



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

GEOGRAPHY A GCSE

SUMMER 2022

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GEOGRAPHY A

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1: CHANGING PHYSICAL AND HUMAN LANDSCAPES

General Comments

It was encouraging to see that the paper was accessible to candidates of all abilities. The wide range of marks also shows that differentiation was achieved within individual questions and across the three sections of the examination. Most of the questions were attempted by the vast majority of candidates and there was evidence of very good quality scripts. The overall structure of this paper was retained and once again the time available for completion was appropriate.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Core Theme 1: Landscapes and Physical Processes

- (a)**

 - (i)** Most candidates were able to correctly name either Exmoor or Dartmoor National Park.
 - (ii)** This question tested the skill of estimating land area from a map and overall differentiated effectively.
 - (iii)** It was pleasing to see that many candidates were able to describe the location of the Yorkshire Dales using direction and distance from specified places with confidence.
 - (iv)** In this question most candidates named a relevant landscape and explained in detail how issues such as congestion and footpath erosion results in visitors exceeding the carrying capacity of a honeypot site. Band 1 answers were more generic and showed basic understanding only.
- (b)**

 - (i)** Most candidates correctly worked out the lag time as 13 hours. However, it was obvious that some students did not take enough care using the scale of the horizontal axis.
 - (ii)** This was a high scoring skills question with most candidates comparing the peak discharge and rising/falling limbs accurately.
 - (iii)** Generally, this AO1 question was well answered with correct references made to factors such as a specific type of weather, soil types and urbanisation. The answer impermeable surfaces could not be credited as it was not exemplified.
 - (iv)** Responses to this question were encouraging overall as most candidates had an elaborated understanding of why impermeable surfaces can increase the risk of river flooding. The better answers referred to specific impermeable rocks or to large urban areas which are covered with tarmac and buildings, which result in rapid surface runoff into rivers.

- (c) (i) A high proportion of candidates recognised that the photograph was a V-shaped valley.
- (ii) On the whole this question was quite well answered with most candidates inserting at least one correct term.
- (iii) Many candidates were secure in their knowledge of traction as a transportation process and linking it clearly to high energy conditions in river channels. Weaker responses described the process of attrition stating that large rocks/boulders were broken down into smaller pieces which are then transported by the river.
- (d) This was the first of the 8-mark application extended writing questions. It required candidates to use evidence from the OS map and photographs to focus on a range of factors which could have been responsible for the rate of landform change. No evaluation nor judgement was therefore required. The best answers recognised the coastline as discordant and analysed how this results in differential erosion which creates headlands and bays. They also focused on human intervention in Swanage Bay and how the groynes are responsible for preventing longshore drift/trapping sediment at one end of the bay but leave the coastline exposed to rapid erosion at the other end. Overall, most responses were Band 2 or above.

Core Theme 2: Rural-Urban Links

- (a) (i) Most candidates understood how to calculate the range from the table of data, but a minority failed to show their working and therefore did not gain a second mark. The most common error was candidates trying to calculate a mean.
- (ii) This was a fairly low scoring skills question. Many candidates did not understand why the interquartile range is often regarded as a more appropriate measure of dispersion as opposed to the range.
- (iii) The second calculation question in this section was understood by many candidates and the working out was shown clearly. However, there was a significant number that scored 0 marks.
- (iv) This AO1 question was not always answered well. Too many students described counter-urbanisation rather than how this has affected patterns of commuting. The better answers focused on an increase in commuting as more people move out of some cities thus increasing average commuting distances and commuting times.
- (b) (i) A fairly high scoring skills question showing that features such as a bus station, churches and museums are common in UK town centres.
- (ii) Many candidates responded well to this map evidence question. Many recognised its position alongside the A458, which makes the town centre more accessible and leads to less congestion in the town centre. Unfortunately, some students thought that the location was chosen because of its proximity to a nearby camping and caravan site.

