

GCSE



Chief Examiner's Report Geography

Summer Series 2018



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Geography for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCSE GEOGRAPHY

Chief Examiner's Report

In the first year of the revised specification with no tiered entry, the majority of candidates were entered for Unit 1 and opposed to Unit 2. It was evident on both papers that many candidates knew their case study material well and could accurately complete most of the skills based questions and so were able to achieve high marks [over 70 out of 100]. However, there were many candidates who offered answers which lacked clear explanation. In some cases, appropriate case studies were attempted but the quality of their evaluation was poor.

The papers contained a range of question styles, from skills-based questions using the resources provided, labelling diagrams to the more challenging questions requiring extended explanations of geographical processes which allowed a wide range of abilities to be tested and differentiation to be achieved. There was little evidence that timing was an issue.

Although candidates of differing abilities were able to respond positively in most questions, there were a few blank spaces indicating a lack of understanding of some topics so the quality of answers provided varied from very poor to good. However, it was noticeable that some candidates confused case studies and were not able to convey accurate answers in clear English while others provided good specific details, particularly for some case study answers but without good geographical explanation. This may have been a product of the fact that the papers were being attempted by candidates in the first year of their GCSE course who may have not yet developed appropriate examination technique.

Candidates must be able to understand the key command words and use them appropriately e.g. describe, explain, and evaluate. Candidates were well aware of the importance of including factual detail in answers to case study questions, but often the quality of their evaluation was limited and did not warrant level three marks, even where there were facts, figures or place names given. Many candidates overlooked the requirement to include a final statement as a conclusion in the questions requiring evaluation. Teachers should be aware that evaluation type questions require consideration of both positive and negative aspects. Failure to include both will result in marks at lower level 2 in these responses.

It is important that candidates note the number of marks available for each question and write an appropriate and relevant amount of information using the lines provided as guidance. As in previous years, it should be noted that there is usually no necessity for a supplementary answer booklet as candidates frequently wrote only one or two lines which could easily have been written in the space below the lines printed on the examination paper. Some even avoided using the labelled Extra Space provided below the question and just went straight to completing their answer in the supplementary booklet! There is also no necessity for candidates to write in the space above the next question or in the page margins. Now that on-line marking is being used, the practice of using a Supplementary Answer Booklet should be very strongly discouraged.

It is disappointing to note that, for some candidates, the quality of written communication was very poor with many spelling, punctuation and grammar errors and not only in the use of key terms; thus some answers lacked convincing understanding of the information relevant to the answer.

Assessment Unit 1: Understanding Our Natural World

Overall candidates found this unit demanding; there were especially weak responses to Question 1 (d) on the formation of a levee, Question 2 (c) on a wave cut platform, Question 3 (c)(ii) on why an anticyclone brings high temperatures, Question 4 (b)(ii) on how granite forms and Question 4 (d)(ii) - the definition of epicentre as detailed below. The knowledge of many candidates was limited on some topics as opposed to their application as some case studies had detailed answers. Perhaps the issue was poor examination technique reflecting the fact that only Year 11 students were taking the revised specification paper this year. There was no evidence that candidates could not complete the paper due to insufficient time as Question 4 was usually fully attempted.

Q1 Theme A: River Environments

Many candidates performed well in this question as river processes and features and the case study information was accurate; the longer question on the physical and human causes of a river flood were answered in detail to good Level 3 standard by many candidates.

