



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GEOGRAPHY A
GCSE**

SUMMER 2023

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GEOGRAPHY A

GCSE

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 1: CHANGING PHYSICAL AND HUMAN LANDSCAPES

General Comments

Once again it was encouraging to see that most of the questions were accessible to candidates of all abilities. The wide range of marks indicates that differentiation was achieved within individual questions and across all sections of the paper. The time available for completion was also appropriate and there was evidence of high-quality scripts from several different centres.

As in previous years the last question in Core Theme 2 was used to assess spelling, punctuation and the accurate use of grammar and specialist terms (SPaG). Most of the candidates achieved at least the Intermediate Band (2/3 marks) but a worrying trend is the use of words like 'gotten' and 'gonna' in formal written English.

The illegible handwriting of a minority of candidates is also a concern which can adversely affect candidate performance in the examination.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Core Theme 1: Landscapes and Physical Processes

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to correctly identify saltation as the process of transportation.
- (ii) Generally, this AO1 question was not well answered. Some candidates did not fully describe the zigzag movement of sediment along a beach. Instead, they simply named the swash and backwash.
- (iii) To gain both marks candidates needed to explain that deposition, and thus the formation of spits, can only occur in certain locations. For example, where there is a sudden change of direction in the coastline.
- (b) (i) This skills question differentiated effectively. The most common wrong answer was given as 0365 instead of the correct 6503.
- (ii) This second skills question was only fairly well answered. The best responses began by describing the meandering river and its flood plain and then comparing this area with the higher and steeper relief to the north and the south of the River Severn. Unfortunately, some students focused solely on the human features of this part of Shropshire.
- (iii) Candidates who made use of the linear scale provided were able to calculate the answer with ease. Alternatively other students understood that 1 cm on the map is equivalent to 50 000 cm (0.5 km) on the ground and showed their working out clearly. However, a significant number scored zero marks.

- (c) (i) A good proportion of candidates recognised that the general direction was East.
- (ii) Responses to this question were encouraging overall with many candidates having at least a basic understanding of why slip-off slopes form on the inside bends of meanders. The better answers explained that friction between the riverbed and the shallow water results in rivers having less energy which means that sediment is deposited.
- (d) (i) In this question most candidates were able to describe two effects of river flooding. However, some of the students did not develop their answers fully, whilst others did not name a valid or specific UK location.
- (ii) Many candidates were secure in their understanding of the benefits of soft engineering strategies. The better answers recognised that these strategies are designed to work with natural processes and are cost effective in comparison with hard engineering schemes. Weaker responses simply stated that soft engineering is better for the environment or that it is a lot cheaper.
- (iii) This was the first of the 8-mark AO3 extended writing questions. It required candidates to gather evidence from the Resource Box given. Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates did not. Instead, they focused on climate change as the only human factor which causes flooding at Tewkesbury. The best answers recognised that the River Severn has its source on high ground and that it flows over a wide flood plain where two major rivers meet. They also focused on human factors such as the growth of urban areas and their related impermeable surfaces but came to the conclusion that both factors combine to cause flooding. Most responses did achieve a Level 2 mark or above, however.

Core Theme 2: Rural-Urban Links

- (a) (i) The vast majority of candidates correctly identified Shanghai as the correct answer.
- (ii) Most candidates correctly worked out the answer as 40.95 million.
- (iii) On the whole candidates responded well to this question. Many recognised that wars are a major reason for the international movements of people and current examples were used as a development to the answer. A number of other economic, social, and environmental push and pull factors were also explained well.
- (iv) Responses to this question varied in quality with many making vague or generic references to tourism and/or trade. Examples included statements such as 'London has a number of airports' or 'London has several tourist attractions'. The better Band 2 answers had specific airport names such as Heathrow or examples of tourist attractions such as Westminster Abbey and clear links as to how the global city is connected to the rest of the world.
- (b) (i) This question was well answered with most candidates ticking the three correct responses.