- (iii) Responses to this question varied in quality with many making vague references to accessibility, greater profits or visiting out of town sites on the way to work. Some candidates also answered the question from the viewpoint of the customer rather than the retailer. The better answers, however, made it clear that retailers are aware of customer preferences such as plenty of room for free parking.
 - (iv) Most candidates had a good understanding of the advantages of using brownfield sites for new retail developments and many scored at least Band 2 marks. The best answers referred to the regeneration of run-down areas of towns and cities and considered the sustainability aspect of these urban communities.
- (c)
- (i) Most candidates were able to identify the correct definition of global cities.
 - (ii) Many of the better answers on this question kept their focus on the wider city-region and gave answers that had specific knowledge of places such as Manchester, London or Mumbai. Too many candidates received 0 marks for this question which was very disappointing. Unfortunately, these students focused their answers on international connections rather than on the wider city-region of a named global city.
 - (iii) The second AO3 question required candidates to interpret and analyse the resources about the city of Kolkata before evaluating the evidence and making a judgement. Most of the students now seem to be aware that they need to discuss both sides of the argument before coming to their final decision, and this is most encouraging. As a result, many achieved Band 3 or Band 4 marks and showed that they could apply their wider geographical understanding effectively. Examples included comparative references to places such as the informal settlement of Dharavi in Mumbai. Those who gained Band 2 marks either presented a one-sided argument or simply used information from the resource with limited analysis. This question was also used to assess SPaG and most of the candidates achieved at least the Intermediate Band (2/3 marks).

Section B: Options

Theme 3 is still the most popular choice for study, but the performance of candidates is, on the whole, comparable in both of the optional questions.

Theme 3: Tectonic Landscapes and Hazards

- (a) (i) This was a very low scoring skills question. Most candidates gave simple generic answers such as easy to understand or it shows the information clearly. Those who gained marks were aware that histograms are used to represent continuous data which is grouped and can show the frequency of events.
- (ii) This question scored quite well with a majority of candidates showing sound understanding of why stratovolcanoes are dangerous. Excellent answers were seen in relation to their associated volcanic hazards including pyroclastic flows and ash clouds.

- (b) Most candidates were able to give two valid ways in which hazard mapping can reduce the risks associated with volcanic eruptions. This included awareness of the dangers, planning evacuation routes and controlling developments in high-risk zones.
- (c) The third AO3 question required candidates to interpret and analyse the resources about the Philippines before evaluating the evidence and making a judgement. Most candidates took the opportunity to present an argument and counterargument with the best answers developing the information provided in the Resource Box. Some of the best answers concluded that physical and human factors are equally important and interrelated.

Theme 4: Coastal Hazards and their Management

- (a)
 - (i) This was a very low scoring skills question. Most candidates gave simple generic answers such as easy to understand or it shows the information clearly. Those who gained marks were aware that histograms are used to represent continuous data which is grouped and can show the frequency of events.
 - (ii) This question scored reasonably well with a majority of candidates showing sound understanding of why powerful storms increase vulnerability to coastal erosion. Excellent answers were seen in relation to increased wave energy which hastens the erosion processes, which, in turn, can then modify landforms and destroy coastal defences.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give two valid ways in which hazard mapping can reduce the risks associated with coastal flooding. These included awareness of the dangers, emergency services action plans and controlling developments in high-risk zones.
- (c) The third AO3 question required candidates to interpret and analyse the resources about the Philippines before evaluating the evidence and making a judgement. Most candidates took the opportunity to present an argument and counterargument with the best answers developing the information provided in the Resource Box. Some of the best answers came to the conclusion that physical and human factors are equally important and interrelated.

Summary of key points

Specific detail or knowledge is often required to answer AO1 questions successfully. In this paper specific detail to a location or facts were needed to answer the questions on drainage basins, landform processes and global cities for example.

Candidates must read the command words and subsequent key words in the questions carefully as in 2cii where the focus was on the wider city-region. This phrase is clearly on the specification.

Continue to stress the importance of a balanced answer – points for and against – in the AO3 eight-mark questions.

Skills questions which require candidates to be critical of graphical or statistical techniques, suggest suitable alternatives, or, show an understanding of why these are used, is as important as doing calculations and interpretation of maps, graphs and photographs. The response to questions 2aii, 3ai and 4ai were very disappointing.

GEOGRAPHY A

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 2: ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

General Comments

The adaptations for the 2022 series meant that options were available in both section A and section B with candidates choosing different options and combinations of questions. In Section A there was an even split between candidates choosing either Question 1 or Question 2. In Section B, a greater proportion of candidates choose Question 3. The overall performance of the paper indicated that it was accessible to candidates. There was variety in the challenge of questions offering differentiation within each of the assessment objectives. Most questions were attempted with a good number of candidates using the additional space available; the time allocated was appropriate.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Theme 5: Weather, Climate and Ecosystems.

