two' for such questions.

Candidates should be aware of the requirements of the eight mark case study question. A relevant example is needed, with correct, detailed information given for each section of the question. Accurate place specific detail is needed to secure full marks. Place specific detail could be additional place names linked to the example given and/or additional location information or data relevant to the example and the required content.

In addition to the eight mark case study question, there will always be a two mark knowledge recall question. This will usually involve the definition of a key geographical term, such as *life expectancy* in Q3. Candidates can underline key geographical words in these and four mark questions. Specification Theme key word glossaries are useful for developing and reinforcing understanding of the meanings.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A Rivers and Coasts

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify the correct components of a drainage basin. Stating an input for part (i) proved to be the most challenging task.
- (b) Nearly all candidates successfully used the flood risk map to score two marks.
- (c) Most candidates gave a range of basic ideas to describe problems caused by flooding. Most common were death, injury and damage to property and possessions. Very few candidates offered detailed or developed ideas.
- (d) Responses needed to show more understanding of why some areas have a higher flood risk. Basic ideas about relief and closeness to rivers or the sea were common. Few candidates considered other factors such as rainfall, rock type and flood management schemes.
- (e) Basic ideas were given for methods to reduce river flooding. Raised river banks, dams and barriers were common. Very few candidates were able to explain how their chosen methods worked and fewer still considered drainage basin scale management schemes such as monitoring and early warning systems.
- (f) A wide variety of responses were noted for the case study. Most candidates were able to name a river valley. The best answers featured almost textbook quality sketches of waterfalls, showing detail such as plunge pools and different rock layers. Meanders and V shaped valleys were accompanied by vague sketches and few labelled features. Most candidates were unable to name or sketch a relevant landform. Ideas about processes were weak and often confused. Waterfalls were the most successful with some ideas about abrasion, undercutting and collapse of the top layer of rock. Meanders saw confusion with erosion taking place on the inside bend and deposition on the outside. Some of the best responses appeared to be the results of successful fieldwork leaning.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates successfully read the Holderness erosion rates map. Part (iii) proved to be more of a challenge with just over half the candidates identifying Easington as the correct answer.

- (b) Limited responses were given for factors which can affect the rate of coastal erosion. Rock type was the most common with other ideas such as wave power/fetch and coastal defence schemes, being very rare.
- (c) Only basic ideas were offered to describe problems caused by coastal erosion. Effects focused on property and loss of livelihood were the most common. Some candidates developed their answers by explaining the costs involved in maintaining coastal management schemes.
- (d) Concrete sea walls and wooden groynes were the most common methods offered for reducing coastal erosion. Very few candidates were able to explain how their chosen methods work or offer other types of hard engineering or 'softer' options such as beach replenishment.
- (e) This question revealed limited understanding of managed retreat. Some candidates were able to give low costs as an advantage and loss of land as a disadvantage. Many candidates simply repeated ideas given in the stem of the question and failed to score any marks.
- (f) Although fewer candidates chose Q2, the case study responses were marginally more successful than those for the Rivers question. Most candidates were able to give a basic sketch of a valid coastal landform. A few candidates provided detailed, accurate sketches of spits or headland features. Ideas about processes were weak and confused with very few candidates giving detail about how processes operate or how they formed their chosen land form. The best responses appeared to be local in origin or the results of successful fieldwork learning.

Section B Economic Development

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were able to read the scattergraph both to extract specific data and to describe the overall relationship.
- (b) Successful answers to part (b) focused on the links between development and infant mortality such as health care, living standards and education regarding infant care. Some candidates were able to give basic ideas linked to either high infant mortality in LEDCs or declining infant mortality rate due to development or low infant mortality rate in MEDCs. Many candidates failed to score any marks as they did not know the meaning of the key term infant mortality. These candidates wrote about changes in birth rate instead.
- (c) The opening stem of this question needed closer scrutiny by candidates before writing their answers. Those who noticed the 'could change' focus of the question stated that both literacy and internet access would increase, for two marks. Basic ideas such as more schools/education investment and improved technology/access to computers then secured four marks. Many candidates failed to score marks as they either wrote about how literacy and internet access can help a country's development or an individual's life chances.
- (d) Most candidates scored one mark for a correct definition of life expectancy. Many were also able to develop their answer by adding given in years or for a specific country or as an average to their definition.
- (e) Candidates needed to pay particular attention to the term 'long-term development' at the end of the question stem. Their advantages of aid focused on emergency relief, in particular food aid. Better responses were given for the disadvantages of aid and many candidates showed some understanding of aid dependency and LEDC debt.

