



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
January 2013**

**Geography B**

**40351H**

**(Specification 4035)**

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

***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)**

It was clear that most candidates had a good general understanding of the idea of coastal areas as “multi-use areas”. The majority of candidates used Figure 1 effectively to identify a number of different economic activities found in coastal areas. Many candidates developed this theme further by bringing in other examples, often with considerable detail.

A small number of candidates failed to fully appreciate the command (Describe), drifting into explanation which was not required.

A small number of candidates focused rather narrowly on tourism, identifying a range of tourist related activities rather than a broader range of economic activities. This approach generally produced somewhat restricted answers.

### **Question 1 (a)(ii)**

There were some excellent responses to this question with a considerable number of candidates identifying a range of developments in coastal areas which have put pressure on coastal environments. Observations about tourism related developments and large scale industrial and port developments were commonly used to illustrate the economic-environmental conflicts found in coastal areas. It was clear that in a number of cases candidates had considered a particular example of a coastal development conflict as part of their course of study and were able to express the environmental pressures linked to development or potential development with considerable thought and detail. Although not specifically requested, it was evident that where candidates based their answer on a specific and well located example they often produced more detailed answers to the question.

A number of candidates drifted into discussion about coastal management, often using the idea of hard engineering having a negative impact on coastal environments. This was a slightly unusual avenue with which to address the question. However, where the need for coastal management was linked to protecting economically valuable areas it provided an interesting way of considering the question.

At the lower mark range candidates simply brought in largely generic and often unqualified observations about “pollution”, often with only tentative links to the idea of development.

### **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)**

This question presented few problems. The majority of candidates used Figure 2 effectively to identify and name the correct features. The feature which appeared to give a small number of candidates the most difficulty was the headland.

### **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 operate to create the features shown on Figure 2. 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)**

This question presented few problems. The majority of candidates used Figure 3 very effectively to identify evidence which suggested that the area in the photograph is being affected by rapid coastal erosion. References to slumping, the position of the fence, bare soil/rock and cracks in the top surface of the cliff were commonly cited as evidence.

### **Question 1 (d)(ii)**

The majority of candidates showed some understanding of the question and were able to offer at least a partial explanation of the processes involved in the erosion of soft coastlines. A significant number of candidates developed this idea by bringing in points about weathering, water percolation and slumping and linking these ideas with observations about the geological nature of soft coastlines. The use of technical language was variable, but in many cases it was used very effectively to produce impressive answers.

### **Question 1 (e)(i)**

This question presented few problems. Most candidates used Figure 4 effectively to identify the types of hard engineering shown on the photograph. Virtually all candidates named type A (sea wall) and B (groyne) correctly, a small number of candidates made errors in identifying type C (rock armour /rip-rap/tetrapods).

A very small number of candidates did not complete the question.

### **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 techniques created barriers or reduced wave energy and consequently protected coastal areas, generally scored very high marks. A number of candidates brought in detailed located examples of hard engineering schemes, often to great effect.

### **Question 1 (f)(i)**

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 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. When clear explanation was added candidates generally achieved Level 3 marks.

### **Question 1 (f)(ii)**

The majority of candidates used Figure 5 effectively to identify the environmental and recreational opportunities created by managed retreat schemes. Points about the development of new environments (salt marsh) and how this, and planting trees, would create opportunities for wildlife were commonly used. In a number of cases the recreational aspects were less clearly understood and it was evident that the appreciation of wildlife and bird watching were not always seen as “recreational”.

### **Question 2 (a)(i)**

This question presented few problems. The majority of candidates used Figure 6 effectively to describe the change demanded by the question. A very small number of candidates failed to use the data or did not identify the command “less developed countries”.

### **Question 2 (a)(ii)**

A number of candidates found this question challenging and were not able to define the idea of “natural increase” accurately, often simply making points about births with no reference to deaths. “Population migration” was better understood, although a number of candidates simply restated the question and wrote “migration”.

The learning of key words and definitions is an important part of any revision schedule since key specification words are frequently used in examination questions.