- Q.1**
- (a)**

 - (i)** This question required selection of the appropriate terms to complete the sentences on the difference between weather and climate. Although successfully attempted by many, some found this challenging which highlights the importance of candidates learning key definitions of terms in the specification.
 - (ii)** This AO1 question on maritime and continental climates proved accessible for those who knew the basic characteristics of maritime and continental conditions. There were some very pleasing responses where knowledge of the different characteristics in winter and summer were outlined (although this was not a specific requirement to achieve full marks). Some offered explanations rather than descriptions; candidates must read the command words carefully to ensure that they are answering the question set.
 - (iii)** Many candidates attempted this question successfully by selecting the correct statements to describe the graph.
 - (iv)** One reason was required here with development of the reason linked to different parts of the UK. There were some pleasing answers which linked climatic factors such as altitude or latitude, or air masses to specific regions or locations in the UK. For example, “wetter in areas such as the Lake District due to relief rainfall at high altitudes”. However, many candidates struggled to give an explanation.
 - (b)**

 - (i)** Many candidates attempted this successfully by offering correct descriptors for Graph 1.2. The emphasis of the question was on change over the period shown; an overview or general increase was successfully identified by many, supported by comments on fluctuations and data on high and low points on the graph.

- (ii) Some candidates gave correct answers here, but many found this challenging. Answers which commented that bar graphs are “easy to use” needed some clarification as to why to score marks such as “because they show discrete categories clearly”.
 - (iii) This question was done correctly by many candidates with valid suggestions for alternative techniques. Pie charts and line graphs were common responses.
 - (iv) This AO2 question had a banded mark scheme and differentiated well between candidates. Most candidates did not achieve beyond band 2 as answers were descriptive with brief explanations. There were some excellent responses which identified aspects of low-pressure systems such as heavy rainfall and high wind speeds, linking them directly through detailed chains of reasoning to the impacts on human activity. For example, the impacts of flooding from storm surges or damage to infrastructure and housing from high wind speeds was explained with reference to both short and long term social and economic impacts such as repair costs and food shortages. It is encouraging to note that there was evidence in candidate responses (in all bands) that candidates are aware of recent examples of low-pressure systems in countries at different levels of development. However, in AO2 questions (understanding) marks are awarded for the quality of explanation linked to the question. Therefore, answers which repeated case study knowledge as the basis of answer did not generally score well. The emphasis here was on the impacts of low-pressure systems on people therefore responses related to environmental impacts were not relevant.
- (c)
- (i) Many found this question challenging and did not achieve more than 1 mark. Successful responses used the idea of global warming linked to greater energy available for storms. Climate change as a response was not sufficient unless it was linked specifically to the idea of warming atmosphere or oceans.
 - (ii) One natural cause of climate change was required. This was a basic knowledge question, but some were awarded zero marks as responses were not specific enough. The emphasis was on change. Volcanic eruptions were the most common response; however, “volcanoes” was not given credit. Likewise, many used Milankovitch cycles in their answers – but the response needed to be specific to change. For example, “changes in orbit” was accepted but “Earth’s orbit” was not.
- (d) This AO3 question required an evaluation of the impacts of human activity on small scale ecosystems. A range of supporting evidence was provided for candidates to use in support of a discussion on both sides. Most candidates were able to select appropriate evidence and comment in relation to positive and negative impacts but did not achieve marks beyond band 2 as answers were often brief and did not go beyond ideas such as potential loss of species or prevention of dune erosion with the use of walkways. A common response was that cars visiting Studland would be a direct cause of climate change and answers then explored wider issues in relation to this idea which made answers lose focus. The emphasis was small scale ecosystems therefore responses related to climate change as a wider issue were not relevant.

There was also a common misconception that litter and plastic pollution from tourists at Studland would also directly cause climate change. Better quality responses achieving marks in bands 3 and 4 looked at wider implications using concepts such as multiplier effects linked to ideas such as biodiversity and how impacts might vary in the short and long term. Economic impacts as benefits of tourism were not relevant here unless linked to funding for management strategies. However, many did not take this angle and explored benefits to the local economy which moved away from the focus of the question. Most candidates decided that impacts were overwhelmingly negative; however, the discussion leading to this needed some balance to achieve a mark in band 3 or above.