- (a) Most candidates clearly identified a meander and waterfall from the map gaining full marks.
- (b) Most candidates completed Table 2 accurately, although some candidates confused the drainage basin transfers and stores. Some candidates added more stores/transfers, rather than just answering the question as required.
- (c) Many candidates failed to read this question carefully and therefore did not focus on channel shape using the data at three different sites. Many responses only provided figures, often omitting width figures, without any explanation at all. Others were unable to read the graph in Fig 1 accurately, misinterpreting the question and not realising that distance from the left bank was the width of the river channel and so they focused on discharge. Many only described depth and not width, while others failed to support their answers with figures although some relevant explanation on types of erosion was given. This question was a good discriminator on levels of ability.
- (d) Some candidates gave good explanations of levees but many described deposition without referring to loss of energy as the river overflowed its banks. Some answers referred to hard engineering and artificial levees or embankments.
- (e) The causes of a named river flood were generally well covered, although some candidates failed to mention the name of a river either at the start of the answer or within it. Most responses were based on the Rivers Derwent in Yorkshire or Valency at Boscastle. However, the quality of explanation of the causes varied greatly. Candidates using the case study of flooding of the Somerset Levels often did not name a river - either River Tone or Parrett - thus restricting their marks to Level 1.

Q2 Theme B: Coastal Environments

Candidates performed less competently on coastal processes and features compared to previous years, with some questions on this theme not attempted. The case study information was mainly accurate as the longer question on a coastal management strategy was answered to Level 3 by many candidates.

- (a) (i)-(iii) Ordnance Survey skills questions were often answered either very competently or poorly with some candidates losing all 4 marks as they failed to measure scale or use compass points accurately.

- (iv) Most candidates gained marks as they knew accurate information on wave height and frequency; sometimes strong swash and weak backwash were both stated but as these terms are the reverse of each other, a mark was lost. No comparison with constructive waves was required.
- (b) (i) In general Table 3 was completed accurately. Some candidates confused Stages 3 and 4.
 - (ii) The majority of candidates correctly identified the feature.
- (c) Only a few candidates could explain the formation of a wave cut platform accurately. More often this question proved challenging, with some candidates confusing cliff collapse and retreat with the formation of a waterfall.
- (d) (i) This question was often poorly answered with candidates not stating clearly why a stretch of coastline would need protection. Some answers were repetitive in both points.
 - (ii) Many candidates stated facts and figures and place names but did not evaluate clearly the sustainability of the methods of protection at their chosen case study. A variety of coasts such as Lyme Regis and Withernsea were used in the answer, although Newcastle (Co.Down) was the most common case study. There were case study facts and figures on at least two methods in the strategy demonstrated by the majority. Excellent answers with good evaluation and a concluding statement were offered by the best candidates. However, it should be noted that evaluation of a strategy required discussion of more than one method. The quality of communication in the explanations was in some cases limited with poor spelling and grammatical errors.

Q3 Theme C: Changing Weather and Climate

This theme is always challenging for candidates; there is much evidence that candidates did not understand the causes of high temperatures in anticyclones; although there were several short questions which enabled candidates to achieve some marks.

- (a) (i) Several candidates did not correctly identify the sources used when making a weather forecast, especially rainfall radar. The spelling especially of 'buoy' varied considerably!
 - (ii) A straightforward question which surprisingly, few candidates answered well. Many answers lacked precision on the difference between weather and climate omitting either the idea of climate being over a longer period of time or it being the average weather conditions.
- (b) There was good explanation of why a Polar Maritime air mass was wet, but many did not explain why it was cold, inaccurately naming the poles or Arctic (instead of from the North West/Greenland) and so did not achieve full marks.
- (c) (i) In several cases, Table 4 was either not attempted or was inaccurately completed, with wind direction especially confused.
 - (ii) Many of the weaker responses offered little explanation for the high temperature in this anticyclone, often scoring zero marks as they discussed precipitation or wind speed and the spacing of the isobars. There was a lack of understanding of how sinking air warms up, leading to clear skies allowing radiation from the sun in an anticyclone.

- (d) Many candidates ignored the command word 'explain', merely quoting the figures to describe the temperature falling with height. When explanation was attempted, most either related to thinner air or radiation out from the earth's surface and were very confused.
- (e) Many candidates responded well to this question with the description of the impacts of Typhoon Haiyan being the most frequently quoted case study. However some candidates confused this extreme weather event with an earthquake or other disaster!