### **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 “growth” on environments with greater success.

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)**

Responses to this question were rather mixed, with some excellent responses with well documented examples and some very generic observations based on little more than the idea of “jobs and money”. The idea of “opportunities” in relation to urban change is generally less well considered than the idea of problems, especially in the context of cities in less developed countries. This may be the result of candidates observing quite a lot of negative images and information about urban slums in these areas. In order to fully appreciate the context of this question it might be useful for candidates to consider the relative differences in relation to urban and rural possibilities in less developed countries. This understanding can be enhanced by using data for urban and rural areas (access to services, income etc.). In this way it may be easier to understand that urban areas can offer real opportunities, despite the fact that conditions in urban areas can look very poor. Those candidates who had this level of understanding and were able to express it in relation to a specific example often produced very impressive and thoughtful answers to what is quite a sophisticated question.

### **Question 2 (c)(i)**

This question was accurately answered by a significant proportion of candidates.

### **Question 2 (c)(ii)**

It was clear that the great majority of candidates understood this question and were able to use scale effectively. However, a number of candidates lost the mark for the question because they failed to respond to the command “to the nearest km”.

### **Question 2 (c)(iii)**

The majority of candidates used Figure 8 (the OS map extract) effectively to suggest reasons why the land in the identified square might be subject to flooding. Points about closeness to the river and the relief of the land were commonly used.

### **Question 2 (c)(iv)**

Virtually all of the candidates were able to identify one problem that flooding might cause to York city centre. A number of candidates did not always fully develop their idea and consequently failed to achieve the second mark.

A small number of candidates identified more than one problem. Where this was done with no further development candidates achieved only one mark.

### **Question 2(d)**

The first part of the question was generally answered very successfully with most candidates suggesting that the edge of town shopping centre might mean less people travelling into the town centre. The second part of the question was slightly more problematic, a number of candidates clearly

did not pick up the distinction between the “city centre” and the “York area” expressed in the two parts of the question and consequently struggled with this part of the question. Those that did pick up on this distinction were able to address the second part of the question successfully.

### **Question 2 (e)**

There were some excellent responses to this question. It was evident that candidates had studied this topic effectively and had a range of methods of reducing traffic congestion in urban areas at their command. The main methods considered were; improving public transport, congestion charging, park and ride and encouraging cycling. A number of candidates based their answer on a particular location, identifying a number of strategies that are being used at that particular location. For example, a frequently used example was Cambridge, where points about the guided busway, park and ride, the development of cycle ways and pedestrianisation were considered. This approach to the question was generally very successful and provided some very impressive responses.

### **Question 2 (f)**

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 are generally sound. Where a name of a place is “tacked on” at the end of the answer (“This can be seen in .....”) the answer is usually quite superficial, and even if the overall response shows some understanding of the question it rarely gets above half marks.

### **Question 2 (g)(i)**

Responses to this question were variable. This appeared to depend upon the level of understanding of the term “regeneration project”, which appeared to cause confusion in some candidate’s minds. Those that did fully appreciate the terminology generally produced appropriate and thoughtful points. There is perhaps a need here to consider and teach this topic in a very sequential way so that candidates understand the whole story. Basically, this is about identifying an area which has declined and has socio-economic and environmental problems; identifying information that can be used to express those problems; describing and explaining a regeneration project and suggesting how it might help to resolve the identified problems and then considering how effective the project has been in resolving the previously identified problems. When this whole process is considered alongside a well-documented example it gives candidates every opportunity of producing excellent responses to questions about any aspect of the regeneration process.

### **Question 2 (g)(ii)**

A minority of candidates used Figure 9 effectively and showed a good understanding of what is meant by “urban greening”, often describing in some detail the different ways that the natural environment of the Olympic site had been improved. Many of these candidates went on to develop this idea by suggesting how these improvements were a benefit to both the broader environment and to the community. Observations varied in depth from general points about reducing pollution levels and making it a cleaner environment to more complex ideas about improvements to the level of biodiversity and the health advantages of both a cleaner environment and an environment which encouraged physical activity such as walking and cycling.

A number of candidates brought in additional examples. Some of these were useful in helping to develop ideas, others were slightly vague and tended to repeat points already expressed. It was evident that a significant number of candidates did not fully appreciate the idea of “greening” in the context of urban areas as expressed in the specification. Many of these candidates drifted into broader discussion about general “green issues” and went on to talk about air pollution or global warming and linking this to the increasing use of renewable energy. Clearly, in relation to the context of the question this was not entirely appropriate and was consequently rather self-limiting.

## Question 2 (h)

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 had selected an appropriate example and included detailed observations about particular elements of 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 responses consequently 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. 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 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

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