GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

GCSE (NEW)
GEOGRAPHY

SUMMER 2018

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UNIT 1 CHANGING PHYSICAL AND HUMAN LANDSCAPES

This was the first Unit 1 examination of the new specification. Aside from some new content, the most significant change in the new specification is the new emphasis on specific assessment objectives (AOs) for each individual item or sub-question targeting just one AO and with each full question containing a predetermined balance of AOs within its structure. Linked closely to this is a much greater importance being placed on AO2, where candidates are required to apply their knowledge and understanding in Geography to interpret, analyse and evaluate information and issues and to make judgements. The weighting of AO2 has been increased to 35% of the total assessment in the paper, with most of these questions carrying higher mark tariffs and requiring candidates to write in extended prose. The performance of candidates in this first examination has confirmed the expectation that they would find this the most challenging aspect of the examination and, as expected, the AO2 questions tended to be very good discriminators within the examination. That said, however, there were many examples of good responses to AO2 questions and nearly all candidates were able to make a reasonable attempt and earn some marks in at least the lower bands of the mark scheme for these questions. AO2 is clearly an area of the examination where candidates can improve their performance in future years but there were some positive and encouraging signs that many had been well prepared for this and were able to access the higher bands.

Another change in the structure of the assessment has seen an increase in the level of challenge for some of the questions targeting AO3, Geographical Skills, where there is a requirement for the assessment of specific mathematical and statistical skills, as set out in appendix A of the specification. Some of these questions require candidates to perform calculations and to show their workings and although this was done quite well in this paper, it is worth bearing in mind that there is a range of more challenging techniques in appendix A which teachers will need to ensure coverage of and which will appear in future examinations in the next few years.

The final major change from the previous specification is the removal of tiered papers and, on the whole, it was felt that the Unit 1 paper performed well, proving to be accessible to nearly all candidates, enabling the weaker ones to not only demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills but also to achieve marks in the more challenging AO2 questions. Indeed, there were no questions in the paper that were found to be universally difficult or where large numbers of candidates failed to achieve marks. At the other end of the ability spectrum, many of the more able candidates seized the opportunity to write impressive and often quite sophisticated responses to the higher tariff questions which enabled examiners to award marks based on the full range allocated in the mark scheme.

Finally, in terms of the optional questions 3 and 4, there was approximately a 60:40 split in favour of candidates answering question 3, Tectonic Landscapes and Hazards over question 4, Coastal Hazards and their Management, although for some reason, this was closer to 80:20 in Welsh medium centres. Overall, the performance in the options was slightly better for those candidates choosing question 3 than question 4 with higher mean marks recorded in all items except for item (aii) where describing hard engineering strategies at the coast proved to be more accessible than features of a stratovolcano.

AO1.1 – Knowledge

AO1.1 questions tend to carry a lower mark tariff and assess candidates at the lower end of the difficulty incline. In nearly all cases, the mean mark for AO1.1 questions was greater than half the total allocated marks which would suggest that on the whole, these were found to be fairly accessible. In Q1b(ii), the majority of candidates wrote about mountainous landscapes and the most common impact described was that of footpath erosion, closely followed by litter. Where candidates lost marks, it tended to be for insufficient development of the response to satisfy the command of 'describe one' in the question. Many candidates successfully named an impact and then either listed others or failed to adequately describe their initial impact. Although not awarded credit in itself, nearly all candidates identified a chosen landscape in which to describe the impact either by type of landscape or a place name such as Snowdonia. Candidates who did not do this were unable to achieve full marks for their description.

There were many excellent responses to Q1d(i) with most candidates able to competently describe the process of hydraulic action in rivers and there was an equally strong response to Q2a(iv) where a good knowledge of the impact of an ageing population in the UK was evident with candidates describing a range of economic, social and health-related challenges, even though it often elicited a somewhat stereotypical view of the elderly in our population.

