



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE
GEOGRAPHY 3110**

SUMMER 2023

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GEOGRAPHY 3110

GCSE

Summer 2023

UNIT 1: CHANGING PHYSICAL AND HUMAN ENVIRONMENTS

General Comments

The general performance of candidates in this paper suggests that it was of appropriate standard and a fair test in which the full range of candidates were able to demonstrate what they know, understand, and can do. Differentiation was achieved through a balance of short questions and more challenging extended writing sections and there were no individual items evident where large numbers of candidates chose not to attempt. It was pleasing to see that most items in questions 1 and 2 had attempt of rates more than 95% with none below 90%. Overall, the mean mark for the Unit 1 paper was 39/83 which was just under 1 mark below the mean in 2022. Reverting to the trend of previous years which was interrupted in 2022, candidates tended overall to perform better in question 1 (Theme 1) than on question 2 (Theme 2) and this was mainly due to a generally disappointing response to both two extended writing questions in question 2 which were worth 6 marks each.

As required by the specification, the questions were driven by the assessment objectives with each item assessing a single objective. Candidates continue, in the main, to find AO1.1 and AO3 questions more accessible and AO2 questions generally more challenging although the latter tends to be characterised by a greater requirement for extended writing which accounts for part of this difference. It was disappointing this year, however, that many candidates struggled with some of the questions assessing AO1.2, understanding, and it was clear that many were uncomfortable with some of the subject content this year, particularly in relation to global cities and rift valleys.

As in previous years, there was approximately a 65:35 split in response to the optional themes, in favour of Theme 3. There appears to have been very little difference in levels of accessibility to the optional questions with a total mean mark of just 0.5 between them, in favour of Theme 3.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Theme 1: Landscapes and Physical Processes

- Q.1 (a) (i) Most candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge of what a geology is used for and to correctly the main feature of the bay located between the two headlands. However, a few were unable to do so which meant that the question proved an effective discriminator at the start of the paper.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to identify the correct rock type from the map key.

- (iii) This type of AO3 map skills question should be familiar to candidates as it tends to appear in the examination in some form in most years and many were able to identify three creditworthy features of the distribution of igneous rocks on the map. Where candidates were unable to earn all three marks, this was due either to a lack of detail where they simply did not give a sufficient number of points to earn the three marks or their responses were simplistic and over generalised. It is worth reminding candidates that description of patterns and distributions from a map should use accepted geographical locators such as compass directions and place names to exemplify the distribution.
- (iv) In this AO2 question, candidates were asked to apply their knowledge and understanding of coastal landforms and geology to draw inferences from the map. As is often the case with this type of AO2 question, many candidates found it challenging and this resulted in one of the lowest facility factors in the paper with the mean mark only in band 1. This was due to many candidates providing fairly simple descriptions of the headlands and bays evident in the map but not relating them in any way to the distribution of the geology that they had just been asked about in the previous item. However, it was pleasing that a great many were able to link the headlands and bays to the distribution of hard and soft rock types in the map key. Whilst this was invariably sufficient to access the upper band of the mark scheme, many candidates missed the command to use map evidence and as such, were unable to gain the third mark. Candidates should be reminded that when they are given this command, they must support their answer by use of a place name or, as in this case, a rock type from the key to exemplify the point being made. However, on a positive note, it was good to see some candidates correctly apply their knowledge of coasts to identify the discordant nature of the coastline as a feature making it distinctive and where they did this, it was rewarded with automatic access to the upper band.
- (b) (i) This was an accessible question and most candidates were able to identify the correct landforms in the photograph.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of the sequence of landforms which lead to the formation of a stack and this is clearly a popular topic in the specification. However, as this question was focusing on AO1.2 and not AO1.1, the very many descriptive accounts of the landform sequence without relating this to understanding of the interaction between geology and coastal processes were unable to progress beyond the bottom band of the mark scheme. Reference to coastal processes such as hydraulic pressure and abrasion and processes of weathering on the arch roof meant that many candidates found their way into band 2 but only a minority provided sufficient detail and chains of reasoning to explain why these processes interact with and attack joints or other points of geological weakness, recognised that these landforms often occur in headlands with uniform geology or explained why certain rock types might be susceptible to chemical weathering, for example to earn the highest marks.

