GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

GEOGRAPHY B
GCSE

AUTUMN 2020

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GEOGRAPHY B

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COMPONENT 1 C112U20-1 INVESTIGATING GEOGRAPHICAL ISSUES

General Comments

This report identifies the main strengths and weaknesses as shown by the small cohort of candidates who sat the November examination.

Comments on individual questions/sections

AO1 Questions
These questions require knowledge, and it is important that candidates learn definitions of key terms that are in the specification, such as latitude and biome. Where a more detailed response is required, such as in Q1 b(iii) which asked for a description of the economic and environmental **impacts** of the growth of online shopping on CBD's, the focus needed to be on specific impacts, not just generic statements about the reasons for the growth. Environmental points need to be more than just a general mention of global warming. Points need to be elaborated. This was equally true of a lack of knowledge about the climate of hot semi-arid zones, where specifics could have included reference to temperature ranges and rainfall totals.

AO2 Questions
These require candidates to show their geographical understanding of concepts and inter-relationships. Good responses need to demonstrate this understanding through exploration of the reasons for the patterns being discussed. Generally, this type of question requires elaboration of initial statements in order to gain the highest marks. Questions such as Q2c(ii) where a reason was required to explain why heavy rain occurs at a cold front, illustrated a lack of knowledge of weather systems and the use of synoptic charts. This is an area that centres could focus on. Where responses require reference to different groups of people, these must be clearly identified, such as 'the elderly', or 'farmers'.

AO3 Questions
The application of knowledge and understanding is tested in higher tariff questions. Candidates responses to these has shown a marked improvement and they are clearly now being taught to look carefully at the command word such as 'Evaluate' or 'Analyse' and target their response accordingly. It is important to get a balance in their answer if more than one strand is mentioned – such as positive **and** negative, or reference to **both** local residents and leisure users, as in Q1c. The best responses will carefully justify their personal viewpoint if required and then use elaborated statements to support their argument. Although factual knowledge is not rewarded in these questions, candidates could make better use of other examples they have studied in order to develop a point they are trying to make.

AO4 Questions

Candidates ability to analyse graphs and accurately refer to figures has steadily improved although it is still evident that lower ability candidates often miss out those questions which require the completion of a graph or pie chart. Although many candidates can carry out a pleasing range of techniques, the ability to critically comment on their suitability for a particular data set is an area that centres should focus on. It is important that they can comment on the advantages and disadvantages of each technique listed in the specification, and answer with greater sophistication than 'it is easy to read'. Similarly, the ability to correctly transfer data from a diagram when asked to do a calculation needs further attention.

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COMPONENT 2 C112U20-1 PROBLEM SOLVING GEOGRAPHY

General Comments

This report identifies the main strengths and weaknesses as shown by the small cohort of candidates who sat the November examination.

Comments on individual questions/sections

AO1 Questions:
These questions require knowledge. Responses to question A ei) were generally very good. The candidates were able to articulate a wide range of effects on their named city, one which had experienced significant inward migration. The most popular themes explored included impacts on housing and also cultural change. Some candidates gave detailed responses, but the city their chosen city was not located in an HIC (a requirement of the question). In this case, worthy comments were given some reward, but up to a maximum of 2 marks out of the available 4.

AO2 Questions:
These questions require candidates to show their geographical understanding of concepts and inter-relationships. In question A bii) the candidates were asked to explain the relationship between latitude and temperature. A significant proportion of candidates appeared to confuse latitude with altitude.

Question A eii) required candidates to explain why a named 'push' factor might force people to migrate to a city in an HIC. A significant number of candidates made the mistake of framing their response around 'pull' factors, not push. No marks were awarded for pull factors.

In question B ai) the candidates were asked to explain why climate can influence stores and flows of water. Very few responses gained all 4 marks. Few candidates used specialist terminology to enhance their answer (e.g., it was rare to see references to transpiration and surface run-off). Some candidates made the mistake of shaping their response around the impact of people (e.g., farmer extracting water from the aquifer and the use of irrigation) on flows and stores.

In question B bi) the candidates were asked to explain why environmentalists are against the use of fossil fuels as energy for desalination plants. Some excellent responses were seen where candidates offered a clear chain of reasoning. However, a significant minority made the mistake of relating greenhouse gas emissions causing ozone depletion.

Some strong responses were seen for question B dii). Candidates were able to articulate and explain why there are significant 'social' impacts when large-scale employers leave an area. A common, well elaborated thread recognised the social impacts (e.g., on health and education) when local authorities lost revenue from lower tax revenues.