As stated above, the only question where knowledge was slightly less secure, was in Q3a(ii) for those candidates who had chosen the Tectonic Landscapes and Hazards option. Some were unable to fully describe two features of a stratovolcano as competently as those who chose the Coastal Hazards and their Management option. Despite many good responses which described either the shape, composition, type of plate boundary or specific hazards related to this feature, the equivalent item in Qu4 where they were asked to describe hard engineering strategies saw higher marks awarded for many candidates.

AO1.2 – Understanding

Nearly all of the AO1.2 questions carry a higher mark tariff and generally require candidates to 'explain why' rather than to describe or list and as such, place greater cognitive demands on them. They are asked to make connections between factors and to link causes and effects and these questions proved to be good discriminators within the examination.
It is important for candidates to understand the command word of 'explain' as they must try to make these connections in order to access the higher bands of the mark scheme.

Q1(d)(ii) asked candidates to make the link between river processes and geology to explain the formation of a waterfall. The mean mark for the question was comfortably in the middle band of the mark scheme which shows that the majority of candidates were able to demonstrate some understanding of the formation of waterfall. Most were able to explain that waterfalls result from bands of hard and soft rock which are differentially eroded by abrasion and hydraulic action but responses often tended to be a little superficial in explaining the links between the geology and processes and lacked detail in the explanation or were imbalanced in that they focussed on one or other of the two variables. The many responses which showed good understanding were able to make the link and demonstrate how, for example, hydraulic action in the plunge pool is able to erode the softer rock more easily because of the high energy of the water flowing off the cap rock or how fragments of the collapsed hard cap rock are used in the process of abrasion to undercut the soft rock in the back wall to aid the retreat of the waterfall. It is this greater sophistication in the ability to explain linkages which enables the more able candidates to score higher marks and those who remained in the middle band tended to regurgitate prepared explanations of waterfall formation without fully answering the question. The vast majority of candidates accepted the

invitation to use a diagram and this clearly helped their thinking and the explanation but it should be noted that this was not a requirement and several candidates achieved full marks without the use of a diagram. The move to single AOs for each question meant that there was no credit awarded in the mark scheme for the diagram itself, except where it supported understanding.

Candidates found Q2(b)(iii) slightly more demanding but a great many were also able to score marks in the middle band demonstrating some understanding of the reasons for declining service provision in rural areas of Wales. Again, most candidates were able to access the middle band of the mark scheme and tended to link service decline to increasing importance of the urban area but their responses often lacked depth and detail and only gave partial explanation. The more able candidates who gave answers in the top band, and there were many of these, often took the hint provided in the previous question and linked the issue to the urban-rural continuum with the increasing sphere of influence of urban areas and the resulting concentration of services in these. They also linked the issue to counter-urbanisation and the rise in commuting and second home ownership whereby daytime populations in rural areas are reduced leading to a decline in demand for services in the these areas making them less viable. As such, candidates were able to create chains of reasoning to enable them to provide full and detailed explanations which were often quite sophisticated.

These points are also applicable to questions 3(b)(iii) and 4(b)(iii) where candidates had to demonstrate understanding of the relationship between the level of development and the vulnerability of people to a moderate earthquake and coastal flooding respectively. Again, many candidates made the link and showed some understanding of the relationship between wealth and vulnerability but tended to miss the opportunity to fully explain why and access the top band. Most made basic reference to quality of building design and structure and levels of preparation between more and less developed countries using qualitative terms like ‘better’ and ‘poorer’ but were unable to go beyond this and demonstrate why this leads to varying impacts. The more able candidates were able to refer to different types of building design or specific strategies which illustrate why people are often safer in wealthier countries and conversely, to the types of construction materials used in poorer communities and often the lack of regulations which make them more vulnerable in earthquakes or flood events. Many candidates achieved this through using specific examples to give a place context to their understanding, but again, even where this clearly helped them to construct a coherent answer it should be stressed that this was not a requirement and many achieved the top band without this.