Theme 6: Development and Resource Issues

- Q.2 (a) (i)** Most candidates attempted this question although some missed it; candidates need to be aware that not all questions will have lines to respond, and some may require completion of a graph such as this one. Accuracy was key here as was labelling for access to both marks.
- (ii)** This follow up question on describing the trend on the graph was answered successfully by most candidates.
- (iii)** This skills question proved to be challenging for many. Common correct responses referred to the accuracy of the scale on the graph, the clustering of points and the lack of labels for some countries. Candidates need to be specific and make disadvantages clear. Responses such as “confusing” needed clarification as to why.
- (b) (i)** Many candidates answered this question successfully using ideas such as developments in transport infrastructure, growth of package holidays and use of the internet to make booking easier. Some misinterpreted the question and offered suggestions relating merely to the existence of tourism in the first place such as the presence of historic sites or other attractions such as beaches. The question had two key elements – growth and global, therefore responses needed to be relevant to both aspects.
- (ii)** This question proved accessible for most, although some lost out on marks as responses were not linked to people, and instead focused on environmental impacts. These were relevant in the context of cost of restoring damaged environments for example, but few managed to make this link successfully. Valid responses included seasonal employment and housing becoming too expensive for locals due to second home ownership. There were some excellent responses developing the idea of enclave tourism. Candidates need to be made aware that when referring to pollution, they must refer to specific types for a response to be worthy of credit.

- (c) (i) When asked to describe resources in an AO4 question, candidates need to ensure that they describe what they can see. Some candidates explained the distribution of Nike factories or suggested that most countries were NICs. Whilst this is a valid point, NICs were not labelled on the map, therefore no credit could be awarded for this idea. 3 statements offering an overview of where factories were located (not a list of countries) was required and many candidates achieved this successfully.
- (ii) This question proved to be accessible with most candidates suggesting a valid reason such as low wages or relaxed environmental laws. However, some did not develop their ideas limiting their credit to one mark. The requirement for one reason for two marks is a question style commonly set, therefore candidates need to be mindful of the need to develop responses to have access to all the marks available.
- (iii) Two positive impacts of MNCs were required here. The emphasis was on positive; therefore, some qualification was required. For example, “jobs” and “education” by themselves were insufficient to be awarded marks. Some further detail such as “more jobs” or “improved education” would have been awarded both marks as both ideas have a positive emphasis as required by the question.
- (iv) The emphasis of this next question moved to negative impacts, however as with c) ii) some answers lacked the development needed to be awarded both marks. There were some excellent responses which linked the impact and the reason such as “poor working conditions” linked to “health and safety of workers”. A response such as this was awarded both marks.
- (d) (i) This question was assessing AO2: an understanding of the reasons why water resources need to be managed sustainably. A range (more than one) reason was needed to access band 3 and there were some excellent responses linked to water insecurity, pollution of supplies and access to safe water. The most successful answers developed these ideas into chains of reasoning linked to sustainable futures and demand for water for agriculture to feed growing populations and the possibility of future water scarcity with climate change. Some candidates used examples well to support their responses, although this was not required for access to full marks. Candidates must take note of the command word; where “explain” is used in the question, repetition of knowledge of case studies will not gain credit, however detailed or interesting. Some misinterpreted the question and produced answers which described and explained how different methods of sustainable management work; again, these ideas were not answering the question set.

- (ii) This AO3 question required candidates to discuss how far they agree with the statement, therefore a decision was required, which most candidates offered at some point within their answer. To achieve a mark above band 2, some balance was required in the discussion which most did through “agree” and “disagree” sections of their answer and many answers were well balanced. The answers which achieved band 3 and above used the evidence from the resources effectively to develop chains of reasoning which explored the problems and benefits. More sophisticated responses in band 4 discussed different perspectives, (different countries) on the issue and whether problems and / or benefits would be more socioeconomic or environmental. Some also commented that problems and benefits might vary in the short and long term therefore the extent of agreement might vary over time.

