



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GEOGRAPHY
AS**

SUMMER 2023

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EDUQAS GEOGRAPHY

GCE AS

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COMPONENT 1: CHANGING LANDSCAPES

General Comments

The paper was accessible across the ability range with only small numbers of questions being left unanswered. Significantly, more candidates opted to answer the glacial option in Section A and although questions on both options performed similarly, candidate outcomes were slightly higher on the glacial option due to higher quality case study evidence and more accurate knowledge and understanding. All items on the paper differentiated well and provided the opportunity for candidates to display the ability to appropriately apply their knowledge and understanding of the specification content. There was evidence that candidates have been instructed well on the differences between the command words and their impact on the AO1, AO2 and AO3 requirements, however 'analyse' proved to be challenging for some candidates along with understanding some terminology such as 'social impact'.

There was evidence of up-to-date case study examples, especially in Section B, Tectonic Hazards. Centres have taught contemporary examples such as Christchurch, Haiti, Japan, China, and DRC to name a few. Overall, candidates have applied them to the question and/or made comparisons between the examples chosen.

Lastly, Q8 proved difficult for some candidates who failed to identify the synoptic nature of this question, responses lacked sophistication and synthesis of geographical ideas, concepts and issues from the resources provided. Centres need to focus on preparing students well for this question and not a simple description of the resources. Candidates need to be able to apply knowledge from across the specification to meet the demands of this challenging question.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Changing Landscapes

- Q.1** (a) Most candidates were able to identify the characteristics of the coastal landscape at Newbiggin confidently. In some weaker responses there was a lack of specialist terminology e.g. profile, lines of weakness, mass movement etc.
- (b) Many candidates demonstrated good understanding of rock structure and bedding planes but there was a lack of knowledge around the lithology of the rock unit discussed. As a result, the assessment of the combined impacts of structure and lithology in the formation of erosional landforms lacked depth. Some candidates did not reference examples to further support their knowledge and understanding.
- Q.2** (a) A number of candidates failed to address the command word 'analyse' and as a result merely described the resource. However most did 'use' the resource whilst doing so e.g. compass directions.

Candidates who achieved marks in Band 3 were able to spot trends in the resource and make overview comments about the pattern of erosion increasing towards the south.

- Q.2** (b) Candidates who scored highly on the question provided balanced discussion around the impacts of both natural processes and human activity on a selected coastal landscape. Making a judgement with specific examples was necessary to access Band 3. Some candidates did consider the development and economic activity taking place at the coastline, which was a valid approach. At the lower end, candidates merely stated a range of human or physical factors affecting erosion with little development of a named example. It was pleasing to see some candidates grasping the interdependent nature of physical processes and human activity.
- Q.3** (a) Most candidates were able to answer this question effectively, using the resource to describe how an arête is formed. There were some inaccuracies with processes and terminology and many students did not opt to use a diagram, which would have been useful here.
- (b) Many candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the importance of depositional processes in the formation of glacial landforms. More successful answers looked to address the command word throughout and some made use of a detailed and evidenced conclusion. Accurate landforms chosen included erratics, moraines and drumlins but some candidates failed to apply their knowledge and understanding to truly assess the role of one or more depositional processes in relation to each other e.g. glacial melt or retreat in the formation of a lateral moraine or their relative importance in relation to other contributing factors or processes.
- Q.4** (a) Similar to Q.2 (a) the command word 'analyse' proved challenging for some candidates, this resulted in a 'description' of the resource. Candidates who scored highly were able to make use of the resource and provide overview comments on the overall retreat of the glacier's snout. Some candidates drifted into explanation, which was not creditworthy.
- (b) Most candidates were able to present evidence to demonstrate that the rate of glacier movement is controlled by many factors and not just meltwater. Those that scored highly were able to provide some judgment on the importance of the role of meltwater relative to other factors such as altitude, gravity etc. The interrelated nature of relationships was clear in some candidate responses but there was a lack of depth and evidence in others. The best responses supported their points with detailed exemplification from named case studies and provided a substantive conclusion.