AO2 – Application

As expected, this assessment objective presented the greatest challenge for candidates and provided effective discrimination between candidates who achieved the higher and lower marks. AO2 requires them to apply their knowledge and understanding of geography to often unfamiliar contexts and it should be noted that there are four strands to this, all of which were assessed in different items in the examination and this will be the pattern in future years. Candidates must interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues and make judgements and each of these demonstrates quite sophisticated thinking skills and cognitive abilities at the higher levels of mark schemes in these questions. It was pleasing to see that many candidates were well prepared for these questions and performed well in them with many examples of excellent work in the examination but it remains the area where teachers can most focus their efforts to support their pupils in improving their performance in future years.

Q1(b)(i) asked candidates to use their knowledge and understanding of landscapes to analyse a photograph and describe the distinctive features of the landscape shown. It should be noted that there is no right or wrong answer in these circumstances and the specification requires candidates to appreciate aspects such as land-use, culture, geology or vegetation in analysing landscapes. Only three marks were available for the question so candidates who focussed on any one of these aspects were able to access the upper band of the mark scheme and a great many were able to do so. For example, candidates described the landscape as agricultural, referring to sheep grazing and rough pasture and a few described the limitations of the area for farming. Some were able to suggest that the field behind the dry stone wall had been improved in some way as shown by the darker colour of the grass. Others focussed on the cultural aspect by describing the area as rural or remote with old, traditional housing in the village with some suggesting that it had been built there because of the shelter afforded by the hill behind. There were also many descriptions of the vegetation as heather and moorland. Candidates who simply listed features from the photograph without attempting to link them together or to suggest how they were distinctive still gained marks in the lower band.

Q1(c)(iii) required candidates to evaluate strategies for managing landscapes in Wales. Good evaluation requires an appreciation of advantages and disadvantages of one strategy or an ability to compare two or more strategies against each other. Sadly, there were few examples of where candidates were able to do this and consequently, a great many answers were bunched in the middle band of the mark scheme because they described one or more strategies, often quite well, but failed to provide evaluation of this nature. Most were content to simply describe a strategy and suggest how or why it would help to manage a landscape but there was no attempt to suggest any disadvantages with it or to compare it with another. Most candidates chose to write about fairly simple strategies such as providing litter bins, reinforcing pathways or they developed the example in the resource of providing effective signage. In many ways, the selection of the actual strategy is irrelevant because the marks are being awarded for the ability to use evidence from knowledge and understanding of the strategy chosen to evaluate the extent to which it might be effective.

Q2(c)(ii) was probably the most challenging question in the examination and it subsequently carried the highest mark tariff. It was also linked to the assessment of the accuracy of candidates' writing. This question required them to make a judgement based on evidence provided in the resource and from their wider geographical knowledge and understanding, as to whether all global cities faced the same challenges. It was pleasing to see that most candidates used the resources quite effectively and compared London and Mumbai in terms of the issue of housing provision and homelessness and the majority identified that although the problems are similar, there is a great difference in terms of scale between the two cities. A great many candidates were able to explore both sides of the argument and eventually come to a conclusion as to whether or not they agreed with the statement, which showed that they had been effectively prepared for this type of question by their teachers and it was more the amount of detail, the quality of elaboration and the level of sophistication of the argument that held them back in the lower bands of the mark scheme. This was to be expected in this type of question on an un-tiered paper and as such, the question proved to be a good discriminator. However, there were some very good examples where candidates were able to analyse and evaluate the resources but also make reference to further challenges faced in global cities, such as employment, picking up the hint provided in the previous question on the informal economy, transport issues and the challenges faced in many global cities with dealing with excessive migration and reducing poverty and deprivation.

Questions 3(a)(iii) and 4(a)(iii) asked candidates to analyse information in a map to suggest why people are vulnerable to pyroclastic flows and coastal flooding respectively. Beyond having a basic understanding of the nature of these two hazards, there are no marks

awarded for description of them and candidates were required to look at the map and identify reasons why the people of Naples and Kingston-upon-Hull are more vulnerable. In both cases, it was an issue of proximity to the hazard and topography. Candidates who achieved marks in the top bands were able to explain that the pyroclastic flow would travel quickly down the steep sides of Mount Vesuvius but also that Naples is situated in lower land between Quarto and the volcano which would funnel the flow into the city. In the case of Hull, the key points include the low level of the land and the fact that coastal flooding would funnel up the Humber estuary into the city. There were, however, quite a few candidates who chose to focus on river flooding here, despite the fact that the question clearly asked about coastal flooding.