AO3 Questions:

These questions require the application of knowledge and understanding. In question A ci) and A cii**)** the candidates were asked to identify the challenges for people (ci) and for the environment (cii) that result from living in a Mediterranean climate. High quality responses were seen with respect to the challenges for people. Water shortages for farmers resulting from the periods when rainfall is very low but temperatures are very high was a notable starting point. Weaker responses were the norm for the impact on the environment. Candidate responses strayed back to the impact on people. Those who chose to focus on the danger of wildfires were able to develop their answer explaining the impact on flora and fauna.

In Part C a wide range of responses were seen. The weakest responses tended to simply list the pros and cons of the two chosen water management schemes for Valencia. Some resorted to simply copying from the Resource Folder, without elaboration. Articulation to justify why other schemes were rejected was a strength in responses awarded either Band 2 or 3. Few responses were found to match the criteria for Band 4. A key element expected of more sophisticated responses would show that the candidates could argue why their two chosen schemes would work well **together.**

AO4 Questions:

These questions require candidates to select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques. In question A a) the candidates were required to identify similarities in the location of areas experiencing a Mediterranean climate. A world map was supplied. Candidates were asked to use map evidence only as the question targeted AO4 – Skills. Responses to this question were largely disappointing. Too many candidates resorted to expression such as "near the tropics". In these cases, observations relating to location would benefit from using the scale provided on the map and/or an accurate use of compass direction.

In question A di) the candidates were required to calculate the % population growth of Valencia (1979 to 2019). A significant number of candidates did not attempt this skills question. From those who did attempt it, their methodology was, for the most part, incorrect. Few were able to gain their 'working' mark or the mark for the correct answer (which was 21.4%). Centres are encouraged to ensure coverage of the statistical skills required in the specification as show in appendix A.

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COMPONENT 3 C112U30-1 APPLIED FIELDWORK ENQUIRY

General Comments

This report identifies the main strengths and weaknesses as shown by the small cohort of candidates who sat the November examination.

Comments on individual questions/sections

AO2 Questions

These questions expect candidates to demonstrate geographical understanding of concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes, as well as the inter-relationships between places, environments and processes. Question 3(b) required candidates explain why counter-urbanisation is happening parts of the UK. Some candidates were not clear on the differences between migration in and out of the UK as a whole and the movements of people within the UK. Some candidates were not clear on the flow direction of people in counter-urbanisation, giving reasons instead for people moving into cities.

In question 3c(iii) candidates were asked to explain why many commuters choose to use cars rather than public transport. Many candidates gained band 2 or 3 by providing breath rather than depth. Band 2 answers could have been further developed with elaboration and with a chain of reasoning to gain Band 3.

AO3 Questions

These questions ask candidates to apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues and to make judgements. In question 1a(ii) most candidates made the connection between the location characteristics of the chosen field-site and the impact this might have on the data collection and therefore results. They did this by mentioning the numbers, variety of different types of people and their motivations and experience.

In question 1(c) candidates often evaluated their data collection *method* not the data collection *sheet* or they described their fieldwork day or results. Description is not credited in these questions. In comparison to question 1(c) the second question on the paper in Part B about the candidates own fieldwork (2c) was answered with more confidence and competence, with candidates placing the answered in the context of their own fieldwork. However, some struggled to give examples of secondary data from their own fieldwork and many of the strengths and weaknesses given were general and generic to secondary data.

In question (3e) Band 4 candidates used a range of evidence and provided a range of viewpoints and reasons to argue and counter-argue their decision. Negatives of the park and ride were not addressed in as comprehensive way as positives overall, but most candidates were able to express the connections to sustainability and provide a well-structured argument.

AO4 Questions
These questions require candidates to select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings. Many of the AO4 lower traffic questions were answered well, however percentages still challenge many candidates.

In question 1b(iii) candidates were asked to provide 3 conclusions for the data in the table. Most candidates made three descriptive statements using only one type of impact for each such as "More people thought it would have a positive rather than a negative effect on the locals". These descriptive statements didn't gain any credit. A conclusive statement gained credit, that is a judgement or decision based on some reasoning about all the data in the table, such as "The *most* negative impact is for tourism" or a comparative statement about two parts of the data e.g. "most people believe that the development will have a more positive environmental impact than positive impact on tourism".

In question 2b(iii) most candidates recognised the possible limitations of asking one group of stakeholders, but there was a lack of full elaboration of the statements in most cases.