
GCSE

Geography A

90302F Human Geography
Report on the Examination

9030
June 2015

Version: v0.1

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General

The paper produced a good range of marks yielding appropriate differentiation between candidates of varying ability. Most candidates responded to the range of question types and stimulus material and wrote in continuous prose of a standard commensurate with the ability range at which the paper is targeted. As on the higher tier and has been the case for a few years, the most popular questions remain 1 and 6 with 2 close behind. These three also proved to be the most popular combination. There was an even spread between questions 4 and 5, with question 3 infrequently attempted. Rubric offences are now much less frequent, though where they do occur it is often by a candidate attempting all six questions, seemingly as a strategy to gain marks as and where they can.

Attention seems to have been paid by centres and candidates to those questions where some structure and format has been provided for them such as filling in the blanks, completing tables or linking statements. These were well answered this year with many candidates scoring maximum marks, demonstrating that time is well spent on these questions rather than the more cursory answers that have been the case in the past. Many candidates had clearly learnt their case studies well and were able to use them to reach Level 2 in the 6 mark questions.

Skills of application remain an area that some centres and candidates could address further. There is a need to read and consider the question to select appropriate case studies and particular information from within those case studies. Some candidates either made inappropriate choices which limited their marks, such as for 2(d) and 6(d)(iii); or utilised information not pertinent to the question, commonly in 5(c)(iii). Candidates would be well served by repetition and practice of matching information to key words in the question and linking and developing their ideas. Similarly the skills required are common to all papers on the specification so that labels or annotations – as in 2(c)(i) and 6(b)(ii) - must point directly to the feature to gain credit.

There were fewer candidates this year whose language indicated they might have performed even better on the Higher tier paper. Many candidates might have scored 2 rather than 1 for SPaG if they had simply improved their punctuation.

SECTION A

Question 1 Population Change

1(a)(i) was largely answered correctly, **1(a)(ii)** much less so. Most candidates were able to give reasons in **1(a)(iii)** and were able to reach Level 1, but fewer linked their reasons to the structural changes to reach Level 2. The almost universal reasons offered were improving health care and the emancipation of women, with very few identifying the ageing ‘baby boomer’ generation as a leading cause behind an overall ageing structure. Both parts of **1(b)(i)** were frequently well answered by direct use of the figure. Slightly less convincing were the answers to **1(b)(ii)** where many candidates could see the link and gained some credit. Only the best were able to explicitly link their factors to falling growth or declining fertility rates and a few thought population growth might actually increase due to falling infant mortality. **1(c)(i)** was almost universally correct, as was **1(c)(ii)**. However, few candidates seemed to understand the meaning of a ‘social impact in **1(d)(i)**, with even fewer scoring both marks. Those who scored well focused on service provision such as schools and doctors. Economic impacts in **1(d)(ii)** were better understood, with some of the better candidates recognising the positive benefits of a demographic dividend. Candidates should be reminded they will need to do more than state ideas where the command is ‘outline’ as some were limited to one mark here despite having good ideas. China’s population policies were clearly familiar territory for almost all candidates in **1(d)(iii)**. Unfortunately, some wasted time describing the policy rather than the problems, illustrating the need for good exam technique, and a significant number were somewhat sensationalist, reading rather like the tabloid press. Many answers were excellent with good quality description supported by facts and figures and confident and clear writing.

Question 2 Changing Urban Environments

2(a)(i) was well answered by those relatively few candidates who linked the ‘increasing’ element of the question with a consequence and developed this. Many failed to score as a result of not qualifying pollution and equally many with 1 mark for very generalised ‘global warming’ answers. **2(a)(ii)** and **2(a)(iii)** were frequently correct. In **2(a)(iv)** most were able to write enough to get to the top of Level 1 with general statements about what could be done; fewer made the link between solution and action needed for Level 2 or brought in knowledge beyond the resource. Place based examples, particularly ones local to the candidate to illustrate their own knowledge, were rare. **2(b)(i)** was very poorly answered by almost all despite this being explicit in the specification; very few could name a scheme or realised that they should do so. Centres are reminded that there are no parts of the specification that cannot be examined or considered minor so they should all be covered. **2(b)(ii)** on the other hand was generally very well answered. **2(c)(i)** saw almost all candidates having a good attempt at answering with most successful and using appropriate labels. Candidates should be reminded to label around the resource and not on top of it so that their answers can be read and that their labels must point clearly to the feature for credit. Equally credit can only be given for what is there and not speculation over what is absent such as ‘no sanitation’ / ‘no electricity supply’. **2(c)(ii)** was equally well answered with ‘disease’ the most common response. The command ‘outline’ on **2(c)(iii)** continues to challenge candidates. Many gained a single mark for a statement but far fewer could actually elaborate upon the improvement. **2(d)** was either done very well, invariably using either BedZed or Curitiba, or poorly because the answers detailed improvements in shanty towns or were simply vague and not rooted in a place or places.

