

Examiners' Report January 2007

GCE O LEVEL

GCE O LEVEL GEOGRAPHY (7209)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information please call our Customer Services on 0870 240 9800, or visit our website at www.edexcel.org.uk.

January 2007

Publications Code UO 018829

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2007

Contents

Paper	Page
01	5
02	8

Principal Examiner' Report
Geography Ordinary Level
Paper 1

General Comments

Despite the small entry for this final January examination of the specification, the paper generated a good spread of marks with a few excellent scripts and a few very weak candidates. The general standard bore comparison with that of previous examinations. Candidates used the stimulus material well in almost all cases but tended not to respond as well as might be hoped on the closing 9-mark tasks. The middle parts of questions, often those testing knowledge proved to be effective differentiators. Example and diagram-giving are frequent strengths of this examination and this was again the case. All questions were answered though with varying popularity. There were no rubric offences.

Question 1

This was one of the more popular choices. It also tended to score well. A frequent weakness however, was the offering of plate margin types rather than the plate names given on the map in response to (a)(i). The only other parts of (a) causing more general difficulties were (v) and (v)(ii). Relatively few candidates achieved maximum marks on (v); it was common to know no more than that a trench was an ocean deep. Most candidates scored marks in (v)(ii) with the question differentiating well. Only the handful of very strong candidates drew attention to Japan's complicated tectonic position with more than one type of plate margin being close by. Some candidates offered diagrams but most lacked the annotation to be useful explanations. The majority of candidates understood the basic reasons why people continue to live close to plate margins. Their depth of explanation, degree of exemplification and highlighting of the risks though did vary as one would expect. However, this was one of the stronger answered final parts helping the whole question to be a higher scorer.

Question 2

This was another very popular and well answered question. Most candidates got off to a very good start by being able to gain at very least one mark defining the four terms listed in (a)(i); many scored higher with maximum marks being a feature of a significant number of scripts. Many candidates however, struggled with the term water balance, though there was some implicit understanding of its meaning. The diagram seemed well understood and this was also evident in their answers to (a)(iii). Parts (a)(iv) and (b) were generally well answered. Convectional equatorial rainfall was familiar to the majority and the weakest were able to link heavy rainfall such as this to flooding, to give a Level 1 response to part (b). Stronger candidates offered a range of factors, including human mismanagement of drainage basins, and draw a clear distinction between physical and human causation. No candidate saw the cause of flooding as an integration of physical and human factors.

Question 3

This was one of the less popular questions. Those choosing it tended to produce very patchy mark profiles across the various question parts. The stronger answered parts tended to be towards the middle of the question. Diagrams were frequent and often good in parts (a)(ii) and (iv); understanding of coastal processes was generally evident. The four parts from (a)(ii) to (b)(i) carrying 13 marks invariably scored respectably. The opening part rarely produced maximum marks with most candidates confusing old and present cliff lines, and the raised beach. The closing part based on coastal fieldwork typically generated Level 1 responses only; most wrote vaguely about the nature of longshore drift with few identifying its effects and demonstrating any evidence that they had actually made first-hand observations of the work of longshore drift on a stretch of coastline.

Question 4

This proved to be a popular, but not high scoring question. Candidates usually made a reasonable attempt at naming the wettest area -(a)(i), describing the rainfall distribution -(a)(ii)- and stating convectional and frontal/cyclonic rainfall -(b)(i). However, the explanatory questions - (a)(iii) and (b)(ii) - were often poorly done. The processes involved in rain formation were weakly understood. The final question part -(c)- was better done than some other such 9-markers. The only weather extremes named were the three given in the question, and of these hurricanes were by far the most popular choice. As one might expect, candidates were generally able to respond more successfully to (c)(i) than (c)(ii). The problems caused were better known and understood than the management strategies adopted in affected areas. Examples were too infrequent.

Question 5

This was an unpopular choice. There were few decent quality responses from those that picked this question. Weaknesses in the candidate's ability to develop process mechanism was again evident in parts (a)(iii) and (b). It was also evident that limestone scenery knowledge was lacking; familiarity with basic features was sketchy making most of part (a) challenging for the candidates. Most knew the meaning of the term, impermeable rock - (a)(ii). The final 9-mark part also tended to be poorly answered. Descriptions were vague and the differences often confused.

Question 6

This was a reasonably popular choice of question. It was also often well answered. It was clear that centres in some locations used local environmental experience to teach this topic well. There was a general familiarity in scripts with the nature of equatorial and savanna vegetation. Candidates also tended to be able to use Figure 6 effectively. Part (b) created more difficulties than the others for some candidates who could not get beyond mere description and into explanation, nor could they offer examples from their own knowledge. Part (c) though produced some of the better 9-mark answers on the scripts as a whole. Candidates frequently chose equatorial forest and addressed deforestation well.

Question 7

This was a very unpopular question which had very few takers. There were no fully correct answers to (a)(ii) and understanding of the soil-forming processes required for (a)(iv) were very weak. Part (b) on the uses of soil types seemed virtually unknown to the candidates; nearly all responses were excessively vague. The candidates had little or no idea as to what was being asked. The positive aspects of answers to this question were parts (a)(i) and (a)(iii). Candidates were in the main able to draw a generic (not for a specific type) soil profile and score about 3 of the 5 marks available.