- (c) (i) The majority of candidates who scored marks in this question identified a choropleth as likely to be the most appropriate method of representing the data on the map although credit was given to the few who referred to proportional circles or bars or to a topological map. However, there was no requirement to name the method and many were able to earn both marks through describing the use of colour and a grouped key.
- (ii) Although it was possible for candidates not to be double penalised if they had failed to earn marks in the previous item, very few were actually able to offer creditworthy responses if they had not chosen one of the more acceptable responses. Candidates were also more likely to earn both marks if they had described a choropleth in the previous item and many were able to provide an advantage and more commonly, a disadvantage which invariably related to the difficulties presented by grouped data. When describing advantages of this type of method, candidates should be discouraged from providing bland and simplistic responses such as that it is 'clearer' or 'easier to understand' and be more specific in that a choropleth enables visual comparison of regions.
- (iii) The mean of very nearly half marks for this question demonstrates a distinct improvement in candidates' ability to evaluate compared to when this type of question has been set in the past. Very many candidates picked up on the command and set out to describe the advantages and disadvantages of the Morpeth Flood Protection Scheme as outlined in the resource and this was usually sufficient to gain access to band 2 of the mark scheme. However, where they confined their response solely to the information in the resource, they were unable to progress to the top band. The candidates who did, were able to evaluate hard engineering in its wider sense as stated in the question either through more detailed evaluation of further examples of hard engineering and comparing them to the strategy in the resource or by considering hard in contrast to soft engineering or simply doing nothing in the context of climate change and arguments relating to sustainability. It was pleasing to see quite a few very detailed and well-reasoned responses in this regard.

Theme 2: Rural-Urban Links

- Q.2 (a) (i) The overwhelming majority of candidates were able to identify the correct location.
- (ii) This was an accessible question and most candidates were able to identify changes in land use between the map and photograph.
- (iii) Whilst a great many candidates referred to the fact that this area had been previously built on and thus clearly knew what a brownfield site is, it is worth pointing out that the requirement in the command to describe how the map shows this meant that map evidence was required to demonstrate the point. Where candidates failed to earn both marks, it was invariably due to a failure to exemplify from the map by reference to the docks, works or industrial land use. This re-emphasises the point made above in relation to map evidence being essential when included in the command for a question.

- (iv) Although there were many examples of very good application of knowledge and understanding through inference from the map and photograph, the response to this question was largely disappointing. The specification requires coverage of the contemporary challenges facing UK towns and cities through issues in one brownfield context and it was hoped that the items that preceded this question would lead candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding from whichever case study they had undertaken in class to Manchester Docks. Many responses were quite simplistic and generalised in nature with most citing the generation of jobs, housing and tourism as benefits and traffic congestion as a challenge and this was usually enough to just about enter band 2 of the mark scheme. However, only a minority of candidates was able to consider in more depth and detail the benefits that increasing employment opportunities can bring to communities that may have struggled in deindustrialised areas like this or even to consider the change in the nature of the jobs compared to the old docks and industry as being a challenge as well as a benefit. Equally, although there were some very good responses that saw improvement and regeneration of the housing and environment as benefits but then went on to consider issues around gentrification as presenting challenges for traditional communities, they were unfortunately few and far between. The issues relating to regeneration in UK urban areas tend to be similar and there were enough clues provided in the resource that it had been hoped would signpost candidates to a range of benefits and challenges regardless of whether they had studied Cardiff Docks, London Docklands or any other urban regeneration project. AO2 and the application of knowledge and understanding to unfamiliar contexts remains an area of the specification which candidates find challenging.
- (b) (i) Most candidates were able to provide the correct definitions of the two terms.
- (ii) This was a challenging mathematics and statistics question both for candidates to answer and for examiners to mark, given the range of different ways in which candidates were able to illustrate their understanding of the relationship between in and out migration to cause changes in the trend of net migration. Many candidates were given credit for identifying the basic point that the net migration line is contingent on the changes in difference between the other two but they tended to struggle to take the answer further by explaining and/or quantifying specific changes over time shown in the graph.
- (iii) This was a straightforward AO1.1 question testing candidates' knowledge of the consequences of migration but the relatively low facility factor of only 35.4 suggests that many found it challenging. Although it was common for candidates to provide one or two consequences in simple terms, often they failed to develop the answer sufficiently to provide enough description to earn the additional marks. There were also examples of confusion between social and economic consequences and although some were credited as either, such as increased demand for housing or public services it did impact on some candidates' responses.

