GCE O Level

Edexcel GCE O Level

Geography (7209)

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Contents

Geography 7209, June 2006

Paper 1

General Comments

In general, most candidates were able to attempt four questions. The best scripts were produced by those candidates who were discerning over the selection of their questions and ensured that they were equipped to do justice to all parts of the questions, including the final component which carried nine marks in each case.

The examiners commended the insight and understanding which some candidates were able to demonstrate together with their capacity to present knowledge and views with clarity and, in some instances, conviction. In other instances, answers were less well prepared and planned; the consequence was often a lack of structure and repetition. Time given over to the preparation and planning of answers is almost invariably a sound investment.

The quality of maps and diagrams was often disappointing; they sometimes appeared rushed and ill considered. On occasions, candidates seemed to lack the basic equipment necessary for the production of these. A good, well labelled map or diagram can frequently convey a great deal of information, especially pertaining to spatial distributions. It can often be produced relatively quickly. However, key skills are necessary to achieve this and tehse can be rehearsed when candidates are preparing for examinations.

Question 1

This was a popular question in which most candidates were able to interpret the chart successfully and reach accurate conclusions. Errors were commonly the consequence of a lack of attention to detail. In (a)(iii) the crucial term 'change' was often overlooked but some candidates managed to identify the presence of a depression. Anticyclones were sometimes confused with tropical storms.
Some candidates struggled with part (c); others become distracted with the environmental consequences of the pollution at C and lost track of the question which was about local climates. Relatively few were able to write with confidence about the likes of the heat island effect at B.

Question 2

This question prompted some very good answers where the quality of response was sustained across all three parts of the question. In (a)(iii) it was important that answers were realistic; while 'silent aircraft' may be an aspiration, the prospect of this seems a long way off. Pragmatic answers such as the installation of double glazed windows in buildings and the regulation of night flights were given ample credit.

Part (c) produced some well argued and hard hitting answers. There was little sympathy with the stance of the USA where, some candidates claimed, self interest prevails. Appropriately, it was pointed out that European countries had invested in alternative sources of energy while there was very sound knowledge about industrialisation in China and its reliance on the likes of coal.

Question 3

Many candidates were well equipped to answer the first two parts of this question and seemed very familiar with the different types of volcanoes and lava.

The best answers to part (b) were almost always based on case studies, Mt St Helens seemingly being the most popular. This example enabled observations to be made on both the local area and 'areas further away', a distinction which was sometimes overlooked by candidates who did not have a case study at their disposal.

Sadly, some candidates had no notion of intrusive igneous activity and forfeited many marks in part (c). However, there were many good answers though the quality of diagrams was sometimes disappointing. It should be noted that in this question a labelled diagram was a requirement.

Question 4

The concept of water infiltration in soils was understood by the majority of candidates who attempted this question. Most identified A as the sandy soil and B as the one giving the greater surface runoff. Candidates' knowledge of podsols was good and there were sound explanations for the presence of clear cut horizons, it being pointed out that the absence of earthworms accounted for this characteristic. Equally, there were convincing answers to explain the presence of the iron pan and credit was given for the use of valid technical terms.

Part (c) proved infinitely more challenging. Quite a few candidates made no distinction between podsols and temperate grassland soils and viewed tropical grasslands as being part of the Equatorial forest. A possible approach to this question would have been to produce two profile diagrams to show the temperate 'black earths', rich in calcium and the tropical lateritic soils influenced by lengthy periods of drought with capillary action in the dry season.

Question 5

Difficulties encountered by candidates in this question were occasionally the result of insufficient attention to detail. For example, some candidates did not detect that location X was in the southern hemisphere although its latitude was clearly stated as 32 degrees south. This apart, many struggled with (a)(iii) failing to see the significance of latitude.

However, most candidates correctly differentiated between the Mediterranean climate and the Savanna climate. Reasons needed to be of the calibre of location X having a hot, dry summer and warm wet winter rather than 'it being at the right latitude'.

Many candidates struggled with explanations in part (c) and surprisingly often dwelt solely on precipitation and had little regard for temperature. Occasionally, 'altitude' was confused with 'latitude'.