Q4 Theme D: The Restless Earth

The majority of candidates handled this final question very well. Candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge and interpreted most questions correctly.

- (a)
 - (i) Most candidates were able to label the mantle accurately.
 - (ii) Most candidates handled this question well choosing the correct word in each statement to describe the earth's structure.
- (b)
 - (i) The term 'distribution' was not well understood. Many answers stated inaccurate compass points. There was some use of the scale by a number of candidates although it often lacked accuracy.
 - (ii) The answers on the formation of granite often confused magma with lava and also muddled granite with basalt and/or sedimentary rock - granite was frequently viewed as an extrusive rock.
- (c)
 - (i) Most candidates correctly stated two characteristics of a shield volcano.
 - (ii) Most candidates correctly named one other type of volcano.
- (d)
 - (i) The city was almost always correctly identified using Fig 10.
 - (ii) There were many poor definitions of the term 'epicentre', often omitting that it is the point on the surface where the first tremors are felt.
 - (iii) Many candidates failed to score full marks as they described the wrong processes for the boundary type given in the question and did not explain the idea of subduction, friction making the plates 'stick' and then jerking free to create the shaking of an earthquake.
- (e) Most candidates gained at least Level 1 marks as they included some information on the cause of a named earthquake, but many failed to describe both a cause and a precaution (with evaluation) before the earthquake happened. The best Level 3 answers described how the named plates moved (cause) and also explained how precautions such as earthquake-proof buildings, disaster prevention days or a tsunami early warning system helped to decrease the number of deaths. Many candidates described the impacts of an earthquake, instead of evaluating a precaution by indicating, for example, how the precaution or lack of precautions due to poverty in many LEDCs, affected the amount of damage caused to buildings and the resulting number of deaths of people.

Assessment Unit 2: Living in Our World

Examiners noted that the paper was straightforward with a good range of both short and long questions. This allowed candidates of different abilities to access marks. Examiners noted that the case study questions were generally poorly answered with many candidates not being able to evaluate, that is giving both positives and negatives relating to the issue or project. The lack of detail and explanation provided in case study questions may be partially due to the fact that candidates have a relative lack of experience in examination technique. There was no evidence of candidates not being able to complete the paper in the time provided.

Q1 Theme A: Population and Migration

- (a) (i) Many candidates incorrectly identified the type of map as a sketch map.
- (ii) A well answered question, candidates recognised the answer as being 20.0 to 24.9.
- (iii) Most candidates described in detail the location of the population aged over 65 years referring to coastal areas and using compass points i.e. south, east or south west England which was pleasing. However, too many candidates used terms such as 'the edge of the country' or the 'bottom of the country'.
- (iv) It is pleasing to report that most candidates were able to elaborate on their answer to gain all three marks in this question. The majority of candidates wrote about the pressure on the health service, stating that medical investment was needed and the fact that taxes would have to be raised to pay for it. The majority of answers focused on the negative aspects of an ageing population. However, equally valid responses referred to the positive implications such as the grey vote, older workers and the free child care many grandparents give to their grandchildren.
- (b) (i) The majority of candidates correctly marked a line on the pyramid to indicate where the aged dependent population began. They clearly understood this began at 65 years old.
- (ii) This question was well answered – most candidates correctly identified the youth - dependent population in Kenya as 16 million.
- (iii) This question was a good differentiator. It was a 'describe and explain' question related to how the population pyramid changed for Kenya between 2012 and 2050. There were essentially three parts to this question. Candidates had to describe how the pyramid changed e.g. base got narrower, top got wider. They had to explain why the changes occurred e.g. birth rate decrease and death rate decrease. The last element was to include figures of different age cohorts in 2012 and 2050. If one element was missed out then candidates were restricted to Level 1. If they completed two elements of the answer (which most candidates did) they scored Level 2. A small number of candidates addressed all three elements.
- (c) (i) The definition of emigration was problematic as many candidates gave a general migration definition by saying leaving one country and moving into another. We wanted to see the candidate focusing on the leaving/ exiting aspect of emigration. Some candidates decided to back this up with reasons why they were leaving (war, famine). This was not required although it showed good understanding.