- (ii) This was a fairly high scoring skills question with many candidates recognising the overall rise and the fluctuation in house prices over the twelve-month period.
 - (iii) The concept of deprivation was well understood but many of the students only gained one mark. They did not develop their answers fully with an example such as lack of jobs or lack of services.
 - (iv) Most candidates had at least a basic understanding of the problems faced by some rural areas. The best answers discussed the seasonal nature of jobs, low incomes, and infrequent public transport as well as the effects of second home ownership in rural areas. Some candidates also demonstrated depth of understanding by using specific rural locations such as the Lake District. Unfortunately, some answers focused on counter-urbanisation and there were also some misconceptions about rural areas such as poor education standards.
- (c)
- (i) On the whole this question was quite well answered with most candidates gaining at least one mark. Answers had to be in the context of sustainable communities and included recycling, specific transport developments or housing design.
 - (ii) Candidates achieving Band 3 and Band 4 marks discussed both sides of the argument successfully before coming to their final judgement. They also applied their wider geographical understanding effectively and made comparative references to other town centres/high streets in the UK. Examples included Chester, Watford, and Liverpool. Those who gained Band 2 marks were in the majority and either presented a one-sided analysis or simply used information from the Resource Box with limited appraisal.

Section B: Options

The performance of candidates was, overall, comparable in both options. Question 3a was the exception.

Theme 3: Tectonic Landscapes and Hazards

- (a) This was a low scoring AO1 knowledge question. Caldera is only one of three larger scale volcanic features which are specifically named in the specification. Too many candidates received 0 marks or did not attempt the question which was very disappointing.
- (b) Most candidates were able to attain a Band 1 mark in this question and thus demonstrated basic understanding. The Band 2 answers focused on the human factors which increased vulnerability in a LIC such as Haiti. Specific elaboration such as poverty, poor infrastructure, and a lack of disaster planning enhanced the responses.
- (c)
 - (i) This skills question scored well with most candidates gaining two marks by giving valid comments about the location of the earthquake within Alaska. Students are obviously comfortable with giving correct directions to and from places. They are also competent at working out the correct distances between two places using the linear scale provided.

- (ii) This AO3 question required candidates to interpret and analyse the resources about earthquakes in Alaska. The Band 3 and 4 responses clearly presented an argument and counterargument as to whether all tectonic zones should be protected from the risks associated with high magnitude earthquakes. They also applied their wider geographical understanding making comparative statements regarding ways of reducing the risks, other types of plate boundaries and reduced capacity to cope with earthquakes in some countries.

Theme 4: Coastal Hazards and their Management

- (a) This question scored quite well with many of the candidates gaining at least one mark for recognising that SMPs identify areas at risk and whether certain coastlines should be protected or not. Only a minority were aware that it is the responsibility of the local councils of England and Wales to prepare a plan for their section of coast.
- (b) Most candidates were able to attain a Band 1 mark in this question and thus demonstrated basic understanding. The Band 2 answers focused on the different opinions about managed retreat in a named low-lying coastline such as at Medmerry, West Sussex. Specific elaboration such as the creation of nature reserves on the one hand, and loss of productive farming land on the other hand, enhanced the responses.
- (c) (i) This skills question scored well with most candidates gaining two marks by giving valid comments about the location of Shismaref within Alaska. Students are obviously comfortable with giving correct directions to and from places. They are also competent at working out the correct distances between two places using the linear scale provided.
- (ii) This AO3 question required candidates to interpret and analyse the resources about a remote coastal settlement in Alaska. The Band 3 and 4 responses clearly presented an argument and counterargument as to whether all vulnerable coastal communities should be protected from coastal flooding and erosion in the face of rising sea levels. They also applied their wider geographical understanding making comparative statements regarding ways of reducing the risks and discussing the concept of cost-benefit.

Summary of key points

- In the questions which require one reason for 2 marks make sure that the initial statement is then developed with an elaborated statement.
- Continue to stress the importance of OS Map skills and interpretation. The responses to questions 1bi and 1bii were somewhat disappointing.
- In some 6-mark AO2 questions such as 2biv it is always advantageous to enhance the answer by referring to specific locations. In this case rural locations such as the Lake District.
- Some AO3 questions require candidates to use evidence from the resources only. Question 1diii was specific to Tewkesbury and therefore the map and photographs had to be used to focus on the physical and human factors which make the town prone to flooding.