Question 6

This was a very popular question. So inviting was part (c), it seems, that some candidates gave this priority over parts (a) and (b). In general, the question was well answered. Part (b) sometimes prompted a discussion of the formation of a wide variety of coastal features which went far beyond the brief of the question. Some diagrams were very detailed but omitted to label the wave cut platform.

There were some outstanding answers to part (c) which considered each of the three parts of the question and gave a clear view supported by evidence. In weaker answers costs were suspect, the impact on the environment was misjudged and occasionally all four schemes were introduced into the answer.

Question 7

Part (a) was completed accurately by many candidates but the cumulative line graph in (b) caused some candidates to draw incorrect conclusions. However, the impact of changes to the woodland area and the urban areas on the risk of flooding was well handled; there was good use of technical terms.

Provided candidates had studied an appropriate case study they took part (c) in their stride. Sometimes there was an imbalance in the answers. Part (i) was sometimes almost totally overlooked.

Occasionally, answers were based on examples which were neither multi-purpose nor 'major'.

Question 8

This question did not produce many good overall quality answers. In general, candidates who attempted this question had a command of basic mapwork skills and were able to cope with the likes of direction, scale and grid references. Interpretation of the map extract proved more demanding. The requirement to focus on 'physical' features in (b) was sometimes overlooked. The interpretation of contour lines in (c) proved difficult for some, though even the recognition of the presence of a river valley scored a mark. The best answers to (e) gave consideration to both the physical constraints of the estuary and the limitations of the hinterland.

Very few candidates attempted the first option in (f); the quality of answers was poor. There were some good answers to the second option, where attention was given to map evidence and different responses to the presence wind farm were considered. Indeed some answers pointed out how radically different views might emerge.

Paper 2

General Comments

Candidate performance showed a slight overall improvement on that of previous years. The mean mark increased to a very satisfying level with double figure scores out of 25 per question being pleasingly frequent. There was general pattern of clear question accessibility with abler candidates scoring very highly resulting in a higher spread of marks across the candidature.

The paper allowed most candidates to differentiate their level of learning. Geographical knowledge and understanding was evident in many scripts. Examples peppered many scripts but detailed case study schemes were a rarer occurrence. Again, there were some outstanding scripts, written at length and in high quality English. One general weakness, however, was the failure of some candidates to not read, understand or focus on the question actually set. Sometimes essential words in questions were ignored, e.g. <u>trend</u> in question 3(a)(v), or confused with others, e.g. <u>how</u> and <u>why</u> in question 4(b)(ii). Answers often read well but were not always focused answers to the question posed.

Question 1

A moderately popular question frequently done well in parts only. Most candidates were familiar with arable, pastoral, and intensive farming and with market gardening so made a positive start with (a)(i) to (iii), though few scored heavily with (a)(iv). Candidates did not fully understand why some forms of agriculture tend to locate away from large urban areas; their answers were restricted in the main to market gardening and basic ideas of perishability and ease rather than cost of transport. Most were able to state one valid factor in (b)(i), but explanation of its influence in (b)(ii) was invariably superficial and not related to one named farming type. For part (c) the most successful responses were from those opting for hedgerow removal and scientific techniques where the better candidates did offer some sound explanations of both benefits and disadvantages. However, many responses were vague, one- -sided and showed limited understanding of the terms/issues posed by the question.

Question 2

A popular and high-scoring question. Parts (a)(i) to (iii) posed few difficulties for the vast majority of candidates, who seemed very conversant with the sector model. Part (a)(iv), however, did produce greater differentiation of response where some candidates tended to list rather than develop effects, and some even had problems with the terms 'de-industrialisation' and 'AIC'. On the whole though, most did correctly address ideas of unemployment and a general fall in living standards. Knowledge and understanding of renewable and non-renewable energy sources was pleasingly good. Large numbers of candidates score full marks on part (b) and in part (c) there were some excellent responses with the majority scoring well. Lack of focus and elaboration and some repetition of reason, e.g. cheapness existed in some responses, but basically there was a decent level of understanding of the issues and considerations surrounding renewables.

