



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
January 2013**

Geography B

40352F

(Specification 4035)

Unit 2: Hostile World (Foundation)

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

The paper proved to be an effective discriminator of geographical ability. It allowed candidates of all abilities at this tier to demonstrate positive achievement. The majority of candidates gave good responses to the range of data provided. Geographical skills such as interpreting bar graphs, climate graphs, articles and maps of various scales and types were good. Opportunities for extended writing were given in one or more parts of each question, and even the least able candidates were able to offer a response, which demonstrated some geographical understanding. The more able of the candidates were able to offer more developed responses, demonstrating good understanding of geographical issues, backed up with some correct use of geographical vocabulary and some use of case study examples. They were able to apply their knowledge and understanding in unfamiliar contexts.

As with previous series there was an imbalance between the numbers of candidates completing Sections A and B of the examination paper. A vast majority of candidates opted for Section A - Living with Natural Hazards, whilst few chose Section B - The Challenge of Extreme Environments.

The vast majority of candidates completed the paper and there were relatively few parts of the questions that were not attempted.

Section A - Living with Natural Hazards

Question 1

Part (a)(i) did not prove problematic for the majority of the candidates with good interpretation of the map. Relatively few candidates ignored the instruction to tick two boxes and ticked more than two.

Part (a)(ii) was generally well done but some candidates did not recognise the belt of earthquakes circling the Pacific Ocean.

Part (b) elicited a range of responses. 'Earthquakes' was the most popular choice and many candidates seldom gave more than a simple idea of movement and/or named the different types of plate interaction. For all three types of natural hazard, there was often a lack of precise knowledge of physical process and use of geographical terminology. The better candidates at this tier did link together the plate boundary with divergence or other plate interactions and were also able to show some knowledge of processes such as subduction at a destructive plate boundary, or evaporation and condensation of water over Tropical oceans and therefore, 37% gained a Level 2 mark.

In parts (c)(i) and (c)(ii) the majority of the candidates were able to interpret the map but some failed to include the plus sign for the second answer.

Part (d) also elicited a range of responses. Some candidates did not discuss the effects of temperature changes on tropical storms or wildfires, but merely stated the causes of each hazard. Many candidates did list effects such as changes in number, frequency, intensity and distribution of the natural hazards, but only 21% were able to develop these points in relation to temperature increase and gain a Level 2 mark.

Question 2

In part (a)(i) many candidates were unable to use direction or show understanding of the key to the map.

Part (a)(ii) again elicited a range of responses with many candidates stating the damage caused wildfires and failing to link this to costs, or why the costs might increase in the future. Candidates did identify that changes in the number, frequency, intensity and distribution of wildfires might lead to increasing costs, but these were not always clearly developed to explain why.

In part (b) some candidates merely lifted information from Figure 4 and did not elaborate upon it in order to answer the question. There were also some very vague responses given, most of the

focusing on 'so people know what to do'. However the majority of the candidates were able to offer two valid suggestions, but relatively few were able to develop each fully and gain maximum marks.

Question 3

Part (a)(i) was not attempted by a significant number of candidates. Of those candidates who did attempt the question, most were able to accurately complete the map.

In parts (a)(ii) and (a)(iii) the majority of the candidates were able to interpret the map well.

Part (b) was not always well answered with many candidates not focusing on the effects on the natural environment, but on the human environment. However, the majority of candidates were able to offer a range of valid effects. Again, some candidates merely lifted information from Figure 6 and did not elaborate upon it in order to answer the question.

Question 4

Part (a)(i) did not prove problematic for the majority of the candidates with good interpretation of the graph.

Part (a)(ii) elicited a range of responses. Many candidates were able to offer simple reasons for their chosen viewpoint; these were often taken directly from the resource provided. These were valid statements and many candidates were able to gain a top Level 1 and score 4 marks. Use of the resource was generally good. Many of the candidates did develop these ideas further to gain a Level 2 mark through good use of the resource along with the application of their own their own knowledge and understanding in constructing an argument for or against the issue. There was some use of case study examples to develop points and there were some well-developed descriptions of a range of methods used to try to make buildings earthquake proof; in the context of less developed countries. References to the use of flexible building materials such as bamboo were common along with some development as to the effect of these methods. There also some well-constructed 'no' arguments with the better candidates realising that you can never overcome the power and unpredictability of an earthquake, especially when resources are limited.

Section B - The Challenge of Extreme Environments

Question 5

Part (a)(i) was well answered with most candidates being able to interpret the map.

Part (a)(ii) did not prove problematic for the majority of the candidates although there was some confusion over higher, middle and lower latitudes.

Part (b) was not always well done with many vague statements and incorrect statements. Many candidates' knowledge and understanding of climatic effects on vegetation in extreme environments is very limited and this is an area for future development, as only 17% of candidates were able to show sufficient knowledge to gain a Level 2 mark. Most of these candidates gave clear explanations of plant adaptations in hot deserts and tropical rainforests.

In parts (c)(i) and (c)(ii) the majority of the candidates were able to interpret the map and 43% gained the maximum mark but some failed to include the plus sign for the second answer.

Part (d) elicited a range of responses. Hot desert fringes and tropical rainforest were the most popular choices with fewer candidates opting for cold environments. Where they did, candidates seldom gave more than a simple statement about melting ice. Of the 26% of candidates that gained a Level 2 mark, most gave clear descriptions of the spread of hot deserts and the effects of this on the environment.

Question 6

Part (a)(i) was well answered with most candidates being able to interpret the map.

Part (a)(ii) was also well answered with most candidates being able to give simple causes of desertification. The better candidates at this tier suggested the links between population pressure and the demand for increased food production to over cultivation or overgrazing and/or suggested the effects of one or both factors by linking them to soil erosion.

In part (b) some candidates merely lifted information from Figure 11 and did not elaborate upon it in order to answer the question. Only 18% of the candidates were able to offer two valid suggestions and few were able to develop the suggestions further.

Question 7

Parts (a)(i) and (a)(ii) were generally well answered with most candidates being able to interpret the map, although giving a compass direction is an issue for some candidates.

Part (b) was also generally well answered with many candidates being able to develop their response to gain both marks.

Part (c) elicited a range of responses, with the large majority of the candidates able to offer two valid suggestions as to how tropical rainforests can be used sustainably reduced and many of the candidates were able to develop at least one response. Ecotourism was a popular response. Some candidates merely lifted information from Figure 13 and did not elaborate upon it in order to answer the question.

Question 8

Part (a)(i) was not attempted by a significant number of candidates. Of those candidates who did attempt the question, most were able to accurately complete the climate graph.

Part (a)(ii) elicited a range of responses. Over 36% of candidates were able to state two differences and many were able to gain full marks. However some candidates described differences in precipitation.

Part (b) elicited a wide range of responses. Many candidates were able to offer simple reasons for their chosen viewpoint; these were often taken directly from the resource provided. These were valid statements and many candidates were able to gain a top Level 1 and score 4 marks. Use of the

resource was generally good. Many of the candidates did develop these ideas further to gain a Level 2 mark through good use of the resource along with the application of their own their own knowledge and understanding in constructing an argument for or against the issue. There was some use of case study examples to develop points and there were some well-developed descriptions of a range of actual and possible issues affecting both the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Clearly developed case studies were generally the route to Level 2 responses with the Exxon Valdez, TAP and Antarctic tourism often being cited to good effect.

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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