IGCSE

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Geography (4370)

Summer 2006

Examiners' Report

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Paper 4370/1F
June 2006

PAPER 1F

General Comments

This was the third examination sitting of this qualification and, because of significant changes to both the number and nature of the candidate entry, comparisons and contrasts with the previous sittings will be little drawn. Centres seem to have improved the precision of their entry policy; a fuller range of candidate ability but a smaller proportion of the candidates of grade C potential were seen entering this paper. Most scripts had an up-and-down mark profile with performance patchy. Full scripts were typical and there was clear evidence that question accessibility was satisfactory. There were some weak scripts where knowledge and understanding was very limited and few marks were gained other than those for basic skills.

Section A

Generally, candidates' best work was exhibited in parts of these six questions. Their highest question total also tended to be in this section.

Question 1 : Water

This was a good example of a patchily answered question; parts (a) and (d) tending to be reasonably well answered with (c) less so. Meanders were generally known to the candidature though some did confuse erosion and deposition. Part (b) discriminated well both in terms of the sequence of features and the accuracy of plotting along the cross-profile. The concept of discharge was not well known; accurate definitions in (c)(i) were rare which often led to weak responses to (c)(ii) because the basic concept was not understood. Waterfalls were a frequent choice in (d). Labelled diagrams were pleasingly present in most scripts, though often failed to address formation.

Question 2 : Hazards

Generally, this was better answered than question 1. Most part (a) answers demonstrated good knowledge of the three types of plate boundary movement. Equally, most candidates showed some idea of why the term 'Pacific Ring of Fire' is used. Again, scoring throughout part (b) was the case in most scripts. Candidates had been well-versed in the causes, risks and management of earthquakes. A mark total of 10 or more marks of the 15 available was common.

Question 3 : Production

This question, unfortunately, produced exceptionally poor responses. Most scored at least 1 mark in (a)(i) but barely anyone answered the question set in (a)(ii). How, for example, soil affects a named farming type was not addressed. Part (a)(iii) was the most successful of the whole question with the majority of candidates being able to write about irrigation, GM crops or other valid developments. Part (b) was disappointingly answered with almost all candidates missing the basic point sought by (b)(i) with its consequential knock-on effects in

(b)(ii). This aspect of agricultural geography seemed to be an unfamiliar topic for the candidates.

Question 4 : Development

This unit of the specification would seem to have been far better prepared than in both 2005 papers when Development answers proved to be very weak. Most candidates were able to correctly match up the two countries, justify their decision and suggest other indicators. Most knew of NICs and LLEDCs for (b), and write respectable accounts of a named growing region or country for (c), usually of an Asian 'tiger' economy. By the standards of closing parts of questions, this part was a strong area of the whole paper.

Question 5 : Migration

This was another high-scoring question with part (a) usually scoring strongly throughout. The push-and-pull model, including its factors and obstacles, would appear to have been learned by candidates prior to the examination. The terms for the types of migrant used in part (b)(i) were known by most candidates who were generally able to make a fair effort of explaining the migrations of guest workers and refugees. Part (b)(ii) was the least well done area of this question. The task was frequently misinterpreted by candidates who often failed to appreciate the significance of "than ever before". Few referred to transport advances or greater public awareness of faraway places as had been hoped by the examiners.

Question 6 : Urban Environments

This proved to be a moderate scoring question. Candidates tended to score in all or most parts but maximum marks per part were rare. Few knew the term 'urban sprawl' for (a)(ii). Superstore locations were dealt with too superficially and partially for full marks to be awarded more than occasionally. The same applied to (a)(v) where the broad idea of the sort of land uses attracted to rural-urban fringe locations was generally evident but the specifics were often dubious. There were few Level 2 responses to part (b). The key idea of threats and pressures on land in the rural-urban fringe was rarely addressed.

Section B

Pleasingly, there were few rubric offences with all but a few candidates attempting one question only. This attempt, however, was often of a lower quality than those generally made in Section A.

Question 7 : Fragile Environments

This was significantly more popular than the other two questions in this section. Part (a) acted as a positive start with many candidates gaining all or most of these early marks. Soil erosion processes were in the main adequately understood. Candidates invariably chose the correct option in (b)(i) but thereafter in (b) had limited success. Answers were often repetitious of (a)(iii), and many showed little distinctiveness between (b)(ii) and (iii). Most were able to name the Sahel, US Dust Bowl or a similarly valid place in (c)(i) but not answering the question was a common feature of (c)(ii). Local impacts were too infrequently the focus of their writings.