Question 8

This proved to be a highly popular choice and was reasonably well answered until part (c). Candidates used Figure 8 well, realised that the pipeline is for oil transport, knew the basic purposes of National Parks and appreciated how National Parks, pipelines and tourists might interact. These first sixteen marks of the question proved relatively fruitful for many candidates. However, performance dipped in the final part where candidates never moved on in their thinking into conflict management strategies. Level 1 only responses dominated.

Principal Examiner' Report
Geography Ordinary Level
Paper 2

General Comments

Whilst it is not possible to make many generalisations about the overall performance of candidates owing to the very small entry, it remains the case that those candidates who were well equipped with knowledge and skills, who were also discerning over their selection of questions and response to the precise instructions, performed best. Most candidates seemed able to attempt the required four questions and make some headway on them. In each case, the final part of a question is designed to be the most challenging; so it proved to be as weaker candidates failed to offer anything of substance and seemed to lack the appropriate case study evidence where it was required.

Question 1

A popular question where part (a) was well handled – provided due care was given to Figure 1a. Most candidates correctly identified the zone in 1b as the inner city, though more meaningful observations were required in (bii). A key feature here was 'land awaiting development'. Part (c) prompted some good answers, provided the focus remained on location. The strongest answers to (d) dwelt on 'explain the differences' as opposed to weaker versions which simply described the two zones. However, there were some excellent responses, often giving close attention to relative land values.

Question 2

It was perhaps surprising that the concept of 'fossil fuels' defeated some candidates in this question, but generally part (a) of the question was well answered, with candidates having a good working knowledge of nuclear power stations and their disadvantages. Equally, part (b) was competently tackled though not all candidates appreciated some of the costs and difficulties in tapping the possible generation in a low income country. Such was the attraction of the opportunity to describe environmental damage in part (c) that some candidates overlooked the term 'energy production' and sometimes totally ignored part (ii) which concerned the overall demand for energy.

Question 3

This question had considerable appeal and most candidates found part (a) very accessible. Part (b) proved more challenging and issues like competition from other modes of transport and the relative neglect of railway networks in some countries were often overlooked. Some of the stronger answers to part (bii) argued a case for subsidies to encourage the use of railways and bring about positive effects on the environment. The quality of answers to (c) was varied, the top answers being those which were carefully planned and structured. Some answers degenerated into lists which restricts development of the response.

Question 4

The concept of farm systems was well understood and most candidates identified the distinction between the subsistence and commercial farm. In part (b) some observations of soil fertility were limited, whereas the pattern was more complex. Very few candidates spotted the progressively longer periods of forest re growth and sometimes fire was viewed as an apparently regular hazard. However, the shifting agriculture found in such areas was readily recognised, stated but not always described. Few candidates were adequately equipped with a case study for part (c). Occasionally, sound answers were forthcoming, some of the strongest being based on reclaimed land in the Netherlands.

Question 5

Some candidates struggled with parts (iii) and (iv) of part (a), not appreciating the impact of the summer drought coinciding with the peak of the tourist season and being defeated by the term 'delta'. In general, the resource offered in part (b) was well used with the strong answers commenting on the limited infrastructure and the potential damage to the forest ecosystem. Answers to (c) tended to be commendable or weak; certainly careful consideration of the newspaper extract helped to compile an answer. Strong answers illustrated how different countries have different agendas and how the outcome was a bland statement which apparently achieved little.

Question 6

There was a good response to parts (a) and (b) but sometimes the very concept of self help schemes was not understood, therefore there was not the opportunity to discuss the motivation and focus of such schemes and the sheer power of 'ownership'. There were some excellent answers to the question based on the model of international aid where candidates illustrated the cumulative nature of debts and reported on the unrealistic and ambitious nature of the model. It was frequently pointed out that 'careful control and supervision' is more usually replaced by corruption and feeble management.

Question 7

Percentage figures remain a problem for some candidates as was shown in this question where answers given sometimes exceeded 100. In general candidates struggled to distinguish between 'heavy' and 'light' manufacturing industries, heavy not infrequently being transferred to the primary sector. Examples such as steel and electronics would have gained marks. There were some outstanding answers to (av) where significant anxieties were expressed about possible social isolation. In general, candidates saw particular merits in the collective workplace. It was disappointing that a similar calibre of response did not carry over to part (b) though a small number of answers showed how such industries are interdependent and cluster in areas close to universities where there is a pool of high quality labour. Such answers went on to explain why the market for high-tech engineers generates appreciable mobility.

Question 8

Some candidates did not grasp that the two population pyramids were not for two different countries and that the essence of the question was about how the urban

structure differs from the overall national structure. Equally, there was a common neglect to deal with the consequences of a high infant mortality rate and high life expectancy, though some candidates grasped the likely impact on birth rates and the provision of social services respectively. All too often in part (c) the first critical word was overlooked and answers dwelled in a country (not always newly industrialised) as opposed to a city within.

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467
Fax 01623 450481

Email publications@linneydirect.com

Order Code UO 018829 January 2007

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at www.edexcel.org.uk/ask or on 0870 240 9800

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no. 4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH