



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
January 2013**

Geography B

40351F

(Specification 4035)

**Unit 1: Managing places in the 21st century
(Foundation)**

Report on the Examination

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Introduction

Candidates had to answer either Question 1 (The Coastal Environment) or Question 2 (the Urban Environment). A number of candidates attempted both questions. This was generally self-limiting and usually resulted in both questions being unfinished or not addressed with an appropriate level of detail. The Coastal Environment option was the more popular choice with approximately 60-65% of the candidate entry attempting it.

General Points

- Very few candidates failed to complete the paper, suggesting that the timing of the paper was not an issue.
- Reports suggested that centres had found the examination a sound reflection of the specification and a good test of the knowledge and understanding embodied within the specification.
- It was evident that the majority of centres had prepared their candidates effectively. Teachers are to be congratulated on their efforts towards ensuring that candidates had a sound grasp of the concepts that underpin the course.
- The use of resources was generally good. A significant proportion of candidates used clearly and appropriately quoted evidence from resources in their answers. However, the use of the Ordnance Survey map extract in Question 2 was variable. It was evident that a number of candidates did not really understand the demands of map reading and interpretation skills. Consequently, what might be considered fairly easily gained marks were lost.
- The use of examples was variable. In many cases candidates brought in well-developed, appropriate case studies, while in others the instruction to include 'examples' or 'own knowledge' was largely ignored.

(The instruction to include 'own knowledge' can be development of the ideas expressed in the question **or** locational knowledge (examples).

- Key point – remember the key instruction at the beginning of every examination paper. 'Use case studies to support your answers where appropriate.' Encourage candidates to do this – it is often one of the ways that the higher level marks can be accessed.
- The majority of candidates responded to the question comments effectively.
- The use of the mark allocations and writing spaces was generally good; the majority of candidates taking the opportunity of using the 'extra space'. A small number of candidates used a 'listing' approach to some of the longer questions. This was often self-limiting and should be discouraged unless time is an issue.
- It was evident that a small number of candidates were not properly equipped. The lack of a ruler can affect levels of accuracy when completing graphs or measuring distances. At this level, basic skills demand a high level of accuracy.

Question 1 (a)(i)/(ii)

The majority of candidates used Figure 1 effectively to identify the correct answers. A small number of candidates failed to attempt question (ii) or circled more than one potential response.

Question 1 (a)(iii)

A significant proportion of candidates used Figure 1 effectively to identify why the physical geography of Rio de Janeiro might attract visitors. Observations about the beaches, wildlife and general scenery were common, while a number of candidates considered that climate might be a significant attraction. It was evident that a small proportion of candidates were not clear about the term “physical environment” and consequently drifted into observations about the built environment.

Question 1 (a)(iv)

The testing of basic graphical skills is a common assessment objective and it was evident that the majority of candidates were practiced in this type of question, resulting in a high proportion of candidates scoring full marks. A small number of candidates made elementary errors or failed to attempt the question.

Question 1 (a)(v)

The command in this question clearly identified the need to use Figure 1 and offer some development. Those candidates that responded to the command generally produced sound answers, often identifying a point from the resource and then clearly suggesting why it might put off visitors. A significant proportion of candidates made observations about water pollution, often developing the idea very effectively. Less common ideas were points about growing areas of slums, general overcrowding and the fact that a lot of building/development might be going on. A small number of candidates picked up on ideas such as the fear of crime or the decline of wildlife making the area less attractive.

A number of candidates completely ignored the command “Use Figure 1” and made generic observations such as the global economic situation or points about competition from other areas. While this approach offered some insight into the question, in relation to the question command it was often self-limiting.

Question 1 (a)(vi)

The majority of candidates were able to offer a description of the different types of activities found in coastal areas and for many candidates this formed the basis for an effective answer. However, a number of candidates failed to develop their responses beyond a simple description of different activities and consequently did not fully address the question which demanded some explanation. In a number of cases candidates considered tourism in some detail but did not really focus on activities beyond this. In relation to the idea of “multi-use areas” this tended to be rather self-limiting. It was evident that a small number of candidates did not understand the idea of “multi-use” when applied to coastal areas.

Question 1 (b)

The majority of candidates answered this question correctly. They had clearly learned the process sequence identified in the question or had been able to use their understanding of the topic to work out the sequence correctly.

Question 1 (c)(i)

The majority of candidates used Figure 2 effectively to identify the four correct terms. The feature that appeared to cause the most difficulty was “headland”.

A very small number of candidates clearly did not understand the diagram and guessed their responses or simply did not attempt the question.