- (f) Credible aid projects given included Goat Aid, Water Aid, Computer Aid and Tree Aid. They were usually based in African nations such as Kenya, Mali, Madagascar, and Ethiopia and linked to known project specific aid agencies, such as Water Aid or non governmental organisations, such as Oxfam. Most of these answers stated the objective of the aid project such as clean water but failed to describe the relevant features such as water pumps, groundwater wells. Goat aid based responses fared better with clear ideas about milk production, manure for crops and breeding of goats. Quality of life ideas focused on improvement to health and benefits linked to increased income. Some candidates were limited to Level 1 marks only. They either wrote in very general terms about aid, usually food aid and emergency relief or they gave Africa as their named LEDC.

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates were able to give an example of a primary industry. Fewer were able to successfully define tertiary industry, and many gave a definition of the example of nursing given in the table.
- (b) Most candidates were able to read the employment structure graph to score full marks.
- (c) Responses showed a clear discrepancy in understanding changes in secondary and tertiary industry in the UK. The former was more successfully answered with references to factory closures due to overseas movement of capital investment/cheaper labour costs or competition from LEDC imports, especially China. Changes in technology with mechanisation/robots taking the place of manual workers also scored marks. Part (ii) revealed many misunderstandings about the growth of tertiary industries. Few candidates linked this to increased economic prosperity or population change. Many gave incorrect ideas linked to higher wages, easier work and the decline of other sectors.

Most candidates gave only general answers about causes of global warming linked to vague ideas about car ownership and pollution. Few gave developed responses linked to specific economic activities such as manufacturing industry, power generation, rice farming. Those who did often quoted correct greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane along with their ideas. Some candidates gave incorrect ideas about the depletion of the ozone layer or misread the question and wrote about the consequences of global warming.

- (e) Common responses focused on the melting of the polar ice caps, linked to rising sea levels and increased flooding. Some candidates wrote about loss of animal habitats and an increase in extreme weather events or droughts leading to crop failures and hunger. Some candidates misread the question and chose to write about the causes of global climate warming.
- (f) A range of multi-national companies were noted with Nike, Coca Cola, Ford and Apple being the most common. These MNCs were usually located in Asia, with Nike in Vietnam being a common response. Ideas about the advantages and disadvantages were given in very general terms linked to jobs, wealth and working conditions. Some good place specific detail was noted for Coca Cola in India, possibly linked to a previous SDME resource booklet. Some candidates were limited to Level 1 marks because they wrote in general terms about the impact of the MNC on the economy of their given country or they gave invalid ideas for their named country, such as 'sweatshop' working conditions in the USA.

A772/02 (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. However, it was suggested by examiners that some centres might be entering candidates for the higher tier who may be better suited to the foundation paper. 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 about a particular place or event will be recognisable through the detailed references being made.

Where case studies were on familiar topics candidates scored well. Most candidates selected appropriate case studies which they had learned in detail. This included some weaker candidates for whom the case studies were the best answers. For some candidates the challenge was to select the appropriate detail to use in answering the specific question. Weaker candidates sometimes decided to write all they knew about the case study, whether it was relevant or not. Relevant place detail is often the main differentiating factor between level 2 and level 3 case studies. Although there are a limited number of case study topics the focus of each case study will vary from year to year. It is worth noting that some case study examples may be better than others to answer questions with a different focus, for example where there is a focus on sustainability.