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COMPONENT 2: ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

General Comments

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 and within each theme. In the option questions, Theme 7, Social Development proved to be the more popular choice. Most candidates attempted all questions with a good number using the additional space available; the time allocated was appropriate.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Core Theme 5: Weather, Climate and Ecosystems.

- Q.1 (a) (i) This question required selection of the two correct statements describing the graphs based on UK climate. Most candidates attempted this successfully scoring full marks and this proved to be a very accessible question.
- (ii) This follow up question asked for an alternative technique to represent the information; it proved to be less accessible with very few candidates achieving a mark here. Those that did answer the question successfully mostly identified that a choropleth map would be suitable.
- (iii) Two impacts of high-pressure hazards on people were required for this question. This was well attempted; however, some candidates did not achieve one or both marks as responses were not sufficiently specific to people. Drought for example as a stand-alone response was not sufficient as it does not indicate what the impact is. This is an example of a question where a one-word answer was unlikely to be adequate in most cases. "Drought leading to crop shortages" would have been acceptable for. Others confused high- and low-pressure systems therefore producing incorrect answers.
- (iv) This next question asked for one reason why high-pressure hazards had impacts on the environment. This was an AO2 question therefore requiring some explanation. For example, reduced plant growth due to lack of water would have scored the full 2 marks: an impact linked to a reason. Many candidates did not achieve more than 1 mark here; development by way of explanation was required for the second mark. Many offered two distinct ideas which would not allow access to the second mark in this type of question.

- (v) This question on high- and low-pressure systems in the UK proved to be a challenge for most candidates with the majority achieving marks limited to Band 1: 1 or 2 marks from the available 6. There were a few issues apparent here. The command word was “explain”, and most did not offer ideas beyond simple descriptions of high- and low-pressure weather conditions. The level of understanding of high- and low-pressure was also weak and largely incorrect in many cases. Candidates must also read questions carefully; there were a good number of responses seen which did not answer in a UK context and instead described tropical low-pressure systems. This is a challenging aspect of the specification for many, but nevertheless is in section 5.2.1, therefore candidates must have a secure knowledge and understanding of this part of the subject content.
- (vi) This question required one reason why weather conditions vary in different parts of the UK. Many successfully scored 1 out of the 2 marks here offering ideas such as latitude, altitude, and air masses but as with aiv), development of the reason was required for the second mark. For example, a typical successful response suggested that highland areas such as the Cairngorms are cooler because temperature decreases with altitude. In this style of question, the use of the word “because” is helpful in steering candidates towards a successful answer.
- (b)
 - (i) Part b moved on to examine ideas on ecosystems. The first question asked for a definition of biodiversity. Where candidates knew this, the question was answered well. Some reference to variety, range or difference was required to be awarded the mark. However, many did not have the necessary knowledge of this part of the specification and therefore found this challenging.
 - (ii) The following question asked for two ways in which human activity can have an impact on biodiversity. Whilst many identified the human activity correctly, the marks were awarded for describing the impacts not the activity. Therefore, deforestation destroys habitats as a response is correct but only worth 1 mark. Further development suggesting that species may become endangered as a result would have been required for a second mark on this point. This is another example of where reading a question carefully is important for success. In this case describing impacts not the activity was crucial to scoring well and achieving above half marks which is where many candidates found themselves on this question.
 - (iii) This question on a strategy to manage biodiversity was answered well where candidates knew the subject matter. Biodiversity as a key concept ran through part b, again stressing the importance of complete knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the specification.
- (c)
 - (i) Part c began with assessing skills (AO4). This question on OS map skills was answered well by many but some struggled with all 3 map skills. OS skills can be assessed in any context on the specification therefore deliberate practice of these skills throughout the course is important to ensure success on these questions.

- (ii) Many found this calculation question accessible, although some lost marks by not following the instruction to show working.
- (iii) This AO3 question required candidates to assess the extent to which energy production had negative impacts on the environment near Biggleswade. This proved challenging with many not scoring marks above Band 2 (3 – 4 marks). Some question specific issues limited marks here; some took a more global rather than local to Biggleswade view, and some responses had a limited focus on the environment. There was a wealth of information available which could have been used as evidence both in the resource box and on the OS extract. More general issues related to the quality of discussion presented; a clear focus on “to what extent” was required. For example, candidates could have looked at the scale of the impacts using OS map evidence, discussed short term versus longer term issues and looked at different aspects of the environment such as wildlife, birds and the landscape. Balance is also required in these answers which many candidates did address by considering both positive and negative impacts. There were some exceptional responses which scored very well and answered the question appropriately using evidence and critically evaluated the impacts.