Question 3 Changing Rural Environments

3(a)(i) yielded few correct answers, only the occasional candidate gaining a mark. Candidates of all abilities should be familiar with the terminology expected on each topic or they will forfeit relatively straightforward marks. Whilst many scored all three marks in **3(a)(ii)** this was less well answered than equivalents on other questions, generally over confusion over the number of crops planted in a monoculture with the scale of planting. **3(a)(iii)** most gained one mark but again were challenged by the need to expand upon one idea for the second mark. Most knew that commuter village was the correct option in **3(b)(i)** but a few opted for urban village. **3(b)(ii)** was poorly answered with many answers generalised about urban areas and change, often the impact on the CBD, rather than focused on the rural-urban fringe. **3(c)(i)** was split evenly between those who had this most basic of map skills in their armoury and therefore gained a mark and those who did not. **3(c)(ii)** however was mostly answered correctly. In **3(c)(iii)** many were able to achieve a mark or two through use of the photograph, though that was often superficial, failing to discern the sale board or the old pub sign. In addition many gave reasons for, rather than descriptions of, a declining rural area and few were able to call upon knowledge of their own through either place or clarity of characteristics. **3(d)(i)** was universally correct as a straight reading from the resource but once again the application let candidates down in **3(d)(ii)**. Most gained some basic credit for the community idea but very few were able to develop this to make a link to rural support such as the idea of a social enterprise or provision of services such as internet or dry cleaning which might be hard to obtain in rural areas and which was the focus of the question.

Question 4 The Development Gap

4(a)(i) was well done generally with many gaining full marks and many, but not all, were able to name another measure in **4(a)(ii)**; those who did not often simply gave one of the ones in Figs 10a and 10b. **4(a)(iii)** saw a few candidates gaining a mark but many either did not understand the question or were unable to express themselves clearly. Similarly **4(a)(iv)** where some answers were very long but most failed to gain a mark with most focusing on why the quality of life would simply be better in richer countries vs poorer ones which missed the point of the question. **4(b)** was again poorly answered with very few candidates moving beyond copying from the resource or able to explain why such actions would create opportunities for development through releasing funds or investment in future technologies. **4(c)(i)** was mostly correct as was **4(c)(ii)**. **4(c)(iii)** was quite the opposite with few able to show understanding of a trading group and instead assuming group members would get a guaranteed price or that such trade would operate fairly. The majority of answers to **4(d)** gained some credit for generic statements and/or good description at Level 1. The Level 2 requirement to link their case study to development proved more of a challenge. Those who knew their case studies well achieved high marks, with Haiti and earthquakes featuring strongly. There were some answers on Nepal showing a very pleasing use of topical material by centres.

Question 5 Globalisation

5(a)(i) was mostly correct, with **5(a)(ii)** less so, many gaining one of the two marks. Whilst there has been some progress with candidates' understanding of this type of map, some still do not appear to know the difference between a country and a continent. **5(a)(iii)** was equally mostly correct, where a mark was lost it was often for replacing 'climate change' with 'the ozone hole'. **5(a)(iv)** again showed that many candidates had good ideas and understood the general concept of the question but lacked the ability to develop their answers for credit beyond the original mark. Many answers used walking or cycling but became an answer more suitable for question 2 or focused on larger scale schemes such as carbon credits. The standard of graph construction was

much improved in **5(b)** with mostly correct answers, although some candidates did not answer at all. For **5(b)(ii)** there were a few excellent answers showing the connection between rising wealth and consumption of technological goods and the need for power to run and charge the devices so many now take for granted. These were few and far between however and the majority simply restated the question in various ways for limited, if any, credit. In **5(c)(i)** most knew what a TNC was. Figure 15 in **5(c)(ii)** encouraged some good answers with candidates recognising the different countries involved and often the assembly in another location. The third mark eluded the vast majority as they did not really examine the resource closely and think about something less obvious as the ‘suggest’ command invites. Case studies had been well learnt for **5(c)(iii)** but often only from one perspective with the benefits to the host country coming to the fore, showing again the need to look at case studies and exemplars from a range of perspectives and to apply the information to the question rather than repeating verbatim.

Question 6 Tourism

This was a popular question but often not generating the highest marks for candidates. **6(a)(i)** was almost universally correct, but this was not carried forward into **6(a)(ii)** where most showed the idea of variation in revenue but were unable to make the connection with relative importance to the countries involved. A significant number simply assumed that higher revenue equated to greater importance to the economy. **6(b)(i)** was either known or not, once again illustrating the value of terminology for each topic as a means to access marks. Annotating the photograph in **6(b)(ii)** proved surprisingly challenging given the popularity of this topic with few candidates gaining significant credit either because they indicated what was not there e.g. “no roads”; simply labelled e.g. “tent”; or did not accurately locate their comment to the feature. Practice of such skills would be well advised across topics as question 2 indicated that candidates are perfectly capable of doing this; indeed many there annotated when they were only asked to label. **6(c)(i)** was mostly correct, as was **6(c)(ii)**. In **6(d)(i)** the response to the map was very disappointing. Whether Eastbourne or the South Downs was chosen mattered little with candidates simply listing features, counting churches, and focused on roads as a means of access. What was required was to link features and use them to say why the area would have been selected as a destination and then grown further. “Litter” was deemed uncreditworthy for **6(d)(ii)** and “litter bins” in **6(d)(ii)** as it is a problem wherever there are people and not just for tourist areas. Centres should note that it will not be credited in future either. In **6(d)(ii)** those who referred to footpath erosion in national parks and stag and hen parties in Blackpool were usually able to develop their answer for the second mark. In **6(d)(iii)** many candidates could provide simple strategies and worked up to top Level 1, even if they chose an unsuitable case study such as Kenya, but specific strategies developed and linked to a UK place were far less frequent.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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