Question 8 : Globalisation

This was a very unpopular option. The few candidates that did so opt had little difficulty with part (a) questions but experienced real problems with the concepts of supply chain ((b)) and global shift ((d)). Supply chains were hardly ever properly understood and surprisingly 'global shift' seemed to be an unknown term to all candidates. Part (c) was better answered than (b) and (d) though the difficulties candidates had with those parts significantly lowered mark totals for this question.

Question 9 : Human Welfare

A significantly popular choice of question and generally the highest scoring of the Section B questions. Most candidates coped very well with part (a) with none of the four tasks creating any response difficulties. Equally, part (b) was usually well answered; the concept of natural increase being generally present in answers to (b)(i), and most candidates were aware of at least two factors encouraging a high birth rate. Part (c) was the weakest with a large proportion of candidates failing to answer the question set. The key words "how it is caused by…" were frequently ignored in the responses offered. However, part (d) scored respectably for a closing section. Here, how they work, i.e. the process, was addressed in the majority of cases, and this was reflected in the marks awarded.

Paper 2H

General Comments

This Higher tier of paper saw an encouraging advance in both size of entry and quality of scripts in relation to 2005. The better scripts of which there were significant numbers were of a high standard for the age-group. It was gratifying to see so many candidates succeeding in terms of both marks and the achievement of geographical objectives. The award of grades reflects this significant improvement in standards achieved this year.

There was evidence of greater consistency of standard across the seven answers but gaps in performance still remain. Candidates often achieved their high overall mark total through some very high peaks on certain individual questions. Section B questions were frequently high scoring this year.

The word 'example' did seem to create uncertainty in the minds of the candidates. Examples are not necessarily named places though knowledge of place is one of the hallmarks of a good script.

Quality of written communication was generally of a highly commendable level and whilst most scripts were very worthy, some were a little too wordy. Additional sheets and over-writing are not recommended. Candidates are urged to limit their answers to the amount of space left in the question-and-answer booklet.

Section A

Question 1 : Water

This was invariably done well and generally scored highly. Most candidates got the sequence and positioning of the four fluvial features in (a)(i) correct, and were able to go on to explain the two basic formation processes sufficiently for the maximum marks available in (a)(ii). Most offered a diagram in (b) though the quality was variable. V-shaped valleys and waterfalls were common. Detail in the diagram was often wanting with basic drawings and brief labels being too frequent. Some centres had prepared their candidates well on discharge variations; their knowledge and understanding enabled them to score well in part (c). However, others confused discharge with velocity and struggled to score more than basic marks in this closing part.

Question 2 : Hazards

A high scoring question; generally well done in all parts except (b)(i). Types of plate boundary movement were almost universally known ((a)(i)), and (a)(ii) always scored at least 1 mark and often 2. The request for a conservative plate boundary diagram in (b)(i) differentiated with some able to present detailed, explanatory annotations and an accurately drawn diagram, others either copying Figure 2 or offering the incorrect plate boundary, and many responding in ways that fit between these two extremes. Most candidates were able to give a decent overview of earthquake risks although not always related to San Francisco. In the same way, earthquake management was a well understood area of the specification but a

general lack of focus on the examples identified prevented many candidates from reaching a Level 3 mark.

Question 3 : Production

Generally, the weakest of the Section A questions. Most scripts started well with candidates offering an interesting range of often creditworthy and distinctive factors to complete Figure 3. Most named developments in (b)(i) received credit though lack of locational knowledge and unconventional listings in (b)(i) limited the award of marks in (b)(ii). Many did appropriately offer greenhouses and irrigation in part (b). Part (c) confused some candidates. Too few associated the questions with overproduction and its causes, especially EU farm policy. A range of economic reasons which did attract some credit were offered. It was particularly disappointing to examine the responses to (d), a piece of traditional geography requiring the use of a case study of a specific farming area. Loosely anchored generic writing of Level 1/lower Level 2 standard was the norm.

Question 4 : Development

This question performed vastly better than its 2005 equivalent. Part (a)(i) generally scored well though some candidates did not gain all possible marks because they failed to explain why the factors indicated an MEDC/LEDC. (a)(ii) and (b)(i) were pleasingly well known. Part (c) differentiated well. Despite the strange selections of some of a rapidly growing area, there was a general sense of understanding of the development process evident. The best offered strong case studies for an NIC. Part (d) responses were often thorough and appropriate although many candidates tended to ignore the "gap" idea and produce either separate or comparative accounts of LEDC development and MEDC development.