Section B

Core Theme 6: Development and Resource Issues.

- (a)
 - (i) This first question requiring candidates to correctly identify the definition of GNI proved to be accessible for most candidates.
 - (ii) This question on comparing GNI in Brazil and the UK was also attempted successfully by many so was accessible provided the instructions in the question were followed. Where some lost a mark or two was where they had simply described the 2 lines separately rather than highlighting similarities and differences.
 - (iii) This was well attempted with most candidates suggesting an improvement to graph 2.1. However, improvements needed to relate to this graph (GNI in Brazil and the UK 1960 – 2020) rather than suggesting an alternative graphs, countries, or data. This is where many lost marks. Most successful responses suggested creating smaller year and / or GNI intervals to make the graph easier to interpret.
 - (iv) Many candidates found this question challenging with marks often not being awarded above band 1 (1 – 2 marks). Whilst many identified that there were other measures of development (largely social such as literacy rates), and / or that inequalities were not evident in economic measures, there were few who developed these ideas beyond simple statements to explain why these were limitations.
- (b)
 - (i) Part b moved on to ask questions on trade. This first question requiring matching definitions was well attempted and was answered successfully by most candidates.

- (ii) This question required two conclusions to be drawn from the map of trading partners in Brazil. This was also well attempted but some lost marks by suggesting ideas which were not evident from the map. The most common successful answer was that most regions of Brazil trade mainly with China.
 - (iii) As with aiv) above many limited their marks to Band 1 (1 – 2 marks). There were two key issues: one was the same as aiv) in that responses did not go beyond simple statements such as LICs don't earn much from primary products, without a link to development. The other issue was that many found the concept of trade and the impact on development challenging or had misunderstood, confusing trade with the impacts of MNCs.
- (c)
- (i) Part c moved on to ask questions on inequality. This question asked candidates to describe the pattern of household income. Correct answers made good use of compass directions to respond. Many referenced the coast as having high income areas which is not strictly true as the east coast has areas of medium and low income. Many lost marks in this way.
 - (ii) A reason for inequalities was required in cii). As with previous questions of this style, development of the reason was needed for the second mark, and many did not go beyond a simple statement limiting themselves to one mark. Common responses related to differences in investment in health care or education linked to inequality in health or literacy.
 - (iii) This follow up question required three social consequences of inequality which many confused with causes and so did not score well. The other common issue was that many gave economic consequences which was also not creditworthy unless qualified with a link to people. Three simple statements were required but despite this many did not score well due to misinterpreting the question.
- (d) This second AO3 question on the paper focused on the management of water supply with Rio de Janeiro as a context. Candidates were required to comment on how easily water supply could be managed based on the information provided in the resource box. Most candidates presented both sides of the argument discussing possible success or otherwise of managing demand for water. The discrimination between candidates came from the quality of argument and the ability to develop detailed chains of reasoning linked to the question to justify the response. In addition, use of evidence was key as well as the ability to critically evaluate linked to the question "how far do you agree?" For example, candidates who were able to differentiate between success in the long term versus short term and / or in different areas of Rio linked to the photograph in the resource box generally scored very well. Some limited their marks by taking their discussion in a different direction to the question. Whilst links to broader development issues are relevant, they should be used to support an answer linked to the question rather than a narrative on development issues in Brazil which is what some presented.