Section B: Tectonic Hazards

- Q.5** (a) Most candidates demonstrated understanding of the demands of the resource and the command 'describe'. Some merely lifted quotes from the resource without development e.g. 'local residents who remained on the island were at an increased risk of death' or 'air quality reduction may lead to breathing problems e.g. asthma'. Some candidates strayed into economic impacts or longer-term impacts e.g. 'farmer's crop failing, and he/she will lose income'.

- (b) A mostly well-answered question with the resource referenced effectively to identify the overall trend of spread being to the north and south of Mt Agung. However, candidates should be reminded to use evidence from the resource to support their answer and subsequently enter the higher mark band.
- Q.6**
- (a)
- (i) Some candidates failed to show their workings.
 - (ii) This question was answered well with only a minority inaccurate.
 - (iii) Candidates were successfully able to calculate the range.
 - (iv) There was a general lack of understanding around what a cartographic technique was. As a result, this question performed poorly. Centres should be mindful of the requirements to explicitly teach the cartographic techniques listed in Appendix A of the specification. Candidates should also consider their appropriateness and usefulness.
 - (v) Overall this was a question that candidates found challenging. Many were unable to identify the lack of relationship between the travel time and height of the tsunami waves in Figure 7.
- (b) There was variability in the quality of candidate's responses to this question. Many lacked depth to their knowledge and failed to recognise that not all underwater earthquakes cause tsunamis. There was evidence of excessive discussion around P and S waves, which was not necessary, and a lack of knowledge about magnitude, shallow focus, and subduction.
- (c) Although there were a number of good responses, it was also clear that some candidates lacked clarity on the meaning of 'governance'. Where this was the case, responses lacked evidence to support their arguments and exhibited an imbalance in their approach to the evaluative element of the question. Most candidates were able to identify 'governance' at different scales and levels of development with named contrasting case study examples, which added depth to their discussion. The most successful answers developed a balanced argument as to whether other factors played a significant role in reducing risk e.g. level of development, magnitude, population density etc. Some also considered the level of economic development and linked this well to the question i.e. how far risks can be mitigated through the investment in technology etc. A minority of candidates did not focus on earthquake activity. Most drew a conclusion and it is clear that centres have prepared students well in this respect.
- Q.7**
- (a) This question saw more variability in the quality of answers with some students misinterpreting the question and discussing other tectonic events. There was also a tendency to list a variety of 'effects' in an unsophisticated way and fail to evaluate the short- and long-term threats posed. Those that scored more highly compared two recent volcanic events, such as Iceland and DRC, addressing both short-, and long-term responses with some accuracy and detail. Recognition that low GDP and significant drop-off in aid as international interest wanes significantly hampers recovery times and increases longer-term effects in LICs was a common thread. The most successful candidates recognised that the severity of the effects of both primary and secondary hazards would vary over place and time.

- (b) This question generally saw a lack of knowledge and understanding of the usefulness of a 'hazard profile'. Candidates lacked balance in their discussion of limitations and positives and as a result, the assessment was partial with a lack of evidence to support. Within the top band, candidates did demonstrate confident knowledge and understanding of the physical hazard profile and identified its limitations for countries planning and preparing for tectonic events. Some commented that what has gone before might not necessarily happen in the same way in the future. There was a lack of specific case study evidence, e.g. Christchurch earthquake for example.

Section C: Challenges in the 21st Century

- Q.8** Most candidates were able to relate to the resource material and generate a discussion around the 'significant challenges' that some places face. Some candidates were able to develop a sound argument that 'challenges' can be both positive and negative and used examples to support their argument. At the lower end, there was limited understanding of the way in which physical processes create challenges other than lifting from the resources provided. These responses were lacking in links to other parts of the specification or indeed 'other' challenges such as economic and social impacts. Few candidates were able to generate a truly synoptic answer, which links from across the specification.