Question 5 : Migration

The highest scoring of the Section A questions. Part (a) created no difficulties for the candidature with maximum marks a common feature. In part (b) voluntary and forced migration were nearly always known and understood with the examples offered often being excellent. Part (c) was an effective differentiator with very distinctive answers according to ability. The best offered valid points and their development. All candidates knew of the obstacles facing migrants; some followed the wording and demands of the question, writing descriptively and explanatorily in depth about groups such as Vietnamese boat-people.

Question 6 : Urban Environments.

Part (a) proved to be discriminatory with all candidates scoring marks but only developed answers achieving maximum marks. The terms listed in (b) were generally defined adequately though greenfield site often proved the most challenging; it was often confused with green belt. The idea of threats/pressures on the edge seems to have been understood by most candidates in (c)(i) but few were able to go beyond listing land use changes and say why the changes are a threat. Many candidates did not have a knowledge of land use changes in MEDC cities so responses to (c)(ii) were frequently poor. Case study knowledge was scant and some candidates had to fall back on shanty town schemes.

Section B

These questions were well answered and there was evidence of whole centre choice. At some centres all opted for the same question, performed strongly and pulled up their mark total for the paper.

Question 7 : Fragile Environments

This was outstandingly popular and the best answered of the three Section B questions. It was normal for all 3 marks to be awarded in (a)(i), and for the processes tested in (a)(ii) to be clearly explained. The 2-mark definition task in (a)(iii) differentiated well, and most candidates had a good idea of the role of both areas in part (b) though answers were not always balanced. Part (c) caused few problems for the candidates at this tier; most responses did focus on impacts/effects and Level 2 marks were common. The candidates produced a set of respectable accounts of fossil fuel use, deforestation and global warming in the main with again Level 2 scores common. It was evident that the concept of sustainability was understood by most but in a direct sense tended to be ignored in the writings of too many candidates.

Question 8 : Globalisation

This was attempted by few candidates and did not achieve high marks. Very few understood the term 'supply chain' and so had problems answering part (b) questions. Surprisingly, little was known about the global shift (part (c)) with greater knowledge and understanding being shown of the United Nations and the media in (d). Part (a) had been satisfactorily answered but (e) was the best answered section of this question, and one of the better finale sections on the whole paper. The pros and cons of TNCs are a popular and well taught area of geography and this was reflected in the marks here.

Question 9 : Human Welfare

A large number of candidates opted for this question. Most gained the mark in (a)(i) but failed to develop their answers sufficiently to gain high marks in (a)(ii). Some good geography appeared in part (b) scripts but too many candidates dealt only with birth rates; a Level 2 ceiling on their mark applied. The basic points were evident in the work in parts (c) and (d) of the vast majority of candidates, however, what was crucial was whether they actually demonstrated the link/process so that the question set was actually answered. Some did this, most did not. Part (e) was pleasingly well done. Many were aware appropriately of the Chinese one-child policy; some could not extend to a second policy but examples were given by other candidates. Perhaps most pleasing were the many genuine attempts at policy evaluation.

Paper 4350/03
June 2006

Paper 3

General comments

As in the previous series, the option of a skills based paper as an alternative to coursework was well received by centres and candidates. Approximately two thirds of the 2006 cohort was entered for Paper 3, which was common to both tiers. The majority of the candidates completed all three compulsory questions, and the allowed 1 hour and 15 minutes proved to be sufficient time for the paper.

The paper was accessible to those entered for the Foundation Tier but allowed the Higher Tier candidates to obtain high scores. As previously, the centres had prepared the candidates thoroughly for most aspects of the paper.

Questions 1 and 2

Both these questions required the candidates to use a variety of resources and geographical skills. The majority of candidates achieved higher scores for question 1.

Question 1 commenced with a straightforward section covering basic skills which enabled candidates to make a good start to the paper, although in some cases candidates would benefit from practice using scale lines, as there were suggestions that the bridge at Henley is as wide as 160 metres. Section (c)(i) required the candidates to complete the graph, the actual plotting of which caused few problems but a significant minority of candidates did not use the scale, as indicated in the key. In (c)(ii) a pleasing number were able to demonstrate excellent geographical skills when describing the patterns shown by the completed graph by providing both supporting figure and comparing the three sites. The following is an example of a high level response which gained three marks:-
'The majority of the traffic both entering and leaving the town was roughly the same. The majority of traffic both entering and leaving the town came over Henley Bridge. At Site 1, Northfield Road, the number entering and leaving were precisely the same, whist in Reading Road those leaving were significantly more (150) than those vehicles entering.'