- (ii) Candidates answered this question well by identifying one human barrier to migration such as lack of money and one physical barrier to migration such as an ocean. A small number of candidates indicated a wall as a physical barrier. This received no credit as a wall is a human barrier since it had to be built.
- (iii) This is one of the new case studies on the specification which looks at the challenges refugees face in their destination country. A high percentage of centres are teaching the journey of the Syrian refugees into Greece. It was important to name the country of origin i.e. Syria and to use the correct terminology (refugee). It was also important to state the destination country i.e. Greece. If candidates failed to do this then this was credited as a Level 1 answer. It was also noted many candidates focused too much on the plight of people who remained in Syria. We were looking for the candidate to highlight the challenge during their dangerous journey to Greece and the conditions of the refugee camp when they reached their destination. We also wanted to see the challenges faced by the destination country trying to cope with the large influx of refugees.

Q2 Theme B: Changing Urban Areas

- (a) (i) Most candidates correctly identified the land use zone as the suburbs.
- (ii) This question was very poorly answered. Candidates needed to know the location of the land zone first (the outskirts/edge of the city). They then needed to explain why the suburbs were located there. Candidates needed to discuss the availability of land, or the cheaper land prices in this location for developers to expand into. Unfortunately, these reasons were often not forthcoming. Too often candidates simply described what the suburbs looked like.
- (b) (i) This was a resource-based question. It was generally well answered with candidates identifying two problems resulting from traffic congestion.
- (ii) Candidates had to identify one issue with public transport in inner city areas of MEDCs. The majority identified the cost of public transport as being a problem. Many candidates were unable to elaborate beyond this and therefore only scored two out of three possible marks.
- (c) This was the case study question on inner city redevelopment. It is pleasing to report that candidates named a relevant inner-city area (Titanic Quarter) and therefore were able to access Level 2 and Level 3 marks. It was obvious that candidates knew their case study facts/figures on housing and employment and therefore easily achieved 4 or 5 marks. However, many failed to fully evaluate how it regenerated and improved both the housing and employment opportunities. A sizeable number of candidates discussed the environmental improvements. This was not required and therefore received no credit.
- (d) This case study question focused on the location of shanty towns in a LEDC city. The most common case study was Kolkatta in India. This question was generally poorly answered as candidates simply gave generic answers which could relate to any city. Answers such as this included references to shanty towns being near railways, roads or factories for work reasons. To get to top Level 2 and Level 3, candidates needed to give specific information on the city in question such as the name of a river, rubbish dump, railway station or district. The best responses referred to various locations in the city where shanty towns are located. It was frustrating that many candidates chose to write about the growth of the shanty towns as well as the living characteristics rather than the location. These responses were not credited. Candidates need to read the question carefully and answer with the appropriate information.

