

GCSE

# Geography B

40351 F/Managing places in the 21st century  
Report on the Examination

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## General comments

Very few students 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 students effectively. Teachers are to be congratulated on their efforts towards ensuring that students had a sound grasp of the concepts that underpin the course.

The use of resources was generally good. A significant proportion of students used clearly and appropriately quoted evidence from resources in their answers. However, the use of the Ordnance Survey map extract in Question 1 was variable. It was evident that a number of students 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 students 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 students to do this – it is often one of the ways that the higher level marks can be accessed.

The majority of students responded to the question comments effectively.

The use of the mark allocations and writing spaces was generally good; the majority of students taking the opportunity of using the ‘extra space’. A small number of students 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 students 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

1(a)(i)(ii)(iii) The majority of students used figure 1 effectively to complete these questions. A number of students failed to complete Question 1(a)(i).

1(a)(iv) Virtually all students showed some understanding of the question and were able to offer some reasons why coastal areas are attractive places to live. The overall quality of responses was generally dictated by the degree of explanation and the range of ideas. Those students who offered a largely descriptive response or focused on the idea of “popular” in a very narrow way (often in relation to tourism or the general attractiveness of the area) generally produced Level 1 responses. Those students who began to develop links (“these areas are good for industry so

there are lot of jobs which attract people”), or used case studies effectively to make points, generally produced thoughtful and clear answers.

1(b) It was clear that responses to this question reflected the hard learning and revision that had taken place. A significant proportion of students were able to identify the correct responses to both questions. It was evident that in some cases students understood either erosion OR weathering (usually erosion) and in other cases there was an element of guesswork taking place. A very small number of students did not attempt the questions or put more than one answer on each line.

1(c) The majority of students clearly had some understanding about longshore drift and were able to complete both questions, (c)(i) and (c)(ii), effectively. It was evident that in some cases there was an element of guesswork and a small number of students failed to attempt the second part of the question.

1(d) Responses to this question were variable. A significant number of students were able to link the idea of longshore drift to the formation of a spit, often showing a good level of geographical understanding by using appropriate language. With students that clearly did understand the question, differentiation was often a result of moving from essentially descriptive answers towards more explanatory comment. In a number of cases students produced very effective answers, not only bringing in general points about deposition but also offering specific reasons for the development of the shape of a spit and the formation of areas of salt marsh behind the spit. A very small number of students used diagrams to help them answer the question. The quality of these was variable. Using diagrams to address questions about physical features can be a very effective tool. The only limitation to this is that sometimes a diagram can be an excellent way of describing a physical feature but when the question is also asking for an explanation, a little more detailed information about process is required.

1(e)(i) The majority of students used the information on Figure 2 effectively to complete the graph accurately. A small number of students failed to attempt the question.

1(e)(ii) Most students recognised the increase in gradient from left to right and were consequently able to gain some credit. A significant number qualified the general pattern by picking out differences in the slope or using data.

1(e)(iii) While most students appeared to have some understanding of what groynes actually are, relatively few were able to express a clear appreciation of their purpose. A number of students returned to the previous question and described the shape of the beach between the groynes, in some cases suggesting that the groynes were playing a part in creating this shape, often without making any clear reference to the idea of reducing longshore drift or preserving the beach.

1(e)(iv) It was clear that the majority of students had some understanding of what is meant by “hard coastal engineering”. A wide range of types of hard engineering were identified, the most commonly used examples were sea walls; rock armour and gabions. Levels of description varied, with some students offering considerable detail while others did little more than repeat the name of the chosen example.

1(f)(i) The majority of students were able to select the correct answer from the list.

1(f)(ii) The majority of students either knew the correct answers or were able to work them out using the context of the paragraph. It was evident that, in some cases, students were not well practiced in appreciating scale or using the key to the map.

1(g) Most students were able to use the resource (Figure 4) effectively to identify the impacts of the development outlined on the resource. A significant number went on to explain how different factors created specific advantages or disadvantages. The distinction between the Level 1 and the Level 2 answers was either the extent to which students developed identified points or the balance in relation to both advantages and disadvantages. Those students who offered some development (“The tourism development will create lots of jobs which will mean that people can afford to have a better quality of life....”) and addressed both of the command elements (advantages and disadvantages) generally scored high marks.

1(h) The majority of students picked up on the word “managed” without really considering the following word, “sustainably”. Consequently many answers offered a quite sound description of management strategies (at times based around clear examples) but did not always fully address the context of the question. If the general description was sound and the chosen example appropriate students were able to score effectively within the Level 1 mark range. In order to move into Level 2 students needed to fully address the question by offering some understanding about the idea of sustainability. Ideas used generally focused on one of the following; Integrated management; Environmental management; Managed retreat or Soft engineering. When used effectively any of these avenues gave an opportunity to show some understanding of the question. A small number of students re-visited the idea of Hard Engineering. In the context of the question this offered a slightly limited opportunity to fully address the question.