The majority of candidates continued to show sound geographical skills when completing the flow map in section (d)(i). Some able candidates missed out this section, thus limiting their total marks for Question 1. Section (d) (ii) required candidates to assess why Henley Bridge had the worst traffic problems of the sites surveyed. Many candidates limited their responses to describing the patterns, tending to repeat material already used in (c) (ii). This can be illustrated by the following Level 1 answer:-

'They reached this conclusion because site 2 has the highest number of vehicles entering and leaving when we compare it to site 1 and site 3. Because it has the highest number of vehicles entering and leaving it means that site 2 has the worst traffic problems'

A typical top Level 2 answer, however, used information from a number of sources to support and develop the statements:-

'At both times surveyed, this narrow bridge had more vehicles both entering and leaving it than any other route into the town – possibly because it has the most direct route from London passing over it, and appears the only bridging point near Henley. At the first survey, the students also kept a tally of the average time waiting in traffic queues, the time spent on Henley Bridge, 15 mins, was 5 minutes longer than at Northfield End and 8 mins longer than at Reading Road. On the evidence available, their conclusion appears sound.'

Question 2 was considered to be more demanding by the candidates as; in general, it required more analysis of material than Question 1. Despite this, the first section proved to be very accessible, and the graph in b (i) was accurately completed. A number of candidates wrote detailed descriptions of the trends shown by the graph, with the best answers giving the overall pattern, supported by relevant figures, and noting any variations.

Section (c) (i) required the candidates to describe the location of two areas, and, in general, this was poorly answered. Many answers described the areas themselves rather focusing on the question, only a minority of responses used the scale or the north arrow to locate the areas in relation to named features. The following concise answer easily obtained the two marks available:-

'It is in the south west of Catalonia, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. it is about 70 km away from Barcelona, a large settlement.'

There were some very developed answers explaining why wind farms should not be built in areas 1 and 2 in section (c) (ii). Some candidates were able to extend the information annotated on the map (figure 2d). In order to gain more than half marks, candidates had to develop material 'lifted' from the resource, as shown by the extract below:-

'Areas A and B are also far from main roads. This means it would be difficult to reach the region to firstly construct the turbine, and secondly to run these farms, repair replacement, supervision etc.'

Section (d) seldom produced high marks. Candidates seemed to be unable to extend their ideas beyond simple statements such as 'the wind farms would be noisy and unattractive and should not be built.' Well developed answers that reached the top of Level 2 included supporting comments: - 'the nature of wind farms means they do not cause pollution, but are of economic importance, and that the majority support their construction but just not in protected regions.'

Question 3

This question was designed to enable candidates to demonstrate the skills and knowledge obtained when carrying out their own field work investigations. It was very pleasing to see that a large number of centres had ensured that the work was geographically relevant and planned to enable candidates to experience a range of techniques. However, some centres and candidates would benefit from more focused investigations. There are a number of suggestions for field work investigations in the Teacher's Guide, and centres should consider providing their candidates with experience of both physical geography field work, for example a river study, and human geography fieldwork, such as an urban or farm study.
In section (a), most candidates were able to state the aims of their fieldwork, and some were able to produce and annotate outstanding sketch maps with clear

locations, scales and compass directions. There were detailed explanations for the selection of the data collection sites, such as:-

'Site x was selected to compare the behaviour and the discharge of the river closer to the mouth with the data of the sites in the upper course and closer to the confluence.'

Some candidates showed an appreciation for safety in the selection of their locations:-

'There is a wide pavement, so safe to view from and allows other users to pass.' Any equipment which had evidently been used as part of the investigation was credited in (c)(i), although the use of 'clipboards' and 'pens' tended to limit candidate's responses in (c)(ii) and (c)(iii). Centres are advised to ensure that the selected fieldwork involves the use of simple equipment such a measuring tapes and rulers, ranging poles or other markers and stop watches. The following extract is from a well prepared candidate who appreciated the importance of careful and accurate use of equipment:-

'The same person was used with each piece of equipment to reduce errors, errors could have been caused by the reaction time and differences in sight. The experiment was done with the same equipment and repeated three times to obtain an average which is more accurate than single results. Each group used exactly the same equipment at each location to make the results fair.'

