

GCSE

Geography B

90351F Managing places in the 21st century
Report on the Examination

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General

- 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 clear 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, whilst 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

Part (a)(i) presented few problems. Most candidates were able to use Figure 1 effectively to identify the Caribbean Sea as the correct answer.

The completion of the graph was variable in part (a)(ii). The majority of candidates identified the two data points successfully, but some candidates did not attempt to complete the line, or run the line through the identified points. It was clear that most candidates knew how to complete a line graph and where marks were lost, it was largely due to a lack of care. At this level a line graph is quite a fundamental skill so there has to be an expectation that it will be completed with a high degree of precision.

In part (a)(iii), the majority of candidates were able to offer some appreciation of how the physical environment acts as an attraction for visitors to St Lucia. In some cases, candidates simply identified physical characteristics (usually the beach or climate) without developing the answer to address the idea of 'why' these features attracted visitors. This approach clearly did not fully address the question. A small number of candidates talked about human features, suggesting that they did not fully understand the idea of 'physical environment'.

In part (a)(iv), nearly all candidates showed some appreciation of how tourism can put pressure on the environment. Responses were largely divided into observations, which either simply identified pressure points (water pollution), or offered some element of cause-effect (building new hotels might mean the removal of vegetation and damage to wildlife). Those candidates that offered some reasoning, generally produced sound answers and achieved both of the available marks. A small number of candidates simply used the word 'pollution' in a largely unqualified way. This was generally not sufficient to achieve any credit unless there was some element of development.

Candidates generally found part (a)(v) quite challenging. In many cases, candidates simply described the different zones and made basic points which suggested that by simply having a zoning policy, the area would be protected, without offering any real development or reasoning. Those candidates who did develop their ideas and made a clear link between policy and protection often made excellent points about issues, such as, overfishing and damage to coral reefs.

Parts (b)(i) and (ii) required candidates to use basic map reading skills. In most cases, candidates used the map extract and key effectively to answer the questions correctly. It was evident that a small number of candidates did not have the appropriate skills at their command to attempt the questions, or made fundamental errors in their attempt to answer the questions.

On part (b)(iii), a number of candidates did not pick up the command 'to the nearest km', and consequently, lost the mark for the question.

In part (b)(iv), it was clear that many candidates had a limited understanding of the term 'multi-use' in relation to coastal areas, and were consequently only able to show a partial understanding of the question. Better answers offered a definition of the term and then developed their responses by offering examples of different functions to support the definition. A small number of candidates used the Ordnance Survey extract to great effect in order to identify the different uses of coastal areas, whilst other candidates used examples that they had clearly studied, or in some cases, reflected back to the example of Saint Lucia, in Figure 1.

The majority of candidates completed the paragraph successfully in part (c). They clearly either had a good understanding of the physical processes that affect coastal areas, or were able to use their general geographical knowledge effectively to work out the correct answers.

In part (d)(i), the majority of candidates used Figure 3 effectively to identify evidence to suggest that erosion was taking place in the area shown on the photograph. Nearly all candidates mentioned the buildings falling over the cliff, and many used the idea of slumping in relation to the position of vegetation or lack of vegetation.

Part (d)(ii) presented few problems. The majority of candidates were able to identify the sequence of events that occurred on rapidly eroding soft coastlines. A small number of candidates did not attempt the question.

Responses to part (e)(i) were variable. In simple terms, candidates either knew the terminology, or did not. In most cases, those candidates who knew the terminology got all three terms correct.

In part (e)(ii), the majority of candidates showed a good understanding of how marine processes can erode a headland and help to form the features shown on Figure 4. At a basic level, candidates talked about the sea hitting the cliff and causing it to collapse, resulting in particular features being created. A significant proportion of candidates developed this general theme further by offering a more detailed explanation of processes, at times using appropriate geographical terminology, or by showing a clear understanding of the sequence of change, resulting in the stump being formed. There were some very sound responses to this question and it was clearly evident that in most cases, the topic had been covered very effectively.

1(f) – The majority of candidates showed some awareness of ‘soft engineering’, although a number drifted into observations about other types of coastal defence techniques. The key to the question was to get beyond simply identifying or describing the methods and move the answer towards describing “how” they actually operate to protect coastal areas. Candidates who recognised this distinction generally produced sound answers, making thoughtful points about the way that a wide, gently sloping beach helps to absorb wave energy and therefore reduce the risk of flooding. Use of examples varied between no real use or simply naming a general location, to offering information about specific soft engineering techniques being applied to a located coastal defence scheme. A small number of candidates drifted into discussion about managed realignment techniques. In some cases there was some value in this, especially where elements of soft engineering had also been used or where candidates offered comparative observations about using the natural environment as a means of coastal protection. However, in general terms this approach to the question appeared to be rather self-limiting, rarely getting beyond simple descriptive observations.

Question 2

2(a)(i) – This question presented few problems. The majority of candidates were able to use their understanding of urban change to select the appropriate words and complete the paragraph successfully.

2(a)(ii) – A significant proportion of candidates selected the correct response. However, it was not clear if this was because candidates knew or could work out the correct answer or if there was an element of guesswork. A number of candidates did not attempt the question.