Section B Options

Theme 7: Social development

- (a) (i) Completion of the graph using data was the skill being assessed here. Those who attempted the question generally achieved the full two marks. However as with previous examinations, candidates often miss out this style of question and therefore limit their marks. Candidates need to be reminded that not all questions will require a written response.
- (ii) Two factors causing high rates on infant mortality were needed. This question was done well by many, but some lost marks as answers lacked focus on the question. Whilst simple statements were sufficient, this was another example of where a one-word response such as “healthcare” needed some qualification such as “poor healthcare” to be worthy of credit.
- (iii) Two reasons why social development changes over time were needed here. Each reason needed development. For example, “economic growth which enables investment in healthcare”. As with previous questions of this style, whilst candidates were correctly identifying reasons, many did not achieve more than 1 or 2 marks as they were not linked to change over time as required by the question.
- (b) Candidates were required to discuss how far they agree that Mozambique was making good progress with health care. As with previous questions of this style, many limited their marks by not developing detailed chains of reasoning linked to the question. Good answers used the evidence from the resource box to support a discussion and recognised the nuances in the situation in that there would be differences in progress in different areas of Mozambique and that progress will vary in the long and short term. Reading the wording of the question is also important here. The word “good” is a focus for the question, not merely progress in itself. Therefore, a judgement of some sort was required for a successful response.

Theme 8: Environmental Challenges.

- (a) (i) Completion of the graph using data provided was the skill being assessed. Those who attempted the question generally achieved the full two marks. However as with previous examinations, candidates often miss out this style of question and therefore limit their marks. Candidates need to be reminded that not all questions will require a written response.
- (ii) Two negative impacts of tourism on the environment were needed. This question was done well by many candidates but some lost marks as answers lacked focus on the environment or it was not clear what the impact was. Candidates need to be made aware that references to pollution need to be specific and will not be credited unless the nature of the pollution is clear.
- (iii) Two reasons why ecotourism is used in some locations were needed. Each reason needed development. For example, “ecotourism does not exploit the natural environment which means biodiversity is preserved”. As with previous questions of this style, whilst candidates were correctly identifying reasons, many did not achieve more than 1 or 2 marks as they were not linked to why ecotourism is used. Some candidates offered responses which related to tourism in general; to be creditworthy, ideas needed to be related to ecotourism.

- (b) Candidates were required to discuss how far they agree that Mozambique was making good progress with restoring damaged environments and habitats. As with previous questions of this style, many limited their marks here by not developing detailed chains of reasoning linked to the question. Good answers here used the evidence from the resource box to support a discussion and recognised the nuances in the situation in that there would be differences in progress in the long and short term and with different aspects of restoration. Reading the wording of the question is also important here. The word “good” is a focus for the question, not merely progress in itself. Therefore, a judgement of some sort was required for a successful response.

Summary of key points

1. Candidates and centres need to make sure there is complete coverage and revision of all parts of the specification, even those perceived to be more challenging such as detailed understanding of high- and low-pressure systems.
2. In AO2 questions, (give one reason, or explain why as command words for example), candidates need to go beyond simple statements and develop ideas in detail linked to the question.
3. Candidates must read all parts of the examination paper carefully and take care not to miss out questions such as calculations and completing graphs, and the potential for valuable marks.
4. Taking note of precise wording of and nuances in the question is essential for success in 8-mark AO3 questions. For example, candidates need to consider whether a particular location focus is required or whether discussion more broadly is expected. Also, there may be nuances in the question which require a value judgement such as “good” progress as in Theme 7 and 8 in this examination series.
5. Developing detailed chains of reasoning linked to the question are key in scoring well on more extended high tariff AO2 and AO3 questions.

GEOGRAPHY A

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COMPONENT 3: APPLIED FIELDWORK ENQUIRY

General Comments

Part A was focused on using a transect in fieldwork and contextualised in a coastal location. Part B was focused on investigating inequality in fieldwork, contextualized using an environmental quality survey in York. Part C continued this area of focus looking at the most sustainable way to manage inequality in the UK

Generally, an accessible paper across the ability range, with many candidates scoring higher marks than previously, showing a full use of the 76 marks available, with a slightly higher mean mark over the cohort.

Many questions had high facility factors, meaning that many candidates scored full marks on these questions, although these were comparable to 2019 pre-Covid. Questions 1aii, 1dii, 2c, 3a and 3ci being the least demanding.

The length of the paper seemed appropriate with nearly all candidates providing an answer to the 12-marker end question.

There was some evidence of high-quality scripts, and it was indicated that many candidates showed evidence of completing geographical enquiry outside the classroom again. It was clear where candidates had been immersed in the fieldwork, as they gave specific and detailed exemplification of their answers enabling access to the higher marks.