Finally questions 3(c) and 4(c) required candidates to draw inference from a photograph. Many responses were of a quite general nature describing the impacts of earthquakes or coastal storms which could be applicable anywhere but the many better responses picked up specific features of the photograph to ascribe meaning, and infer impacts within the context of the places shown.

AO3 – Skills

Generally, these questions were accessible to the majority of candidates. Most were able to demonstrate good map skills by identifying the correct grid reference, accurately measuring distance and identifying contour patterns to describe relief in question 1. There was also a generally good response to the new style of question based on Appendix A of the specification and it was pleasing that nearly all candidates were able to select and give a simple justification regarding the most appropriate type of graph to represent the data shown in Q1(c). Where they were asked to perform a calculation as in Q3(b)(ii) and Q4(b)(ii), many showed good mathematical skills and demonstrated their working although there was a slightly better response in Q3 where they were more comfortable in performing a simple step calculation to work out the difference in the log scale and associated increase in earthquake shaking than they were in carrying out a simple division to calculate the frequency of Category 5 storms in the USA.

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UNIT 2 ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The change in weighting of the AO components of the new GCSE is an important point to emphasise to centres, especially AO2 (being 35%). Application style questions were used in this paper as 2, 3, 4 and 6 mark questions. Many candidates had some difficulty in accessing marks at the higher bands.

The examination proved an effective test of knowledge, understanding, application of knowledge and understanding and skills. Examination technique, as usual, proved crucial to success. Performance was good, and reasonably consistent across all questions, with the strongest responses for the Optional Themes 3 and 4.

AO1.1 Knowledge

AO1.1 knowledge questions are worth 15% of the overall assessment weighting. These questions carried a lower mark tariff (1-3 marks) compared to other questions. There were some areas where this was a strength, in particular, Q3a(i) and Q4a(i) in which candidates were required to define two key terms.

However, many responses to other AO1.1 questions failed to score maximum marks. For example, in Q2a(ii) a significant number of candidates could not give two limitations of using GDP as a measure of economic development with a lot of blank answers or 'inaccurate guessing' seen. This indicated a lack of detailed knowledge in this area which is clearly in the specification on page 17 - 'How national wealth (for example, GNI, GDP) is used as a comparative measure of development and why this evidence of development has limitations'.

In Q3b(i) relatively few candidates could give three factors that lead to a change in birth rates, although most could give one. In Q2a(iii) candidates were required to complete a paragraph on GDP. The majority of candidates managed to complete at least 2/3 responses correctly.

AO1.2 Understanding

AO1.2 questions are worth 25% of the overall assessment weighting. These questions carried a mark tariff between 2 - 8 marks. These questions focused on assessing candidates' understanding of processes, places and environments and proved to be a good differentiator.

For questions with a mark tariff of 2, the majority of candidates were able to score at least one mark. However candidates found Q1c(iii) particularly difficult, with only a limited number of candidates able to score full marks. In this question candidates were required to give one reason why the intensity of storms may increase due to climate change. Some candidates were able to give a basic reason - the majority of answers included reference to temperature, rather than specific sea or air temperature, which therefore failed to gain credit. A high proportion of the candidates that did give a valid reason could not explain why this reason increases the intensity of storms.

In the 4 mark questions, such as Q1a(iv), Q3c(iii) and Q4c(ii), many candidates failed to gain full marks since responses gave simple statements and did not demonstrate the understanding necessary for a Band 2 response. The majority of candidates provided responses which were at the top of Band 1 (2 marks).

In Q1a(iv) candidates were required to explain why ice cores are evidence of climate change. A number of candidates were not sure what ice cores were. Many wrote about ice cores melting which could show global warming, confusing them with glacial retreat. These responses were unworthy of credit. The majority of candidates achieved Band 1 (2 marks) for this question. The majority of these candidates talked about gases being trapped within ice cores, but failed to make a link between the composition of the ice core and a change in climate which is important in understanding the inter-relationships. By doing so, this would have allowed candidates to achieve Band 2 marks.

