

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE Global Development 6GL02
Global Development Challenges

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1 a i

All specifications contain specialist terminology which students need to know to understand the broader themes and ideas. These terms are fundamental and most students were able to offer at least sound answers; usually about economic sustainability. The term 'social' posed more problems but there were those who recognised that this might involve education, health or more contentiously 'quality of life' which needed further development if it was to be distinguished from economic sustainability. One or two thoughtfully suggested that economic development was a means of achieving social development; a sophisticated idea.

1 a ii

There were some excellent responses to this question that recognised an inherent tension between the global economic system which requires higher levels of consumption and the impact this has on natural resources and environments. Some offered case-study evidence by way of support, often drawn from modern China and its heavily polluted industrial cities whilst others took a more global view offering ecosystem destruction and climate change as clear impacts of economic growth. Students with only a general idea of sustainability struggled with the question.

1b

Once again the minority of students who simply didn't understand the term 'sustainable' were unable to make much progress with this question. Generally this was not an obstacle but a rather unrefined sense of the role of governments did present problems. It is a common feature of students at this level that they envisage governments as being largely made up of well-intentioned individuals who do their level best to promote the interests of all citizens. Of course some see that this is difficult whilst others bring a dose of cynicism to the topic and report that some governments promise to deliver a whole range of societal improvements which may not be compatible. A few candidates offered the view that, for example, 'during economic recessions people want jobs and worry less about the environment' which is a sophisticated view. The majority were able to say something about how multinational corporations tended to seek profit at the expense of environmental considerations although real examples were rare.

2 a

This was either very well answered with good detail about specific conflicts based on case study knowledge – Darfur featured commonly – or very weakly answered by the students who had clearly not prepared this topic and were obliged to extemporise. Some did this quite inventively in the context of global conflicts such as the 2nd World War but others tried to answer it without naming any nation state or states which rarely added any marks to their overall score. The best answer was a very thoughtful description of the Iraq-Kuwait war in which the Iraqi invasion was an explicit attempt to capture the Kuwaiti oil fields.

2 b

There were, as with question 2a, some very strong case-study based responses to this. UN actions in the Balkans featured widely with excellent detail about the difficulties of that engagement and some of the issues that it raised. Others had to piece together bits and pieces including Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan with some insecure history apparent in some. The weakest answers failed to mention any actual conflicts but simply offered generic comments about conflict resolution in general such as, 'it is important to get people to agree on the conditions of any possible peace'.

2 c

As with the previous questions the instruction to 'use examples' was ignored by the weakest students who subsequently struggled to say anything very useful about the relationship between conflict and economic development. At the other extreme a thoughtful minority saw that this relationship was both complex and could work in both directions. That is to say economic development might be a cause of conflict but also that conflict might cause economic development. 'The USA ended the 2nd World War with an economy that had doubled in size in 4 years' and that it subsequently 'was able to dominate the post war world as both Germany and Japan were destroyed and the UK was in debt to it'. The more popular route was to emphasise how economic development might cause resource wars over a reducing resource base – once again the Middle East in general and Iraq in particular was often chosen as an example.

3 a i

Question 3 was based on pre-released materials but students came to the material with very variable levels of preparation. Some had studied the Haitian earthquake in detail going well beyond the Resource Booklet in order to explore its devastating effects. They also had a very strong understanding of the issues that were 'flagged up' in the Resource Booklet. The first of these was addressed in this question which produced some excellent answers. The keyword here is 'relationship', which the weaker students rather overlooked in presenting information about deaths for example, independently of information about insurance costs. Some seemed unclear about the distinction between overall losses and insurance costs; a distinction that should and probably was addressed in the preparation of students.

3 a ii

Most students recognised that the causes of this catastrophic disaster go well beyond the strength of the earthquake itself and that the state of preparedness of the population, as well as its vulnerability to post-event hazards such as disease, were crucial factors. The best answers were thoughtful and had interesting things to say both about corruption levels within Haiti and the reasons behind this, including the troubled relationship with the United States. Many noted that Haiti's development status is untypical of the region and sought reasons as to how that impacted on the scale of the disaster as 'neglect of the most basic building regulations and an absence of warning systems is partly explained by corruption of local officials' followed by 'the inability to deal with the epidemic calls into question the level of international commitment to help and the poor organisation on the ground'. There were several very strong answers that took this general approach.

b

Modelled on the sample assessment materials students should have expected two substantial 'essay style' questions on this pre-released material. This question was the first of those with a clear focus on 'the contrasting role of international organisations, NGO's and the Haitian government....' in the management of the disaster after the event. Contrasts are best addressed by using connective words and phrases such as 'whereas', 'on the other hand', or even, quite explicitly 'by contrast'. Too many of the weaker students made no such contrasts, presenting the information in discrete paragraphs and presuming that the examiner would draw his or her conclusions from these descriptions. These answers were unlikely to qualify for the top two levels within the mark scheme however well they recounted the facts of post-earthquake Haiti. Stronger candidates not only offered contrasts but also saw that there was a relationship between these bodies that is addressed in the Sources.

c

As with essay titles on Unit 1 this question is 'set-up' to stimulate a debate. The statement is obviously contentious and it is self-evident that not everyone is likely to agree with it. The best answers took on the title, offered evidence from a range of sources including the Resource Booklet but also their own knowledge and, critically, came to a conclusion. This last was the greatest weakness of more modest responses which tended to conclude, when they concluded at all, with bland comments such '....it is complicated and many people are at fault for what has happened in Haiti'. It is vital that students deconstruct titles and don't neglect either the focus of the question or its restrictions. In this case humanitarian and development aid were treated as one by most students rather than as explicitly different types of aid. Very few saw the significance of 'most Haitians', replacing it in their minds with 'Haiti' in general. Needless to say, by 'reading' the title in this way, they missed the fact that Haiti has a small but very wealthy elite who have profited very considerably from development aid in the recent past whilst also being partly responsible for the mal-distribution of its humanitarian aid. Essay titles need deconstructing, especially when pre-release materials rather level the playing field of factual recall.

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