Section B

Theme 7: Social Development

- Q.3 (a)**
- (i) The graph was completed successfully by most candidates although some missed out this question.
- (ii) The calculation was completed successfully by most candidates.
- (iii) This AO1 question was done well by many candidates who correctly identified two ways of tackling malaria. However, some confused tackling malaria with tackling COVID 19 which led to a range of incorrect responses.
- (iv) There were some excellent responses in this question which had a banded mark scheme. Successful answers used specific health indicators such as people per doctor and life expectancy to explain why this indicated level of social development. Such responses referred to investment in health care, and education linked to lifestyle for example. As an AO2 question, to reach band 2 there needed to be clear links demonstrated between health and social development.
- (b)** The focus of this question was HIV and the extent to which it can be tackled easily. Some candidates used the evidence from the resources well to produce a balanced discussion and detailed evaluation. Better responses picked up on the word “easily” in the question which produced a more detailed evaluation developed into chains of reasoning, giving access to marks above band 2. More sophisticated responses in band 4 offered suggestions that the extent to which HIV can be easily tackled might vary between Sub Saharan countries and within countries, and that the success might vary in the short and long term. There were some valid comparisons with other countries using candidates’ own knowledge, such as Malawi, however the tendency to repeat detailed case studies should be avoided as this approach does not address the question set. Many did not go beyond the requirements for band 2 and gave only brief reasons as part of their evaluation.

Theme 8 Environmental Challenges.

- Q.4**
- (a)**
- (i)** The graph was completed successfully by most candidates although some missed out this question.
 - (ii)** The calculation was completed successfully by most candidates.
 - (iii)** This AO1 question was done well by many candidates who correctly identified two ways in which rainforests can be destroyed. “Deforestation” as a response needed qualification with a reason to gain credit such as for housing or farming.
 - (iv)** There were some excellent responses in this question which had a banded mark scheme. Successful answers used specific examples of consumerism such as demand for palm oil or plastic to explain why there are negative impacts on the environment. Such responses referred to loss of biodiversity, generation of e waste and specific types of pollution for example. As an AO2 question, to reach band 2 there needed to be clear links demonstrated between consumerism and impacts on the environment.
- (b)** The focus of this question was climate change and the extent to which it can be tackled easily. Some candidates used the evidence from the resources well to produce a balanced discussion and detailed evaluation. Better responses picked up on the word “easily” in the question which produced a more detailed evaluation developed into chains of reasoning, giving access to marks above band 2. More sophisticated responses in band 4 offered suggestions that the extent to which climate change can be easily tackled might vary between Sub Saharan countries and within countries, and that the success might vary in the short term and in the future. There were some valid comparisons with other countries using candidates’ own knowledge such as Tuvalu, however the tendency to repeat detailed case studies should be avoided as this approach does not address the question set. Many did not go beyond the requirements for band 2 and gave only brief reasons as part of their evaluation.

Summary of key points

AO1 or knowledge questions require specific responses. They are often low tariff, but some candidates are losing marks unnecessarily by offering vague responses not tightly linked to the question.

AO2 questions which require explanation should have clear development or chains of reasoning which make links between the ideas in the question. Many candidates are limiting access to band 3 in longer AO2 questions by offering only brief explanations and implied links to the question.

Use of examples (case studies) in teaching is valuable as candidates gain an understanding of real geography. However, in AO2 and AO3 questions, simply recalling knowledge from specific case studies will limit marks as this does not answer the question.

In AO3 questions candidates are being assessed on their ability to apply knowledge. Resources are provided to support discussion and their use within an answer is strongly encouraged. However, the tendency by some candidates to lift information and offer only brief comments without detailed chains of reasoning or evaluative comment will limit marks to band 2.

AO4 questions will assess a variety of skills. Evaluation of different graphical and statistical techniques is one of the required skills and candidates need to offer specific ideas in relation to these questions.

GEOGRAPHY A

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 3: APPLIED FIELDWORK ENQUIRY

General Comments

In general, this paper was accessible across the ability range and provided the opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their fieldwork and geographical skills and abilities. Most candidates fully engaged with the complete content of the paper and the time available did not seem to be a cause for concern as the majority of the candidates finished their paper.

Even though candidates were not required to take part in fieldwork and not answer questions on their own fieldwork in this exam, it was obvious that schools had prepared their candidates well for fieldwork and geographical skills examined in component 3. Candidates can often struggle on the questions relating to their own fieldwork, so the removal of these two 6-mark questions, as adaptations for 2022 only, ensured that the accessibility of the paper was increased; and contributed to many candidates performing well, particularly with improvement at the higher percentage marks.

Most candidates accessed the mathematical skills well in this paper, with question 3(c)(i) & (ii) differentiating well in this area. Candidates had obviously been well prepared overall in using technical vocabulary directly related to fieldwork, command words and SPaG, however, some answers or part answers were difficult to interpret due to the legibility of the candidates writing.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Part A

Parts A and B assessed AO3 and AO4 for fieldwork skills in a human and/or physical environment which is unfamiliar to candidates.

The focus of this question was investigating the use of qualitative surveys in fieldwork.