- (c) (i) In this question, candidates frequently tended to score either both marks or none. There are clear reasons why some cities become global cities whilst others do not and those candidates who understood this, invariably went on to provide further elaboration to earn both marks.
- (ii) As with 2(a)(iv), the response to this question was slightly disappointing and between the two they contributed in large part to the lower mean for question 2 when compared to question 1. The specification requires that candidates study the ways of life and urban challenges in HIC and LIC global cities but too often, the responses were fairly simplistic, and lacking in detail. Invariably, the most common responses were very generalised and descriptive statements around creating jobs and encouraging tourism and increased congestion and pollution but there were very few that offered explanation through chains of reasoning supported by evidence from case study material as to *why* the nature of, and conditions in global cities can have positive and negative impacts on people's lives by making the connections between urban growth and people. Where candidates did score higher marks, they were able to make these connections by considering the positive impacts of political prestige, economic opportunities, and cultural enrichment alongside the challenges of dealing with poverty, providing housing, dealing with waste and pollution, and managing infrastructure in the face of rapid and often excessive urban growth.

Theme 3: Tectonic Landscapes and Hazards

- Q.3 (a) (i) Most candidates were able to identify the pattern of volcanoes as sitting inside the divergence zone of Iceland and many described the anomalies to this general pattern. Description of patterns from a map is a common question task in this examination and in the main, candidates are comfortable with this skill. Where they fail to earn marks, it is usually due to a lack of detail where insufficient creditworthy points are made in comparison to the mark allocation.
- (ii) In this AO1.1 question, candidates tended to score at least 2 and more often all three marks as they clearly knew the main features of a geyser or no marks at all because they did not. One mark was reserved in the mark scheme for recognition of the emission of water or steam from the earth's surface which is the key feature.
- (iii) Again, it was disappointing that a significant number of candidates did not know or understand the nature of rift valleys and the processes that form them at divergent plate boundaries. A great many understood that plates are moving apart and that the valley is formed in the space between them but unfortunately, only a minority of candidates were able to explain the essential nature of a rift valley as being where the tension created by the diverging plates causes the middle block of crust between the two plates to sink down. Recognition of this point gained automatic access to the upper band of the mark scheme but it was clear the overall concept of rift valleys presented a significant challenge to many. It was this, rather than any perceived lack of understanding of the term divergent plate boundary which led to the low facility factor in this question. It should be noted that this is the sixth examination of this specification and as such, it should be expected that all the content, even that which may be more difficult, must be examined.

- (b) (i) Although worth only one mark, this question proved to be a good discriminator with just under 60% of candidates knowing the purpose of hazard risk maps.
- (ii) Again, a good discriminator with a facility factor of around 60%. Most candidates are able to describe a location using map evidence and where they fail to score all of the marks it is either due to a failure to pick up on the number of marks on offer and thus include sufficient creditworthy points, or a lack of precision in the use of map evidence, particularly when using the scale or compass point to set location relative to a place on the map.
- (iii) Many candidates struggled with this question and it was often due to sometimes bland and over generalised statements related to perceived inaccuracy of hazard maps themselves rather than as due to the unpredictable nature of earthquakes which makes planning difficult.
- (c) This was the only 8-mark question in the paper and overall, the response was fairly pleasing. Candidates are now familiar with this type of question and it was pleasing to see most of them using the resources well, offering sensible and valid analysis and at least attempting to make a judgement based on the evidence presented. There were many responses seen that gained access to the upper bands of the mark scheme, some with quite sophisticated and balanced judgements that were based on well-presented chains of reasoning. However, it should be remembered that 8-mark questions have four levels to the mark scheme and there needs to be a clear progression in terms of hurdles through the bands. The main cause of where candidates were unable to progress, despite in many instances providing well-reasoned judgements relating to the resources was in not considering the possibility of an alternative viewpoint. It was common to see candidates write extensively about why they felt that people who live in wealthier countries are less vulnerable to earthquakes and this is perfectly acceptable as long as they show at least some recognition that there may be another view. In this case, the image of central Tokyo showing the high density of buildings, the reference in the resource to Japan being densely populated and highly seismically active and the signposting in the earlier question to the 2011 Tohoku earthquake where loss of life was extensive could have enabled them to provide at least some balance to their argument even if, in their conclusion, they had agreed fully with the statement.

Theme 4: Coastal hazards and their Management

- Q.4 (a) (i) Most candidates were able to identify the general pattern as increasing from north to south and many described the anomalies to this general pattern and were able to exemplify with quantified reference to the diagram. Description of patterns from a map is a common question task in this examination and in the main, candidates are comfortable with this skill. Where they fail to earn marks, it is usually due to a lack of detail where insufficient creditworthy points are made in comparison to the mark allocation.