Question 3

Another popular and well-answered choice. Part (a) generally revealed sound awareness of population change but many candidates lost marks because they did not adhere to good examination technique. Many left out the unit in their answer to (a)(iii), failed to identify the trend in (a)(v), preferring to repeat their over-long responses to (a)(i), and tending to state without developing factors responsible for death rate change. Nevertheless, respectable scores out of the 13 available marks in part (a) were common. Part (b) posed few difficulties though (c) did, especially (c)(i) for all but the abler candidates. The consequences of an ageing population seemed to have been well taught with candidates producing lengthy answers to (c)(ii), but these often did not distinguish between economic and social consequences. Many candidates failed to refer to pyramid B in their responses to (c)(i), and as such their descriptions and reasoning lacked focus.

Question 4

A choice for some candidates, who tended to gain marks consistently through until part (c) where performance was patchy. Part (a) was successful for almost all candidates except those that did the arithmetic incorrectly in (a)(i) and could not name a type of water transport other than a ship or ferry in (a)(iii).

In part (b) most correctly identified the basic problem in (b)(i) and many were able to give simple links to the economy, often in a list form, e.g. lateness. Few, however, developed their responses. (b)(iii) proved to be a very effective differentiator with responses ranging from weak repetitious material to well expressed beneficial ideas. Candidates at some centres understood the basics of trade blocs though often struggled to explain how they increased trade. At other centres trade blocs were not known, though candidates attempted the question. (c)(ii) was an even greater source of confusion with most appearing not to know what they were supposed to do. The best tended to go no further than to indicate that they were MEDCs. Vague, woolly and misinterpreted answers were typical.

Question 5

This was not a popular choice and the very few responses we received were of a poor quality. Generally, Ordnance Survey map skills appeared to have been little developed and the term 'site' was alien to most. Candidates tended to make reasonable use of Figure 5 in part (a), offering relevant statements about airport location and coastal road pattern concentrating on Port Louis.

Part (b) was disappointingly answered with specific map evidence, especially grid references lacking from answers to (b)(i), and the inclusion of much irrelevant detail in (b)(ii) answers because the concept of site was little understood.

Part (c) was more successful in eliciting good geography though too infrequently did candidates apply material from their course or effectively use the climate data provided in Figure 5.

Question 6

A moderately popular choice, which provided an opening part on which almost all candidates scored two marks but on which few developed their answers into full mark responses. Most candidates found (a)(ii) and (iii) accessible but few developed

their response to (a)(iii) sufficiently into an actual explanation related to a specified location. Surprisingly, the term rural-urban fringe was not known to most candidates, and some confused it with rural-urban migration. Consequently, part (b) yielded limited marks to most candidates. In part (c), few named and described in detail an actual inner city redevelopment scheme. The London Docklands was popular with those that did; too often accounts were either vague and generic or had an LEDC shanty town redevelopment focus.

Question 7

Another moderately popular question providing a strong start for candidates. The purposes of National Parks were not as clear to candidates as one might have liked with ideas of urban access or rural livelihood rarely mentioned. Part (c) proved difficult for many candidates, who failed to identify two groups in obvious conflict so that explaining each's viewpoint proved problematic. Equally, few candidates understood the three categories used in Figure 7c; erosion and coastal defence was a common interpretation of protection. This interpretation constrained the marks in part (d) where answers about building, litter, pollution etc. were sought, though not exclusively.

Question 8

One of the popular questions on the paper, this also scored highly because many candidates started and finished well. Most candidates scored maximum or almost maximum marks in (a)(i)-(iii) and (v). However, the answer to (a)(iv) was not known to the majority of candidates; few got beyond labour-intensive and repetition of information in Figure 8. Part (b) differentiated well with most candidates offering at least one valid reason, albeit for Japan rather than an NIC, and some offering two developed reasons for a valid NIC. A mid-question dip in performance typified many scripts. TNCs were quite well known in the main, giving the majority of candidates a well scoring finale.

GEOGRAPHY 7209, GRADE BOUNDARIES JUNE 2006

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade (Max=100)	62	53	44	39	33

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