Q.1 (a) (i) This question assessed AO3, application of knowledge and understanding. Candidates were asked to apply their knowledge and understanding of sampling, to an unfamiliar OS map.

Most candidates gained one mark in this two-mark question, as they gave a generic response using their understanding of sampling, by making a statement that could be applied to any location. Many candidates were unable to apply their knowledge to the map shown, so failed to gain the second mark. Candidates could be pointed to the phrase in the question “in the area shown”, which would enable them to apply their knowledge to the resource in the exam paper.

Common creditable answers for one mark, were that sampling avoids bias and saves time. Candidates who scored two marks, put their answer in context of the map e.g. a large area to study.

- (ii) This question assessed AO4, candidates were asked to use their fieldwork and geographical skills to complete a line of a bipolar survey. A high proportion of candidates attempted and successfully answered this question, using their fieldwork skills correctly, and interpreting and completing a bipolar survey.
- (b) (i) This question assessed AO4, candidates were asked to apply their geographical skills to interpret the results on a graph. It was encouraging to see most candidates were successful in this question, which used a radar graph. Candidates who scored two, often failed on the final statement.
- (ii) This question assessed AO4, candidates were asked to adapt a fieldwork technique, by suggesting improvements to the part of the questionnaire shown. Most candidates were successful in this question, scoring two marks. Commonly creditable answers were references to distance, options for residents who lived further away and overlapping categories.
- (c) This question assessed AO3, using the command word, evaluate. Candidates were asked for one strength and one weakness of an example of the fieldwork technique provided in the exam paper.

The fieldwork technique was a completed field sketch. Strengths were more competently done by most candidates than weaknesses, however the mark scheme did credit one mark for a strength (or weakness) and up to 2 additional marks for elaboration, allowing some candidates to score 3 out of 4, without a weakness (or strength).

A significant majority of candidates did not evaluate the field sketch provided but described the sketch, referring to the content of the sketch. Another group of candidates gave generic strengths and weaknesses about field sketches in general, rather than referring to the diagram provided.

Creditable common answers referred to detailed annotations and labels/visual clarity, which were then occasionally elaborated on in terms of a better understanding/drawing conclusions/easier to interpret. For weaknesses, the most common answers related to the sketch having no numerical data/no scale/limited viewpoint, with elaboration referring to comparing the field sketch with other locations.

Part B

Like Part A, Part B assessed AO3 and AO4 for fieldwork skills in a human and/or physical environment which is unfamiliar to candidates.

The focus of this question was investigating place through fieldwork.

- Q.2 (a)** This question assessed AO3, candidates were asked to apply their knowledge of place and investigating place, to a photograph of Lowestoft.

Under half of the candidates correctly identified two enquiry questions about investigating place.

- (b)** This question assessed AO3, candidates were asked to apply their knowledge and understanding of place and location, to identify two mistakes in a description of the location of Lowestoft.

There was a range of marks for this question, but generally candidates did very well, with many candidates scoring four marks. There were very few candidates who did not attempt this question which highlights that this type of question was accessible.

- (c)** This question assessed AO3, candidates were asked to apply their knowledge and understanding to evaluate the fieldwork recording sheet provided.

Most candidates recognised that their answers to this question were about this particular recording sheet, that had been included in the resource folder. Common creditable answers were related to large amounts of information/detailed questions/clearly recorded date and time. Weaknesses were as generally credited as well as strengths, and answers commonly related to words overlapping/writing overprint/ no space for answers. The elaboration of these initial points differentiated well. Elaboration covered a range of points such as allows comparisons or is hard to read/come to conclusions.

Some weaker responses described some of the data recorded on the recording sheet, others provided answers that showed non-comprehension of the question.

- (d)**
- (i)** This question assessed AO4, candidates were asked to use their skills to complete a shading section on a choropleth map. A high proportion of candidates attempted and successfully answered this question.
 - (ii)** This question assessed AO4. Candidates were asked to use their skills to interpret the choropleth map. Most candidates scored correctly, and most candidates only tick one box. A high proportion of candidates attempted and successfully answered this question.

Part C

The focus for this part, is the wider UK. In this section of the paper, in addition to AO3 and AO4, AO2 is assessed, candidates being asked to show their understanding and to explain geographical concepts or interrelationships between environments and processes.