Performance in the comparable questions i.e. Q3c(iii) and Q4c(ii) were answered equally well. Again, most candidates achieved the top of Band 1 for their responses. For Q3c(iii) candidates were asked to explain why it is difficult to increase the percentage of girls in education in sub-Saharan Africa. Many candidates spoke in general terms about education, not referring to girls specifically. Better answers showed a clear link between the factor/s and why that prevents education of girls in sub-Saharan Africa.

For Q4c(ii) there were some excellent answers which addressed the source of emissions and why it was difficult for governments, both nationally and internationally to reduce emissions. However, many candidates only gave basic reasons as to why it is difficult for governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Candidates failed to make a link between the factor and why that prevents reduction. Candidates also talked about more local factors rather than difficulties that governments had in working together to deal with a global issue.

Q2c(iv) was worth a total of 11 marks, including the 3 marks for writing accurately. The question required candidates to explain why an increase in population and agricultural change would lead to an increasing demand for water. It was pleasing to see that a high proportion of candidates used the resources in order to help them with their answer. However, most responses lacked the thorough understanding, detail and elaboration of explanation in order to achieve the higher band marks. Many wrote in general terms about more people needing more water to survive and more plants needing to be watered. Most answers seemed to be unbalanced with more identifying why population growth led to an increasing demand for water. The most common answers seen referred to an increasing need for water for washing, cooking and other domestic uses. Agricultural change was not as well answered. Candidates should consider briefly planning answers to ensure that the response has purpose, is organised, logically structured and demonstrates the thorough understanding needed for the higher banded marks. The accuracy of writing was reasonably good, most answers showed considerable accuracy and scored 2 marks. Centres need to encourage candidates to show a wider range of specialist terms, as well as leaving time to do a read through to check their accuracy of writing.

AO2 Application of Knowledge and Understanding

AO2 questions have seen the biggest change in weighting in the new GCSE course – now worth 35% of the overall assessment weighting. Applications style questions were used in this paper as 2,3,4 and 6 mark questions. These types of questions could be up to 8 marks in future series. Many candidates had some difficulty in accessing marks at the higher bands when being assessed on the application of knowledge and understanding in unfamiliar contexts. However, it was pleasing to see that lower ability candidates were able to access

marks regularly. Through limited use of the resources provided they were able to access Band 1 and with some application Band 2 marks.

Most AO2 questions are accompanied by resources and this will continue for higher tariff AO2 questions in future series. Many candidates made good use of these resources in their answers. However, in Q1d(ii) and Q2d, many candidates merely copied out the resources without **applying** their knowledge and understanding to these resources. Most candidates did make a judgement; however, this was often a quick comment e.g. 'Hurricane Matthew had a devastating effect …'. The majority of candidates then did not use the resources to show the extent of agreement. The best rewarded answers were those that qualified why, often by summarising the key impacts. Making decisions and applying understanding to evidence from resources again is one of the major changes in the new specification. Centres need to spend time practising these styles of questions and showing candidates how to develop new answers in order to get into the higher bands.

Q2(b) required candidates to suggest one way in which the photograph shows that China is closing the development gap. Most candidates identified Toys 'r' Us and McDonalds as being MNCs, but the majority of candidates could not develop this and suggest how the introduction of these companies was closing the development gap.

Q3c(i) and Q4c(i) were both well answered questions. Many candidates gained full marks for these questions. Candidates were able to identify consequences from the photographs and elaborate on this for a second mark.

In Q3a(iv) and Q4a(iv) candidates did well in making links and identifying patterns. Candidates were able to analyse some of the interrelationships between indicators. Some good connections were used to good effect here. However, few candidates analysed the trends in enough detail in order to reach the higher band marks. The mark scheme was opened up to allow candidates to get to higher bands by allowing some suggestions of why there are links. However, for future series, analysis should focus detailed scrutiny and on making links and connections. Some candidates may also consider anomalies or outliers in their analysis. Reasons for these links/patterns will not be required. Time should be taken to read command words such as "analyse" and "to what extent" carefully to achieve a Band 3 response.