There are opportunities in each question for candidates to develop answers, and in some questions they are instructed to do so. Candidates need to consider how they might do this when the opportunities arise.

The most popular questions chosen were Q1 and Q3. There was limited evidence that candidates had evaluated questions before starting to answer them or made rough plans for their answers. Candidates are 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.

Very few candidates infringed the rubric requirement. Time management was not a major issue for candidates who completed all their answers. Some candidates also lost marks by misreading or misinterpreting sections and consequently writing irrelevant answers. For example, they chose a case study from an MEDC in question 3.

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 their 2013 examination.

- Obey the rubric instructions.
- 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.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A Rivers and Coasts

Question 1

- (a) (i) Most candidates identified a store but many candidates seemed to be unaware of the term. Often candidates identified a flow.
- (ii) Most candidates gave a simple answer which matched mark scheme criteria for one mark.
- (iii) Many candidates gave two reasons, usually linking surface run-off to lack of infiltration. Few candidates understood how farming directly affected the soil through compaction. Most marks were gained through explaining why surface run-off is less in forested areas.
- (b) (i) Most candidates ranked the authorities correctly. A small minority ranked them the wrong way round.
- (ii) Most candidates compared the two regions correctly and used supporting data from the map. Some weak responses mixed up the two regions or compared the wrong regions.
- (c) (i) Candidates answered this question well. Many reasons were suggested, most commonly deforestation, urbanisation and inability of the river channel to cope with high discharge. Better responses also developed these ideas well.
- (ii) Candidates suggested a range of prevention measures and explained how they would control flooding. Popular measures suggested included building levees or embankments, a dam, channel alterations and measures on the floodplain.
- (d) Many candidates had learned an appropriate case study. A popular example was the River Tees with a specific focus on High Force waterfall. Answers were often detailed and included specific named processes. Weaker answers were vague in explaining the sequence of processes. The best descriptions of the waterfall were through a diagram. Other candidates chose lowland landforms, particularly an ox-bow lake. Again the best answers included detailed diagrams which showed the specific processes responsible for the formation. Often these answers had less place detail and could have referred to any lowland river.

Question 2

- (a) (i) Most candidates correctly identified Easington.
- (ii) Most candidates ranked the settlements correctly. A small minority ranked them the wrong way round.
- (iii) The question discriminated well between candidates. Most answers focused on rock hardness and coastal defences. However, the latter point was often quite general when candidates could have been more specific about their effectiveness.
- (b) (i) Most candidates correctly identified two different methods, usually barriers to erosion or groynes. They also explained how these barriers prevented erosion by the sea. The impact of groynes was well explained by reference to longshore drift.
- (ii) Many candidates answered this question well. The main disadvantages suggested were expense of construction and maintenance, and being an eyesore. Better responses then went on to explain the further impact of these disadvantages.
- (c) The idea of managed retreat was not understood by many candidates. The best definitions concentrated on the idea of doing nothing and letting the sea erode the land without interference. Where candidates knew what managed retreat meant the most common explanations of its sustainability referred to habitats, preserving the natural environment and cheaper cost.
- (d) Many candidates used an appropriate case study. Different examples were used from around the coast of the UK, most commonly the Dorset coastline, Happisburgh and specific named spits. Answers which focused on landforms produced by erosion were often detailed in explaining the sequence from a weakness in a headland to a stump. Weaker answers did not explain the processes of erosion in enough detail to gain level 3. The best descriptions of the features were through a diagram. Other candidates chose depositional landforms, particularly a spit. Again the best answers include detailed diagrams which showed the specific processes responsible for the formation. Often these answers had less place detail and could have referred to any depositional coastline.