- Q.3**
- (a)** This question assessed AO4. Candidates were asked to interpret a graph of Internet sales as a percentage of total retail sales. A high proportion of candidates attempted and successfully answered this question.
 - (b)**
 - (i)** This question assessed AO2. In this question candidates were asked to show their understanding of the interrelationship between places, environments and processes. They were asked to explain why retail provision is changing in the UK.

This question and the following question were clearly familiar territory for candidates, which led to some weaker candidates collecting marks and accessing band one. However, some candidates did not fully separate the ideas involved in the questions, “retail change” and “impacts of online shopping”, which led some stronger candidates not to achieve in both questions. Overall, not many band 3 responses were seen.

- (ii) This question assessed AO2. In this question candidates were asked to show their understanding of impacts from online shopping, focusing on social and economic impacts.

The command word for this question was explain, which some candidates struggled to apply to the reasons behind the impacts. Many candidates wrote expansive answers, but these did not always effectively target the question. Succinct targeted answers, often within the space provided, scored more highly.

- (c) (i) This question assessed AO4, and with its counterpart 3 (c) (ii) asked candidates to calculate and then interpret their calculations, using a comparative statement. Many candidates did well on this, using the data from the table in the resource folder.
- (ii) This question assessed AO4, following on from the previous question. Many candidates were able to offer a comparison.
- (d) (i) This question assessed AO4, asking candidates to use their skills to suggest adaptations to the diagram to provide greater clarity.
- (ii) This question assessed AO4, asking candidates to use their skills to suggest a numerical method to analyse some data. This offered a suitable challenge to most candidates.
- (iii) This question assessed AO4, asking candidates to use their skills to suggest why a particular presentation method would be suitable for a dataset.
- (e) This question assessed AO4, asking candidates to use their skills to suggest why a particular presentation method would be suitable for a dataset.
- (f) This question assessed AO3. This question required candidate to use the material presented in part C of the examination papers and the resource folder to justify a decision. Candidates were required to build on all four elements of AO3. Candidates were asked to interpret a range of evidence in the resource folder and paper, as well as applying their wider geographical knowledge to the question. They were expected to analyse, by giving argument/counterargument, differing reasons/viewpoints, and expressing this logically through relevant chain of reasoning. Candidates were also asked to evaluate and then justify by reaching a decision or a conclusion.

Most candidates wrote answers for this question, with many candidates writing extensive answers. However, many of these candidates, did not show evidence of planning, so the coherence of the answers was not as successful as otherwise could have been. Candidates could be pointed to making a plan, if they find they have adequate time. All candidates could be encouraged to think of a logically developed answers or sequence of points, or logically developed paragraphs before they start. As this is probably a familiar topic for many candidates, many showed little planned logical development within their answers.

Few candidates achieved band four responses this year. Often answers were not clearly structured with little use of signposting or evidence of argument and counterargument. Many candidates failed to include differing reasons, viewpoints, or use their wider geographical knowledge and/or range of evidence to support their reasoning. Limited chains of reasoning were seen.

As usual this question is interpreted in many different ways by the candidates, some focused on the changing shopping habits whereas others focus more on new developments.

Some candidates provided good examples of wider geographical knowledge, however this was limited, and not always specific, for example not giving location information.

The evidence in the resource folder was used well, with some widely different interpretations, which allowed a range of analysis and explanations.

Most candidates interpreted U.K.'s towns and high streets to mean the infrastructure i.e., shops and transport, and the people who might live there. Few candidates considered the political, cultural, sustainable aspects of our UK towns and high streets.

High quality band four answers included linked chains of developed reasoning which were relevant. Candidates were covering aspects such as digitally enhanced high streets/integration of retail and entertainment services/diversity of services/opportunities for redesign/business models/town identity/brands/clone towns/communities.

Candidates focused heavily on online shopping and how this might limit retail within the high Street. Many answers were in band two and three, with very few in band one.

Summary of key points

- Some candidates made generic points or provided description in A03 questions, where using the provided resource and referring / applying their knowledge to this was important. Making sure that comments refer directly to the resource provided is critical for these marks.
- Candidates provided answers to the longer questions that didn't show evidence of planning / structure or initial thought. This was probably exasperated by the familiarity of the topics this exam. They would be advised to take a moment to think and make a plan, before attempting the longer answers, jotting down key geographical terms they might want to use.
- Characteristically those candidates that scored highly attempted all questions across the paper, even if their performance on the longer answers was weaker than some others, their marks added up over the paper. If candidates are not sure of an answer, they should have a go anyway.



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