AO3 Skills

AO3 Skills questions are worth 25% of the overall assessment weighting. Generally, this is an area of strength. Candidates were reasonably secure in most of the skill areas assessed which included Q1a(i) - reading a line graph, Q1c(i) - describing trends of a bar graph, Q2a(i) - calculating the range, Q3a(ii) and Q4a(ii) - calculating the median and Q3c(i) and Q4(b) - calculating the percentage. However, some candidates failed to score both marks by not including their clear workings out in questions such as Q1c(ii) and Q2a(ii). Q2c(i) was quite a poorly answered question as many candidates could not identify a choropleth map. Some candidates did not even attempt this question.

Question 2c(ii) proved challenging to many candidates. Candidates were asked to suggest how the technique used to display data could be improved. Most candidates could give one way the map could be adapted; however, few candidates could give more than one way. There are equally challenging elements of skills on the specification that may come up in future series.

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UNIT 3 FIELDWORK ENQUIRY

This was the first year of the new Unit 3 NEA assessment and there were many positives to highlight. The best examples included;

- Well organised and presented scripts, including the use of additional 'portfolio' information.
- Clear and specific reference to their own investigations and processed this using quantitative or qualitative statements.
- Selected suitable graphical techniques and completed them well.
- Showed understanding by offering plausible reasons for the patterns or trends that had been observed.

There were also areas that centres should consider for further improvement. These include;

- Some centres have not helped candidates through poor organisation and collation of the answer booklet, in particular the inclusion of additional information from their own investigations.
- In too many cases a table of data was not included which created problems for the assessment of an accurate and complete graph. In others, candidates must be careful to only include data which is specific to the graph they are going to produce.
- Graphs or maps where required should be drawn on the pages provided in the answer booklet.
- Centres would benefit from looking at specifics of graphical techniques using the SAC method (suitable, accurate and completed) and the SALT method (scale, axis, labels and title).
- Candidates need to pay more attention to the command words within each question so that they use their portfolio with more thought and interpret what they have learnt within the context of the question asked and not copy or regurgitate notes without thought. Assessment at higher bands clearly differentiated between 'general' responses and those which included more 'specific' information.
- Candidates must relate strengths and weaknesses of their data techniques and not generalise comments. For example, 'a strength of a pie chart is it was simple to look at.'

Q1(a) - AO1.2 : 4 marks

This was generally well answered and most candidates achieved Band 2 marks. Better candidates were able to link their answers to specifics from their fieldwork, often with exemplification of what they had done during the fieldwork.

Nearly all candidates used reliability of data or calculating averages as reasons but some failed to relate this generic response to the question. Flows of wind, river velocity, traffic, or pedestrians all fluctuate over time and vary spatially. Many candidates were able to make this link but fewer were then able to provide a reason using their own fieldwork experience. For example, river discharge increases downstream because the size of the catchment area increases as more tributaries join the main river.

Q1(b) - AO2 : 6 marks

The quality of responses to this question was varied. The majority of candidates discussed systematic sampling and better candidates related their own fieldwork specifics to achieve Band 3 marks. For example, candidates signposted their responses clearly with phrases such as 'the biggest strength was...' and 'however, a significant weakness was …'

The majority of candidates showed an understanding of the general strengths and weaknesses of sampling such as saving time and avoiding bias but many found it hard to illustrate these by identifying specific strengths or weakness of their own fieldwork. For example, many candidates identified that a weakness of systematic sampling along a river is that not all sites are accessible but surprisingly few illustrated this with an example or were able to explain why this made their results less reliable.

A lot of candidates seemed to write about stratified and systematic sampling as though they were the same thing. In most cases students who claimed to have used stratified sampling were actually writing about systematic sampling.

Q1(c) - AO2 : 6 marks

This question differentiated by centre and it was clear that in some instances centres had not used secondary data, despite the fact that an understanding of its use is indicated as content in the specification.