- (ii) Most were able to describe one impact of erosion on communities. Where they were unable to access full marks, it was either due to a lack of creditworthy points in relation to the mark allocation for the question, a lack of focus on the impact specifically on communities or they provided a list separate and unrelated separate impacts without elaboration, given that the question had asked to describe just one.
 - (iii) Candidates found this AO1.2 question challenging and it produced the lowest facility factor in the entire paper. Many responses were very simplistic and did not pick up on the cost-benefit explanation against holding the line in the face of increasing sea levels and climate change and allowing some coastlines to enter into managed retreat. A further opportunity to score marks by picking up on the 'some people' reference in the question was also only rarely taken.
- (b)
- (i) Although most candidates were able to answer this question, many did not score marks because they simply repeated the wording in the question, in other words referring to people moving from their homes for 'environmental' reasons. It is accepted that this may have been less of an issue if the question had been worth two marks, but the single mark on offer required candidates to exemplify (which could have been, though not necessarily, from the map) the type of environmental pressure being faced, for example, rising sea levels.
 - (ii) This was very accessible and the majority were able to provide a reason which many elaborated for the second mark.
 - (iii) This proved to be a good discriminator with a mean of 1.5 and a facility factor more than 50%. Most candidates are able to describe a location using map evidence and where they fail to score all of the marks it is either due to a failure to pick up on the number of marks on offer and thus include sufficient creditworthy points, or a lack of precision in the use of map evidence, particularly when using the scale or compass point to set location relative to a place on the map.
- (c) This was the only 8-mark question in the paper and overall, the response was fairly pleasing. Candidates are now familiar with this type of question and it was pleasing to see most of them using the resources well, offering sensible and valid analysis and at least attempting to make a judgement based on the evidence presented. There were many responses seen that gained access to the upper bands of the mark scheme, some with quite sophisticated and balanced judgements that were based on well-presented chains of reasoning. However, it should be remembered that 8-mark questions have four levels to the mark scheme and there needs to be a clear progression in terms of hurdles through the bands. The main cause of where candidates were unable to progress, despite in many instances providing well-reasoned judgements relating to the resources was in not considering the possibility of an alternative viewpoint. It was common to see candidates write extensively about why they felt that SIDS like Tuvalu are more vulnerable to rising sea levels and this is perfectly acceptable if they show at least some recognition that there may be another view. In this case, the fact that populations are fairly low in comparison with some other coastal communities or the argument that all coastal areas are under threat could have enabled them to provide at least some balance to their argument even if, in their conclusion, they had agreed fully with the statement.

Summary of key points

1. Candidates need to ensure that they use map evidence when this required for exemplification in the command for a question. When using map evidence, regardless of the type of map, candidates should aim to be as accurate as possible in their use of scale, direction, or information from the key.
2. When demonstrating understanding in AO1.2 questions, candidates must try to offer more sophisticated chains of reasoning to explain *why* things are as they are rather than be content with description.
3. It should be remembered that a wide range of mathematical and statistical skills is required to be assessed from Appendix A of the specification. Although these will always be set in a geographical context, the percentage of marks on offer should not be ignored and attention paid to development of these skills.
4. In questions assessing AO2, candidates should be encouraged to use their learning from case studies in class to apply their knowledge and understanding in unfamiliar contexts.

GEOGRAPHY

GCSE

Summer 2023

UNIT 2: ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

General Comments

The overall performance that candidates demonstrated in this paper indicates that it was of appropriate standard. All questions were attempted by most candidates (the 'not attempted' percentage is lower than last year) indicating the phrasing and language used in the questions, together with the time allowance given, were accessible and appropriate. The paper enabled differentiation to be effectively achieved for all candidates through a range of question styles and a balance of short and extended writing questions. These provided plenty of opportunity for candidates to illustrate their geographical knowledge, understanding and skill. There was a relatively even split of candidates completing the option questions in the English medium scripts, but for the Welsh medium, double the number of candidates answered question 3 compared to question 4. As required by the specification, all 3 assessment objectives (AOs) were examined across the paper with each part question assessing a single objective.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Theme 5: Weather, Climate and Ecosystems