AO4 questions were overall answered well, but many candidates failed to complete the kite diagram and pie chart, however they were able to complete the sketch graph well, showing that they can visually display data graphically.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Part A: Investigating the use of transects in fieldwork

- Q.1 (a) (i) AO4 question, asking candidates to use their map skills to interpret the scale on the map to correctly identify the length of the transect. Most candidates answered this correctly, with nearly all candidates attempting the question. Candidates ticking more boxes than were asked for were marked incorrect, even one tick was in the correct box. This is standard marking practice on all tick box questions.
- (ii) AO4 question asking candidates to use their map skills to interpret the orientation of the map and identify the direction of the transect. Again, nearly all candidates attempted the question, with most candidates answering this correctly, with over 80% obtaining the correct answer.

- (iii) AO4 question asking the candidates for a 6-figure grid reference of the start of the transect. Most candidates attempted this question, but not as many as expected candidates answered this question correctly, some candidates wrote a 4-figure grid reference instead, scoring no credit. Answers accepted included one up or down on the 3rd and 6th digit, to account for the placement of the letter A in the map, but still many candidates were either 'out' by a few on the last digit or had the eastings and northings mixed up.
 - (iv) AO4 questions asking the candidate to use their mathematical skills to estimate an area shown on the map. The demand of this question was higher than the previous three and this showed in the relative numbers of candidates offering the correct answer, with more candidates answering incorrectly, however nearly all candidates did attempt this question.
- (b) AO3 question asking the candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of displaying fieldwork locations to evaluate a sketch map. Generally, an accessible question, which differentiated well, with most candidates aware of what they were expected to do. A few candidates responded with "drawn badly / not easy to read", this was not credited unless exemplified by referring directly to the map. Some candidates described the map rather than explaining its strengths and weaknesses. Mid-achieving candidates scored on the strength, but not on the weakness.
- (c) AO3 question asking candidates to evaluate systematic sampling in the context of a transect along a beach. Two marks available, one for general advantage of systematic sampling in this context and one for the development / elaboration of this. Some candidates understood the principle behind sampling generally and many were able to pick out the specific features of systematic sampling, however some candidates just repeated the question in their answers and a few did not understand sampling as a concept. Some candidates' answers were too brief to attract credit e.g., "accurate". The most common mark was one where candidates can identify an advantage, commonly 'equal intervals' or 'quick to find intervals', but then not have made an elaboration point to specify further the specific advantage of this.
- (d) (i) AO4 question asking candidates to complete a kite diagram using the given information in the table. This question had a high non-attempt rate, nearly 30%, suggesting candidates are not familiar with kite diagrams. Some candidates who maybe hadn't seen kite diagrams before, may have used the data in the table to check how the graph had been drawn (by looking at the plotting of one sample point for instance) before adding their points and line. This is a suitable way to check how an unfamiliar graph works, before completing it. Most wrong answers plotted 20 on both sides, as opposed to 10. Those candidates that did complete the diagram usually scored the full two marks.
- (ii) AO3 question asking candidates to use the data to make judgements. Most candidates selected the two correct answers, with most of the rest selecting one of the right answers.

- (e) (i) AO3 question about the candidates own fieldwork, asking about them to evaluate using a transect to collect their data. Historically candidates' ability to turn their understanding of fieldwork into exam answers has often been the most challenging part of the exam for them and this is the first year since the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions that these questions have returned to Component 3. There were some candidates who responded to these questions stating that they had not gone on any fieldwork. 1(e) (i) was attempted by more candidates than 1 (e) (ii). Many candidates have written similar responses as for question 1(c) with the most common responses including 'quick to do', 'comparison of results' and 'can see changes', which are creditable for 1 mark. However, there were some answers among the cohort which showed some candidates had a clear understanding of transects.
- (ii) AO3 question about the candidates own transect fieldwork, asking them to explain the strengths of their presentation method. Some candidates were able to name one (sometimes two) presentation methods, give examples of the types of data shown and relate this to strengths given in the questions. Some candidates found the question inaccessible, struggling to highlight the presentation method aspect of the question, often confusing collection with presentation. Band 2 responses used examples directly from the candidate's own fieldwork, including being able to clearly compare transect data from different points, describe how their graphs show lots of different data variables all at once, or the use of specific location information to be able to interpret their graphs within context. Band 1 responses quoted the question text in a general answer or simply describe their presentation method or how they completed their transect. Some candidates respond in the future tense / hypothetical sense, highlighting the possibility that they were not that familiar with any fieldwork and write-up that they had done.