Summary of key points

- Use of contemporary case studies has improved with evidence that candidates confidently grasp the main principles and are able to apply what they have learnt.
- Responses to the skills questions vary in quality with some better candidates unable to utilise some of the more basic geographical skills in order to aid and develop their answers.
- The time available did not seem cause for concern with only a handful candidates missing out questions or failing to complete the paper.
- There is evidence that candidates are aware of the differences between the command words and their impact on the AO requirements. Centres should continue to devote time to teaching the requirements to candidates as they prepare for the examination.

EDUQAS GEOGRAPHY

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Summer 2023

COMPONENT 2: CHANGING PLACES

General Comments

The paper was accessible across the ability range with limited evidence of questions being omitted; however, like last year, many candidates found some of the skills questions challenging. The paper differentiated well, and all questions gave the most able the opportunity to demonstrate some excellent knowledge and understanding of the specification, while remaining accessible to those of lower ability.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Changing Places

- Q.1**
- (a) The paper opened with a skills-based question which most candidates were able to access successfully.
 - (b) This was followed by a question relating to rural rebranding; many candidates misinterpreted the context of 'diversify' which relates to diversification of the post-productive countryside.
 - (c) The first of the long answer questions was best answered by candidates who separated the changing technology from the government strategies; and better still where they also drew on specific examples to illustrate these factors. The best answers followed the command to examine by examining firstly the role of technology and then the role of government strategies and finally identifying which was more influential.
- Q.2**
- (a) The second question opened with map-based skills question; candidates should be advised to approach this by looking at the overall pattern (or lack thereof) first, before addressing the detail and supporting their answer with map evidence. They should resist the temptation to list information from the map as this does not address the distribution of a pattern command. Most candidates were able to access some marks in the question relating to proximity of universities, but suggestions were simplistic from most.
 - (b) The final question in this section was appeared to be the most challenging, with candidates able to describe at length the role of informal media, but far less clear about the source of formal statistical media. This question is drawn from the meaning and representation part of the specification, and it is to be expected that candidates have looked at contrasting sources of information relating to their home and contrasting places.

Section B: Fieldwork in Physical and Human Geography

- Q.3** Marks in this section were polarised between candidates who were confidently knowledgeable about risks and ethics and those who were not. Very few candidates were able to access the three marks relating to ethical considerations; this is something that could be discussed when out in the field preparing for questions 4 and 5. The Lorenz Curve question was problematic for most students, many of whom were clearly unfamiliar with this skill. Candidates should be encouraged to use Appendix A in the specification as a checklist, bearing in mind that any of these skills could be examined in any upcoming session.
- Q.4** The requirement to write about two fieldwork visits has been reintroduced following the COVID pandemic. It was pleasing to note that candidates could write about their fieldwork undertaken in contrasting environments. Question 4 was the most accessible of the two to candidates, although some had clearly not previously considered the choice of location, hence struggled to write about more than about the suitability of the location for collecting data on their chosen theme; better candidates were able to include the logistics, as well as risk and ethics of the location with some referring data gathered enabling other aspects of the enquiry process to be addressed, this was a suitable approach.
- Q.5** The final question on the paper was arguably more challenging as whilst it was drawn from Stage 2 of the enquiry process, it required an understanding of reliability of data which many candidates found challenging; although it was pleasing by how many candidates were able to discuss not only where their data was reliable but also identifying areas where it was not.

Summary of key points

- Candidates should be familiar with the wording of the specification to help them connect the knowledge required by the question to their answer.
- Candidates should be familiar with the skills outlined in Appendix A as some of these will be examined on each paper.
- Candidates should be encouraged to write up their fieldwork using the Enquiry Process as a framework; the fieldwork questions will be drawn from one of the stages of this framework.
- Candidates should be encouraged to support their knowledge of geographical concepts and ideas with examples throughout, remembering that they are all experts in their local geographies and should use this expertise to illustrate their understanding.



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