- Q.1 (a) (i) This was a very accessible question and most candidates were able to gain at least one mark, but many achieved full marks. A significant minority of candidates entered 'seasonal change' instead of 'climate change' for the third space, possibly indicating that these candidates did not read or understand the timescale on the x axis.
- (ii) The candidates answered this question well and the majority had the idea that the graph shows a mean temperature that fluctuates. Many attempted to include some quantification in their response, but this was not always accurate. Some candidates did manage to observe the differences in relative speed of temperature increases/decreases, or the anomalies present, which was pleasing to see.
- (b) The standard deviation from the mean for this question was one of the highest across the paper. Some candidates wrote about ice cores only and therefore missed the comparative angle that this question posed; whilst others wrote about two sources of evidence but again did not compare them. The more able candidates were able to access band 3 marks by focusing less on description and more on the comparative value of each source of evidence throughout their response. Band 1 answers were very descriptive, some of which were just a copy from the resource, whilst others confused ice cores and ice caps.
- (c) (i) A very straightforward question asking for a definition which the candidates either knew or they didn't. However, significantly, it was attempted by almost every candidate, which is a great improvement on the attempt rate of a definition question in the 2022 paper.

- (ii) A very accessible question in which most candidates gained full marks. However, some candidates did not label the temperature on the isoline and therefore only received 1 mark.
 - (iii) Most candidates attempted this question, but only a small minority gave a valid answer. Some candidates wrote about that specific map rather than the weakness of the type of map used i.e., an isoline map. Other responses were too vague e.g., 'not accurate' but did not elaborate what they meant by this.
 - (iv) The candidates were required to use the resource to identify a factor influencing microclimates, which most candidates were able to do. The more able candidates were able to give a good explanation as to why their identified factor affected microclimates, which was good to see.
- (d)
- (i) A very accessible question where the majority of candidate were able to correctly identify the definition. However, some candidates did tick more than one box and therefore their response was void.
 - (ii) A straightforward question where most candidates were able to calculate the correct percentage and show their workings to gain full marks.
 - (iii) Like Q1b, the standard deviation from the mean was quite high for this question and it was clear a significant minority struggled to answer it. Many candidates gave very general responses, they clearly did not know what a wildlife corridor was and answered the question giving the benefits of a national park or reserve. Others copied the definition given in an earlier question and included the name of a wildlife corridor from the table but did not elaborate and clearly knew nothing about it. Those candidates that did well had good knowledge of a wildlife corridor case study.

Theme 6: Development and Resource Issues

- Q.2
- (a)
 - (i) A very accessible question and most candidates gave the correct response.
 - (ii) Most candidates gave the overall trend of the relationship between water consumption and population, but less were able to fully elaborate on this. Many attempted to give some quantification, but too often one element of this was incorrect and so it could not be credited. A few candidates noticed the differences in rate of increase which was great to see and rewarded accordingly. However, some candidates began to explain the reason for the water increase which was not required by this question and so could not be credited.
 - (iii) Most candidates were able to choose a factor which they thought had the greatest impact and were able to give some reasons for their choice. However, most candidates only focused upon the factor they chose rather than giving a balanced answer and considering all factors before giving their opinion. A minority of candidates were able to provide answers with good chains of reasoning which is something that they should be encouraged to practice. As a result, most responses were band 2 answers (but with a large standard deviation score) and required greater depth and breadth to enter a higher band.

- (b) (i) A very accessible question in which most candidates were able to provide the correct responses. (This was the question that had the most correct responses on the paper.)
 - (ii) Many candidates knew this definition and were able to give an adequate response to gain at least one mark. A few candidates referred to an agreement between two countries, which was not credited whilst others thought it was something that caused countries not to trade with each other (which obviously isn't creditworthy either). Some candidates were able to give examples of trade blocs or explain their benefits which was good to see.
 - (iii) A very accessible question where most candidates were able to identify the correct definition of the terms given. Some candidates entered the same letter more than once which meant the responses for that letter were void.
 - (iv) This should have been a straightforward explanation question but it was poorly answered. Many candidates referred to the rich being at an advantage but had little to back this up. The minority that did respond in detail did so through chains of reasoning and easily accessed band 2 marks. Some candidates did not understand this question at all and missed the focus of the question (e.g., they wrote about MNCs and rates of pay).
- (c) This was the most poorly attempted question on the paper. Most candidates gave vague answers that were not specific to an area and could have been written about most of the UK e.g., many businesses. The candidates needed to give more specific answers e.g., more MNC locating their headquarters to gain a mark, followed with elaboration of this point for the second mark. Some candidates mixed up social and economic factors or did not understand what they were.