## Question 2

2(a)(i) The majority of students used the data effectively to complete the graph in Figure 5 accurately. A very small number of students did not attempt the question.

2(a)(ii) This question presented few problems and virtually all students were able to select the correct answer.

2(a)(iii) The majority of students were able to select the correct terms from the list in order to complete the paragraph accurately.

2(b)(i) This question presented few problems and virtually all students were able to select the correct answer. A very small number of students did not attempt the question.

2(b)(ii) The majority of students were able to identify the correct answer. A small number of students either did not attempt the question or selected more than one possible answer (with this type of question if students select more than one possible answer they will not gain any credit even if one of their choices is correct).

2(b)(iii) The majority of students were able to identify an increase in the number of slum dwellers. A significant proportion of students developed their answers further by using the specific data given on Figure 6.

2(b)(iv) Most students showed a good general understanding of the question and were able to express ideas about how migration was increasing urban populations in less developed cities. The reasons for migration were often expressed in quite superficial terms, general points about job

opportunities and money were a common theme. A number of students developed this general theme by bringing in points about the relative differences in living standards between urban and rural areas. When this idea was used to express how this encourages people to migrate to urban areas in order to improve their economic and social conditions the resulting responses were very impressive. A small number of students brought in points about natural increase, in most cases not fully developing the idea in relation to the youthful populations found in many cities in less developed countries.

2(b)(v) It was clear that the majority of students had studied this topic effectively, many brought in detailed observations about how self-help and government schemes are being used to improve housing conditions in less developed urban areas. Many students scored high marks by making a clear link between elements of the chosen scheme and how this actually improved conditions rather than simply stating generic ideas such as “build new houses” or “put clean water in houses”. The level of locational detail was variable. In many cases students named places but offered no real locational context. Where answers were developed around an effectively located example responses were generally very sound.

2(c)(i) This question presented few problems. The majority of students were able to identify two causes of air pollution from Figure 7. It was evident that a very small number of students did not really understand the word “cause” and consequently suggested effects rather than causes or simply repeated the word “pollution”.

2(c)(ii) The majority of students were able to offer some suggestions about how pollution might affect people and the environment. General points about “harming or killing plants or animals” or links to health were frequently made. While these types of observation were creditworthy they did not always show a complete understanding and often lacked development. When students addressed the key word “how” by introducing some clear cause-effect link they generally scored full marks.

2(d) The majority of students were able to offer some suggestions about how levels of pollution might be reduced. General points about less traffic or less industry were frequently made. While these types of observation were creditworthy they did not always fully develop the idea so did not achieve both marks. When students addressed the key idea by stating a point and then suggesting clearly how it would reduce pollution they generally scored full marks.

2(e)(i) It was clear that not all students understood the basic idea of the question and were not always clear about the concept of “quality of life”. Consequently, answers were variable with students generally either scoring both marks or scoring zero. A small number of students failed to attempt the question.

2 (e)(ii) It was clear that not all students understood the basic idea of the question and were not always clear about the concept of “inequality”. Consequently, answers were variable with students often repeating ideas from question (e)(i) with very limited development. A significant proportion of students either scored both marks or scored zero, suggesting that they either fully understood or had very limited understanding of the question. A small number of students failed to attempt the question.

2(e)(iii) This question presented few problems. The majority of students were able to select the correct terms in order to complete the paragraph.

2(f) Answers to this question were variable and there was some obvious confusion about the term “urban redevelopment/urban regeneration” with a number of students using inappropriate “eco” projects as examples. While some eco projects or elements of them are part of regeneration strategies and were therefore clearly acceptable, a number of students used examples which did not really fall into this category. Those students who did select an appropriate example (a number used the Olympic site) often produced answers that were effectively documented and showed an impressive appreciation of the question.

2(g)(i) This question presented few problems. The majority of students were either familiar with the terminology or were able to work out the correct answers using the definitions given.

2(g)(ii) It was clear that the majority of students had some understanding about the idea of sustainable urban settlements or how elements of urban management were being used in an increasingly sustainable way. The focus of answers generally took one of the following three approaches. A number of students used examples of sustainable settlements (Bedzed and Dongtan were popular choices) to develop very effective answers. Another approach was the option of using particular elements of sustainable management such as housing developments, industrial or social developments or infrastructural/energy management. While this did not always give a holistic appreciation of sustainability it did allow students to bring in useful case studies and consequently produce some excellent answers. The third approach was where students talked about sustainable management in a generic way, often using energy or transport as a single key idea or simply repeating ideas from Figure 9, with no real locational context. While this approach was worthy of some credit it did not fully address the commands of the question and was consequently rather self-limiting.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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

## **Converting Marks into UMS marks**

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**UMS conversion calculator** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)