Question 1 (c)(ii)

The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of headland erosion and were able to describe the processes that had created the features shown on Figure 2. A significant proportion of candidates used appropriate geographical language to identify different types of erosion and offer

some explanation of how they work. At the highest mark level candidates not only considered the individual features but also offered some explanation about the sequence of erosion from the crack/cave to the stack. Those candidates who showed a good understanding of both process and sequence usually produced excellent answers.

Question 1 (d)(i)

The majority of candidates were able to identify the four correct terms and complete the statement accurately. A small number of candidates used a term more than once or left some or all of the gaps blank.

Question 1 (d)(ii)

It was clear that the idea of a “rapidly eroding coastline” was understood by most candidates. In most cases the photograph, Figure 3, was used effectively to suggest evidence that might show rapid rates of erosion. The more common ideas expressed were the damage to the fence and the bare earth. More developed points included observations about slumping and the lack of vegetation on some of the slumped areas. The quality of responses was largely determined by the clarity with which the idea of “evidence” was expressed. Those candidates who simply identified points with little or no development generally scored one or two marks. Those candidates who expressed some reasoning about why the evidence suggested that erosion was taking place generally produced sound answers and scored full marks.

Question 1 (e)(i)

This question presented few problems. Most candidates used Figure 4 effectively to identify the correct types of hard engineering found at each of the located points.

Question 1 (e)(ii)

The majority of candidates had some understanding of what is meant by “hard engineering”. At the lower mark level candidates simply named some hard engineering techniques and offered very little development. A significant proportion of candidates developed this idea by offering a visual description of the techniques, often implying some appreciation of how they work. While this approach showed a useful general understanding of the question it did not fully address the command “Explain” and consequently tended to limit the overall mark for the question. Those candidates’ who not only described a hard engineering scheme (or a number of hard engineering techniques) but also showed a clear understanding of how hard engineering created barriers or reduced wave energy and consequently protected coastal areas, generally scored very high marks. Although not requested, a number of candidates brought in located examples, often to great effect.

Question 1 (f)(i)

The use of Figure 5 was rather variable and it was evident that some candidates did not fully understand the idea of “benefit”. These candidates tended to simply copy points from Figure 5 randomly, on occasion making an appropriate observation. Those candidates who did understand the idea expressed in the question and used Figure 5 effectively generally scored highly. The quality of responses was often differentiated by those candidates who simply copied from Figure 5 and other candidates who identified a point from Figure 5 and then offered some development. A commonly used example of this was where some candidates simply identified “newly planted trees” as an environmental benefit while other candidates developed this point further by suggesting that the newly planted trees might attract more wildlife and therefore be a broader environmental benefit.

Question 1 (f)(ii)

Understanding of “managed retreat” was variable. A small number of candidates clearly had very limited understanding of the term and consequently made only superficial descriptive observations, often based on Figure 5. Those candidates who did have an understanding of the terminology were generally differentiated by the extent to which they moved from a descriptive account of managed retreat towards actually explaining how it works to protect coastal areas from the effects of the sea. At the highest level, candidates were able to consider managed retreat in its broadest context, bringing in points about why it provides the opportunity to protect wider coastal areas in a more sustainable way. A small number of candidates developed this theme further by suggesting that managed retreat was a

more positive way of managing environmentally sensitive areas, often using well considered and developed examples to support their answers.

The use of examples was variable. When used effectively well located examples almost always enhanced answers, and even when largely descriptive they generally helped to move responses from Level 1 to Level 2.

Question 2 (a)(i)

The testing of basic graphical skills is a common assessment objective. It was evident that few candidates were practiced with this type of graph, resulting in a high proportion of candidates not completing the question successfully. A small number of candidates failed to attempt the question.

Question 2 (a)(ii)

The majority of candidates were able to identify the four correct terms and complete the statement accurately. A small number of candidates used a term more than once or left some or all of the gaps blank.

Question 2 (a)(iii)

While the majority of candidates either knew or were able to work out the correct answers to this question, it was evident that the definition of “urbanisation” was not well understood.

Question 2 (b)(i)

The majority of candidates were able to describe environmental problems found in urban areas in some detail, often using Figure 7 to good effect. However, the idea of urban “growth” creating environmental problems was not always well considered. Those candidates who based their response on a particular example were often more able to consider the impact of “urban growth” on environments.

A small number of candidates simply used the word “pollution” in an unqualified way or appeared to have a limited understanding of the word “environmental”. In both cases this clearly limited responses to isolated and rather generic observations.