Theme 7: Social Development Issues

- Q.3 (a) (i) A very accessible question in which most candidates were able to gain full marks.
- (ii) Most candidates responded very well to this question and scored several marks. Candidates gave comparative data to illustrate change over time. However, some candidates referred to different sections of the population when describing the changes and was therefore not a direct comparison. Some candidates talked about the change in shape which was good to see.
- (iii) Most candidates were able to identify an economic factor and explain how this affected death rates. A minority of candidates gave a social factor, whereas others did not link the factor to a change in death rates.

- (iv) Comparing the responses for this question and the equivalent on question 4, this question was by far the better answered of the two. Most candidates were able to correctly identify a social factor and link its influence on birth or death rates (the majority chose a factor affecting birth rates). Many candidates used chains of reasoning effectively and were able to access band 2 marks. Those that got into band 2 but did not receive full marks did not link their factor back to a change in population structure for South Asia.
- (b) (i) This was a very accessible question that most candidates were able to answer. Most candidates were able to gain 2 marks for this question.
- (ii) This should have been a very accessible question, but it was clear from most candidate's responses (and a facility factor of 8) that they did not know what an asylum seeker was. Many candidates answered as if the question was about economic migrants whilst others referred to war but did not relate this to persecution.
- (c) This question required candidates to state how far they agree with the statement, and candidates were expected to weigh up both points of view and then decide. Many candidates decided if they agreed or not and gave the argument from that point of view only and so their answer was unbalanced. There was also a heavy reliance on the resources given in the question, which is fine, but few candidates took this further than a direct lift or elaborated further. Some candidates brought in their own knowledge referring to Rwanda or small boats, but again were unable to explain this fully. It was noticeable that this question was not answered as strongly as the corresponding part in question 4, and band 2 was the average for this question.

Theme 8: Environmental Challenges

- Q.4 (a) (i) A very accessible question in which most candidates were able to gain full marks.
- (ii) Most candidates responded very well to this question and gained several marks. Most candidates were able to make comparative statements about the data to illustrate change over time. Most candidates used quantification to reinforce their observations which was credited, although often one element of the data had been read incorrectly from the graph.
- (iii) Most candidates were able to name one way that waste could be disposed of, but less were able to elaborate this point. The elaboration needed to be focused on how the method reduced the volume of waste. Some candidates went off focus and talked about side effects of a method of waste disposal (e.g., releasing greenhouse gases) which was not required for this question.

- (iv) Compared to the equivalent part in question 3, this was not answered as well. Many candidates talked about a throw away society and illustrated this with the example of mobile phones. This was a good approach but some did not explain this fully and link it back to its impact of waste. A few talked about e-waste, landfill, manufacturing process and packaging which are all relevant, if related to how consumerism creates more waste. It was this that the candidates were weak at doing. As such most answers were in band 1. When band 2 was achieved, good examples were often seen e.g., the concept of 'fast fashion' via brands such as Shein. Only a small minority achieved full marks.
- (b) (i) This was a very accessible question in which most candidates gained full marks.
- (ii) Many candidates gave answers to this question that were too vague to gain marks. Candidates often talked about dangerous metals but did not link this to the product being broken down in some way. The question asked why they affect people and to explain this the candidate needed to reference the breakdown of the waste product first.
- (c) The responses to this question were of overall higher quality than the responses to 3c. Candidates used the resource but most were able to elaborate or extend the information they were given. Some candidates were also able to bring in their own knowledge of national parks in Indonesia and debt for nature swaps in Bangladesh for example. This was great to see. Many candidates did discuss both sides of the argument and then decided, and it was clear that schools have been working hard on ensuring candidates know how to structure the answer to such a question. For many candidates they were able to talk about their opinions, but they lacked depth and chains of reasoning and balance.

Summary of key points

1. Candidates need to be specific in their statements. For many 2- and 4-mark questions, candidates are often asked for a factor, with a second mark for elaboration. Many candidates are too vague in their answers. E.g., in question 1ciii candidates were required to identify a weakness of the map. Many candidates wrote 'it's not accurate' which is incorrect. However, if they had said it was a 'simplified pattern' or 'does not show temperatures between the lines' then that would have been correct.
2. Give both points of view. For AO2 6- or 8-mark questions, candidates are usually asked to evaluate/say to what extent they agree and then to decide and justify. In these questions there must be some element of discussion to access the higher bands. For example, if a candidate is asked to choose a factor, candidates need to consider all factors and then reason why they chose the one they have. Whereas currently most candidates chose a factor and give reasons for this factor and against the others.
3. Ensure when giving quantification that it is accurate. There were several questions across this paper where candidates were able to elaborate their answers by providing quantification. If candidates choose to do this, it needs to be accurate. Some candidates say, 'over or under' a certain number, whilst others use the term 'roughly ...' When the resources are produced, we ensure that candidates can read graphs accurately and a tolerance will be given if needed. However too often candidates are missing out on these marks due to inaccuracies.