Q3 Theme C: Contrasts in World Development

- (a) (i) This was well answered with most candidates giving the correct meaning of HDI.
- (ii) This resource based question proved accessible to most candidates. An easy four marks to obtain.
- (iii) This question has been asked in previous years on the legacy specification. The use of terms like 'composite measure', 'economic and social indicators' are welcome and help give the answer greater clarity. Some candidates went on to use certain countries such as Saudi Arabia to highlight the inadequacies of using indicators on their own. A well answered question on the whole.
- (b) Candidates had to select a Sustainable Development Goal and explain how it attempts to reduce the development gap. This was generally well answered by candidates. To gain the full four marks the candidate had to demonstrate how this goal was being met. Specific information on what was being done was welcomed e.g. in terms of investment, literacy targets, reducing infection targets and so on.
- (c) (i) The meaning of the term 'fair trade' was generally poorly answered. Most candidates received one mark by saying farmers get paid a fair price. More detail was required e.g. cutting out the middleman, improving working conditions or ensuring environmental protection. It is evident that only a few schools are using these more detailed definitions of fair trade.
- (ii) This question was in general well answered. Most candidates referenced a named LEDC and gave some detail on how the money was being invested into the local community or area. On a separate note many responses for this question involved the restating of the fair trade definition. These types of answers scored quite low. Some centres had studied actual people from various countries to highlight how fair trade had helped them. These answers were welcomed as they were very specific to a named LEDC. No credit could be given for answers which did not name a relevant LEDC.
- (d) The most popular case study by far was the Hippo Rollers that are being used across Africa. Generally, facts and figures relating to the appropriate technology helped the candidates reach Level 2. However, as this was an evaluate question many candidates failed to offer a single negative about the technology which limited their answer to Level 2. Going forward, more emphasis needs to be placed on this when teaching this case study. If only positives or negatives are given, then only 3 marks can be awarded. Like all evaluate questions an overall conclusion or judgement is required for full marks (assuming all other criteria has been met).

Q4 Theme D: Managing Our Environment

- (a) In this question candidates had to outline the change in the number of tourist arrivals in Turkey. Overall this was well answered. However, some candidates did not quote the full-time scale, i.e. from 1995 to 2015. These answers only scored one mark.
- (b) (i) This question was answered very well by most candidates who identified Chile as the correct answer.
- (ii) Grey Lake was correctly identified as the longest trail. These two questions provided easy marks to access.

- (iii) The meaning of the term ecotourism was poorly answered. Most candidates achieved one mark by saying green tourism helped protect the environment. Very few candidates achieved the second mark by discussing the protection of the people's way of life/culture.
- (iv) This was a data response question where the candidates had to use a resource about a sustainable tourism project in Chile. Candidates didn't require any prior knowledge of this Eco Camp. The resource highlighted various ways in which it was environmentally friendly. Candidates needed to quote detail from the resource (e.g. 100% renewable energy, waste recycled e.g. plastic, paper). By doing this they could achieve 2 out of 3 marks. The other mark was for the elaboration on how this could be beneficial to the environment i.e. 100% renewable energy meant no greenhouse gases produced.
- (c) This was well answered by candidates. They demonstrated a good knowledge of greenhouse gases trapping heat in the atmosphere which lead to rising temperatures. Many candidates were able to name the greenhouse gases as well as long wave and short-wave radiation.
- (d) (i) A very well answered question. The vast majority of candidates correctly inserted 'reuse' and 'disposal' in their correct positions on the waste hierarchy.

(ii) This question was also answered quite well. Many candidates wrote about using the 'blue bin'. To achieve full marks we needed the candidate to mention a product that could be recycled e.g. paper, plastic etc. However, we did not accept upcycling as a valid answer for recycling i.e. turning an existing product into a new product.

(iii) This question was poorly answered. The candidates thought that reusing something was a way to reduce waste. Reuse is a separate concept on the waste hierarchy, so we were very clear when it came to mark this question that reduce had to be the focus. We noted some very good answers such as reading newspapers online which reduces the need to buy a hard copy thus saving paper. Other good answers included making a shopping list to buy less products or buying food with less packaging.
- (e) The final question on the paper required candidates to evaluate the benefits and disadvantages of a renewable energy source. Many candidates failed to give specific details on their chosen renewable energy source and provided very generic advantages or disadvantages. These answers only achieved four out of seven possible marks. The best answers referenced the renewable energy source to a location e.g. Walney farm, wind power in Denmark (Horn's Rev) or the MENA countries. By default (although no requirement for a case study) these answers easily achieved Level 3 marks. It would be advantageous for centres to teach this part of the specification through a place/location where the renewable energy source is prevalent as this seems to provide the candidates with material for writing extended answers in good detail.

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