Part B: Investigating Inequality

- Q.2 (a) AO3 application question, asking candidates to consider the theme of inequality and consider what enquiry questions would be appropriately chosen in York. This question was answered well, with almost all candidates gaining 1 or more marks and nearly all candidates attempting the question.
- (b) (i) & (ii) AO4 questions, asking candidates to complete the environmental quality survey and to adapt the survey. 2(b)(i) was answered correctly by many candidates, but it was clear that some candidates were unfamiliar with this class of survey. The demand and subsequent difficulty of 2(b)(ii) was high, with relatively rare responses as per the mark scheme. The marking also credited statements about the relative impacts of graffiti and litter, if it was clear that the candidate was referring to these two aspects in their statement.

- (c) AO4 question asking candidates to use their skills to present the transect information in a sketch graph. Most candidates drew a well-drawn and plotted scatter graph, scoring 4 marks. Some candidates opted for a bar-graph which was also credited within the mark scheme. It is noticeable that candidates overall were less likely to complete the pie graph and kite diagram, but well more likely to be able to sketch a graph displaying the data in this question.
- (d) AO3 question asking candidates to use their knowledge and understanding of enquiry-based terminology to match statements and terms. Nearly all candidates attempted this question, most selecting the correct terms, with the mean mark near 2 marks.
- (e)
 - (i) The second set of questions relating to the candidates own fieldwork, this time on researching inequality. Candidates are asked one reason why their data collection was reliable. Some candidates did not attempt this question, the ones that did produced some very reasonable answers, they clearly understood the ideas of repeatability of methods and the reproducibility of the results. Many candidates did not give responses specific to their own fieldwork experiences, possibly suggesting that some candidates were not that familiar with the fieldwork that they had done. Some responses focused on the use of primary data (often without qualification), large sample sizes from using whole class data and the use of systematic sampling to remove bias. Surprisingly few candidates directly referred to the concept of repeatability to increase reliability. Some candidates described their data collection methods. There is potential here for further understanding of the enquiry process, in terms of accuracy of data, reliability of results and validity of conclusions, using examples from the candidates own fieldwork to illustrate this.
 - (ii) Candidates are asked to evaluate their own fieldwork conclusions; a question with a high degree of difficulty, in which many candidates struggled to understand the difference between strength and limitation in relation to their conclusions, many also just described their conclusions. The candidates that did answer well, exemplified their answers with details from their own conclusions and data.

Candidates need to be able to evaluate all aspects of their fieldwork within the enquiry cycle. Evaluation includes the weighing up (for example the strengths and limitations) of information to come to considered response. It could also include the drawing together of disparate threads of an argument or issue.

Part C: The wider UK dimension

- Q.3 (a) AO4 question asking candidates to use their interpretation skills to select three correct statements based on two graphs. Most candidates answered this successfully with full marks and nearly all candidates answered this question.