GEOGRAPHY

GCSE

Summer 2023

UNIT 3: FIELDWORK ENQUIRY

General Comments

This was the first year that the NEA assessment has had to be completed in its entirety, since 2019. The paper was accessible to the whole ability range of candidates with over 98% of candidates attempting each question. Most examples included:

- Well organised and presented scripts. The quantity of portfolio work attached to the answer booklet was less, and most centres followed the guidance, with regards to the number of additional sheets that were permitted to be included. In some instances, a few centres continue to include too many additional sheets, and in a small number of cases, the whole portfolio. This is not required and is unhelpful to examiners when assessing the NEA. Centres are advised to follow the guidance, with regards to the maximum number of additional sheets included with candidates' scripts.
- 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 questions asked. Assessment at higher bands clearly differentiated between 'general' responses and those which more 'specific'.
- Many candidates continue to make general comments to their own fieldwork. Candidates need to refer to and use actual evidence/data from their own investigation in order that answers can be credited at the higher bands.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 (a)

- Most candidates were able to achieve Band 1 for this question with the mean mark being 1.5. Candidates found this question the most challenging on the Unit 3 NEA Paper, with a facility factor of 38.7. The main factor which prevented candidates from being credited with band 2 was the lack of specific reference to the candidate's own enquiry and in the context of transects.
- Many candidates described the sampling technique, without giving a specific explanation as to why the named sampling technique was used.
- Very few candidates achieved Band 2 for this question.

Advice

- Candidates need learn more about why they are undertaking certain sampling techniques in the context of their fieldwork.
- Candidates should use and reference their own study/investigation.

- (b) Generally, candidates performed well in this question with the overall mean mark at the top of Band 2.
- Nearly all candidates did draw their choice of graph in the allocated space in their answer booklet. Graphs must not be drawn on separate paper and/or stuck on page 10 of the answer booklet without a teacher's signature to confirm the work was completed during the allocated time. E.g., Some candidates had converted raw data from their table, for example, to percentages. This data was then located in pie charts on a base map along a transect. The base maps and located pie charts were not authenticated by the centre as in the guidance.
 - In some cases, candidates were not able to access Band 3 because the graph or map they chose to draw did not include all the data from the table that was drawn. Consequently, candidates lost marks for accuracy.
 - There were fewer inaccuracies in the drawing of graphs in terms of scale/figures on the X and/or Y axes as well as plotting points/drawing bars from their table of data.
 - A significant number of graphs were incomplete (lacked titles/labelled axis).
 - There were particularly good examples which included well executed bar, line and scatter graphs which successfully addressed all the SAC components (S – Suitability; A – Accuracy; C - Completeness).
 - Some centres appear to have taught their candidates graphing techniques that were not wholly correct or suitable for the data collected and the context of transects.
 - Some candidates failed to reach full marks because they chose to represent their data using a simple line or bar graph which limited the mark awarded.
 - In general terms the graphs chosen by the candidates to draw tended to be suitable though some were not the most suitable in terms of transect data.

Advice

- All the data that candidates include in their tables must be included in their graph. If candidates include data in the table, but not in the graph, then 'A' for Accuracy cannot be awarded.
- Teachers are reminded that if a candidate is unable to complete the graph on page 10 of the answer booklet, then any additional paper that candidates use must be authenticated.
- There were still cases where a table of data was not included and therefore it was not possible to assess accuracy as part of the SAC criteria.
- Candidates need to ensure that they choose the most suitable graph for the specific data that they have included. A simple graph, e.g., a bar graph is not always the most suitable graphing technique, and candidates need to be taught suitable graphing techniques that candidates can use in their portfolios.

- (b) (ii)
- Many candidates were able to offer some explanation why they chose their graph and relate this to the nature of the data presented in the table. However, very few were awarded full marks because they were unable to elaborate and link the graph or map to their data and offer a more than basic reason why they had chosen the technique. Answers tended to be very generic, e.g., 'easy to draw and read' were common. Many could not relate the graph to their fieldwork. This resulted in a mean mark of 1.6.
 - Some candidates described the data presentation technique rather than give reasons why it was the most suitable and/or why other techniques were not.