Section B Economic Development

Question 3

- (a) (i) Most candidates correctly identified Turkey.
- (ii) Again most candidates correctly identified the different relationships, although answers were sometimes poorly expressed. Incorrect answers related life expectancy to infant mortality without linking these indicators to GDP per person.
- (iii) Most candidates placed a strong focus on healthcare or medical care with little mention of other factors. Good answers included ideas about diet, education and care for older people which resulted in a more balanced answer. Some candidates repeated the same ideas for both indicators and consequently only gained credit once. Weaker responses gave vague answers such as 'an increase in GDP would mean more food and a nicer house to live in'.
- (b) Virtually all candidates placed a strong emphasis on how improved literacy leads to access to a job or better job with a subsequent increase in income. Many candidates then went on to suggest how this money might be spent to improve quality of life. Some better responses recognised that increased income would lead to greater taxation which could be used for further improvements. Few candidates suggested ideas about being able to pass on literacy skills or read information or instructions.

- (c) Most candidates chose Figure 10 for their explanations. Many candidates recognised the advantages of showing change over time and more detailed stages of development. Candidates also criticised Figure 11 as being out-dated in support of their answer for Figure 10. Candidates who chose Figure 11 also recognised the advantages of a map in showing individual countries and a clear divide. Weak answers suggested that the colours on the map were significant in showing levels of development.
- (d) There were many excellent answers about long-term aid. Most candidates suggested that the receiving countries could become reliant or dependent on aid and would then make little attempt to reduce that dependency. Other disadvantages which were commonly suggested focussed on tied aid and government corruption.
- (e) A great variety of aid projects were chosen. The most popular examples were Goat Aid in Ethiopia and Water Aid in Mali. However, there were many other examples of local or small-scale aid projects taking place in Africa, including play pump and sand dams. Some candidates focused their example on a project in which the school was involved in supporting a village in Kenya or Tanzania. These resulted in excellent place specific answers. Many candidates described the aims of the project well and explained how sustainable they were, particularly for local people. Some candidates produced good answers but did not include place detail so the aid project being described could have been in any LEDC. A common error in weaker responses was in not referring to a named country, but rather Africa.

Question 4

- (a)
 - (i) Answers to this question depended on whether a candidate was familiar with a triangular graph. However, most candidates did work out the correct percentage.
 - (ii) As with Q4(a)(i), the answer depended on whether the candidate knew how to interpret the graph.
 - (iii) Instead of explaining the reasons, candidates tended to describe the differences in employment structure with many references to primary, secondary or tertiary employment. An example of this error is where a candidate wrote 'more people are employed in primary industries in an LEDC' rather than 'more people work in agriculture or mining in an LEDC. The most common explanations related to the importance of farming in LEDCs, higher levels of skill or training in MEDCs, and the effect of mechanisation in industry.
- (b) Some candidates mixed up quaternary with tertiary sector. Most candidates who were familiar with the quaternary sector usually described then as being high-technology industries and linked to research and development.
- (c)
 - (i) Many candidates showed good understanding of the greenhouse effect and how it is caused. They made use of the diagram to put their ideas in a logical sequence. Weaker responses revealed a common misconception of how the greenhouse effect is linked to the ozone layer. Weaker answers were characterised by vagueness such as referring to gases in the atmosphere rather than greenhouse gases or named gases, heat from the sun rather than radiation, and the earth heats up rather than the atmosphere.
 - (ii) The main reasons suggested for the difference in contribution to global warming were linked to transport especially cars, and factories, and fossil fuels which were burnt to produce electricity. Candidates developed their idea by explaining how these released greenhouse gases or specific gas emissions. Most candidates focused their ideas on high emissions from MEDCs rather than low emissions from LEDCS.

- (d)** The most popular case studies were Nike in Vietnam or another Asian country, Walmart in various locations, and Coca Cola in India. The best answers included a balance of positive and negative effects on local people and the economy. Most answers focussed on working conditions and financial effects of pay. The example of Coca Cola gave candidates the opportunity to also consider the use of water and the effects on local farmers. Weaker answers focused on the effects on local people rather than the whole economy. Some answers lacked place detail because of a focus on the MNC generally rather than its operation in a specific country or location. Answers which focused on MNC operations in an MEDC produced a different set of effects which were also valid. However, these examples tended to be vague and lacked place detail.

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