The term 'secondary data' used in (d) was not understood by the majority of candidates, and again only well prepared candidates were able to outline the use of text books, maps, the internet or other sources of information that they had not collected themselves. Centres are encouraged to ensure that candidates are familiar with, and can distinguish between, the terms 'primary' and 'secondary' data.

Paper 4350/04
June 2006

Introduction

The coursework option attracted an entry of an entry of approximately one third of the total candidates. There were entries from candidates from both the higher and foundation tiers.

Administration

There were no administrative errors by centres and centres are to be thanked for contributing to the moderation process.

The majority of work was submitted in simple light weight folders which again assisted with moderation. Centres are requested to fasten coursework pages together and to ensure that candidate's names, candidate numbers and centre numbers are written clearly on the front cover.

Much of the submitted work was accurately marked. However, there were instances of centres being overgenerous or inconsistent with some criteria, and this caused some adjustment in the candidates' marks.

Candidates' performance

General

The choices of topic were all geographically relevant. Teachers had made great efforts to ensure that their candidates had access to appropriate areas for data collection, and there was also evidence that work had been designed to discriminate between candidates. Where care had been taken to structure the work, it was able to help candidates access the full range of marks in all the criteria.

Criterion 1 – Introduction and aims

It is essential that candidates have a clear aim for their study; in addition, candidates should be able to develop questions or hypothesis. A number of carefully designed studies did not include an outline of the proposed data collection, thus limiting attainment for this criterion. It was pleasing to note that the studies were generally well located and there were a number of excellent, detailed hand drawn location maps.

Criterion 2 – Data collection

All the submitted work had a strong emphasis on primary data collection, and it was pleasing to see that the candidates had used a variety of methods to collect their information. All the work contained clear descriptions of the methods used to collect information, and explanations of the methods used to collect and record the data were evident in the majority of studies. However, the data collection methods were only justified by some candidates and consequently a number of pieces of work failed to reach Level 3. There was some evidence that where data collection was totally organised by the teacher, there was limited scope for candidates to be aware of why particular methods were used.

Some candidates used methodology grids, which is an excellent way of presenting this material as long as the size of the selected grid does not limit the depth of the provided explanations.

Criterion 3 - Data presentation

Candidates demonstrated some excellent data presentation techniques. These included digital photographs, field sketches, cross sections and flow charts, the majority of which included titles and keys and scales where appropriate. It was especially pleasing to see that both the field sketches and the photographs were annotated, and in some cases, located. Many candidates used the wide variety of techniques required to access Level 3, with a number being awarded full marks for this criterion.

The teacher led nature of much of the submitted work limited the originality of presentation methods from a number of centres. Candidates should be encouraged to extend their range of presentation, perhaps including located graphs and annotated photographs on base maps. Overlays of flow diagrams can be used to compare current data with that of previous years.

Very few candidates attempted to justify their selected methods; this could be rectified by the use of a simple table outlining the method of presentation with a brief justification.

Criterion 4 - Analysis and Conclusions

The majority of candidates were able to comment on their data to some extent. Frequently this was limited in content, and did not reach the higher levels for this criterion. Candidates should be encouraged to increase the quantative nature of their analysis.

Most candidates were able to offer some concluding comments, candidates who were able to reach Level 3 returned to their original hypothesis or question and drew together the threads of their argument, this tended to be more evident where candidates had investigated a physical geography topic.

Candidates were able to comment on the limitations of their studies and to make valid suggestions for improvement. Weaker candidates tended to suggest that they might repeat their data collection or take a larger number of measurements. The better evaluations recognised that changes at the planning, data collection and analytical stages would improve the validity of their study.

Criterion 5 - Planning and Organisation

The majority of work was well organised in a logical manner, and many candidates attained at least Level 2. The best studies included diagrams and graphs that were integrated into the text, and made appropriate cross-references throughout the work.

It was pleasing to see that many candidates acknowledged sources of secondary data, including maps, books and websites.

A number of centres used showed excellent use of ICT to enhance the studies. Hand written annotations and labels were easy to read and it was clear that candidates had taken great care to ensure legibility.

4370 GEOGRAPHY, GRADE BOUNDARIES JUNE 2006

Grade		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Lowest mark for award of grade (Max 100)	Option 1 (1F, 03)	-	-	-	51	43	35	27	19
	Option 2 (1F, 04	-	-	-	50	42	35	28	21
	Option 3 (2H, 03)	73	65	57	49	40	35	-	-
	Option 4 (2H, 04)	72	64	56	48	39	34	-	-

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from series to series and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question papers.