Advice

- Candidates must learn specific details about different graphical techniques, avoiding the use of very generic and simple statements that could apply to any presentation technique. Candidates must offer clear, detailed, and specific reasons for their choice of graph or mapping technique.
- Candidates need to consider the suitability and effectiveness of the technique to their own data.

- (c)
- The command 'evaluate the limitations' was a key differentiating factor in the outcomes for this question. Many candidates talked about strengths and weaknesses of the data collection methods whilst investigating transects, instead of evaluating the limitations of the data collection methods that they used during their investigation. This resulted in the mean mark being 2.7.
 - Most responses included a relevant evaluation of the limitations of the data collection methods used whilst investigating transects. Candidates talked about relevant data collection methods that they used during their investigation; however, the standard of the evaluation was not specific enough in order to achieve Band 3.
 - Some candidates only offered a description of their fieldwork data collection and consequently weren't awarded more than Band 1. This was also true for candidates who evaluated sampling techniques.

Advice

- Candidates need to read the question correctly and need to have a better understanding of command words.
- Candidates are failing to access Band 3 due to a lack of specific detail related to their fieldwork being included in their responses.

Q.2 (a)

- Most candidates understood what secondary data was and were able to describe what secondary data was and to give general strengths and weaknesses of secondary data in general terms. Most candidates also addressed to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement.
- Most responses provided a more general understanding of the value of secondary data. Many candidates also struggled to refer effectively to their secondary evidence to support their evaluation of the statement.

- This was reflected in the mean mark for this question – 2.5 marks (Band 2).
- At Band 1 the responses were often generalised, with vague references to online articles or photographs. In addition to these generic references the candidates offered very little if any connection to how secondary information applied to their study / investigation.
- Band 3 answers provided a specific and detailed understanding of the value of the secondary data used within candidates' own investigation.

Advice

Once again, candidates are failing to access Band 3 due to a lack of specific detail related to their fieldwork being included in their responses. Candidates need to demonstrate specific understanding of the value of the secondary data that they used in their investigation.

(b)

- The mean mark for this question was 3.7 and most responses fell into Band 2.
- Candidates continue to show a lack of understanding of the command word 'analyse'. Most candidates describe individual data points, rather than identify and illustrate trends, patterns, and connections in their investigations. Some candidates described main findings without using supporting evidence.
- Many candidates struggled with referencing primary and secondary evidence from their portfolio and what the data showed. Some candidates did not include any evidence from their portfolio with their scripts.

Advice

- To reach the higher bands, candidates need to make links between data sets, to make effective connections with theories and concepts in relation to their evidence and investigation.
- Candidates are encouraged to carefully select information from their fieldwork portfolio to support their analysis of trends and/or patterns. This evidence is extremely useful to examiners when assessing scripts.

(c)

- In general terms most candidates were able to offer conclusions and/or describe their findings, however candidates struggled to weave in detailed and specific information from their fieldwork/evidence to support their response to this question (evidence, figures, named places, streets, etc).
- A significant number of candidates struggled to make the link between predicted outcomes and their conclusions and as to why they were the same as, or different from, what was expected.
- The mean mark for this question was 2.6, which indicate Band 2 responses.
- Some candidates referred to conclusions in their fieldwork on transects instead of inequality.
- Many tended to repeat what they had already described in question 2b.

Advice

- Candidates need to address the question. They need to go further than describing their main findings and ensure that their explanations include evidence from their own investigations, which supports their findings.
- Candidates need to better understand the term 'conclusion'.
- Candidates are failing to access Band 3 because of a lack of specific detail included in their responses which are related to their fieldwork.

Summary of key points

- Where asked to submit additional pages from their portfolio, these should only be attached if they can provide useful evidence in support of an answer to a specific question – evidence should not be submitted in bulk (beyond 5 pages) and should follow the guidance given on the WJEC website.
- Centres need to pay full attention to the AOs in this assessment so that answers have more focus and avoid description.
- Many candidates' responses stay in the lower bands, as the mean mark for each question suggests, as these responses provided very limited reference to the candidate's own study/investigation. The higher bands credit more detailed and specific responses to candidate's own investigation.
- The graphical/map drawing question is well established. Knowledge and understanding of the most appropriate graph or map to represent such information is the next part of a response at the highest band.
- Understanding of command words, for example, 'analyse' and 'evaluate' is a key differentiating factor. Candidates need better understanding of these terms.



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