Most candidates achieved Band 2 marks. Better candidates were able to discuss specifics regarding the use of secondary data. For example, velocity data was used to compare the changes in flow across sites and across different sources. However, many candidates achieved Band 1 marks as a result of superficial or limited responses.

The best answers referred to specific sources of secondary data (such as a named website or the year of a previously published report) and then identified specific strengths and weaknesses that had a bearing on their actual fieldwork. For example, the use of the BBC weather website before the fieldtrip to check that a river or coastal environment would be safe. Other successful responses evaluated the use of data that had been collected previously (either by school students or data published on a website) that allowed them to investigate how something had changed over time. For example, the use of secondary data from a pedestrian survey conducted in 2006. Specific weaknesses could then be drawn, such as the fact that the exact location or time of the secondary data collection was unknown leading to issues of reliability.

Q2(a) - AO3 : 10 marks

There was a huge range of responses between and within centres, but very few in the top band. Most candidates achieved Band 3 marks having responded to the different requirements of the question.

The weakest responses did not provide any tabled data. In other cases candidates over-complicated this table and spent too much time detailing everything rather than focusing on what they needed to complete their graph. In both cases this did not help candidates select and complete an accurate graph or map.

Students used the following forms of data presentation successfully to represent either flows or other data that was a factor in affecting flow:

- Scatter graphs.
- Flow line maps with proportional arrows to represent traffic or pedestrians.
- Pie charts located on a base map.
- Dispersion graphs / box and whisker graphs to represent pebble size.

- Radial diagrams to represent data from an EQI – used to determine why some urban areas have more pedestrians than others.

A significant number of students made errors when it came to choosing a suitable style of graph. Some commonly seen misunderstandings were:

- Cross section diagrams that were drawn upside down (i.e. with the numbers ascending rather than descending on the y-axis) so that the river bed looked like a hill.
- Line graphs being used to join different sites e.g. pebble sizes or pedestrian flows at different locations.
- Scatter graphs being drawn (and lines of best fit added) where there were only three data points.
- Line graphs that had a gap between the y-axis and the first data point on the x-axis.
- A minority of candidates did not draw the graph using the allocated pages in the answer booklet, but instead included a separate graph sheet which was not in keeping with the requirements of the question.
- Some candidates had drawn a graph previously which had been marked by the teacher but submitted this as a response to this question.

Most responses made a valid statement about the pattern or trend but very few responses were successful in attempting to quantify change. For example, 'pedestrian flow doubled from x to y'.

Better candidates were able to make use of their own data to further elaborate discussion points when discussing the trend of their graph.

Q2(b) - AO2 8 marks

The command 'evaluate the techniques' was a key differentiating factor in the outcomes for this question. At least half of the candidates resorted to describing what different graphs showed about their investigation rather than evaluating strengths and weaknesses as a technique.

The question asked for three other maps / graphs or tables to be selected from a fieldwork portfolio. Too many candidates selected and tried to evaluate more techniques.

Evaluation that was specific to the actual map or graph was the key to reward at higher bands. Too many answers were generic, almost appearing to be copied from a standard textbook response. This is not an exercise in rote learning of generic statements and higher level evaluation needs to be applied to the actual fieldwork experience and should include strengths and weaknesses.

Q2(c) - AO1.2 : 6 marks

There were some very good answers to this question with candidates carefully selecting information from their fieldwork portfolio to make links in their conclusions to geographical principles and theories. In other examples which were awarded a lower band, candidates wrote copious explanations without using evidence from their own investigations to support their findings. However, fewer used secondary sources to support conclusions.

A majority of candidates failed to understand the significance of 'conclusion' which is the ability to use evidence to support an overarching statement that pulls different lines of enquiry together. In these cases candidates wrote lists of simple statements, with or without the support of evidence that lacked any explanation or suggested reason for their findings.

As such a clear differentiating factor in failing to access Band 3 was the lack of specific detail related to their fieldwork included in their responses. It appears that some centres/candidates are confused with what is an evaluation and what is a conclusion.

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