- (b)
 - (i) AO2 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. This is an AO2.1 question asking candidates to use their knowledge to explain why people might move from rural to urban areas of the UK. This question was accessible to all levels of candidates, so differentiated well between the higher and lower scoring candidates. A significant number of candidates however, seemed to discuss movement from urban to rural areas. Most Band 3 responses scored on the range and breadth of their reasons as opposed to the depth of a couple of reasons, with only a small number including extended chains of reasoning.
 - (ii) AO2.2 follow-on question asking candidates to explain why rural to urban migration has impacts in urban areas. Some candidates were not specific in their answers to this question, giving general statements such as “creates problems”, but many candidates score well, with a mean mark of just over 2 marks.
- (c)
 - (i) AO4 question asking candidates to complete a pie graph. Ideally candidates would be expected to continue the sequencing of the table and to complete the housing next to the crime section and environment next to the income section, if this didn't happen candidates weren't penalised. There was one mark for the line drawn correctly and one for the shading. Some candidates missed out on the shading mark due to the lines not being vertical i.e., they were often drawn as spokes.
 - (ii) Follow-on AO4 question asking candidates to say why a pie chart is suitable to present this data. Credit was not given for “easy to read / visually clear” unless qualification was given.
- (d)
 - (i) AO4 question asking candidates to name a suitable alternative graph for some data displayed as a pictogram. Many candidates answered this correctly.
 - (ii) AO4 following on asking candidates to state why their chosen graph is suitable. No credit given for easy to draw and understand, as this is given in the question.
 - (iii) AO2.2 question asking candidates about their understanding of deprivation and why having a minimum wage could reduce this. This question differentiated well, with many candidates providing evidence of understanding the link between available money and using this to action personal choice related to equality.
- (e) AO4 question asking candidates to use their graphical skills to interpret a graph, making a comparison. Looking for similarities and/or differences between 2019 and 2020. Many candidates used comparison words e.g., however, most, but only, however some candidates just described the data for both years, without making a comparison. Full answers compared total numbers between years, and distribution of monthly data. Many candidates either scored 4 marks (comparative) or 1 mark (descriptive).

- (f) AO3 question worth 12 marks, with 4 additional marks for SPaG. This question asked candidates to interpret information on three strategies to reduce inequalities, then to analyse these and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses, in relation to sustainability. Then to reach a justifiable decision on which they consider to be the *most* sustainable option to reduce inequality in the UK.

Candidates generally used the resource well and drew on their wider geographical understanding, but many did not use the sustainability thread to justify their decision, focusing instead on the inequality aspect. Many excellent answers were short, focused and justified, many weaker answers were longer, copied and described the resource folder.

SPaG marks were overall less this year than others, perhaps a consequent of the Covid-19 period. A firm grasp on high quality geographical terminology does underpins evaluative and critical thinking.

Candidates who were working in Band 1, were able to use the resources, although mainly descriptively, to support their decisions. Some candidates did not come to a decision.

Most candidates scoring at Band 2 and Band 3 have written about at least two of the schemes, have referred to the positives of their chosen scheme, and while acknowledging the positives of one or more other schemes, have generally referred to the negative points of the scheme not chosen. Candidates scoring band 2 and Band 3 have been general in their responses, rarely referring to specific case studies, however a greater proportion have discussed the concept of environmental and/or economic sustainability of the schemes.

Candidates scoring within Band 4 have generally written about each scheme in turn, detailing both positives and negatives, have evaluated within the context of short term and long term, and have drawn upon wider geographical knowledge, often referring to UK based urban case studies to reinforce their argument.

Many candidates used signposting to guide the reader through their answers, using aspects such as elements from the Egan wheel, three legs of sustainability, short / long term, local to UK wide, argument and counter arguments. Some candidates used Point, Evidence Explanation successfully.

Aspects to consider would be:

Interpret: information in the resource file and the exam paper.

Analyse: the information to find patterns and connections using wider geographical knowledge.

Evaluate: then weigh up this information / patterns and connections to make a

Judgement: based on a chain of reasoning using the evidence.

Try to create chains of reasoning as part of your justification.

Explore positives and negatives in a balanced way.

Consider alternative geographical futures.

Summary of key points

Candidates handwriting is a continuing challenge for examiners, a black pen working well would aid the scanning process to secure a readable script for candidates who are struggling with legible handwriting.

Prepare candidates for completing graphs / diagrams, by showing them examples from previous exam papers, and coaching them in how to use data given to work out how to complete the graph if they are not familiar with it.

Use a range of stimulus material to enable candidate to drawn differing opinions to their own initial opinions, improving their ability to justify differing sides of arguments, this will help them deal with innate bias, so help provide balanced arguments to AO3 final 12-mark question.

Ensure candidates are aware of the differences between using the resources to write descriptive answers, rather than reasoning or explanation, using the resources as evidence. This will help them write answers that are elaborated and for the higher banded questions, more complex and sophisticated answers.

Each individual question targets only one assessment objective. AO1 is not assessed on this component, therefore description is not creditable on AO2 or AO3 questions.

There is potential for further use of improved geographical terminology to aid students critical and evaluative thinking.



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