Question 2 (b)(ii)

The majority of candidates showed some understanding of the question, although “economic opportunities” was translated into a basic appreciation of “jobs and money” by a number of candidates. While this level of understanding was worth some credit it did not really get beyond what might be considered a basic appreciation of the question. Those candidates who developed this theme by bringing in a wider range of economic points or considering the economic multiplier generally produced sound answers. Where this was accompanied by an appropriate example candidates quickly reached the highest marks.

It was evident that a small number of candidates had little or no understanding of the term “economic opportunity”.

Question 2 (c)(i)/(ii)

The majority of candidates used Figure 8 (the Ordnance Survey map extract) effectively to identify or work out the correct responses.

A small number of candidates made elementary errors in the use of the map or simply did not attempt these questions.

Question 2(c)(iii)

Candidates found this question quite challenging, often making generic points with little or no reference to the map (Figure 8). Observations about increasing numbers of cars and levels of wealth were used by a number of candidates, but in the context of map evidence this approach offered limited possibilities. Those candidates that did use the map effectively often made appropriate and sensible suggestions, including points about the high concentration of buildings and limited number of roads, main roads converging on a small area, concentration of employment in a small city centre and observations about the added difficulty of crossing a number of rivers. A small number of candidates identified tourist facilities on the map and suggested that visitor numbers might put added pressure on the road system at particular times of the year.

Question 2 (c)(v)

The majority of candidates were able to offer an example of a method used to reduce traffic congestion in town centres beyond that which was evident on Figure 8. The more popular ideas included congestion charging, the use of cycle tracks and walkways and pedestrianisation.

Question 2 (c)(vi)

The majority of candidates identified the fact that there were a lot of rivers evident on the map (some candidates describing them as canals) and a significant proportion of candidates suggested that the land was quite flat. These were the two most popular considerations. Other factors considered included points about building and hard surfaces which increased surface water and observations about it being a place where rivers joined, consequently adding to the volume of water which added to the flood risk. A very small number of candidates suggested (not always clearly) that changes to the river because of development or a lack of obvious flood prevention measures may have increased the flood risk. The major issue with responses to this question was that while candidates were able to identify possible reasons why York may be at risk from flooding, they did not always develop the ideas sufficiently in order to get the second mark in each statement. For example, “there are a lot of rivers...” is a reasonable starting point but it does not fully develop the idea of flood risk. Candidates need to be trained to extend their ideas and make sure that they offer some development, especially in relation to two mark questions.

Question 2 (d)

The quality of responses to this question were often dictated by the choice of example and the depth of locational knowledge. Where candidates built their answer around a clearly located and well documented example responses were generally very effective, and in many cases of impressively high quality. Where candidates did not use a well-documented example answers were often very generic and quite superficial, simply offering points such as “better buildings” or using general terms such as “better preparation and planning” without any development or explanation. The key to achieving higher marks in questions which demand examples is the level of knowledge and how effectively it is related to the question. Where the example is introduced early and the response built around it responses were generally sound. Where a name of a place is “tacked on” at the end of the answer (“This can be seen in”.) the answer was usually quite superficial, and even if the overall response showed some understanding of the question it rarely got above half marks.

Question 2 (e)

The majority of candidates used Figure 9 effectively to identify environmental improvements (both physical environment and built environment) brought about by the redevelopment of the Olympic site in East London. In many cases candidates went on to develop their basic ideas into very effective answers, consequently scoring high marks for this question.

It was evident that a number of candidates did not fully understand the word “environment” in the context of the question. The result of this was that they either totally misinterpreted the question or drifted into purely economic factors.

Question 2 (f)

The quality of responses to this question were generally dictated by the level of understanding shown in relation to the term “redevelopment project”, the extent to which candidates understood the term “socio-economic” and the depth of detail shown in the chosen example. Where candidates selected an appropriate example and included detailed observations about particular elements of a redevelopment/regeneration project responses were often very impressive, often showing an excellent understanding of a range of socio-economic improvement factors. Quite often, however, candidates tended to lack sufficient detail and consequently responses become rather generic, showing a general descriptive understanding of the idea expressed in the question but lacking a clear explanation of the relationship between redevelopment strategies and the improvement of specific socio-economic conditions.

A number of candidates drifted into discussion about eco projects or self-help schemes. Where these were clearly a part of a redevelopment project this provided a useful avenue with which to address the question, but where they were not part of any broader redevelopment/ regeneration strategy they were somewhat self-limiting.

A number of candidates used the Olympic games site in East London as an example of a redevelopment/regeneration scheme. This was done with varying levels of success. It was clear that some candidates had studied this area and consequently brought considerable detail to their answers, while other candidates simply attempted to use Figure 9 in order to address the question, often with quite limited success.

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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