2(a)(iii) - The majority of candidates showed a reasonable understanding of this question and were able to make thoughtful observations about the growth of urban areas in developing countries. Many candidates focused on links to economic migration, some bringing in detailed socio-economic points and locational examples to great effect. A number of candidates brought in points about natural increase, in a few cases linking this to the idea of “youthful populations and fertility rates” associated with the in-migration of a younger age group. The key point of differentiation was

essentially the distinction between those candidates who made basic generic points about “jobs and money”, sometimes adding an observation about access to an individual service (usually healthcare or education), and those candidates who identified a range of relative advantages or linked points together (“better education giving increased employment and income possibilities”).

2(b)(i) – This question presented few problems for the candidates who attempted it. A significant number of candidates did not attempt the question, consequently losing two quite easy marks.

2(b)(ii) - This question presented few problems. Virtually all candidates were able to use Figure 6 effectively to identify the correct answer.

2(c)(i) – The first part of the question was addressed successfully by most candidates, many bringing in ideas about how a lack of clean water might be linked to illness or disease. A significant proportion of candidates developed this theme by offering a clear cause-effect link or extending the idea in relation to washing, cooking or using water as a means of discharging sewage. The second part of the question was slightly more problematic for some candidates. There were a lot of generalised observations about “lacking security” and “not being able to do various things because you did not own the land”, some of which were not always well developed. A number of candidates did consider a lack of security in relation to the potential of being made homeless. A few candidates made the sophisticated link of the idea of lacking security to not having a “proper address” and consequently not being able to get a regular job and therefore improve living conditions.

2(c)(ii) – There were some excellent responses to this question and it was evident that the majority of candidates had a sound understanding of this part of the Specification. A significant proportion of candidates were able to bring in some locational evidence or used a particular urban improvement scheme in order to develop their ideas. A small number of candidates focused on water supply/sanitation-based schemes. Where this theme was set in the context of improving residential conditions it often provided a useful vehicle with which to address the question. A number of candidates drifted away from the question and considered ideas beyond the scope of “housing conditions”. This was often self-limiting.

2(d)(i) – The completion of the graph was variable. It was clear that most candidates knew how to complete a bar graph and where marks were lost it was largely due to a lack of care. At this level, a bar graph is quite a fundamental skill so there has to be an expectation that it will be completed with a high degree of precision.

2(d)(ii) - The majority of candidates were able to make reasonable suggestions about how urban environments might be improved if more people were encouraged to cycle to work. In most cases points about reducing pollution were mentioned as the key observation. This idea was sometimes developed to bring in links to air quality and how this might affect health or vegetation. Other ideas considered were points about reducing noise and litter dropped by motorists. A small number of candidates offered more sophisticated ideas which considered that less cars would mean less need for the building of more roads and that this would be good for the environment. Some candidates considered the “urban environment” in a broader context, making points about reducing accidents or “road rage” and consequently improving the social environment in urban areas. Where this was clearly linked to the idea of reducing traffic it was seen as a reasonable idea.

2(d)(iii) - The majority of candidates were able to offer a suggestion about how vehicle numbers might be reduced in urban areas. There were a range of ideas mentioned, including park and ride schemes, increasing public transport and congestion charging. A number of candidates considered pedestrianisation as a method of reducing vehicle numbers. When considered relative

to surrounding areas this was seen as a reasonable idea. A small number of candidates failed to read the question carefully and continued their discussion about cycling strategies.

2(e)(i) - This question presented a challenge for a number of candidates and suggested that the basic idea of urban deprivation in developed urban areas was not fully understood by a significant number of candidates. Those candidates that showed some awareness of the question tended to describe the characteristics of poorer areas (“few jobs, less money, poor housing, etc.”) rather than offering any cause–effect reasoning about why these areas might actually have these particular characteristics. While this approach showed some understanding of the question and was consequently creditworthy, it did not fully address the key command of the question. A significant number of candidates identified this question (and (e)(ii)) as a developing world question and consequently addressed it in that context. This generally limited the value of responses.

2(e)(ii) – This question was not always answered very effectively, many candidates either making generalised observations (“improve housing”, “create jobs”) with limited development or totally ignoring the question command to focus on one method and listing a number of improvement ideas, some of which were not entirely appropriate within a more “developed country” setting. The question was answered most successfully when addressed through the use of an example. Where candidates had clearly identified a deprived area they then had the opportunity to describe what was being done to improve the area, so a logical route through the question was established. Unfortunately this approach was not common and many candidates did not get beyond basic Level 1 statements. A small number of candidates considered “one way” in terms of a regeneration scheme which took on a number of approaches. Where it was clear that these approaches were all part of a more “holistic” regeneration strategy this was considered an appropriate way through the question.

2(f) – There were some excellent responses to this question. The majority of candidates used the resource (Figure 8) effectively to identify a number of ways that the St Paul’s improvement scheme had improved the environment and created opportunities for people. Differentiation was generally achieved by the extent to which candidates went beyond simply identifying changes expressed in Figure 8 and considered “how” they would improve environmental conditions. For example, identifying an increase in green spaces can be seen as an environmental improvement but it might also encourage wildlife or improve air quality as well as providing a relaxing environment where people can meet. A significant number of candidates linked the ideas of “people” and “environment” together to create a more holistic response, often to great effect.

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